

MAN FROM THE EAST

An original TV screenplay
Inspired from his novel 'Man from the East'

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TV screenplay

EPISODE 1

FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON STREETS – DAY

THE CAMERA roams over London streets until it stops at a large impressive-looking building on the corner of a London business street.

INT. INSIDE THE BUILDING – DAY

THE CAMERA moves into the building, climbs up the floors and stops at a wooden door with a bronze sign demonstrating an Arabic name: "Selim A. Razek" and his profession: "Legal & Economic Consultation". The door opens and the CAMERA penetrates into a reception area revealing a blond female secretary in her late forties, collecting a newspaper from her desk and heads toward Selim's office. She enters into the spacious office where Selim sits at his desk reading some papers. He is a man in his late fifties with handsome oriental features. The secretary places the newspaper over his desk.

SECRETARY

The Daily Mail talks about your wealth for the third time this year. It says that the Egyptian millionaire is one of the richest Arab millionaires living in London. Your wealth amounts to 1.7 billion pounds Sterling.

SELIM

(ushering her to sit down)

I wonder when these people would stop chasing me. I just want to live in peace in your beautiful country.

SECRETARY

The newspaper also talked about your lonely life in London, and wondered about your wife and kids living in Cairo away from you all these years.

SELIM

I left my wife, Safia, in Cairo to care for my son and daughter, Ali and Nadia, who are still in high school. Ali is one year older than his sister, and finished high school this year. I'll bring my family to London as soon as Ali officially receives his diploma.

SELIM (CON'T)

(smiling)

Ali is a fantastic karate player, he is a third degree black belt. My plan for Ali is to study business administration in one of the American universities. As for Nadia, it is best if she stays with her mother and continues her education in London.

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT – DAY

A British airline passenger plane arrives at Heathrow airport. Safia, Ali and Nadia emerge with the other passengers. Their servant Saber, a Nubian man in his late fifties who cared for Ali since childhood follows at their heel. Selim holds Safia dearly and kisses his kids joyfully. He then shakes hands with Saber warmly. A chauffeur driving a Rolls Royce takes them to an elegant mansion located in the North East of London. It's a millionaire mansion, big, sprawling, with clipped lawns and gardens.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Before Ali leaves to the United States, Selim spends time alone with his son.

SELIM

I always wished that you continue studying business administration in an American university. I chose North Carolina University due to its wide reputation in that field. A nice apartment was rented for you in the Raleigh district near the university campus. Saber will go with you to take care of you.

ALI

Yes, father.

SELIM

You're in your late teens now, and imagination frequently takes you away from reality. I want you to be alert and look after yourself well. Please be careful and use your brain in all things concerning your future.

ALI

Yes, father. Please pray for me.

SELIM

(raising his hands to the sky)

O Lord. Protect my son from all evil, and make him successful in a different world.

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

- 1- Ali and Saber at Heathrow Airport bidding Farwell to Selim, Safia and Nadia.
- 2- Ali and Saber arrive at Raleigh-Durban International Airport.
- 3- Ali and Saber take a cab to where the apartment is located.
- 4- Ali and Saber explore the apartment admiring its splendor.
- 5- Saber begins unpacking.
- 6- Ali looks at the surroundings from the balcony, closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

INT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – LECTURE ROOM – DAY

THE CAMERA WANDERS ABOUT the establishments of the university campus to quickly reveal the flowering gardens, tennis courts,

swimming pool, the central library, the main building, and the various departments.

THE CAMERA then penetrates into a lecture room to reveal Ali sitting with other students waiting for the arrival of the professor. The professor enters into the classroom and begins a lecture. The students try to take some notes, but the professor comments:

PROFESSOR

Don't take notes. Try to understand first. I only touches on topics then leave you to deduce details from text books.

INT. CENTRAL LIBRARY – DAY

Ali goes to the library to get the first set of text books, which are six large volumes. He carries them in a pile, walking across the library pavement and trying to avoid being bumped, when he crashes into a girl. She gives an outraged gasp, then tears come to her eyes. They fall down and books scatter everywhere. He rushes to her to apologize, but embarrassment holds his tongue when he sees tears rolling down her face. She lifts her face and looks at his intense, dark eyes for a moment, then she blushes and lowers her gaze, trying to collect her books.

Her beauty takes away his breath and his heart pounds so hard he fears she might hear its quick, uneven beats. She has wide gray eyes, thick straight sheaths of silky blonde hair, her skin is dazzling white and milky like satin. She is like a wonderful flower blossoming in his virgin heart. He keeps looking at her, unable to talk, because he could scarcely breathe. She looks into his eyes and feels his confusion.

GIRL

(shyly)

It was my fault. I didn't look where I was going. My books weigh a ton today.

ALI

Oh, no. It's my fault. Those tears in your eyes prove that. Please accept my sincere apology.

He offers his handkerchief, and she wipes away her tears before returning it. He helps her collect her books and sees they are similar to his. That means he would probably see her often in the lecture room. As she walks away, he stares after her until she is out of sight. Ali walks joyfully toward his apartment, jumping up and down despite the heavy books under his arm, thinking of the angel who captures his heart.

INT. LECTURE ROOM – NEXT MORNING

Ali sits in the last row, pretending to arrange his papers while searching with hesitant eyes for the girl from the library. She isn't there at first, but she soon arrives, chatting and laughing with a well-built boy. They sit together. Two other boys arrive, sitting beside her and her friend, participating in their laughter. Ali's throat constricts when he realizes she is surrounded by several competitors.

At the end of the lecture the professor surprises his students with the fact:

PROFESSOR

You will go through sudden exams and seminars on related topics.

After the lecture, Ali collects his papers and walks toward the door. When he passes the girl, she says:

GIRL

Hi. Remember me?

ALI

(smiling)

Yes. You're the girl from the library.

THE WELL-BUILT BOY

Are you the guy who bumped into her yesterday and hurt her?

ALI

(surprised)

I apologized to her. Besides, I didn't do it on purpose.

THE WELL-BUILT BOY

(looking at the girl)
You want me to beat him up?

GIRL
(obviously embarrassed)
It was my fault. I apologized to him.

THE GIRL (CON'T)
John was a boxing champion in high school and likes to show off. I
apologize for him.

ALI
(relieved)
I accept your apology.

As Ali walks toward the door, one of the other two boys stops him and asks:

BOY
Where do you come from?

ALI
Egypt.

BOY
Never heard of it.

ALI
(extremely annoyed)
In our country, we generously receive our guests and graciously
entertain them.

Ali quietly pushes his way to the door, refusing any further debate.

EXT. UNIVERSITY PARK – NEXT DAY - EARLY MORNING

The following day, Ali goes to the campus and has plenty of time for a walk in the surrounding park. The beautiful flowers brighten his heart and deepen his romantic sense of nature. Suddenly, a beautiful call

from behind stops him. He turns and finds himself face-to-face with the girl. He stands for a few seconds, fascinated by her. She is more beautiful than the greenery and colorful flowers in the park.

ALI
Did you call?

GIRL
Yes. What's your name?

ALI
Ali

GIRL
That's a famous name in our country. No doubt you know of Muhammad Ali, the boxing champion. I came to apologize for what John, Peter, and Timmy said yesterday. John is a bit short-tempered, and his attitude may sometimes hurt other people's feelings. Peter idolizes him.

ALI
You don't need to apologize for them. They should apologize of their own accord.

GIRL
I also came to thank you for your patience concerning the pain they caused you – and for your decent response.

ALI
Your attempt to comfort me made me forget what happened.

INT. CLASSROOM – MORNING

They enter the classroom together and sit down listening to the professor. Ali looks to his left and sees John and Peter staring angrily at him. After the lecture, Ali wants to leave, but the girl asks:

GIRL

Do you understand these lectures?

ALI
I think so

GIRL
Can you extract the relevant material from the references?

ALI
Yes

GIRL
Could we study together sometime?

ALI
I'd be delighted

GIRL
You haven't even asked my name yet.

ALI
I feared you might feel it was an intrusion.

GIRL
(astonished by his sensitivity)
I'm Diana Stevenson.

ALI
(smiling)
I'm Ali Abdel Razek.

DIANA
When and where can we study together?

ALI
There's a small garden about one mile from here, quiet and isolated
where we could read without interference. How about nine o'clock
tomorrow morning?

DIANA

I know the place. OK

EXT. GARDEN – NEXT DAY - MORNING.

Ali walks briskly towards the garden. He is on time, and she is waiting for him in a rosy dress that matches the tender beauty of her skin. Her thick blonde hair against the color of her dress adds purity to the sunrise.

ALI
(softly)
Good morning.

She looks up, smiles, and holds out her hand. He takes it, pressing it gently as he faces her, and holding her with her eyes.

ALI
What should we start with?

DIANA
How about economics?

She likes his logic and simple way in explaining the difficult points. Most of the time as he talks, he doesn't look at her, but at the sky or the extended green. She looks at his profile and feels as if he were flying her to a far, bright horizon.

After they have enough reading they take a walk through the beautiful surroundings.

DIANA
Tell me about your country.

ALI
An ancient country with its history rooted in the deepness of time. It's the land of prophets. Its people are generous and kind, their bodies sprouting from the fertile soil and watered by the Nile. They work hard and ask the Lord to provide the necessities of life.

She looks deeply into his eyes admiring their beauty. She feels so vulnerable that she has to excuse herself.

DIANA
(smiling)

I'm afraid I'm late. I must go now.

She goes on ahead. When she glances back, she catches him eagerly watching her.

INT. ALI'S APARTMENT – DAY

Saber serves Ali lunch. Saber notices the happiness on Ali's face and the extreme joy that stimulates Ali's appetite. Afterward, Ali sits on a bamboo seat on his balcony, recalling his morning with Diana. Saber, seeing Ali lost in thought, approaches quietly and sits beside him.

SABER
Ali?

Ali doesn't answer. Saber calls several times, until Ali finally says:

ALI
Yes, my friend?

SABER
Be frank with me. Is there something in the university that deserves all this introspection?

ALI
Yes. I met a girl. I think I'm deeply in love with her.

SABER
Does she love you the same?

ALI
I don't know. Sometimes, she seems to.

SABER
Listen carefully, my son. As far as I understand, the girls here behave naturally, without reservation, and their tenderness might be misunderstood by those of us raised in the East. You may think she loves you and carry on with such thoughts, which are, in fact, just an

illusion that will collapse. You are still young and very romantic. I fear you may suffer from this experience.

EXT. OUTDOORS – GARDENS – PARKS – LAKE

The first semester is almost over, and the approaching examinations force Ali and Diana to devote more time to their studies. Ali and Diana meet occasionally in quiet places to review their courses.

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH SHORT DIALOGUES

- 1- Ali and Diana sit in parks and gardens studying together.
- 2- Ali treats Diana elegantly and with extreme politeness. When they take walks, he insists of carrying their books. Gifts of sandwiches, hamburgers, peanuts, almonds and pistachios demonstrate his extreme generosity.
- 3- They go for a boat ride with Ali rowing in sad silence. His strong love waits to express itself to her. When Diana notices his long sad silence she asks:

DIANA

Where were you just now?

ALI

I've always been here with you.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – DAY

The students gather around the exams pass list. Ali and Diana pass the exams successfully. Their reason flees with joy. Diana offers to celebrate the happy occasion.

DIANA

How about celebrating the happy occasion?

ALI

Do you have any plans?

DIANA

I know a place you would like. I'll pick you up at six o'clock in the morning.

ALI
Why so early?

DIANA
(laughing)
Seeing the sunrise is worth it.

EXT. ALI'S BUILDING – EARLY MORNING

Diana arrives on time in her fancy yellow Buick. Ali slid into the passenger seat.

EXT. GREEN VALLEY – LAKE – EARLY MORNING (CON'T)

Five miles from the university, Diana parks the car on a hill looking down into a wonderful valley. Picnic basket in hand, they walk into the valley.

THE CAMERA explores the beauty of the valley. Green grass covers the land, with trees lifting toward the sky. A lake shimmers in golden light, its banks speckle with bright flowers. The sun rises, shining joyfully on the lake, lighting up the valley through which they walk.

ALI
(fascinated)
My eyes can't resist the beautiful view.

ALI (CON'T)
There are certain things in this world that deeply impress me.

DIANA
I know you are a sentimentalist who loves beauty.

ALI

I haven't shown you any of my feelings.

DIANA

I watch the glimmering of your eyes whenever they settle on
something beautiful.

They sit near the lake, enjoying the silence until his words break the
holy calm.

ALI

I wonder how many times the sun rose on this place and how many
times the valley received a new morning.

ALI (CON'T)

(beat)

I feel man is part of nature. When he stretches his hand to others, he
becomes exactly like this lake, which waters the green. When he
believes in truth and establishes it among people, he's like the sun
when it rises on the valley and changes the darkness to light.

ALI (CON'T)

(beat)

If happiness creeps into his soul, he resembles the birds when they rise
singing from the grass. Stormy waves on the angry sea are his pain
and misery.

ALI (CON'T)

(beat)

There's however a difference between man and nature. Man is free to
choose between the path of good and evil, while nature was created
pure, thus unable to commit sin. Man loaded with sin, can come here
to purify himself in the lake's clear water.

DIANA

(patting his shoulder)

Stop flying to heaven and come down to earth, so we can share
sandwiches and orange juice.

Diana hands him a cup of orange juice.

DIANA

Tell me about your hopes, your future.

ALI

(beat)

I haven't thought of that before.

DIANA

Why'd you join the college of business administration then?

ALI

It was my father's wish.

DIANA

What does he do for a living?

ALI

He works in trade.

DIANA

What kind of trade?

ALI

Several kinds.

DIANA

Perhaps after graduation, he wants you to help him at work.

ALI

We haven't discussed that.

It is already noon. Ali walks to the lake. As a religious Muslim, he washes his face, arms and feet, then stands to perform his prayers. Diana watches amazed by Ali's sacred inclinations and prostrations in adoration of the Creator. While sitting between two such prostrations, a small bird lands peacefully on Ali's right shoulder. A tremor goes through Diana, and she thinks, seeing the bird's tranquility, that the universe is praying with him.

Ali finishes his prayers and stands to walk along the bank. Diana goes to him. She walks beside him, their shoulders touching; she takes his hand in hers.

DIANA

(smiling)

So that you don't fly away from me.

Amazed, he looks at her passionately, though he stops himself before he could say, "I love you."

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – DAY

Diana and her father, the Republican Senator of North Carolina sit in the terrace, and Mary the governess, serve them breakfast. The Senator is busy reading a newspaper while sipping at his tea. Diana eats her breakfast slowly thinking of what is happening to her with Ali. The Senator suddenly rises from his seat, kisses his daughter then rushes to the door.

SENATOR

I'm already late, see you at dinner sweaty.

Governess Mary sits at the table opposite to Diana and looks straight in her eyes.

MARY

What's up Diana? You're not yourself lately.

DIANA

What do you mean?

MARY

You don't eat at home as before, you lock yourself in your room for hours. You seem a bit distracted I suppose.

DIANA

I've been eating outdoors with a colleague. I rely on him for revising the courses.

MARY

Is that all? Tell me what your heart conceals.

DIANA

(beat)

He is an Egyptian colleague. I haven't been myself since I first laid eyes on him. He's different from anyone I ever met.

MARY

Different in what way.

DIANA

He is a sentimentalist and something of a mystic. He takes each day as it comes, totally unconcerned with tomorrow.

MARY

Those traits of his character unfit him for the coarse texture of life.

DIANA

His thoughtful consideration of everything romantic opens my heart to him. My heart admires him, but I fear the consequences.

DIANA (CON'T)

(beat)

I see him a man from the unknown, sunk in idealism and romanticism – traits that would get him in trouble if he enters my life. I try to keep from loving him, but his love quietly creeps into my heart.

MARY

It would be better to give your heart a chance to recover in peace. Don't let your feelings go. Don't study with him alone and treat him like the rest of your colleagues.

MARY (CON'T)

(beat)

The Senator is preparing you to run his company after him. Because of his obligations in Congress he depends totally on James, his partner's son, in running the company. He fears James would dominate the company and become its only boss. Your father would never approve of you being involved with a stranger, someone who might destroy his future plans for you.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

The second semester begins, with students attending lectures again. While Ali is filled with eager longing for Diana, she deliberately avoids him. In the classroom she sits whispering a quick hello, then turns her full attention to the lecturer, scarcely acknowledging Ali. He stops her between two lectures.

ALI

Diana, what happened? Did I offend you in any way?

DIANA

No. You are just imagining things.

ALI

Then why you treat me in that cool, detached way, with hardly a glance?

DIANA

I'm just busy studying with John, and Peter.

She then hurries to John and chats laughingly with him.

INT. ALI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sunk in love, Ali wanders the campus gardens aimlessly, barely conscious of his surroundings. He misses lectures for weeks and stays at his apartment, drowning in the feeling that he doesn't deserve such abandonment and cruelty.

Saber notices Ali's somber mood and long stays at his apartment.

SABER

Has your girlfriend deserted you for others?

SABER (CON'T)

She's there, free like a bird, and doesn't feel the fire kindled in your heart, while you're imprisoned here with your sorrow. If that what happened, go back to her and pluck her from her admirers. Put off disappointment and go on to the classroom to fulfill the task for which you came.

ALI

How?

SABER

You're a fine athlete. Stand and fight. Put on the Karate suit with its black belt and strike failure and pain with your strong fists. She'll return to you because the love you carry for her has already touched the depths of her heart.

Ali

You always read my mind and know how to set me on the right path.

SABER

No wonder. I took care of you since you were a child.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali walks briskly to the university with his sports bag on his back. In his soft white shirt, flannel suit, rubber shoes, wavy hair shaking on his forehead, he looks handsome and healthy.
- 2- In the classroom, Ali concentrates fully on the lecture, deliberately not looking at Diana who is sitting beside John.
- 3- After the lecture, Ali goes to the gymnasium, searching for the karate arena. The karate team sits on the floor, listening to the trainer's instructions.
- 4- With light quick steps, Ali reaches them and asks the trainer to join the team.
- 5- The trainer inspects his long body and shakes his head "OK", pointing to the dressing room.
- 6- In the dressing room Ali skillfully ties his uniform and puts on his black belt. Looking at himself in the mirror, he feels confident enough to step forward and punch the air with a yell.
- 7- He returns to the arena and sits in silence with the rest of the team.
- 8- The coach asks him to stand and demonstrates stances, punches, kicks, self defense and sparring.
- 9- The coach overwhelmed by the boy's skill, realizes that his hope of North Carolina University winning the gold cup in karate championship for all American universities is within his grasp.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

Looking at his watch, Ali sees the next lecture is due to start, so he hurries to the classroom and looks for an empty seat. There is one beside Susan, a pretty cheerful girl. Ali smiles as he sits down, and she nods with an even bigger smile.

THE CAMERA FOCUSES ON: Diana sitting beside John; Susan sitting beside Ali and wearing a very short skirt revealing her legs and

thighs; Peter sitting at the end of the classroom watching Susan with the eyes of a wolf waiting for its prey.

THE CAMERA then moves to the lecturer and the blackboard behind him showing the title of the lecture: "THE DIFFERENT ECONOMIC SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT"

PROFESSOR

The topic of today's lecture is the difference between the old and new economic schools and their contribution to the current world economy...

After the lecture the professor calls the names of the students and gives them cards having topics for seminars.

PROFESSOR

When I call your names come up here and take your topics. The seminars are to be given after three weeks.

Upon calling their names, Ali and the rest of the students go to the Professor and take their topics. Ali is ready to leave the classroom when Susan stops him.

SUSAN

Diana told me about your remarkable ability to explain courses and draw conclusions from suppositions. I wonder if you could help me prepare for my seminar.

ALI
(shyly)
OK.

Susan laughs as she leaves. Ali glances at Diana, who sits beside John, and sees her watching reproachfully.

EXT. CAMPUS – GARDENS - DAY

Ali sits on a campus bench in one of the gardens, reading references related to his seminar. Diana passes through and is glad to find herself alone with him. At least they could talk again, and that would be an improvement. Ali's heart pounds when he sees her coming, and he hurries to meet her halfway. Diana could barely hide her disappointment when Susan intercepted him, calling him aside.

SUSAN

Ali, do you have time for me? I want to discuss some points with you.

Diana has no choice but to change direction toward the lecture room and abandon the meeting.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali and Susan meet frequently outdoor to discuss lessons.
- 2- Girls gather around Ali in the classroom seeking scientific advice.
- 3- Diana watches all this with a twinge of jealousy.

EXT. CAMPUS PARK – DAY

Peter, however, strengthens his relationship with Susan by finding new ways to approach her. One day while walking in the campus he intercepts her.

PETER

(theatrical gesture)

Dear, you're stunning, your beauty flows right to my heart.

SUSAN

(giggled at his words)

You're taking so much risk in playing with a match stick.

PETER

Can I borrow your lecture notes from yesterday?

SUSAN

(smiling)

OK.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Peter and Susan sit at a bench in the campus park reading some notes. She is busy explaining to him certain points but his gaze roams over her sexy body.

- 2- Peter and Susan walk hand in hand in a public park. She laughs aloud at his jokes.
- 3- Susan and Peter watch a movie picture while eating pop-corn.
- 4- Peter and Susan sit at a table in a bar sharing glasses of wine.
- 5- Peter and Susan dance on pop music. Both look half intoxicated.

EXT. CAMPUS ROADS LEADING TO SUSAN'S DORMITORY – NIGHT

After drinking and dancing, Peter walks Susan home. Both are shouting and yelling with excitement. Peter surprises her by kissing her goodnight hard on the lips.

INT. LECTURE ROOM – PROFESSOR – STUDENTS

Ali has to present his seminar. The lecture room is filled with students, and the professor sits in the audience, leaving the podium to Ali.

ALI

I'll start by giving a general overview of the major economic ideas and doctrines from ancient days to the present...

After a while the professor comments:

PROFESSOR

What book did you refer to in presenting economic ideas from ancient days to the present?

ALI

George Soul's ideas of the great economists.

PROFESSOR

It's a good reference for your topic, Continue.

ALI

By going through the doctrines of the great economists one can deduce certain important points...

Ali finishes the seminar. The professor comments:

PROFESSOR

Ali did well in his seminar. He started by working through old economic ideas to the present and concluded that they must be correlated with ethics and justice to mankind, and that money is not target in itself if it doesn't serve production and achieve economic balance in society. Islamic economic principles were also presented, thereby adding to our knowledge of a new economic doctrine. Based on the Islamic economic doctrine Ali emphasized the fact that the real owner of property is God, and people are only inheritors. It isn't lawful, for example, to gamble, to produce alcohol, to do business with usury, to forestall the market, to stop money from producing, to use it on what isn't needed, to harm the right of others, or to increase prices.

PROFESSOR

(beat)

Although Islamic economics dates back to the emergence of Islam fourteen centuries ago, its introduction into the teaching curricula isn't known to us. The interpretation of the Islamic doctrine is certainly an addition that deserves our appreciation.

The professor begins applauding and is quickly joined by the others.

Ali collects his papers and leaves the podium to walk toward the door. Susan stops him to congratulate him, and several other students gather around him, asking questions until they finally disperse.

EXT. CAMPUS – GARDENS – DAY

Ali seeking privacy goes to the nearest garden to sit on the grass. He closes his eyes and thanks God for enabling him to express his views properly. He awakes to a soft, tender voice he knows well – Diana's voice. She stands there contemplating him with her lovely smile.

DIANA

I came to congratulate you. You were great, and the seminar went smoothly.

ALI

(standing and looking at her with blazing eyes)

A single glance would've revived me. I don't want to burden you with anything that might be a bother. It's enough just to feel you near me.

DIANA

Don't make so much out of it. There are so many things I want to talk to you about, but I fear you'll misunderstand them.

ALI

When and where will that be?

DIANA

In the place you like most.

ALI

The beautiful valley?

DIANA

Yes, but don't rush things.

ALI

I'll let you decide the date, but please make it soon.

They parted in the hope they'd be reunited.

INT. BAR DOWNTOWN – NIGHT

Susan goes with Peter to dance in a downtown bar offering pop music. After feverish dancing, Peter orders a bottle of cognac and drinks until he is tipsy. Susan shares several glasses with him and becomes befuddled.

SUSAN

(nearly drunk)

Peter, please drive me home.

EXT. PETER'S CAR – CITY AT NIGHT – DESERTED LANE

Instead of taking Susan home, Peter drives down a deserted lane and stops. The desire to make love with Susan assails him furiously. He takes her forcefully in his arms.

PETER

Gazing for a few seconds at your beautiful body lights a fire in my thirsty heart.

SUSAN
(frightened)

Get back to your senses and drive me home now.

Susan manages to push him back, and leaves the car, but he catches up with her, throws her down, and sits on her. She kicks and fights with all her strength, but she is no match for him. She keeps screaming, even when he covers her mouth with his hand. He socks her head several times until she is unconscious. After raping her, Peter leaves her alone in the dark.

Susan awakes feeling severe pain. She has to walk a long way in the dark to reach home, and once she is in her room, she refuses to leave it for days.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

Soon it is time for Susan's seminar, but she doesn't care. The professor calls her name but she is absent. The professor has to pass over her time slot and asks Diana to go ahead.

Diana gives her presentation, then answers questions from the professor and students. Ali raises his hand in a victory sign, and she smiles feeling secure.

Diana collects her notes and leaves the lecture room. Ali, John and Peter join her in the park.

ALI
Bravo. Nice presentation.

DIANA
(laughing)
I felt like prey that fell into a hunter's net.

JOHN
My baby was great today.

PETER
You were very convincing.

Diana smiles thankfully.

ALI

Peter, do you know why Susan's been absent so long?

PETER

(shaking his head)

I haven't seen her for days.

ALI

Diana, would you be willing to go to her room and see what's wrong?

DIANA

I'll drop by on my way home.

INT. DORMITORY – SUSAN'S ROOM - DAY

Diana knocks on Susan's door. Susan opens the door with a face swollen and bruised.

DIANA

Susan, what happened?

Susan hugs her and bursts into tears. Diana gently pats her back until she calms down. They both enter into the room and sit opposite to each other. After a moment of silence, Susan confessed her secret.

SUSAN

Peter raped me. I thought he was a good friend but he turned out to be a beast.

Diana was shocked and unable to speak for a while.

DIANA

What will you do now? Will you stay imprisoned in your room with exams coming?

SUSAN

I've decided to go back home.

DIANA

No. You're going to continue classes as if nothing happened. No one else knows what happened between you and Peter. A horrible event like this shouldn't depress you and keep you from your studies. I'll tell everyone that you're sick and need a few more days to recover. When your wounds heal, return to class and catch up.

EXT. CAMPUS – DORMITORY – DAY

After few days from Diana's visit to Susan Ali meets Diana at the campus.

ALI
Is Susan okay?

DIANA
She is ill, but would return to class soon.

ALI
I'm worried about her. I suggest that we stop by her room.

DIANA
If you wish.

INT. DORMITORY –DAY

Susan opens the door to see Ali and Diana staring at her. They enter the room and sit on the sofa, while Susan takes a chair facing them, looking embarrassed whenever she glances at Ali.

SUSAN
I've decided to quit the university and find a job.

ALI
What's the matter with you? Where's the enthusiasm that glowed from you to others?

SUSAN
(looking at Diana ironically)

Why don't you tell Ali the sad truth?

ALI
What sad truth?

SUSAN
I'll tell you the whole story and save her the embarrassment. Peter
raped me, hit me, left me alone in the dark and ran away.

Ali stares at the ceiling, trying to hide his disgust for Peter and hoping
for a chance to break him in two.

ALI
(firmly and calmly)
You didn't do anything wrong, because you were the one who was
raped. I'll stand by you and help you concentrate on the lessons you
missed. What happened isn't
the end of the world and tomorrow brings new hope for the future.
Tomorrow I'll come here to escort you to class. We'll leave you now
so you can get organized.

EXT. STREETS – PEDESTRIANS - DAY

Ali sets off at such a rapid pace that Diana has to run to keep up with
him. He keeps that up until she tires and takes his hand to stop him.

ALI
(anger shows in his eyes)
She suffered a lot these past weeks, and no one stood beside her. She
was like a beautiful flower, admired by all, then came this vagabond
to deflower her in order to satisfy his mean desire.

DIANA
I didn't realize before that you get nervous when something offends
you.

ALI
If Peter comes near her, I'll break his bones.

DIANA
Your hand's cold and shaking. Please calm down. Let's spend a good
time together. I'm glad to be alone with you.

ALI

(takes her hands in his)

I'm starving to death. Let's walk downtown and get launch.

DIANA

Yes. At least I'll have you to myself for a while.

INT. RESTAURANT – DAY

In the restaurant, they take a quiet corner table. They chat during launch.

DIANA

I'm amazed to see how quickly you convinced Susan to return to college. You have great influence over her.

ALI

She felt the sincerity of my words.

DIANA

How long will you help her?

ALI

Until she catches up with the lessons she missed.

ALI (CON'T)

(suddenly realizing her meaning)

Does that bother you?

DIANA

No, but don't go too far with her.

Feeling her jealousy, he takes her hand and presses it gently.

ALI

When our date at the lake be?

DIANA

(obstinately)

When I decide.

ALI

Why did you walk out on me recently?

DIANA

There are a million things I want to say to you, but not now.

ALI

Then don't walk out on me until we meet again.

DIANA

That depends on your behavior with Susan.

He eats lunch in silence. She notices his silence.

DIANA

What are you thinking of.

ALI

I sail in the gray depths of your eyes.

Diana

(laughing)

Always the romantic.

ALI

Your eyes are like a calm, gray sea that flows tenderly into my heart and fills it with love. You don't know what your beauty has done to me.

DIANA

(hearing her heart beats)

What did you say?

ALI

I'll tell you there among the flowers and sweet-smelling herbs. When our date be?

DIANA

(looking at her watch to hide her shyness and avoid fixing a date)

I'm already late. Will you walk me home? It's less than a mile.

EXT. STREETS – PEDESTRIANS – SENATOR'S MANSION -
DAY

They walk down the street until they reach a large, handsome mansion.

DIANA
I live here.

ALI
You come from people exalted in dignity, then.

DIANA
My father is the Republican Senator, Edward Stevenson.

ALI
That house can accommodate many people. Do you have brothers?

DIANA
No. I'm the only child. My mother died when I was two years-old. I live with Mary, my governess, and an old driver and gardener.

ALI
In such a huge mansion, I doubt you see each other very often.

DIANA
(laughing)
That's exactly what happens most of the time.

DIANA
(waving her hand)
See you at the university.

INT. DORMITORY – EARLY MORNING

Early the following morning, Ali knocks on Susan's door.

ALI
The beautiful day is waiting to receive you.

SUSAN
Won't you come in?

ALI
I'll wait for you here. Take your time.

SUSAN
I'll be ready in a minute.

She is about to shut the door, but he adds saying:

ALI
How beautiful you would be if you wear a long dress.

SUSAN
America is a free country.

ALI
It's a special request.

SUSAN
(looking into his eyes for several seconds)
For your sake, I'll do whatever you want.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

Susan feels secure while walking with Ali to the classroom. In the classroom she sits with him, feeling restless. Her pale, sweating face made him lean over to murmur:

ALI
You'll become accustomed to this after only a few minutes.

After a few more minutes, Diana arrives, and kisses Susan.

DIANA
You look beautiful this morning.

Then John enters followed by other students. All shaking Susan's hand and ask about her health. Peter, the last to arrive, sees the crowd around Susan and turns away, but John sees him.

JOHN

Peter, you know who's here? It's Susan. Come say hello.

Peter is forced to confront her.

PETER

(trying to control his anxiety)

Hi. It's good to see you again. We've been worried about you. I hope you're fully recovered.

Susan doesn't look at him but talks with other students, smiling to hide the hatred she feels for him. From the anger in Ali's eyes, Peter realizes he knows the truth.

EXT. CAMPUS – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali is studying with Susan regularly in the parks surrounding the campus providing her with summaries of the lectures she missed.
- 2- Diana watches them jealously from afar.
- 3- Diana attends those study meetings to ensure that Susan doesn't try to go too far with Ali.

INT. CLASSROOM – GYMNASIUM- DAY

Diana and Susan emerge from the classroom after the end of a lecture. They walk in the corridor talking.

DIANA

I wonder what is keeping Ali from attending several of our study meetings lately.

SUSAN

I heard him saying he's busy exercising in the gym.

DIANA

Ali in the gym? Let's go there and see.

INT. GYMNASIUM – DAY

In the gym Diana sees John boxing with another player.

DIANA

I hate boxing, people get hurt.

SUSAN

Ali's here too, punching one of the players.

They go to the karate arena and sit with the other observers to watch. Diana stares in surprise. Ali's strong punches strike his opponent like whiplashes. He is obviously a karate champion out for victory. He never told her he is involved in such a severe sport. Is that the dreamer she fears might crash against the ground of reality?

After the end of training, the players stand in a row to salute the trainer with a bow. Susan looks at Ali in admiration.

SUSAN

How beautiful he is in that white uniform. He reminds me of...

DIANA

(cutting her short)

Susan, forget about Ali. We're in love with each other.

SUSAN

(astonished)

I thought you loved John.

DIANA

(firmly)

No, we're just friends.

Ali seeing them waves. Diana goes to him.

DIANA

We're fascinated by your strong performance.

ALI

I'm sorry for the violence you saw that might hurt your feelings.

Diana holds his hand, and leads him to the dressing room. Susan follows, her mind echoing with Diana's words about her love of Ali.

DIANA

Each day I discover something new in you. Sometimes I feel I don't understand you at all. Please explain this.

ALI

I want to tell you many things, but examinations are approaching, as is the university karate championship. I must be ready.

INT. GYMNASIUM – STUDENT CROWD – KARATE ARENA – BOXING RING

The time of the karate and boxing championship arrives, and the preliminary rounds begin. Competition is merciless.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Quick alternate shots revealing Ali in the karate arena and John in the boxing ring winning one battle after another.
- 2- Diana, Susan and the crowd encourage Ali and John enthusiastically.
- 3- Ali and John reach the final.
- 4- Ali faces in the final a huge African- American-player from Louisiana University.
- 5- The fight begins with a quick attack from the black boy, who strikes Ali's head with a strong punch, followed by a kick to the stomach. Pained, Ali falls to his knees.
- 6- Ali looks at Diana, who stares back in concern.
- 7- The referee comes to help Ali stand.
- 8- The trainer shouts at Ali" "Fight back. One of you must be the champion.
- 9- The second round begins with a yell from Ali, who attacks with a strong punch to the head, followed by a straight-out kick to the stomach. When the black boy doubles over, exposing his head, Ali gives him an elbow strike to the back of the head that sends him to his knees.
- 10- The final round would decide the winner. The fight begins with an exchange of punches, kicks, and blocks. Ali makes his blows reach the opponent's body effectively. His opponent soon becomes exhausted. Ali takes advantage of the situation with a right front kick to the chest and another to the knee. He steps

forward to deliver a head punch, and that final blow wins the championship for him.

11- His opponent falls over, unable to catch his breath.

12- In boxing, John wins in the third round with a knockout punch.

13- Students cheer and applaud as the dean of North Carolina University present the karate prize and boxing prize to Ali and John.

INT. DRESSING ROOM – DAY

In the dressing room, Ali prays, thanking god for helping him win the karate championship. His suffering body hurts enough that he lies on his back for a few minutes to relax.

JOHN

Ali, how you doing?

Ali stands and slaps John's shoulder.

JOHN CON'T)

You're a great player. You impress everyone who watches you.

ALI

You're are a great player, too. I watched you in training.

JOHN

I didn't know you were that good in karate, maybe because you prefer to live alone.

ALI

I didn't like how you treated me when we first met.

JOHN

Can't you take a joke?

ALI

Yes, but with good intentions.

JOHN

How about being friends?

ALI
Sure. It's OK with me.

They shake hands.

JOHN
(walking away)
See you outside after you're dressed.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – STUDENT CROWD – DAY

Outside the dressing room, a crowd gathers around John and Ali to congratulate them. They carry the two champions on their shoulders while singing the college anthem. After the students' enthusiasm weakens, John and Ali descend seeking a calm place to rest.

Diana isn't with the crowd, so Ali looks for her. Finally, he sees her sitting alone in a quiet corner.

Feeling his gaze, she looks up at him. He returns her gaze with tenderness and love, and she holds out her hand. He takes it in his palms and sits beside her.
He is about to speak when he sees tears rolling down her cheeks.

ALI
What makes you cry?

DIANA
(wiping her eyes)

I saw you fighting today; patiently bearing your pain and wounds, then you won and had tears in your eyes. At that moment, my love for you became ardent longing. When that crowd carried you off, I came here, waiting to admit that my love has become too intense for me to keep it to myself.

He lifts her hands to his lips and kisses them. When he returns them, they are wet with his tears.

DIANA

(tenderly striking his hair)

What makes you weep?

ALI

You.

John, watching from afar, is astonished. Diana has never shown any sign of love for him, but she is still his girlfriend, and everyone knows it. What would he say to his friends if they know that the university boxing champion couldn't protect his girl? How dare Ali insult him by stealing her like that? Just a few moments earlier, he suggested they become friends, and that is how Ali treats him?

He would teach Ali a lesson he would always remember. The thrill of victory fading in his chest, John walks away.

INT. UNIVERSITY CELEBRATION HALL – STUDENTS
ELEGANTLY DRESSED – NIGHT

The university gives a big party to celebrate the dual championship. The hall fills with students anxious to see the two champions, who are already the talk of the college. Diana wears a long green dress to set off her golden hair. When she enters the hall, all eyes go to her, as if a bird of paradise has flown in. She looks for Ali and finally sees him in a dim corner, watching her in fascination.

She walks to him, and he meets her on the dance floor. Diana lays her head on his shoulder as he touches his lips to her hair.

ALI

Darling you shouldn't be so remarkably beautiful. Diana I love you.

DIANA

Never stop telling me that. My name sound beautiful when you say it, as if I'm hearing it for the first time. When you admit your love, I feel
I was made only for you.

DIANA (CON'T)

How handsome you are. The girls' eyes haven't left you since you entered the hall.

ALI

In this hall I see nothing but you.

DIANA

I want to take you to our valley and hide you from the other girls.

ALI

We are made for each other. You are my fate.

DIANA

Promise me the days will never separate us.

ALI

I promise you, my love.

Her breath hot on his face, he holds her as they dance to slow music.
Other dancers watch them in admiration, but they don't notice.

The band finishes its slow number and breaks into a fast song.
Without warning, Susan joins the throng of dancers, gyrating and hip-swinging until she made a spectacle of herself.

Ali and Diana move to the sidelines and watch in astonishment. Susan wares a very short skirt that shows a considerable amount of leg. Other students gather to watch, clapping and shouting. Susan stretches out her hands to the watchers, inviting them to join her, moving from one to the other until she finds herself in Peter's arms. Half-drunk, he holds her tightly.

PETER

Would you mind dancing with me, baby?

SUSAN

(her anger rising)
Leave me alone.

PETER

Oh, no. It's been too long since I saw you. Let me wrap my arms around you.

SUSAN

I'll scream if you don't leave me alone.

PETER

(laughing)

That would work against you. I'll tell everyone what happened between us. You know something? That night you were superb and delicious.

Losing control, Susan slaps him. He returns the slap with a harder one that knocks her down. Ali, angered, leaps against Peter's chest, punching and kicking until he falls down. With one hand, Ali pulls Peter to his feet and slaps his face repeatedly.

Bleeding and unable to catch his breath, Peter runs from the party, trying to avoid people's eyes.

John watches the incident silently. Although he disapproves of Peter's villainy with Susan, he couldn't help shouting:

JOHN

Peter's my friend. Whoever hurts him offends me, too. Susan is Peter's girl. What's between them is their own business, not yours.

JOHN (CON'T)

I offered you my friendship yesterday. I withdraw it. Tomorrow morning at nine, I'll be waiting at the baseball field to teach you a lesson.

EXT. CAMPUS – DORMITORY – NIGHT

Ali and Diana escort Susan to her room.

SUSAN

I haven't done anything wrong. You saw that.

ALI

Oh, no. You have done wrong. You were nearly naked, and your aggressive dancing was a plain invitation to the watchers to take advantage of you. Peter simply availed himself of that opportunity.

SUSAN

(bursting into tears)

Is it so wrong to want boys to like me? I know they're all liars, but their words make me feel good. I was tormented by my stepmother.

You don't know what my life with her was like. It was hell. She made me slave away my whole life to raise her four kids.

ALI

All that happened because you were fishing for compliments. Stop seeing people for a while and stay in your room until you feel safe again. I've helped you through all the courses. You can study the finals without returning to class.

SUSAN

Whatever you say, but don't deprive me of your friendship. You're the only one who helps me without asking for anything.

Susan watches Ali and Diana leave, then closes the door.

Ali and Diana walk toward Diana's house lost in thought. Diana stops and looks into Ali's eyes.

DIANA

I'm worried about you.

ALI

You mean John? I've no fear of tomorrow's fight, because I didn't do anything wrong.

DIANA

I'm worried about you because of John and the others.

ALI

What's that supposed to mean?

Diana

(trying to sound cheerful)

The age of knights has passed my beautiful cavalier.

ALI

As long as there's purity to disperse the clouds and reason to combat futility, there must be a knight. Always remember that my love surrounds you with peace and security. Even when I'm away, I leave my heart and soul behind to protect you from life's iniquities.

DIANA

Sometimes, you talk as if you're leaving me.

ALI

My love for you has no boundaries. It's not limited by time or space.
It's a luminous light that comes from my heart and touches yours
wherever you are.

With their faces less than a breath away, she kisses his lips lovingly,
and he kisses her passionately. She lays her head over his chest for a
second, enjoying the thrill of the moment, before entering her house.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD – CROWD OF STUDENTS – MORNING

The following day, Ali and John meet at the baseball field. A crowd of
students gather to watch the fight. Diana and Susan were there, too.

The two opponents circle each other cautiously.

JOHN

This fight isn't for Peter. I met him after the party, and he told me what
happened between him and Susan. I detest his shameful act and blame
him for it. This fight's because you stole Diana from me.

ALI

Until this moment I wasn't angry with you, but now you can be certain
I'll break your bones. Diana never belonged to you, and you know that
perfectly well. Stop talking and start fighting.

They stand ready, preparing to deliver the first blows, when they hear
the karate and boxing trainer arrive.

The karate trainer grabs Ali's arms.

KARATE TRAINER

Is this what you've learned from karate, to fight your brother or to
defend yourself and help the weak?

The boxing trainer puts his hand on John's shoulder.

BOXING TRAINER

The noble boxer never uses his fists outside the ring. You two champions must remain examples for others to follow. Go shake hands with Ali.

The two boys look at each other for a moment, then Ali holds out his hand, and John copies him. The crowd applauds, and Diana walks up with a smile.

ALI

Did you know this fight was about you, not Peter?

DIANA

I knew it from the start.

ALI

Please explain.

DIANA

I'll explain at the end of the term, at the place that witnessed the birth of our love, the green valley with its blue lake. It's enough right now for me to see you safe and unharmed.

EXT. THE VALLEY – MORNING

The date of the meeting finally comes. Diana reaches the valley half an hour before Ali. She parks her car at the top of the hill. She takes a deep breath to fill her bosom with the fresh morning air. Her heart pounds strongly with love, so she runs into the valley hugging herself, as if holding the whole universe. She looks like a white butterfly flying over waves of grass with the sun waving golden threads around her.

Diana, looking up the hill, sees Ali watching. She holds out her arms to him, and he runs to her through a vista of trees. He picks her up and whirls her around before she could catch her breath. She looks down at him, her tears raining on his eyes, her long hair kissing his face.

He sets her down and holds her tightly. The green valley witnesses their love, and in his arms she tests paradise. When the heat of their

love ebbs, they sit on the grass overlooking the lake. She has a lot to tell him.

DIANA

When we first came here, I felt our spirits would never be divided, but the force of my love frightened me, because your ideas were very different, shaped by a different background. How could we agree on a plan for our lives? That's why I decided to stop loving you.

ALI

Is that why you walked away from me?

DIANA

Yes.

ALI

What does John have to do with this?

DIANA

I tried to convince myself there was nothing between us by having him as a friend.

DIANA (CON'T)

When I wanted to return to you, I found Susan had your attention, so I became angry and jealous.

ALI

What are the consequences you fear from loving me?

DIANA

I was afraid your dreamy romanticism might take you away from reality. Over time, I realized I was wrong.

ALI

What made you change your mind?

DIANA

I admired the way you gave to others, how you protected and supported Susan, and your insistence on getting me away from John. When you won the karate championship, I realized nothing can stop you from reaching your goals.

ALI

I don't separate dreams and reality. My love for you is my sweet reality. It's also a beautiful dream that's agreeable to the bottom of my heart.

ALI (CON'T)

(beat)

It's the right of people to dream of a life based on love, goodness and beauty. I want to live by those principles. It would profit a man little if he gained the world only to lose his soul.

They remove their shoes, stand hand-in-hand, and walk along the lake. Noticing her drifting into deep thoughts, he asks:

ALI

What's in your mind now?

DIANA

I was thinking of your ideas about money. Didn't you say in the seminar that money is the source of all evil and is only a medium for exchange? By itself, it doesn't produce anything?

ALI

Those who developed the economic systems didn't take into consideration humanity and compassion. That resulted in two economic systems struggling to control the world. Economic systems in order to be fair and just must include the divine laws governing economic business and behavior.

DIANA

Why do you always relate religion to science? You deviate from logic.

ALI

Religion is a must, because law made by mankind will never be as ideal as those made by God, who knows better what's good for his servants.

DIANA

I appreciate your being religious, but we must separate relationships with God from the material world.

ALI

No. They're one and the same, because the path of God is the same to correct and construct the world. It is man who changes and guides development, and only he who can change and modify the modes and relations of production. It's a truism that individuals and nations can exist only with good morals and human relationships, not with wealth.

ALI (CON'T)

Material welfare must be twinned with faith. Material progress, without faith or control, is likely to make people miserable and crush society's solidarity. It's necessary for progress to be complete to rely on both economic and religious facets. Concern with one facet at the expense of the other will lead to disequilibrium and disorder in the lives of individuals and society.

DIANA

You're talking about ideal perfection, an impractical plan for improving society.

ALI

It's only with the approach I just mentioned that we can end all forms of blind fanaticism and distortion and develop a better world.

DIANA

If you inherit a fortune, will you deal with it according to your ideas?

ALI

I'll abide by my principles, and I'll be one of those who construct the world. Who knows? You may see it yourself.

They leave the lake and sit under a tree, leaning against its huge trunk. She looks at him from the corner of her eye and imagines he comes from a legendary world. The sun sinks to the distant horizon, and the lake glitters with golden light. They climb the hill and stand at the top watching their paradise.

ALI

The valley is my heart, and in it, you can find my love in the fragrant odors of the beautiful flowers.

DIANA

Is that imagination again?

He contemplates the valley without answering.

Diana sits behind the wheel, waiting for him to get in.

ALI

I prefer to walk and relive every moment we spent together.

She departs in a car crowded with her thoughts and his. Love would satisfy both despite their differences.

EXT. CAMPUS – DAY

A crowd of students gather around exam pass list. A great cheer goes up from Ali, Diana, Susan and John because they pass all the courses successfully.

Peter stands afar sad-looking, because he passed in certain courses and failed in others.

Ali cell phone goes off. Signs of concern are drawn on his face after the conversation.

ALI

It's my father. He wants me to spend the summer vacation with the family in London.

DIANA

(saddened by his sudden leave)

O Ali. Can't you stay for a few more days?

ALI

I haven't seen my family for nearly a year. I'm afraid I must go.

SUSAN

I'll miss you terribly.

Diana looks at her reproachfully. Susan corrects herself quickly.

SUSAN

I mean we'll all miss you terribly.

EXT. RALEIGH AIRPORT - DAY

Diana gives Ali and Saber a ride to the airport. It is the first time that she sees Saber. She greets him with courteous words.

DIANA

I heard a lot about your honesty and loyalty from Ali. Thank you
because you take care of my beloved.

Saber smiles at her words appreciatively.

Diana bids Omar farewell by holding him tightly and kissing him long on the lips.

Saber glances at them worriedly.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN:

To be continued.

EPISODE 2.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – MORNING

Diana and her father, the Senator, are having breakfast in the terrace. The Senator begins a conversation with his daughter.

SENATOR

I was pleased by your high grades in the second semester.

DIANA

I got help from a colleague who simplifies the lessons and explain them clearly.

SENATOR

Someone I know?

DIANA

No. He's an Egyptian called Ali.

SENATOR

(surprised)

I haven't seen him with you.

DIANA

We studied outdoors. We both love nature.

SENATOR

Where is he now?

DIANA

In London, vacationing with his family.

SENATOR

What does his family do there?

DIANA

They live there.

SENATOR

Tell me about him.

DIANA

(dreaming)

It's as if he comes from an ideal world shaped by truth and virtue. He wants to spread love among people by helping them. Sometimes he flies to dreamy words of his own creation.

SENATOR

How far has your relationship with him gone?

DIANA

He's wonderful. He can give me the world. I love him dad.

SENATOR

(annoyed)

Does he feel the same?

DIANA

Yes.

The Senator frowns with worry. The only intention the stranger has is to dominate Diana's fortune. He would manage his daughter, so she wouldn't get hurt. He would stop the greedy stranger and never allow him to own a fortune he hasn't earned. How could Diana let herself fall in love with a stranger who is so totally different?

James, his partner's son is the solution. Diana must marry him to be safe, but plans must be put very carefully and without any pressure that might force Diana to accept a marriage she doesn't like.

EXT. MANSION'S GARDEN – NIGHT

On the occasion of Diana's success in her exams, the Senator gives a big dinner party in the spacious mansion's garden. Congressmen, businessmen, and their wives are invited. At the top of the list are his partner Clark Robertson and his son James.

THE CAMERA moves through the garden through a series of BRIEF SHOTS:

- 1- Delicious food is set out on tables around a swimming pool illuminated with underwater lights.
- 2- In a corner is a bar that offers all varieties of liquor, served by barmaids dressed in white.
- 3- Waiters pass trays of hors d'oeuvres and glasses of champagne.
- 4- On the terrace, an orchestra plays.
- 5- Light from the mansion and swimming pool mingle, reflecting on flowers and bushes, turning the grounds into a background of twinkling stars.

ANGLE ON:

Diana wears a simple black dress, her blonde hair falling softly against her shoulders. She stands with her father at the entrance to the garden to receive their guests.

The guests arrive in a long line until Clark and his son James shows up.

James, examining Diana with experienced eyes, realizes that the child of the past has become an exquisite young woman. He holds her hand, bends over it, and kisses it politely. Shyness overcomes her, and she blushes.

SENATOR

It's James Robertson. Remember him?

DIANA

Yes. He visited us with his father.

SENATOR

This intellectual young man and his daddy watch over your father's business when he's busy with politics. Your father's an old man now. It's about time for James to take you to the factory, so you can get an idea about how your share is managed.

JAMES

I'm at her service in anything she asks.

After dinner, an old congressman comes to the Senator's table.

CONGRESSMAN

Would you do me the honor of dancing with me?

They dance together, and within minutes, the marble circle is filled with couples. Although the old man has an elegant face, his fat, aged body didn't match Diana's beauty and loveliness.

With a glass of Scotch in his hand, James stands alone in the dark, watching Diana in admiration. He asks for another double, swallows it in one gulp, and walks up to tap Diana's shoulder.

JAMES

Have you a dance left for me?

CONGRESSMAN

(laughing)

We've finally found a perfect match for you.

The congressman retreats to his table.

James is a good dancer, he dances beautifully with Diana.

JAMES

I remember you as a child. I never thought you'd turn into such an exquisite beauty.

DIANA

(laughing shyly)

Thank you for the compliment.

JAMES

How about my taking you to the company tomorrow?

DIANA

Why not? It's what father wants.

JAMES

(confidently)

Elements of success are not in the lessons you learn at the university.

You learn to succeed from work itself. I haven't completed my academic education, but my experience in business management is unmatched.

DIANA

(sensing his inferiority complex)

It seems I'll learn a lot from you.

CLOSE IN:

The Senator is very pleased to see the couple so close together. His solution is working.

He approaches the couple and pats their backs.

SENATOR

You're made for each other. Together, you make a wonderful couple.

INT. SENATOR'S FACTORY – DAY

Diana sits beside James in his black Cadillac. Although the factory is ten miles from her home, he shows his driving skill by reaching it in a few minutes.

At the factory he gives her a quick tour of the production lines for dresses and makeup. He invites her to his office to brief her about the company's status.

THE CAMERA focuses on the contents of James' office:

- 1- The spacious, high-ceilinged room has equipment for communication with the various divisions and with markets both in the United States and abroad.
- 2- A leather sofa and two chairs facing his desk.
- 3-The floors are covered with expensive Oriental carpets
- 4-The walls are lined with wood bookshelves, one shelf of which is empty to provide space for a bar. Bottles of liquor are neatly arranged on glass shelves, and clean bright, crystal glasses sit in a cocktail cabinet under the shelves.

Diana sits on the sofa facing James desk. He offers her a cigarette from a gold box.

DIANA
I don't smoke.

James takes a cigar from a large wooden box on his elegant desk and lits it.

JAMES
How about a drink to start the morning? I have all kinds of liquor.

DIANA
No, thank you I don't drink.

He walks to the bar to fetch himself a brandy.

JAMES
What do you prefer then?

DIANA

Lime juice.

JAMES

(laughing)

I have plenty of that, too, because I usually mix it with gin.

James returns to his luxurious desk and asks his secretary to send in a glass of lime juice. He enjoys sipping his brandy and glancing at Diana, as he explains the company's financial status.

JAMES

Our parents' fortune is estimated at twenty-two million dollars. Capital assets in the form of the factory and machinery are around fourteen million, and the net profits range from six to seven percent of the value of the capital assets.

JAMES (CON'T)

Our production always faces severe competition in local markets, which compels us to open new markets in Japan, Europe, and the Middle East.

JAMES (CON'T)

That's what I've done recently. The new markets are consuming all our products and need more. That wonderful achievement revives my life dream – to expand even more.

DIANA

It seems the company's success runs from this office.

JAMES

Right you are. My father's old and sick, and the Senator is always busy with politics. The Senator is also suffering from frequent mild heart attacks, and has to rest by doctor's orders.

JAMES (CON'T)

(beat)

It's about time you share the management responsibilities with me.

DIANA

What's that supposed to mean?

JAMES

It's your company, too. You must take part in management.

DIANA

My education is more important right now.

JAMES

You can assume your responsibilities during vacations. You'll have the chance to compare the lessons you learn with what happens in the real world.

DIANA

I think no opportunity has seemed as good as this.

JAMES

I like your enthusiasm. How about starting tomorrow?

DIANA

OK.

JAMES

I've worn you out already. Come on. I'll give you a ride home.

DIANA

(laughing)

On one condition – don't drive too fast.

JAMES

(smiling)

Your wish is my command.

INT. SENATOR'S FACTORY – DAY

Diana and James friendship grow during the summer vacation. James is clever at occupying her time.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Diana in James' office taking instructions for her day's work.
- 2- Diana discussing technical matters with the head of production lines.
- 3- Diana in James' office giving him a feedback.

JAMES

How do you see the point of expanding our production lines?

DIANA

I'm not experienced enough to answer.

JAMES

Even modest opinions can help solve big problems.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – NIGHT

At night in the drawing room, resting in a comfortable chair, the Senator asks his daughter about her work in the factory.

SENATOR

How things are going in the factory?

DIANA

(eagerly)

I'm happy because of the immense experience I acquire from James.

SENATOR

Is he taking care of you?

DIANA

His excellent management is the reason the company is flourishing.

The Senator smiles. He couldn't have been more pleased by the growing friendship. The present situation is a good beginning for Diana to marry James.

INT. COMPANY - CLARK'S ROBERTSON OFFICE – DAY

CLARK

James, come over to my office, I have an important matter to discuss with you.

James enters into his father's office and sits in a leather chair. He seems bored and restless.

CLARK

I think it's time you consider getting married instead of spending your nights with your lowlife friends.

JAMES

(sharply)

I'm free to do whatever I like with my life. Please don't interfere in my private affairs.

CLARK

Maybe marriage is the only way to protect you from yourself. You drink too much. Your eyes are red and swollen.

JAMES

Don't you ever stop blaming me? Since my mother died, you dislike everything I do.

James stands to leave.

CLARK

The Senator talked to me weeks ago about the possibility that you marry his daughter. I personally welcome the idea. How about you?

Utterly surprised, James sits in the nearest chair, thinking.

CLARK

Marriage is certainly better than spending nights with cheap women at bars.

CLARK (CON'T)

If you marry Diana, everything she owns will be yours. She and her father own two third of the company and we own the rest. If you don't marry her, a stranger will share it with us.

JAMES

The idea of marriage hadn't crossed my mind before, but you're right.

A stranger would jeopardize all my plans. In the past, she was just a little girl. Since she turned into an uncommon beauty, I wouldn't mind marrying her.

CLARK

The Senator insists she finish college first. That mean you'll have to wait three years.

JAMES

What do you suggest?

CLARK

If you promise not to drink, I might persuade him to lessen the time period to one or two years.

JAMES

What does drinking have to do with marriage?

CLARK

Because a drunkard like you might get a bad reputation and ruin everything. Promise to give up drinking, or we'll forget the whole thing.

JAMES

(knowing that he is but throwing words in the air)
I give you my word.

James sits in his office, thinking. The new situation requires drawing Diana closer to him.

At the end of a working day, James surprises Diana by inviting her to dinner.

J

JAMES

How about having dinner tonight. I know a fancy restaurant famous for superb seafood.

DIANA

(embarrassed)

I don't know...really I...

JAMES

There are several important work issues that need to be discussed, and dinner will be a good chance to exchange views.

DIANA

OK.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Senator is expecting Diana at dinner, but he notices her conspicuous adornment.

SENATOR

Where to? Aren't you going to have dinner with me?

DIANA

James invited me to dinner downtown. I won't be late.

SENATOR

(smiling)

Have fun.

INT. RESTAURANT – NIGHT

James escorts Diana to a fancy restaurant. A waiter, recognizing James, leads them to a special table. A beautiful waitress in a very short dress welcomes them with a broad smile while setting down the menu. Diana realizes from the woman's friendly manner that James must be a regular customer.

JAMES

(pointing to the menu in Diana's hands)

Have you made your choice?

DIANA

All the dishes are alike. I'll leave it to you.

JAMES

(pointing at the waitress)

The usual.

WAITRESS

(without waiting)

Fried fish with cooked vegetables, shrimp with mayonnaise, snails, and caviar with fresh salad.

JAMES

Good girl.

The waitress walks few steps, then pauses to ask:

WAITRESS
Champagne as usual?

JAMES
Yes, of course.

The waitress returns within minutes wheeling a table carrying their dishes and a small bucket filled with ice and a bottle of champagne. James happily removes the cork, which popped out. He fills two glasses until the foam overflows.

DIANA
But I don't drink.

JAMES
You don't drink or smoke. Don't deprive yourself of life's pleasures. A little champagne refreshes the body after a hard day's work. Look at the bubbles. See how they twinkle in your glass? Go ahead and sip.

JAMES (CON'T)
(raising his glass to her)
Cheers.

DIANA
(forced to copy him)
It's like apple juice.

JAMES
(laughing)
After you finish your glass, you'll realize that what you think is apple juice is, in fact, an indispensable magic liquid made especially for intimate lovers.

He brings the glass to his mouth and drains it, then pours another.

DIANA
This one glass is enough.

JAMES
Right you are. I don't want the Senator blaming me for getting you drunk.

JAMES

(while eating dinner)

For the champagne to produce its effect, this special meal has to be eaten in a certain sequence. It's preferable to begin with light food like snails and caviar, then move to heavier food, like shrimp with mayonnaise, then end with fried fish and cooked vegetables.

DIANA

What's the idea behind that?

JAMES

Intoxication by liquor would be gradually equalized with this food sequence, and would keep us from becoming drunk.

DIANA

It seems you have a lot of experience with liquor and food.

JAMES

Yes. Liquor soothes me in my solitude.

DIANA

How could a man like you become lonesome?

JAMES

(smiling)

I'm not now.

Understanding his meaning she feels she has exceeded her limit. She doesn't understand it is the liquor that makes her feel relaxed and at ease.

JAMES

(finishing his third glass)

Ah, I was about to forget the matter I wanted to discuss with you.

DIANA

Yes?

JAMES

We have many things in common, and the day will come when we inherit our parents' fortunes and be the only proprietors of the

company. Because our decisions must be alike, we must see each other more often.

DIANA

I don't think we differ that much. I'm fond of your management style.

JAMES

Do you trust me that much?

DIANA

Yes. I told my father that your skill running the company was unmatched.

JAMES

(beat)

You're absurdly beautiful. Has anyone ever told you that?

She is about to tell him that Ali praises her beauty, but she stops. Suddenly thinking of Ali makes her fall into deep silence. Deep sadness enters her soul, magnified by the feeling that the purity she enjoys with Ali has been contaminated by liquor with James.

DIANA

(looking at her watch)

I promised my father I wouldn't be late. I hope you don't mind leaving now.

JAMES

(terribly annoyed)

But the evening hasn't even started yet.

DIANA

It seems I'm a bit dizzy. I want to rest.

JAMES

Can't we wait a bit?

DIANA

(insisting)

I want to leave now.

James has no choice but to obey. He nervously summons the waitress and gives her money, then walks toward the exit with Diana. The waitress stops him to return the change.

WAITRESS

Mr. James, the rest of your money - one hundred dollars.

JAMES

(nervously)

Keep the change.

EXT. LONDON – SELIM'S MANSION – DAY

Ali spends lovely days with his family in London. His mother cooks special meals for him and serves him herself. His father is content to look at him in admiration, while Nadia his sister, is filled with joy, because he is her example and only brother.

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH SHORT DIALOGUES

- 1- Ali surprises his mother by cuddling her from behind and kissing her while cooking Egyptian food for him.
- 2- Ali walks with his mother in the garden, both are laughing happily. He teases her:

ALI

Father has married a beautiful woman, you look absolutely breathtaking.

SAFIA

(laughing)

Sweet talker.

She nudges him playfully with her elbow then loops her arm through his and rests her head on his shoulder. He smiles and rests his head against hers, then both continue walking happily.

3- The family gathers happily around the table for lunch. Selim glances at his son in admiration. Safia puts food in Ali's dish. Nadia is laughing with joy. Ali asks Nadia teasing questions.

ALI

Do you still bite your nails and throw tantrums like a toddler?

Nadia laughs aloud and grabs a towel and throws him with it. The towel comes directly to his face. He looks funny with the towel covering his face. They all laugh at him. He removes the towel from his face, and Nadia could see vengeance in his eyes, so she runs upstairs to her room. Ali races after her but she gets to her room first and slams the door shut. She leans her back at the door laughing and hardly catching her breath.

EXT. HYDE PARK – EVENING

Ali sits alone at a bench in Hyde Park contemplating the beauty of the blue lake for many hours. He awakes to Nadia's voice.

NADIA

Saber told me you're here. All the family's waiting for you at lunch and you're sitting here, staring at the lake!

ALI

Sorry. I lost track of time.

Ali rises from his seat and walks with Nadia toward the car.

NADIA

You were lost in thought. Have you got something in your mind?

ALI

You turned into a beautiful young lady while I was in the United States.

NADIA

Don't change the subject. Tell me what's bothering you.

ALI

I'm deeply in love with an American girl.

Nadia stops, takes his hand, and leads him to the nearest bench, where they sit down.

NADIA

Tell me everything that happened to you since you left us.

ALI

(laughing)

What about launch?

NADIA

Forget launch. Speak.

THE CAMERA stays with Ali and Nadia for a few seconds while Ali relating his love story. Nadia looks like a child hearing a fairy tale filled with magical creatures and their adventures.

Finally, they walk off hand-in hand. Ali stops suddenly as if remembering something important.

ALI

I want to buy Diana a precious gift.

NADIA

Splendid idea. Let's go to stores that carry items women like.

THE CAMERA focuses on Selim's Rolls Royce parking near Hyde Park. The driver spots them, moves slowly toward them, and takes them to a jewelry shop.

THE CAMERA penetrates into the jewelry shop revealing Ali and Nadia bargaining with the seller, settling in the end on a large, gold heart on a gold chain.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – DAY

Selim relaxes on a large fauteuil in the drawing room. Saber enters with a cup of coffee on a small tray. Saber places the tray on a small table before Selim and is about to leave, but Selim asks him to stay.

SELIM

Saber, have a seat.

Saber sits at a chair confronting Selim.

SELIM

Ali succeeded satisfactorily in his courses and won the karate championship. Is there anything else I should know?

SABER

(after a moment hesitation)

Yes, Sir. He's in love with an American girl studying at the same university.

SELIM

That's natural. Any man is sweet on a good-looking girl.

SABER

It's a true love, and it seems strong. You know Ali, his emotions reflect his behavior.

SELIM

You mean he's romantic who can't separate imagination and reality.

SABER

Something like that.

SELIM

That's why I sent him there. I wanted him to face the raging waves of life alone, so he can learn to separate what's real and what's imaginary. Anyway, his news is encouraging so far.

SABER

But Sir, his love for this girl is real.

SELIM

It may be as real as you say, but it will merge with a beautiful fantasy in his mind. If this love ends in failure, he'll have to bear the consequences. What's so special about her?

SABER

She's very beautiful and is extremely fond of him, too. She is also exalted in rank and wealth.

Signs of worry are shown on Selim's face.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM – DAY

Days before leaving to the United States, Selim sits with Ali in the drawing room.

SELIM
(smiling)

Don't you need a car for transportation in the United States?

ALI
(joyfully)

Thank you, dad, I need one badly, but I was embarrassed to ask, lest you disapprove.

SELIM
I'll write you a check so you can draw money from my bank account in the North Carolina bank. You can choose any American car you like.

ALI
I'd prefer a European sports car.

SELIM
What car would you like?

ALI
A Ferrari.

SELIM
That's an expensive car, but I'll buy it for you, anyway.

SELIM (CONT'D)
(beat)
I advise you to concentrate on your studies and stay away from life's pleasures.

ALI
I'll do my best to fulfill your commands.

Ali bends forward and kisses his father's hand thankfully. When he's ready to leave. Selim stops him.

SELIM

Have you any idea about your father's fortune?

ALI

(surprised)

I know that you're extremely rich.

SELIM

It's more than 1.7 billion pounds Sterling. The day will come when you, your mother, and your sister will inherit it. I long for the day of your final return, because I expect you to take over for me when I retire.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – MORNING

Diana rushes out of her room, and descends the stairs in a hurry. Mary inquires about such an unexpected haste.

MARY

Where to in such early hour of the morning?

DIANA

Ali arrived from London yesterday. We're supposed to meet at the valley in fifteen minutes. I'm already late.

EXT. THE VALLEY – MORNING

Ali hurries to the valley and hides behind some trees to watch Diana before she notices him. She is already there bending over some flowers, inhaling their fragrance. He stands for a while, meditating upon her, then he walks slowly towards her.

Hearing his approaching footsteps, she looks up and feels a shiver of delight as her heart races. She wants to control her feelings but he is already upon her. He holds out his hands, and she takes them, then he draws her to his chest and holds her close.

DIANA

Your love is so dominating, I can't endure it alone.

ALI

My life was poor while I was away from you.

DIANA

You don't know how much I love you.

ALI

You're shaking. Do you love me that much?

DIANA

Your love is the reason for my existence. Take me to the land of dreams.

Their long kisses and passionate hugs fly them to meadows woven of love flowers and springs flowing with love wine, until both are lost in love's drunkenness.

They lean back on the grass, and Ali puts his arm around her shoulders. Sunlight streams down through the trees. Green leaves whisper, and the two of them watch the trees. After a short time, she falls asleep in his arms, and he remains still, fearing to wake her. Many beautiful moments pass until she opens her eyes.

DIANA

Sorry I slept so long. I long to live all my moments with you.

ALI

I watched your face while you slept. If beauty came to be compared with you, it lowers its head in shame.

DIANA

How beautiful to wake up to such sweet words.

He rises to his knees and removes a small red velvet box from his pocket.

ALI

For you my love.

His gesture overwhelms her, and she stares at the large heart through her tears.

ALI (CON'T)

Now my heart is in your possession. Treat it tenderly, and conceal it in your bosom.

Her heart melts within her, and she couldn't think of anything but the desire that rises in her like a tidal wave.

DIANA

Hold me tight. I want to vanish in your arms. Love me this one time.

He pushes a lock of her blonde hair back behind her ear.

ALI

I don't want to deflower you before you become my wife. My love for you isn't for a moment. It's for an age to live together.

DIANA

Is there such purity in our world?

ALI

I can't imagine you with anything but a pure heart. I'll ask your father for your hand in marriage once we graduate.

DIANA

I long to bring you children who will be as noble and gracious as you.

It is dusk, and the sun sinks toward the distant horizon, as the couple walks along the lakeshore. She's everything he sees, touches or breathes. She finds him irresistible, and their love melts the differences between them, while the future is colored with endless happiness.

EXT. SEAPORT - DAY

THE CAMERA roams over a seaport until it settles on a container ship discharging its cargo among which is a white convertible Ferrari.

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH SHORT DIALOGUES

- 1- Ali drives the Ferrari to the university.
- 2- The students gather around the car admiring its beauty.

3- Diana enjoys driving the car with Ali.

DIANA
(while driving)

How you come to possess such an expensive car?

ALI
(smiling)

It's a gift from my father for doing so well in my exams.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE AT THE FACTORY – DAY

In his office at the factory, the Senator holds an important meeting with his partner Clark, and his son James.

SENATOR
James, I'm pleased to see you training Diana on the different activities of the firm.

JAMES
I told her everything she needed to know. She even made some valuable suggestions for certain problems.

SENATOR
Training her through summer vacation isn't enough. I want her to join you even while she's in college. James, give her a real challenge. I'll bet she rises to it. A permanent job would use up all her crazy energy on something that would give her a sense of accomplishment.

JAMES
I'll have a permanent office prepared for her.

SENATOR
That's a good idea. That would link her to work.

CLARK
Senator, didn't you suggest that they marry? James welcomes the idea.
I see no reason for a delay.

SENATOR
(rises from his seat and paces the room)

It's not that simple. She's strongly attracted to an Egyptian student, I must remove him from her life.

SENATOR (CON'T)

Listen carefully, James. I know she doesn't feel romantic about you, but she can love you with her mind if she realizes the benefits. That requires you to be fully present in her life. If we don't do it soon, there's no knowing what she might do. I'm sure you can help her when nobody else can.

JAMES

I'll do whatever you say, Senator. I'm determined to save her at any price.

SENATOR

She's fond of your management style. Do you know what that means? It's the first sign of a logical love. All you have to do is invest in it.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – NIGHT

Diana and the Senator are having dinner in the dining room. Mary comes with a small elegant envelope and gives it to Diana. Diana surprised, unfolds the letter and reads it. A broad smile is drawn on her face.

DIANA

I've been appointed deputy director of the firm, with a monthly salary of \$3,000

Enchanted by the idea she shows the letter to her father.

SENATOR

It's a good step on the right road.

DIANA

You know about this of course?

SENATOR

Nothing happens in the company without my knowledge. I own two thirds of it.

DIANA

I'm afraid the job will interrupt my studies.

SENATOR

It's too good an opportunity for you to refuse. You can go to the office each day after your classes. When exams are near, you can stop going to the office to study.

DIANA

(thoughtfully)

I can manage that. Most students have to work. When do I start?

SENATOR

That's up to you.

INT. COMPANY – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Diana at her new office reading some papers.
- 2- She then goes to James office seeking his advice about some business matters.
- 3- Diana leaves James office and goes to the warehouses to inspect the goods ready for exportation.
- 4- Diana inspects the production lines and talks to the workers.
- 5- She returns to her office, sits at her desk, and smiles in contentment while her gaze roams over her new office in admiration.

EXT. CAMPUS – UNIVERSITY RESTAURANT - DAY

Ali and Diana meet at the university restaurant. They sit at a table sipping their coffee. Diana looks happy.

DIANA

(cheerfully)

I entered into the world of business.

ALI

I don't understand.

DIANA

I received training in my father's company during summer vacation. James put me in the middle of real problems and asked me to submit solutions. Some of my ideas were useful, and had already increased the company's profits.

ALI

Who is James?

DIANA

The son of my father's partner. He's also the company's director.

DIANA (CON'T)

Due to my skills in management, James appointed me deputy director. I want you to see for yourself how I'm managing my responsibilities.

ALI

(laughing)

Is that an invitation from the deputy director?

DIANA

Yes indeed.

ALI

I'll pick you up tomorrow at nine.

DIANA

OK.

INT. SENATOR'S COMPANY – DAY

Ali and Diana in the Ferrari heading to the company. Ali parks the car in a space reserved for a department head. Ali accompanies Diana to her office. She sits proudly at her desk and Ali smiles as he sits before her.

ALI

Is it proper to start practical work as a deputy director? You've risen to a high position in one step.

DIANA
(proudly)

Management of the company is my father's right. He owns two thirds of the company.

ALI
Now start your work and forget all about me.

DIANA
How about starting the day by taking you for a tour?

ALI
OK.

They leave the room hand-in-hand and meets James in the corridor. Diana introduces them, and James greets Ali indifferently. Seeing them together angers him.

DIANA
I'm taking Ali in a quick tour. We'll be back in an hour.

James nods and goes to his office to sit and think. Diana has to be burdened with enough work to keep her away from Ali.

After the tour, Diana and Ali meet James at his office. The moment they sit down, James gives Diana a file.

JAMES
It's a file of customer orders for dresses. I want you to investigate the capacity of our production lines to see if they could meet the demand.

DIANA
(annoyed)
Couldn't it wait until tomorrow?

JAMES
This is urgent. I expect your answer in an hour.

DIANA

(gives Ali a regretful look)

I'll wait for you in my office after you finish with James.

Ali walks to James library and studies the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves.

ALI

Do you mind if I look at your books?

JAMES

Go ahead.

ALI

It seems you have a good collection on economics.

JAMES

I tried to read some of them, but I don't have the patience to read more than a few pages in a book. What's the use of reading when you already know the path to success? I run a large company with three hundred employees. My net profits are in the millions.

James walks to the cocktail cabinet and pours a shot of bourbon.

JAMES

Do you need a drink?

ALI

I never touch alcohol.

James finishes his bourbon in one gulp, lit a cigar, and scrutinizes Ali. He looks handsome and strong, a calm, quiet young man. James is filled with the need to humiliate Ali.

JAMES

If you need a job, I wouldn't mind hiring you. We need laborers here.

ALI

(still examining the books)

I don't need money to complete my education.

After he finishes with the books, Ali sits in a chair facing James' desk.

ALI
(calmly)

Diana's fond of your style of management and talks a lot about your skills.

JAMES
(while going to the bar to pour himself another drink)
She's a good girl with an inquisitive mind. What are your plans for the future?

ALI
Nothing specific.

JAMES
It's strange to see a man your age without any plans.

ALI
Concentrating on my studies is a good investment for the future.

JAMES
Life, my dear friend, wants those who grasp opportunities and turn them to their advantage, not those who wait for them to become available without making any effort.

ALI
In the East, we believe that the future is in God's hands. Man has to work hard to gain his goodness. Whatever brings gain is due to God's goodness, not just labor. It's what we call surrendering to God and having confidence in him. You may work hard and plan well for the future without receiving the blessings or benefits unless you believe in the Benefactor and resign yourself to Him completely.

JAMES
(laughing derisively)
Oh, good grief. I thought you were a man of good sense. You mean a man waits for his chance to come without making any effort?

ALI
I mean exactly what I said. Whatever you plan for the future isn't sufficient to predict anything, because the future is in God's hands. Let me give you an example. A few moments ago, you asked Diana to investigate whether the production line can meet customer demand.

Can you guarantee the adequate delivery of products in due time? Can you be certain that those demands will increase, decrease or remain constant? Fashions may change, thus influencing the rate of purchase. Can you predict the trend of prices in general or in detail?

ALI (CON'T)

The famous economist, Wesley Mitchell, devoted his entire life to trying to explain disturbances that affect business cycles. In the end, he couldn't explain what caused the disturbances but instead introduced a type of theory that's merely descriptive.

JAMES

What do you mean descriptive?

ALI

His analysis showed that an economic system of interrelated parts develops internal stresses during expansion, and those stresses bring on recession. Uneven contractions in various parts pave the way for revivals. This lack of human understanding proves that the future is in God's hands and occurs only according to his will.

ALI (CON'T)

What man needs to do is tactfully plans for tomorrow, works hard during the day, and surrenders to God concerning the future.

JAMES

(astonished)

Where'd you learn all that?

ALI

(pointing at the library)

From the books you haven't read in your library.

After a while, Diana enters the room, and gives James the results of her investigation, then she takes Ali's hand. They rush to the door laughing as they walk to his white Ferrari.

From his office window, James stares at the car's elegant lines and realizes that Ali is a strong competitor for Diana's love.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – MORNING

The Senator and Diana are having breakfast. Diana eats her breakfast in hurry, then rushes to the door.

DIANA

Daddy, Ali has reached the final of the karate championship. He won the cup last year, and is trying hard to win it this year too. I must hurry, he needs all the support and encouragement he can get.

Diana stops at the door as if she has forgotten something to say to her father.

DIANA (CON'T)

The TV will record the final match, it would be a good chance for you to see Ali's final.

The moment Diana leaves the room, the Senator calls James.

SENATOR

James, come right away. We have a karate championship to watch.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM – DAY

The Senator and James sit in the living room watching the karate championship in TV.

When Ali wins the cup, the students roar their approval and exchange hugs and proud smiles. The two men look at each other in silence, realizing the good looking karate champion has all the qualities that would capture a young woman's heart.

JAMES

He's a nuisance. We'll be much better without him. Sir, it's about time that Diana must think of me as a husband and not just as a trainer.

SENATOR

Don't worry, time is in our side. Influencing Diana must be done gently through awakening her sense of logic.

INT. JAMES' OFFICE – DAY

In his office the following day, James reads in the morning paper.

INSERT: "The Egyptian student wins all his battles without defeat"

James throws the newspaper into the trash and goes to the cocktail cabinet for some Scotch.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – MORNING

Diana and the Senator are having tea in the terrace.

SENATOR

How about spending the day fishing?

DIANA

(surprised)

Why this sudden interest in fishing? Do you have time for me?

SENATOR

(smiling)

Spare me your pungent remarks. Go and prepare the van and the fishing equipment.

EXT. LAKE – DAY

Diana drives to a lake rich in fish. They catch three large fish that she cooks with some potatoes. They enjoy the meal immensely.

Feeling a longing for Ali's sweet words, she stands to walk along the lake and dreams of him. The Senators sees her drowning in romantic thoughts. With a smile he walks to her.

SENATOR

I'm really pleased to see you interested in your work. I feared James would dominate the company and becomes its only boss.

DIANA

Don't worry about me. James wants to see me succeed. He consults me in every business matter.

SENATOR

Over the past few months, I managed to win the primaries. Now I'm preparing against the Democratic candidate, Norman Patterson.

Politics takes up most of my time, and it's not easy to juggle my private business and political career. Thank God you're sharing with James running the company. Someone of my blood should represent me there.

DIANA

I'm doing well. With James support, I can get things moving.

SENATOR

He's a promising man. He has achieved good profits for us during the past few years.

SENATOR

(beat)

A few days ago, he asked for your hand in marriage. How do you like that?

DIANA

(staring at her father in surprise)

Does James think of me as a wife?

SENATOR

(pretending to be pleased)

Yes. It's natural.

DIANA

What was your answer?

SENATOR

I said I'd talk to you about it.

DIANA

But I love Ali. I can't imagine living with someone else.

SENATOR

Oh, that Egyptian you talked about? My dear child, there are things in life that need wisdom and prudence. Marriage is a whole life to live, not just a few moments of folly that usually don't last.

DIANA

Ali is a perfect man. He has all the qualities you're looking for.

SENATOR

He's different from us in culture and tradition. This love won't work. James would never accept Ali as a partner, and the harmony between you and James will turn into a mess. Believe me, my child, it's a matter of business and profit.

DIANA

Love doesn't submit to such materialistic measures.

SENATOR

It does, and I'll tell you how. You're a millionaire's daughter, and you'll remain that. I'm not well. My heart may give out any moment. As a father, I want to make sure that you're emotionally and financially safe.

DIANA

You're making this tough for me, father. You're stepping on my feelings, cutting out my heart.

SENATOR

You want to be taken care of, and I know what's best for you. James is the most suitable man for you.

A long silence passes. Diana suffers as he watches the influence of his words on her. What matters to him is that she starts thinking of James not as an instructor but as a husband.

SENATOR (CON'T)

I'm your father, and I know what's good for you. You must leave your feelings behind and try to see your way to marry James. Think of your own good.

DIANA

Is it possible for a woman to love with her brain?

SENATOR

Yes, my child. The brain is the seat of thought and guidance. The responsibilities you already have need a brain to think, not a loving heart.

DIANA

I couldn't possibly feel romantic about James.

SENATOR

A woman can easily become accustomed to her man after marriage. It's like eating. The more you eat, the more your appetite for food increases.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE AT THE COMPANT – DAY

The third university year coincides with the Senate election. After the end of one working day, the Senator brings Diana and James to his office to discuss his election campaign. His words surprise them.

SENATOR

You both know that I won the primary, but the battle with Paterson will be very difficult. I want you, James, to run my campaign. Diana will provide you with the necessary money.

JAMES

(astonished)

I've never assumed such a responsibility before.

SENATOR

Don't worry. It's another form of management, and you're talented in that. I want you two to work closely.

SENATOR

(handing Diana a checkbook)

You're delegated to cover all expenses James needs. I'll go over the expenditure with you each week.

James understands. It isn't enough for the Senator to involve Diana in the company to place her near him. He also deliberately brings them together in his political campaign.

SENATOR

(looking at Diana)

Well, Diana? What do you think?

DIANA

(feeling important)

I agree of course. James and I will form the perfect team.

JAMES

(with challenge in his eyes)

Sir, this time you'll win by a huge majority.

INT. JAMES OFFICE – DAY

CLOSE SHOT:

James sits at his desk talking to his financial manager.

JAMES

Bob, buy newspaper space and time on radio and TV. Rent halls for public meetings for the Senator to meet with his supporters. Hire biographers to write accounts of the Senator's political life and his achievements for the state. Hire political editors to reshape the Senator's program.

The Senator has to work hard to cope with such an intensive program.

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH SHORT DIALOGUES

1- The Senator appears on TV.

SENATOR

Powerful America has to be protected from Attack. America is strong, because it faced big problems and knew how to solve them...

2- The Senator appears on the radio.

SENATOR

I demand a serious effort toward the American dream of wealth and power by investing more money in giant projects...

3- The Senator revises with James articles for the newspapers.

4- The Senator talks to the voters in a hall.

SENATOR

I emphasize the importance of reducing taxes on profits and private ownership...

The voters applaud the Senator.

5- Schoolboys wearing T- shirts with the Senator's pictures on them.

6- Signs read: "Vote for Edward Stevenson" hung on doorknobs of hotels' rooms.

7- The Democratic candidate, Norman Patterson appears on TV.

PATTERSON

Americans allowed hatred, fear, and violence to thrive in their society, and I have ways to reform that...

8- The Democratic candidate, Norman Patterson talks to his supporters in a public park.

PATTERSON

America, the richest and strongest country in the world, still suffers from inflation, idleness, insecurity, hungry children and deficient hospitals. I wonder if it would ever be possible for the poor to shape their lives according to their desires, or if they'd always have to submit to influential people...

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Three days before the final announcement of the election results, the Senator, James and Diana watch TV in the living room.

BROADCASTER

Polls predict a victory for the Senator...

Suddenly, the Senator turns white, clutches his chest, and grasps for air. He stands and walks a few steps before falling unconscious to the floor. Terrified, Diana throws herself on him and bursts into tears. James calmly walks to the phone and calls the Senator's doctor.

James reaches awkwardly for Diana and pats her hair.

JAMES

There, there.

Sobbing she throws herself into his arms. He pats her back until she cries herself out. With his handkerchief, he wipes her tears and seats her on a chair.

JAMES

It's just a light heart attack. He has these on occasion. He'll be himself soon.

DIANA

(suddenly she looks grave)

We must call for a doctor.

JAMES

I already did that.

DIANA

(looking at him gratefully)

I couldn't possibly manage without you. You're always ready.

JAMES

You know how I feel about you.

Blushing, she lowers her gaze without comment. She recalls her father's words at the lake.

SENATOR (V.O.)

You want to be taken care of, and I know what's best for you. James is the most suitable man for you.

James and Mary manage to carry the Senator to his room. The doctor arrives and examines the Senator.

DOCTOR

The Senator must go to the hospital immediately.

JAMES

It's just a mild heart attack. The Senator could be treated at home.

DIANA

(worriedly)

But James...

JAMES

If the news of the Senator's heart attack is released to the media, your father might lose the election.

DOCTOR

I suggest that you hire a private nurse specialized in heart blockages.

JAMES

I would rather prefer that Diana and Mary nurse the Senator under your supervision.

THE CAMERA focuses on the doctor calling the hospital to send the necessary medicines and supplies.

THE CAMERA then focuses on the doctor showing Diana and Mary how to take care of their charge.

James walks the doctor to the door. He doesn't forget to remind him:

JAMES

News of this must never reach the media. If it does, the hospital won't receive its yearly donation from the Senator.

THE CAMERA focuses on Diana and Mary nursing the Senator. Diana kneels beside her father's bed praying for his safety.

During the critical hours just before the announcement of the Senator's victory, his health improves. Diana holds him dearly and kisses his forehead.

DIANA

(smiling through her tears)

Congratulations Senator, you won the elections.

SENATOR

(smiling)

Where's James? I want to thank him.

DIANA

James is busy talking on the phone dismissing people who want to congratulate you in person.

SENATOR

Tell him I want to see him.

Diana walks out of the room to call James who is downstairs in the lobby talking on the phone.

JAMES

The Senator is not available right now. He has already left for Washington.

DIANA

(calling from upstairs)

James, father just came to himself. He wants to see you.

James climbs the stairs two at a time. He shakes the Senator's hand congratulating him. Holding James' hand with one of his, the Senator holds out his free hand to Diana, who gives hers to him.

The Senator puts their hands together.

SENATOR

(with difficulty)

How much I hope, before I die, to see you two married.

DIANA

(fearfully)

Don't talk about death, father. The doctor warned that you mustn't get excited.

James presses Diana's hand in his hand.

JAMES

Marrying Diana is my dream.

DIANA

(looking at her father in sympathy)

Don't bother about that, father. I'll seriously think about it.

JAMES

Take your time. We're in no hurry. I'll always be waiting for you.

Diana withdraws her hand and leaves the room. She walks to the front door and finds her car outside as if inviting her for a drive.

INT. ALI'S APPARTMENT – NIGHT

Diana drives aimlessly, trying to think. She keeps driving until she finds herself in front of Ali's house. The Ferrari is there, which means he is home. Saber welcomes her and shows her to the living room. Distressed, she sits staring into space. Ali hurries in and immediately sees the sadness in her eyes.

Ali tenderly puts his hand on her shoulder, and she stands, looking into his eyes as if escaping confusion and distraction. She bursts into tears and throws herself into his arms. He tenderly holds her, kisses her hair, and gently pats her back.

ALI

Diana, what's up?

She wants to tell him but she couldn't.

ALI

Don't say anything now. Come to a place where you can forget your pain. Don't you miss the valley?

DIANA

(a faint smile comes to her lips)

Let's go now.

EXT. THE VALLEY – NIGHT

Ali drives the Ferrari to the valley. In the valley, they sit beside each other on the grass and stare into the lake.

ALI

(after a moment of silence)

I used to come here alone when you were busy. I felt your soul flying over the lake and mixing with the flowers' scent.

DIANA

Did you suffer much?

ALI

Yes, but whenever I surrendered to pain, love invaded my heart and eased my restless soul.

DIANA

My beautiful angel, I can't live without you.

ALI

(after a moment silence)

Is it James?

His question makes her cry again.

DIANA

(after she regains control)

Dad is having one of his frequent heart attacks. James proposed to me, and dad strongly supports of the marriage. I fear to disobey lest he might die.

ALI

(in grave anxiety)

I'm sorry about your father. Thank God he's safe. My sincere congratulations on his re-election.

Ali (CON'T)

(after a pause)

When I met James, I had the feeling he wanted to split us apart. Our love will survive as long as you believe in it.

DIANA

I'll marry where my heart has chosen.

ALI

I'll defend my love until the end. I trust in God. He won't abandon me.

ALI (CON'T)

(after a moment)

Examinations are approaching. Are you ready?

DIANA

You're miles ahead of me. I have to catch up.

ALI

Don't worry. I'll help you. Just let me see you.

DIANA

I promise.

ALI

The karate championship is near, but I'm not ready yet. I don't think I would be able to participate in the karate championship this year.

DIANA

(annoyed)

Why not? You're the champion.

ALI

I fear James might carry you off if I were away from you.

She kisses him long, and he holds her tight close to his heart.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Diana alternates with Mary nursing her father back to health.
- 2- Diana and Ali study in his apartment.
- 3- Ali, Diana and Susan stand before the exam pass list shouting with joy for their success in the exams of the third educational year.
- 4- Diana gives Ali and Saber a ride to the airport.
- 5- At the terminal she kisses Ali farewell and waves goodbye to Saber.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – NIGHT

The fourth educational year has already started, and Diana is with the Senator, caring for him under the doctor's orders. When he sees grief in her eyes for fear of losing him, he insists she marries James.

SENATOR

(with a sad smile)

I'm proud of you because of the way you took care of me these past weeks, but my happiness will never be complete unless you marry James.

DIANA

(fear seizes her)

Please, father, save me the embarrassment. I don't want to cause you any complications.

SENATOR

I'm your father and know what's good for you. Your future is with him, not someone else.

DIANA

Forget that now. Your health's more important.

SENATOR

You must be engaged to James before I leave to Washington.

SENATOR

You want me to marry him so soon?

SENATOR

I'm simply doing what I must. You won't give up your father for a stranger.

DIANA

You're talking about my life. I want to share it with Ali, not with James. It's not fair that you slaughter my heart and throw it to a man I don't love.

SENATOR

James formally proposed yesterday, and I accepted.

DIANA

(enraged)

It's my life to live, not yours! It's my right to choose my husband. I refuse to allow my marriage to be settled behind my back.

SENATOR

(pretending to have another heart attack)

I can hardly catch my breath. Hurry with the tranquilizer.

Working past her tears, she hurries to the tray of drugs on the table beside the bed. With terrified, shaking hands, she gives him a pill and glass of water. He swallows the pill.

SENATOR

(after a moment)

I think I'm dying. Hold my hand. I want you near me in my last moments.

She kneels beside the bed, weeping violently, and kissing his hand, which becomes damp with her tears.

DIANA

Forgive me, father. I won't oppose your wishes any further. Just relax and get well. I'll do what you want and marry James.

SENATOR

When do you think that will be?

DIANA

As soon as you wish.

SENATOR

Right after your graduation, which is six months away? Your wedding will be the talk of the town, I promise. Don't send the doctor for me. I feel better. You can go now.

As soon as Diana leaves the room, the Senator calls James.

SENATOR

James, Diana agreed to marry you right after graduation.

JAMES

Thank you, Senator. I'll come tomorrow with two engagement rings.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

The Senator in his pajamas and robe de chambre sits at a chair in the living room.

Diana and James sit at two other chairs confronting him. Diana's expression is empty and her heart filled with sadness. No guests have been invited lest something untoward happens to ruin the Senator's plan. Diana doesn't argue with her father, because melancholy and perplexity from the previous weeks leave her unable to think. That night James slid an engagement finger on her finger, and she does the same carelessly, not knowing what she is doing. Events take place too quickly for her to stop them.

Diana, staring at her engagement ring, feels suffocated. Her stomach lurches, and she rushes to the bathroom and vomits until she is empty and exhausted. She then walks to her bedroom and throws herself on her bed to cry. She looks like a zombie.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN

To be continued.

EPISODE 3

EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN – DAY

Diana goes to the university with the new engagement ring shining on her fingers.

She wants everyone to know from the beginning that she is engaged.

Her separation from Ali has to occur sometime. It is better to get it over with.

She glimpses Ali on a wooden seat in the university garden.

DIANA

(regretting what she has to say)

Maybe you'd better forget about me. I'm engaged to James.

His eyes darken and they are almost black and lightless. Shock deepens the lines on his face. He stands and stares into the distance.

ALI

Why didn't you wait until I proposed to your father?

DIANA

Ali, please try to understand my position. My father suffers from frequent heart attacks. He is having one now and is still not fully recovered. He insists that I marry James but I totally refused. My stubborn rejection agitated him beyond measure. I would never do anything to jeopardize my father's health.

Deathly silence falls. He lowers his eyes to hide his tears.

DIANA

Put sadness aside, darling. I don't deserve it. I swear you'll find someone you can love and who'll give you what you deserve. You're strong enough to love again.
You'll soon bear only memories.

ALI

You say 'darling.' You talk about loving someone else. That is ample punishment for loving you.

DIANA

James wasn't my choice and was imposed on me by my father. My marriage is based on reason not love.

ALI

What reason do you mean? You love one person and love another? Many things change or pass by, but not what we shared.

DIANA

Love isn't everything. James is the future. I'll share my life and fortune with him. There are other considerations that make a marriage succeed. I possess a fortune that will be even greater if I marry James.

ALI

What do you call what we had between us? Vanity? Absurdity? Or the beginning of a marriage based on love?

DIANA

I call it beautiful moments that quickly passed. Reason implies the sacrifice of emotion to achieve goals. Stop being emotional, so we can at least part friends.

ALI

Diana, my love, what happened to you? Don't sacrifice my love. It's the most precious thing man can offer.

DIANA

Ali, please don't make our separation difficult. I'm sorry I had to leave you like this, but it was the only way I could. I passed through bitter moments, and my heart bled with pain. Please try to understand and forgive me.

ALI

I love you Diana. I know you've suffered, but I'm here to remove your pain.

Troubled as she is, she turns with her eyes full of tears and runs back the way she came, leaving him to stare after her in fear of their separation.

INT. ALI'S APPARTMENT - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Unable to sleep, Ali tosses and turns in bed as if on live coals.
- 2- Ali is having bad dreams. He dreams he is in the valley of love seeking remembrance of beautiful days, but all he sees is desolate silence and withered flowers. He walks to the lake, hoping to see beauty, but all he finds is a sea of darkness filled with snakes.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali is seen wandering aimlessly in the campus – his hair long, his beard loose.
- 2- Diana is seen constantly filled with anxiety. She avoids Ali by rushing out after each lecture leaving no chance for them to talk.
- 3- The students wonder what happened to the big love.
- 4- James comes to pick Diana up; jealousy eats at Ali until the ecstasy of love becomes unbearable.
- 5- Susan watches Ali from afar. She wishes he could feel at peace again.

EXT. CITY STREETS – DAY

One day, Susan sees Ali aimlessly walking the streets and approaches him, hoping to erase his pain. When she unexpectedly takes his hand, he looks at her, hoping it is Diana, but he is disappointed. He gives her a feeble smile without speaking. She leads him to a quiet place, sits him down, and sits beside him.

SUSAN
(tenderly)

Ali, you must rise above this pain and be yourself again.

ALI
I've been ruined by ardor and sadness. I know nothing more chattering than to love with all my heart then not be able, no matter how I try, to break myself from it.

SUSAN
How could you allow yourself to come to this? These things happen between lovers. Return from the dead and be cheerful again.

ALI
I'm devoured by passion. All life has left me.

SUSAN
Please, let me be with you. Our friendship can soften your pain and revive hope in your heart.

ALI
(looking at her eyes a long time)

I don't want to hurt your feelings, but my heart will never be given to anyone else.

SUSAN
(looking away)
I'll take whatever you can give.

ALI
I've always known you had a big heart.

SUSAN
(holding his hand tenderly)
If you really seek salvation, return to school and sports. Those will keep you busy and help you forget the pain.

ALI
I'm afraid I'm not interested in them anymore.

SUSAN
(laughing)
What's that supposed to mean? How can I succeed if you give up? I rely on your concise summaries.

As they walk back, they are silent until they reach her room. She surprises him by holding him close, and kissing his forehead long. She smiles in his arms and utters encouraging words.

SUSAN
Try to feel better. Smile, make your sun shine again. Your soul wasn't made for defeat. If you change your outlook, everything around you will change.

During the following weeks, Susan is like Ali's shadow, following him everywhere. She refuses to give up, forcing him to return to his studies and karate.

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH SHORT DIALOGUES

1- Ali study reluctantly with Susan in his apartment. He closes the book after a short reading, but she opens it again forcing him to read. He leaves the table but she runs after him and drags him back to the table.

ALI

Susan, please. I'm tired. I want to be left alone.

SUSAN

(shouting at him)

Why? To cry your desperate love? I refuse to give up. Besides, I might fail if you don't help me.

2- Ali and Susan walk in the campus hand-in-hand. When they reach the gymnasium he stops refusing to enter it.

ALI

I'm too weak to endure the physical stress.

SUSAN

(pulling him forcibly towards the gymnasium)

Stop escaping and practice with the team again. The school suffered a great loss when you hadn't competed last year.

3- Susan watches him work out in the gym. He's nervous and tense. His blows strongly affect the players who spar with him. She knows he isn't practicing karate but is deliberately striking torment and despair.

4- Ali runs for hours every day at dawn as if practicing for a merciless competition, but he is really chasing mirage and the remnants of a vague hope.

NT. DORMITORY – DAY

Susan receives a telephone call in her room from Saber

SABER

Miss Susan. Ali practices karate and runs for hours everyday, but he hadn't eaten or slept for days.

SUSAN

He stopped attending classes for days too. How is he now?

SABER

I think he has high fever. He kept tossing and turning in bed all night.

SUSAN

I'm on my way.

INT. ALI'S APPARTMENT

Susan comes to see Ali and finds him feverish and bedridden. Susan and Saber stays at Ali's bedside, nursing and trying to cure him.

ALI

(Hallucinating)

The worst of all vexations is the hostility of one's beloved.

SUSAN

(Burying her face against his chest)

For heaven's sake, stop torturing yourself! She doesn't deserve it. She's with another man, and you're here, crying with the drunkenness of love.

ALI

(looking at Susan yearningly and holding out his hand)

Diana, you came at last! Our union will be paradise, and aversion is hell.

SUSAN

(weeping)

I'm not Diana.

ALI

Who are you then? What are you doing here?

SUSAN

(holding him and crying bitterly)

Don't you know who I am? I'm Susan. I came to help. Please return to life again.

ALI

I wish to have one glance at her, though death be my reward.

He gets up to dress, but Saber and Susan drags him back to bed. Seeing how shallow and emaciated he is, Susan decides to make a sacrifice. Ali has to recover enough to pass his exams by the end of the year.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – DAY

Susan meets Diana at the university campus the following day.

SUSAN

(ironically)

What happened to the big love? Did it disappear when another man loaded with money showed up?

DIANA

Stop being ridiculous, Susan, the pain that's tearing Ali apart is also killing me.

SUSAN

You talk about pain? You look good to me, but you dragged his spirit down. You make his wounded eyes sleepless while you still sleep every night.

DIANA

I'm sorry to hear it.

SUSAN

Do you really know what love is, or do you just know the word? You were born with a golden spoon in your mouth, but I wasn't. I know what pain is. It's synonymous with my life. That's why I can't stand to see people suffer, particularly Ali. He always helped others.

DIANA

His love still burns in my heart. You don't know the circumstances that made me accept James' engagement.

SUSAN

If your love was true, you'd have sacrificed everything for it. Instead you ruined his body and soul while you chased a mirage that will disappear someday.

SUSAN (CON'T)

His love is real, and true values last forever. He has to get back on his feet again, and you have the power to make that happen.

DIANA

I'm so sorry about his condition. What do you suggest?

SUSAN

Your separation must be gradual. Try to help him recover by giving him faith and love again. We must keep him busy with schoolwork and karate.

DIANA

I'm afraid if we do that, I'll be attracted to him again, and I'm trying to forget him.

SUSAN

Don't be alone with him. I'll be around until the crisis is over.

DIANA

What made you suddenly so interested in Ali?

SUSAN

(replying simply)

Because I love him. I don't want to see him hurt. Do you mind if I love him now, or do you want to keep him for your heart and the other for your bright future?

DIANA

(tears in her eyes)

If you really love him, why push him at me?

SUSAN

It's a sacrifice from a girl in love. I'll control my feelings until he's well again. Maybe someday he'll feel the love I have for him. If not, I can at least return some of the help he gave others and me.

DIANA

Does he love you?

SUSAN

No. He loves only you. But I'm willing to take whatever he offers.

DIANA

I feel small beside you. I'll do as you wish. But I still love him, and his love will remain alive in my heart as long as I live.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – DAY

Ali sits at a bench in the University Park. His head bent over his chest. His complexion is sallow, and his body is too skinny. Diana is horrified when she sees him. With a heart broken with sadness she walks up to him.

DIANA

How are you Ali? I haven't seen you for so long. Where have you been?

ALI

I needed to see you to wipe away the wounds in my heart.

DIANA

(tears in her eyes)

Ali, I'm grieved for what happened to you, but it's all part of fate and destiny.

ALI

I tried to forget you, but I couldn't. I can't stop thoughts of you coming to my mind.

DIANA

Please, Ali, stop killing me. You can see my heart is bleeding.

ALI

A flame of fire has been kindled in my heart because of my love for you.

DIANA

Fair and softly, my love, my soul almost departed because of our separation.

ALI

You say, 'my love.' Come then and murmur words of love.

DIANA

I love you. I love you with all my heart.

She dashes into his arms weeping, and he holds her tightly.

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH SHORT DIALOGUES

- 1- Ali and Diana in the Ferrari laughing while heading to the valley.
- 2- They walk into the hills hand-in-hand and pick flowers.
- 3- They run laughing along the bank of the lake spraying each other with water.
- 4- Ali exercises karate with the team.
- 5- Ali, Diana and Susan study together in Ali's apartment. Saber serves them sandwiches and tea.
- 6- Ali and Diana kiss and hug in the balcony and Susan watches them worriedly.
- 7- Susan intercepts Diana in the campus and warns her that her strong relationship with Ali could have serious consequences in the future.

SUSAN

Diana, you forgot you were engaged to another man and let yourself go with Ali. That might have severe consequences.

DIANA

Susan, please, I'm living the best moments of my life.

- 8- Both alone in the classroom, Susan talks to Ali about her fears.

SUSAN

Ali, you've stepped over the line with Diana. I don't want to see you hurt.

ALI

I couldn't enjoy the sight of the world unless I see it through her eyes, nor do I feel delight except in her presence.

EXT. PARK – DAY

Ali and Diana dominated by love haven't noticed that the Senator has seen them from his car walking and laughing in the park one day.

INT. ALI'S APARTMENT – EVENING

One evening while Ali and Diana study quietly together in his apartment, someone knocks on the door. It is the Senator asking to enter. Saber shows him in. The Senator glances at his daughter.

SENATOR

It's a good chance for you to hear what I want to say to your friend.

SENATOR (CON'T)

(giving Ali a look of irritation)

You know perfectly well that she's engaged to another man, and her wedding will take place right after graduation. Her presence with you is an offense to her, to James, and to me. I'm a Senator, and I don't want to be ridiculed. I forbid you to see her again. If you disobey, I'll ruin your future and have you expelled from North Carolina.

ALI

My love for Diana is pure. I take this opportunity to propose marriage.

SENATOR

Your marriage proposal is rejected. My daughter won't marry anyone but James, and their marriage preparations have already begun.

ALI

She doesn't love him. He won't make her happy.

SENATOR

Look here, boy. You don't tell me how to deal with my own life. What you two call love is nothing but teenage absurdity.

ALI

James is no better than I. I'm distinguished by my love for Diana.

SENATOR

How dare you think of marrying my daughter? You're different. We know nothing about you. I won't allow a stranger to share in a fortune he didn't help create.

ALI

Immense fortunes bring no happiness if there's no love between people.

SENATOR

Stop talking nonsense. Get out of her life, and leave her alone.

SENATOR (CON'T)

(looking sharply at Diana)

We've been over this a million times. This stranger has no place here.

You won't give up James just to be nice to him. One way or another, you'll marry James. The date of your wedding is set, and until that day comes, you won't see this boy again unless you want to cause his ruin.

Let's go home quietly before the situation gets worse.

Diana leaves weeping with her father, and misery consumes Ali again.

INT. KARATE CHAMPIONSHOP - GYMNASIUM – DAY

The Karate championship comes, and Ali fights like a ferocious lion. He imagines each of his opponents is James or the Senator.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- In the preliminaries, he pummeled the other competitors savagely.
- 2- In the final round, he becomes even more agitated and strikes his opponent's eye with a fierce punch, then breaks one of his ribs with a strong kick.
- 3- As Ali looks at the shouting crowd, he wants them to shut up. When he is awarded the championship cup, he neither raises it to the crowd, nor greets them with a bow.
- 4- Returning to the dressing room, he sits in a remote corner and weeps ardently.

EXT. GRADUATION DAY – CAMPUS – MORNING

THE CAMERA moves to reveal the campus thronged with happy families on graduation day. Ali and the other students with their graduation uniforms sit in rows listening to the graduation speech. Diana in graduation uniform sits beside James. Ali watches them in grief.

CLOSE UP: on Ali's face – his eyes are filled with tears.

DEAN

It is that wonderful moment when we open a new chapter with enthusiasm after working so hard during study time. I wish you success in your new endeavors.

After the speech, Ali, Diana, Susan and the rest of the graduate students are awarded their graduation certificates. Thereafter, all present disperse all over the campus chatting and laughing.

Ali watches Diana walking hand in hand with James. Jealousy consumes him. He has to see her again.

He has a moment to be alone with Diana while James is busy talking with an acquaintance.

ALI

Diana, meet me at the lane behind the church at eight sharp. I have an important thing to say.

DIANA

Ali please, it will never work that way.

ALI

This is my last day in the United States. I'll leave tomorrow to London. Please don't be late.

James watching them talking, excuses himself, and talks on his cell phone.

JAMES

I want it to go according to plan. Do your job, and I'll pay you well.

EXT. LANE BEHIND THE CHURCH – NIGHT

On a dark, narrow street, Diana arrives shaken and confused.

DIANA

Ali, we can't go on like this. Can't we discuss this sensibly? Our love must end. I can't see you again. You'll never know how sorry I am.

ALI

When you love someone, it's painful to think of her making love with someone else.

Diana

Maybe it would be less painful to you if you find someone else.

ALI

You sound like your father. Listen my love. I'll take you to a nest in the mountains where we can be as happy as birds.

DIANA

Ali, please. It'll never work. Your words are nothing but a dream. They have nothing to do with real life.

He is about to continue blaming her when he sees four evil-looking men approaching. Realizing they are after him, he falls into a violent rage.

ALI

Who sent them, your father, or James? Stay where you are.

He walks to them, glad to have men on whom he could release his anger. He fights like a furious lion, breaking bones and striking their faces, tearing their bodies until they bled. There has not elapsed more than a little while before the gang is routed. They run away seeking their own safety.

Ali hears a movement behind him, he turns, and it is only a split of a second before a blade strikes between his ribs.

Blind with rage and maddened by pain, Ali grabs the knife and throws it away as he stares at the man, who flees in fear.

ALI

(shouting at Diana)

Diana, are you all right?

Her heart leaps to her throat. She runs and finds blood flowing from his mouth and chest. As he enters a world of darkness, he whispers:

ALI

Diana, take me in your arms.

She tries to hold him, but he staggers and almost falls. They sink to the ground as his blood flows like a river.

ALI

(whispering)

They got me, I'm done, let me die in peace.

DIANA

I'll call an ambulance. You'll be fine. I promise.

ALI

(trembling)

Death is better than being alone without you.

DIANA

Don't say that, my love. I'll live with you forever.

She continues crying and screaming until passerby gathers and call an ambulance. Paramedics take him from her arms, then the police comes and takes her to the police station for interrogation.

INT. POLICE STATION – NIGHT

The Senator receives a phone call from Richard, the chief of the police - an old acquaintance of the Senator - that his daughter is detained in the police station for interrogation. The Senator and James rush into the police station.

SENATOR

Richard, what's up?

RICHARD

We found a young man sunk in blood lying unconscious in your daughter's arms. As it seems, he was stabbed by a blade that left a deep wound in his chest. We tried to interrogate your daughter but she's crying hysterically unable to justify her presence with him.

SENATOR

The victim is a karate champion and a schoolmate of Diana's at the university. He's just the kind of person who fights with thugs in some dark alley.

JAMES

Diana must have been passing by and saw him lying on the ground in his own blood, so she called an ambulance.

SENATOR

There's no relation between them. Diana is engaged to James. They're getting married on Sunday.

RICHARD

Congratulations Senator. You can take your daughter back home.

SENATOR

Richard, you know of course that my position implies that my daughter's name is not to be mentioned in any investigation of this crime.

RICHARD

Of course, Senator.

SENATOR

By the way, did you receive the invitation to the wedding?

RICHARD

Yes, Senator. Thank you for your kindness.

The Senator and James escort Diana home, and decide to watch over her carefully until the wedding.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – NIGHT

Alone in her room, Diana stands oblivious before the mirror as Mary, her governess, helps her undress. Seeing Ali's blood on her chest and face, Diana screams and faints.

INT. HOSPITAL – OPERATING TABLE – INTENSIVE CARE UNIT
– NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH A SHORT DIALOGUE

- 1- Ali lies unconscious on the operating table. The doctors open his chest and stitch the torn flesh. They inject him with strong

antibiotics to stop the wound from becoming infected and give him blood transfusion.

- 2- Ali lays motionless in the intensive care unit, with tubes up his nostrils and into his veins. A bottle of glucose hangs from a frame near the bed. On the other side of the bed, a monitor reveals his pulse.
- 3- The hospital receptionist calls Saber and tells him about Ali's accident.
- 4- Saber puts down the receiver, then calls Selim in London and tells him about what happened to Ali.
- 5- With signs of fear and worry shown on Selim's face, he calls his private pilot:

SELIM

Make the plane ready for a trip to the United States.

- 6- Selim kisses his wife Safia goodbye and whispers few words:

SELIM

Sorry darling for such an unexpected trip. It's an urgent business matter. It's also a good opportunity to see Ali. I won't be long.

- 7- The Rolls Royce takes Selim to his private jet.
- 8- The take off of Selim's private jet from Heathrow Airport heading to the United States.

INT. ALI'S ROOM AT THE HOSPITAL – DAY

THE CAMERA penetrates into Ali's room at the hospital to reveal Ali lying unconscious in bed. Selim sits beside Ali's bed with fear that his only son would die. Saber stands beside the bed looking at Ali in sadness. Susan rushes in, buries her face in Ali's hand and bursts into tears. Selim watches Susan surprisingly but also appreciatively. The doctor enters the room and examines Ali. Selim asks the doctor about Ali's condition.

SELIM

He has been in a coma for a week. Is there any remedy that would take him back to consciousness?

DOCTOR

We did our best. There's nothing to do but wait.

INTERCUT BETWEEN DIANA AND ALI

- Ali remains unconscious in bed.
- James tries to compose Diana's continuous weeping with strong tranquilizers until she loses the power to think.
- Diana walks down the aisle with her father until they reach James standing beside the priest.
- The priest asks Diana if she accepts James as a husband, and, intoxicated by drugs, she says, "Yes."
- At the moment that Diana accepts James as her husband, Ali returns to consciousness for a few minutes. Susan rushes to the bedside. "Did she get married?" He asks Susan, and she replies: "Yes."
- He closes his eyes, rejecting life. A bell goes off, indicating cessation of Ali's heartbeat. Doctors run in and give him several electroshocks to stimulate his heart, but it didn't work.
- The groom and the bride take a fancy limousine to the airport.
- The doctors are still giving Ali electric shocks.
- The airplane flies to Hawaii.
- The doctors are ready to give up when suddenly Ali's pulse, though weak, returns on the monitor. The staff smile, and Selim, Susan and Saber sigh in relief.
- In a narrow street near the church, passersby step over a large bloodstain on the pavement.

INT. POLICE STATION – DAY

Selim goes to the police station to see the chief of the police.

SELIM

I'm the father of the student who was stabbed in a fight two weeks ago. I want to know what exactly happened.

RICHARD

Your son was found in a bloody puddle in the street. A girl, who'd been his colleague at the university, passed by and saw him, so she called an ambulance.

SELIM

Can you give me her address?

RICHARD

You can't interfere in this case. It's under investigation.

INT. ALI'S ROOM AT THE HOSPITAL – DAY

Selim returns to the hospital. He could do nothing but remain at the bedside and pray that God would save his son's life. The doctor comes in and examines Ali.

SELIM

Well doctor. What do you think?

DOCTOR

The body is cured. But we don't know why he wouldn't regain consciousness.

The doctor leaves the room. Selim approaches Susan who is sitting beside Ali's bed. She looks at him sadly.

SUSAN

I share your grief. Your son is noble. He doesn't deserve this.

SELIM

Are you the girl he loves?

SUSAN

No. He loves another.

SELIM

Who?

SUSAN

Diana Stevenson, the daughter of Senator Stevenson.

SELIM

How can I see her?

SUSAN

I'm afraid you can't. She was married a few days ago and left with her husband for Hawaii for their honey moon. It was in the morning paper.

SELIM
Can I see her father?

SUSAN
I think so.

SELIM
Why did she marry another man if she loved my son?

SUSAN
Her father chose what he thought was the best for her – the son of his business partner.

SELIM
Why you're so interested in my son?

SUSAN
He was my supporter and protector during a very difficult time. He is a rare person. I won't leave until he's well again.

SELIM
You are colleagues?

SUSAN
Yes.

SELIM
What's your name?

SUSAN
Susan.

SELIM
Susan, I'm very indebted to you. It seems like you're the only one around here who cares for my son's life.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – EVENING

Selim knocks on the Senator's door. Mary answers.

SELIM
May I see the Senator?

Mary shows him to the drawing room. The Senator comes in and shakes hands cautiously.

SENATOR
What can I do for you?

SELIM
I'm Ali's father. My son was your daughter's colleague at the university.

SENATOR
I'm sorry about what happened to your son. Violence happens in North Carolina sometimes.

SELIM
I know my son very well. He doesn't tend toward violence.

SENATOR
He's a karate champion. Sometimes, such fights go beyond the university. I heard he fought against someone in a dark, narrow street.

SELIM
My son doesn't fight with knives. There's something strange about this case, don't you think?

SENATOR
I'm afraid I can't help you. If you have any remarks, you can tell the police. Like you, I was surprised when I heard the sad news.

SELIM

Why were you surprised, when the victim wasn't your own son?
What surprised you was the presence of your daughter with him
that night.

SENATOR

(angrily)

What's that supposed to mean? Are you accusing me of something?
If that's your intension, this meeting is over.

SELIM

(quietly)

I'm not here to accuse anyone. The chief of police said there was a
girl with Ali that night, and she, with the help of passerby, called
an ambulance.

SENATOR

Did he tell you it was my daughter?

SELIM

No, but I think it was.

SENATOR

(standing up and holding out his hand))

I'm sorry about what happened to your son. As a father, I
understand your feelings. I hope Ali has a speedy recovery. I'm
afraid I must go now. I have other obligations.

Selim stands and takes the Senator's hand, holding it for a moment.
Looking into his eyes, he asks calmly:

SELIM

Why didn't you approve of the marriage of two people in love?
Maybe my son is richer than the man you choose for your
daughter.

SENATOR

I chose the man more suitable for her.

Selim shakes the Senator's hand and walks toward the front door.
Opening it, he turns and says:

SELIM

I didn't come to raise problems but to find out what happened to my dying son. If he lives, I'll take him home in peace. If he dies, I won't leave this state before I know the cause of his death. I'll raise the matter before the court, which, of course, is my right.

SENATOR

(with a smile)

Is that a threat?

SELIM

Instead of calling it that, pray with me that my son returns to life.
Good evening.

INT. HOSPITAL – ALI'S ROOM – DAY

Days pass slowly, each one carrying the possibility of sudden death. Selim has nothing to do but pray and wait beside Ali's bed, asking the Lord to keep him alive.

SELIM

(weeping)

O Lord. To whom but you I set forth my complaint. My only boy, the apple of my eye, is dying before me and I can't help him. He is a good boy. He worships you and glorifies your name. He did nothing wrong. He just...just fell in love. Is that a crime deserving such unbearable punishment?

Selim feels a weak, trembling hand touches his shoulder. His heart sinks as he looks at his son.

ALI

(whispering)

Father?

SELIM

(buries his face against Ali's hand and weeps violently)
Yes, my son. I'm your father. Come back to life. You're the spirit of my heart, the fruit and delight of my existence.

Susan rushes forward. Ali looks up at her and smiles faintly. She holds him tenderly, laughing through her tears. Saber comes up next, holds Ali's palms, and kisses them as tears run down his face.

The doctors change Ali's glucose to light food, but he couldn't use his hands to eat. They think weakness causes that, and movement would improve over time, but his hands don't budge. Nurses feed him as patiently as a mother with a baby.

Making matters worse, Ali hasn't spoken since he returned to consciousness. He looks at the world like an innocent child. He smiles at his father, Susan and Saber, while tears constantly pour from his eyes.

When orderlies try to get Ali up out of bed for a little exercise, he falls to the floor. They pull him up and give him their shoulders to lean on, but his lower half doesn't move. The only way he could get around is a wheelchair. He looks at them like a crippled child, smiling and crying simultaneously.

INT. HOSPITAL – DOCTOR'S OFFICE – DAY

Selim visits the doctor at his office to discuss Ali's new condition.

SELIM

When Ali came to life, he touched my shoulder and called out my name, meaning that he could move and speak if he wished.

DOCTOR

Although your son couldn't speak or move his limbs, his mind isn't impaired in any way. His mind has taken him to his childhood - to a time when he has been safe and happy. Physically, he is cured, but the anxiety he experienced and his massive wound left him with a deceptive paralysis. His body wouldn't obey him again until he passes through another shock that would force him to destroy the barriers he erected in his own mind.

INT. HOSPITAL GARDEN – MORNING

Ali sits in a wheelchair in the hospital garden. He seems like a shadow staring into obscurity. Susan sits at his feet and puts her

head on his knees, waiting for a response that may show he feels life returning. If she feels a shiver, she learns he's been awakened by a bird flying away or a colorful butterfly landing on a flower. His senses are attracted only to childish things.

Looking plaintively into his eyes, she speaks, assuming he doesn't hear her.

SUSAN

I envy any girl for whom you carry all that love. How much I wish it was for me. Do you know that I love you with all my heart? You don't feel me, because your heart is with her. Who knows? Maybe someday, you'll feel the love I carry for you.

He smiles and cries as he listens to her. She gets on her knees and kisses away his tears.

SUSAN

Don't cry, my love. Just smile. Without tears, your eyes look like a pure spring that flows with kindness and compassion.

He smiles silently, then forgets about her and watches a bird flutter in a bush, listening ecstatically to its love song.

INT. RALEIGH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – DEPARTURE GATE

Nothing is left but to leave for London with the karate champion in a wheelchair. At the airport Susan shakes hands with Selim and Saber.

SELIM

(giving Susan his card)

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the way you cared for my son. I hope someday you'll visit us in London.

SUSAN

Thank you Sir. It is my wish to see Ali on his feet again.

Susan insists on wheeling Ali to the departure gate. She then sinks to her knees beside the wheelchair and takes Ali's hands in hers,

kissing them as the pain of separation fills her heart. Tears of pain cover Ali's face.

SUSAN

(looking into his eyes with tearful eyes)

This is only a temporary cloud until the sun appears again. You'll be stronger and more glorious than ever. I'm sure I'll see you again, sowing goodness and harvesting love that spreads happiness among people. Didn't you do that when you stood by me during my time of distress? Didn't you fight hard to protect your love? You haven't been defeated. Periods of desperation often happen to those who seek goodness for the world.

SUSAN (CON'T)

(beat)

You won, my love, and I see it in your innocent smile, flowing tears, and sad expression. You know what those tears are for? You wanted to tell the world, "Don't tear the love from my heart lest you kill a soul who wishes you goodness and excellence." You know why you smile? Because love still fills your soul. You know why you won't talk? Because you're an open book that can be read by good souls raised on giving.

He doesn't smile. Bitterness shows on his face as he cries.

She kisses his forehead and holds him to her for a moment, then flees weeping.

He follows her with sad eyes until she disappears. He feels tremendous sympathy for her. She is the only one who understood him and summarized his condition in words that traveled from heart to heart.

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORTY – DAY

In Heathrow airport, Safia and Nadia receive Ali with sorrow and grief. Safia bends to hold Ali's head and kisses him.

SAFIA

(trying to hide her sadness)

I still see my beautiful child in you. You're sitting in that chair only to rest. When God grants his favor, you'll rise to your feet and walk in the world again.

Nadia sits on her knees, taking Ali's hands in hers and kissing them as she weeps.

NADIA

I won't despair of the Lord's favor. You'll surmount this pain.

EXT. HOTEL'S BEACH – HAWAII – DAY

James and Diana are spending their honeymoon in Hawaii in a fancy hotel overlooking the beach.

THE CAMERA explores the fancy hotel then moves forward to reveal Diana and James in bath suits lying on chaise longues in the sun. A bartender serves James a scotch, while Diana reads a book. She seems nervous and bored. She puts the book aside and taps her fingers nervously on the deck chair arm. James enjoys sipping his scotch while staring at Diana's fine body. He lays his hand on her thigh but she pushes his hand back and hurries off to her room. James agitated, rises from his chair to catch up with her.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – DAY

JAMES

Diana, what's up? You are nervous and tensed. I've hardly touched you since we've got married.

DIANA

Sorry James, I just can't help it.

JAMES

You pass the nights screaming from nightmares!

DIANA

I don't get much sleep. I spend the nights awake fearing to see more of these nightmares.

JAMES

Tell me about your nightmares, maybe I can help.

DIANA

Don't worry, I'll get by. Just give me time to accept my new life with you.

INT. HOTEL BAR – HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT (CON'T)

THE CAMERA focuses on James at the hotel bar drinking alone. The CAMERA then moves to Diana's room revealing her in bed trying to get some sleep. She manages to take a nap, but the picture of Ali lying motionless in her arms and sunk in blood haunts her again. She awakes screaming looking at her chest and arms lest they are still stained with Ali's blood. James opens the door to see her crying. He offers her a glass of brandy.

JAMES

Here, drink this, it will calm you down.

DIANA

I think I need it.

JAMES

Take this sleeping pill with the brandy, it will help you sleep.

Fearing to see more of Ali's blood in her dreams, she obeys reluctantly. The brandy with the sleeping pills has a magic influence on her. The nightmares disappear and she manages to sleep solidly for hours.

When sleep overtakes her, she awakes to the hungry kisses of James who has been drinking in the hotel bar. When she resists, he takes her roughly without tenderness. Her weak body surrenders to him reluctantly. Feeling her reluctance, James decides to dominate her body by exposing her to wine. He offers her a few drinks every day and night. She accepts only so she could tolerate his brutality.

Wine renders her insensible to the pain James does to her body when his desire for her becomes violent at the sight of her lying drunk in bed, unable to reject or refuse. He gives her no pleasure and never brings pleasure to her dry body. She soon acquires the habit of drinking wine to tolerate his egoism.

EXT. HAWAII AIRPORT – AMERICAN AIRLINE – DAY

Diana sits beside James in an American airline heading back home.
Diana occupies herself by reading a book.

JAMES

Darling. Wait until you see the apartment I prepared for you. The elegant furniture and the...

DIANA

(sharply)

I'm not going to live in any apartment, James. I must take care of my father. You'll move to live with me in my father's house.

JAMES

But Diana, we must have our own place...

DIANA

Don't argue James. It's final.

JAMES

Okay darling, as you wish.

INT. FACTORY – SEAPORT – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- James in his office convening with the heads of the production lines.
- 2- Diana writing some observations in a note book while inspecting the production lines, and talking with workers.
- 3- The products are packed in cartons then carried to the warehouse prior to exportation.
- 4- The packed cartons are carried from the company's warehouse by a fleet of trucks to seaport.
- 5- CLOSE UP: The name: "Stevenson & Robertson Co. Ltd" appears clearly on the carton shipments, and underneath it appears the name of some importing countries e.g. Emirates; Jordan, Kuwait, Turkey, Japan...

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – NIGHT

Life goes on between James and Diana as it proceeds between business men. Hard work during the day, and discussion during the night about James' big dream. Glasses of whisky entertain the two partners and the warmth emitted from the fire place relaxes the bodies, thus stimulating discussion into the late hours of the night.

JAMES

(smiling – benumbed by the whisky)

All our products are sold in the hungry markets abroad.

DIANA

(smiling - befuddled by the whisky)

The profits flow in.

JAMES

The accounts of the company owners are accumulating in the bank,
thus fixing my big dream in your father's mind.

JAMES (CON'T)

(beat)

It was hard opening all these markets. You know, all these shuttle
trips abroad.

DIANA

You certainly know how to manage things.

JAMES

I'm glad to hear that from you. Sometimes you look sad, I wonder
why?

DIANA

It's just the stress of work.

JAMES

Stress of work! Honey, in all my decisions I seek to relieve you
from any stress.

DIANA
(ironically)

You're racing with the world, James. I simply can't cope with you.

JAMES

We are partners Diana, you know everything I do.

DIANA

Partners! I thought we were husband and wife.

DIANA (CON'T)

You pushed me into the margin of your life and made all the decisions without me. You forgot I was your partner; I became your satellite, gasping after you.

JAMES

I'm sorry you feel that way. But look at the profits we are making. The Senator and my father are really happy to see...

DIANA

I'm not complaining James. I consider my life with you a race toward your big dream.

JAMES

Good girl. That's what I expect to hear from you. How about celebrating by having hot sex tonight?

DIANA
(carelessly)
Why not?

With the glass of Whisky in her hand, she rises from her seat and climbs the stairs to her room and James at her heels sipping his Whisky delightfully.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – ALI'S ROOM – GARDEN - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali sits in his room at a wheelchair looking at the ceiling in oblivion.
- 2- Saber feeds him by hand and carries him from the wheelchair to his bed and back.
- 3- Ali sits by the window. Saber notices that he stares at the green lawn in the garden below.
- 4- Saber wheels Ali's chair out to the large, well tended-garden.
- 5- Ali watches eagerly the waves of green shining in the sunlight as branches wave in the soft wind.
- 6- FLASH BACK: The image of a golden face with gray-green eyes appears which he quickly pushes away.
- 7- The bird's delightful songs remind him of her sweet words of love.

FLASH BACK

EXT. ALI AND DIANA IN THE VALLEY

DIANA

Hold me tight; just love me this one time.

CLOSE ON ALI'S FACE: Ali smiles sadly upon hearing her words of love.

- 8- Her words of separation to him burn in his mind like red-hot irons.

FLASH BACK

EXT. ALI AND DIANA IN A DARK NARROW STREET JUST BEFORE ASSASINATION

DIANA

Our love must end. I can't see you again.

CLOSE UP ON ALI'S FACE: Signs of deep sadness show on his face and tears well up in his eyes.

Saber wheels Ali back to his room then carries him to bed to relax his back.

Saber has to report to Safia. He finds her in the living room arranging flowers in a vase.

SABER

Taking Ali into the garden is useful, his eyes move attentively through the bushes and flowerbeds.

SAFIA

I understand what is passing through my son's mind. He's sentimental and loves nature. Take him to Hyde Park. The surroundings would give peace to his feverish heart, while the sun would soothe his weakened body.

EXT. HYDE PARK – DAY

In Hyde Park, Ali watches the speakers and listeners debating and interrupting each other. When he becomes bored, his gaze wanders across the lake away from the noise of people. Saber wheels him to the lake.

The lake attracts his attention, reminding him of beautiful days he wants to forget, and the silent pools of eyes that once were the mirrors of his heart.

FLASH BACK

The image of Ali crashing into Diana in the library, sending books flying appears before his eyes. His heart was captured by her gray eyes that hold glints of sea waves and seashore sand.

He tries to drive thoughts of her away without success. It's madness to love so deeply.

Silently, he pleads:

ALI (V.O.)

Oh, God, I complain to you of the torment of my love and the complete exhaustion of my patience. Be merciful and indulgent, for my heart is breaking through the violence of my love for her.

A chill comes over him. His breathing stops when the horrible image he's been fighting for so long suddenly looms up, almost blinding him.

FLASH BACK

The image of James looming over Diana, sinking into her appears before his eyes.

ALI (V.O.)

God, don't let me think of it anymore

Ali closes his eyes and sighs as the torture continues.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

The success of James in managing the company made the Senator fascinated by his ability. James taking advantage of that, asked for an assembly of the company board.

James sits at the meeting table with Diana beside him. The Senator and Clark Robertson sit at the opposite side of the table confronting James and Diana.

James begins the meeting by introducing his project to the board.

JAMES

During the past five years, I've managed to open new markets abroad. We face severe competition in local markets, while foreign ones, consume huge amounts of our products no matter the price.

Our inability to fulfill this demand means our customers are shifting to other companies. In order to compete satisfactorily in international markets, we must expand.

JAMES (CONT)

Before each of you is a project proposal to establish four new production lines. Objectives and costs are listed.

SENATOR

(glancing at the proposal)

Twenty million dollars! That's nearly the value of all our capital assets. Where would we get such an amount?

JAMES

I suggest that the company issue stock valued at twenty million and submit them to the stock market. That will add to our capital.

SENATOR

Who'll buy all those stocks?

JAMES

I've already made arrangements with the bank for that.

SENATOR

O! What's the interest rate? How long is the grace period?

JAMES

The interest rate is high these days. It's 16%, and the grace period is seven years.

SENATOR

We may not be able to fulfill the agreement with the bank at such high interest.

CLARK

The bank approved lending the money after it completed a risk-assessment study that showed that losses are very unlikely.

SENATOR

I still say the interest is very high. It sounds risky, but a good businessman takes risks to make his dreams come true. I approve the project and wish you every success.

CLARK

James, I rely on you to keep the company progressing. You have my blessing and hopes for success.

The Senator and Clark leave the meeting room congratulating each other. Diana stays behind with James and looks up at him gladly.

DIANA

Although it's hard for me to keep up with you, I find it pleasant to live with you.

JAMES

(roaring with laughter)

How about celebrating with a dry martini?

DIANA

Why not? It'll freshen me up.

They walk to his office, where she prepares two martinis. They drink and enjoy James' ability to convince the board of his dream. He lits a cigarette and gives her one. He strikes a match and holds it for her. She inhales and coughs. He pats her shoulder as he laughs.

JAMES

You'll get used to it over time.

JAMES

(looking at her for a long time)

Do you realize that you're very beautiful?

DIANA

As if you were saying it for the first time.

JAMES

Maybe because my mind's always busy.

DIANA

Do you love me?

JAMES

Of course. And you?

DIANA

What do you think?

JAMES

You seem satisfied living with me.

DIANA

I think I am.

JAMES

I don't see any difference between love and contentment. They're identical.

DIANA

(raising her glass)
Cheers.

JAMES

Cheers.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN:

'Two years later'

EXT. HYDE PARK – LONDON – DAY

Two years passed and Ali is still locked in his misery. Hyde Park becomes his favorite place. With Saber nearby, Ali sits alone in the warm sun, taking companionship with his own thoughts. He dresses carelessly and neither knows or think about how he looks. His beard grows as it pleases, and his hair is long and spreads down his back. Old people, sunning themselves, watch him in astonishment. Children, playing and jumping around, fear to approach him.

A small boy with big blue eyes and blond curls comes along, holding his governess' hand. When he sees Ali in his chair, facing the sun and bathing in its light, the boy stops and pulls back his hand and stares in amazement.

The governess examines Ali for a moment, then whispers to her young charge:

GOVERNESS

(pulling the boy away)

That cripple is a worthless bum. He's dangerous.

A short distance away, the boy plays with his ball, kicking it and running after it. One strong kick brings the ball under Ali's chair.

The boy cautiously approaches and glances at Ali's eyes, fearing he might hurt him.

When he sees innocence and kindness in Ali's eyes, the boy comes closer until he's within Ali's reach. Instead of bending to lift his ball, he looks attentively into Ali's eyes.

Ali glances at him. His blue eyes are like the water in the lake, and his blond hair covers his ears. He feels an urgent need to speak to the boy, because he is a reflection of beauty and the impulse of virgin nature.

Ali smiles kindly to the boy, who stretches out his hand and touches the thick beard with tender fingers. Ali surrenders in silence to his curiosity as if he, too, were a child again.

The boy stops playing with Ali's beard, then bends to retrieve his ball. In an adorable childish accent, he asks:

BOY
Could you play with me?

Receiving no answer, he tosses the ball lightly to Ali. Striking his chest, it rolls to the ground.

BOY
Why do you look so sad?

The boy takes a piece of chocolate from his pocket and puts it in Ali's mouth. Ali chews slowly and swallows, sharing the sensations with the boy and rejoicing in his company.

The governess runs up, takes the ball, and pulls the boy away reproaching him. The boy weeps, and Ali feels his weeping is a reflection of his own sorrows and expression of his grief.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – ALI'S ROOM – DAY

In his room, Ali recalls the boy's face.

FLASH BACK: image of the boy's face appears to Ali – the boy plays with his ball in Hyde Park.

The boy's animation flows through Ali's dying heart, making him want to be rid of his suffering.

EXT. HYDE PARK – SUNNY DAY

On a sunny day, Nadia wheels Ali to Hyde Park and sits beside him in one of the seats set at intervals around the lake. She lays her head on his shoulder and rubs his hair gently with her fingers until he goes into sleep. He could almost see Diana in James' arms, and a tremor wakes him.

Nadia holds him tenderly and pats his hair affectionately until he feels better.

His eyes roam the place looking for the boy. Nadia doesn't understand his restless gaze at first, but, when she sees the big smile on Ali's face when the boy comes to play with him, she rejoices. At last there is someone who could stimulate his senses and energizes his emotions.

BOY
(glancing at Nadia)
Can I play with my friend?

Nadia smiles and nods.

BOY
Why is he always sad?

NADIA
He's lonesome and can't find someone to play with.

As before, the boy takes out a piece of chocolate, breaks it into pieces, and puts them into Ali's mouth one at a time. Ali surrenders happily. Amazed, Nadia watches.

The governess comes over.

GOVERNESS

I apologize for the intrusion.

NADIA

(gently)

These two are dear friends. There's nothing to worry about.

The governess looks into Ali's eyes, sees his kind smile, and understands he is harmless. She walks away to sit nearby and watches.

The boy throws the ball to Ali, and it strikes between his eyes. The boy laughs, and Ali's body shakes with laughter, too. The boy keeps throwing the ball. One time it strikes Ali's forehead, sometimes his mouth. The boy continues laughing, as does Ali.

Sometimes, the ball rolls away to be caught by other children. They throw it to each other, refusing to return it. The boy runs after them, crying for his ball. Ali, unable to help, finds himself weeping at the boy's disappointment.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – DAY

Nadia wheels Ali home. Saber continues wheeling Ali to his room. Ali alone in his room is absorbed with sorrow and affliction. His affection for the boy however, makes him fight to rise above his disability.

ALI (V.O.).

(Prays to God)

Oh, Lord. I'm considering your doings. I won't despair when I suffer affliction, for how many wondrous mercies have absorbed affliction?

EXT. HYDE PARK – LAKE

The friendship between Ali and the boy grows over the passing days. The governess leaves them together for hours after she understands Ali is harmless.

The boy stares at the lake and tosses in a stone. A ripple appears. Every time he throws in a stone, the circles become larger, and he feels more enchanted, as if he discovers something new.

Ali watches peacefully, surrendering to the relaxation that takes him into deep sleep.

Suddenly he awakes to the boy's screams. He looks up and sees the boy crying and pointing at his ball, floating on the lake. Ali realizes the boy must've kicked it there by accident, and the water slowly carries the ball out of reach.

The boy pulls Ali's hand, pleading for help, but he sees weakness and debility in his friend's eyes. Realizing his crippled friend couldn't help, he stares at his ball and cries.

Suddenly the boy rushes toward the lake. Ali watches in fear. He looks around for help, but neither Saber nor the governess is there.

As the boy wades out deeper into the water, Ali becomes more frightened. He wants to shout at him, to tell him to return to shore, but his disabled tongue refuses to work.

The water is up to the boy's chest. The ball is almost within reach, which tempts him to go further until his feet slips in a deep place, and the water comes up to his chin.

"Help" the boy shouts, knowing he is about to drown.

An inner voice resonates in Ali's ear:

INNER VOICE (V.O.)

You who are oppressed with anxiety should know that anxiety won't last. As happiness passes away, so does anxiety. Haven't you always searched for love and purity in people's hearts? You found that in the friendship of a boy whose heart is still pure and innocent. What are you waiting for when all that is dying before you? Get up from your slumber and wash out your heart with that purity! Get up to God's spacious world and drink from the spring of life.

As his entire body shakes, Ali finds himself praying to God.

ALI (V.O.)

In the name of God the Eternal, the Everlasting throughout all ages; in the name of God who begetteth not, and who was not begotten, and unto Whom there is none like; in the name of God the Mighty and Powerful; in the name of the living God who dieth not, help me.

His hand moves on the chair's arm. His fingers contract to squeeze his palm, and his right foot touches the ground, followed by his left. He tries to rise but falls to the ground. Crawling on his hands and knees, he moves toward the lake.

Every yard he crosses is a chain falling away from him, releasing his soul from its tortured prison. He shouts at the boy:

ALI

Don't move until I could reach you.

His tongue is released from its prison.

He reaches the boy and carries him from the water, setting him on the shore before collapsing to his knees before him.

Holding the boy tightly, Ali cries, letting his tears wash away his pain. The sun rises from behind the clouds, clearing away the darkness in his heart and sending hope to his awakening soul.

Saber and the governess arrive in time to see the rescue and feel as if they've witnessed the power of God help the boy save Ali's soul, as Ali saved the boy's life.

Ali rises to his feet to rest against Saber's shoulder. Saber holds him with one arm and walks forward slowly, pushing the wheelchair with his free hand.

EXT. GARDEN OF SELIM'S MANSION - DAY

Safia sees Ali and Saber approaching the mansion out the window. She rushes downstairs, dashing through the garden to receive her son. Selim and Nadia follow, wondering what is happening.

Safia meets Ali in the middle of the garden and holds out her hands to him. He sees in her eyes the limitless love of a mother. His love

for her overflows, and he speaks the sweet words she longs to hear since he came to London.

ALI

Mother, how are you?

She burst into tears and holds him in her arms, raining kisses on his face.

SAFIA

I'm fine my son. Welcome back after a long absence.

Selim holds and kisses them both. Ali buries his face in his father's hands and kisses them, and Selim does the same.

Smiling, with tears in her eyes, Nadia waits for her turn. Ali holds her in his arms and kisses her affectionately.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION - TERRACE – SUNSET

Ali sits in the terrace alone recalling what happened between him and Diana.

REMARK:

Ali's recollection is told through the lyrics of a song sang softly by a male singer (SFX), combined with FLASH BACKS reflecting happy and sad moments with Diana.

SINGER (V.O.)

Your smile was the joy of my life.
Your eyes were the mirror of my heart.
You used to blossom just for me.

FLASH BACK: Ali kisses Diana in the valley of love – Ali gives Diana the gold heart.

SINGER (V.O) (CON'T)

You threw all this behind your back.
You married a man you didn't love or even care for.
You stepped over a loyal heart.

FLASH BACK: Diana marrying James in the church.

SINGER (V.O) (CON'T)

They locked me in a wheelchair.
From sadness agitated with pain.
I withered like a dead leaf.

FLASH BACK: Ali locked in the wheelchair with tearful eyes,
long beard, and long hair spreading down his back.

SINGER (V.O.) (CON'T)

No Diana, you don't deserve my heart.
The most precious thing I own.
Time of awakening has come.
I would make my love die.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION DINING ROOM – NIGHT

The family gathers around the table for dinner. Safia and Selim are elegantly dressed.

NADIA
(addressing her mother)
Where are you going?

SAFIA
Your father and I will spend the night with some of our friends at
the Ritz club.

NADIA
I've never been there.

SAFIA
It's magnificent, and it has an elite membership.

NADIA
Why don't you both go to the Casanova Club? It was a famous
aristocratic place once.

SAFIA

The Ritz has an elegant air. I find comfort there.

Safia looks at Ali who eats in silence.

SAFIA (CON'T)

Don't you think it would be better if you became a member of one
of the clubs?

ALI

(carelessly)

I haven't thought of that.

SAFIA

You could make friends.

ALI

(beat)

I need time to collect myself.

SAFIA

Don't you think it's time to return to life? You're not a backward
man. Have your hair cut and beard shaved. I want to fill my eyes
with the beauty of your face.

SELIM

(handing Ali a card)

Here, this is the address of my tailor. Visit him and enjoy his skill
in tailoring British, French, and Italian fashions.

ALI

I'll think about it.

EXT. HAIR DRESSER – TAILOR – RITZ CLUB – LONDON
STREETS – JAGUAR

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali at a hairdresser shop cutting his hair and shaving his beard.
- 2- Ali at a tailor shop trying suits of elegant style.
- 3- Ali drives his fancy Jaguar through London streets.
- 4- Ali drives the Jaguar to the countryside. The car responds
beautifully to his touch.

- 5- Ali at the Ritz club playing Tennis and riding horses.
- 6- Ali dining at the Ritz with new acquaintances.
- 7- Ali's dark Arabic features and strong beautiful body attract women at the club. He responds with a broad smile without going any deeper.

INT. SELIM'S OFFICE – DAY

Selim sits at his office. His secretary calls him.

SECRETARY

A young lady wants to see you.

SELIM

Let her in.

When Selim sees who it is, he stands and smiles. It is Susan, Ali's colleague at the university. Selim welcomes her warmly and guides her to a far corner of his office. He then walks back to his desk and calls his secretary.

SELIM

Bring a glass of lime juice.

Selim sits with Susan inquiring about her news.

SELIM

Tell me about you. It's been more than two years since I last saw you.

SUSAN

I'm an accountant for a large firm in San Francisco. I arrived in London only yesterday with a tourist group. We're supposed to return to the United States in five days. I've come to see Ali. How is he?

SELIM

He's fine now. He stayed a cripple in his chair for two years until God cured him. He divides his time between sports and visiting friends. He didn't show any desire to join me at work. At this hour of the morning, he's usually having breakfast at the Ritz. I'm sure he'll be glad to see you. I'll call him there.

Through his cell phone, Selim calls Ali at the Ritz.

SELIM (CON'T)

Ali, come to my office right away. There's a surprise waiting for you.

Ali reaches Selim's office, the secretary shows him in, and Ali walks directly into the office, where his father sits behind his desk.

Selim smiles, stands, and shakes his son's hand.

SELIM

You know who's here?

ALI

(in concern)

No.

Selim points to the corner. Ali looks over and sees Susan seated in a leather chair, smiling at him. He is stunned. She looks like a beautiful dream from the past.

ALI

(whispering)

Susan!

She rises and walks to him. Instead of shaking his hand, she hugs him and kisses his cheeks. Ali looks at his father in embarrassment.

SELIM

(laughing)

Is there any other way to express a greeting than with a kiss?

SUSAN

Did I do something wrong?

ALI

(quickly)

No, you're most welcome in London. I'm happy to see the heart that holds within it all the love of the world.

SELIM

Susan came to London with a tourist group. She's supposed to leave to the states after five days. I suggest that she stays in London a little longer.

ALI

Yes. You withdraw from the tourist group and stay at our house for more days.

SUSAN

I'm afraid I have to...

ALI

No excuses. I want to spend a good time with you. It's also a good opportunity for mother and sister to meet you.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – DAY

The Rolls Royce arrives at the mansion's doorstep. Saber shakes hands with Susan and takes her luggage to the guest room. Safia and Nadia are at the door to welcome Susan

SAFIA

(embracing Susan warmly)

It's a pleasure having you in our home. My husband told me how you stood by Ali in his suffering.

SUSAN

(smiling)

It was nothing. Ali is a dear friend.

NADIA

(embracing Susan)

Your warm heart gave Ali confidence in his days of dismay.

SUSAN

(smiling)

I didn't know that Ali has such a beautiful sister.

Susan wanders about the mansion and realizes that Ali's family is extremely rich.

EXT. LONDON STREETS – RITZ CLUB – NATIONAL
GALLERY – BALLET – EDINBURGH – RESTAURANT - DAY

Ali makes Susan share his days as he lives them.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali and Susan are having breakfast at the Ritz early in the morning.
- 2- Before noon, they go horseback or playing tennis.
- 3- They eat superb dinners in luxurious restaurants each evening.
- 4- Ali takes Susan out in his fancy Jaguar, showing her the city's landmarks.
- 5- They spend good time at the National Gallery.
- 6- They watch the opera and ballet.
- 7- In Scotland, they share with the people of Edinburgh one of the country's popular festivals.

INT. RITZ CLUB – NIGHT

The beautiful days are, however, short. Susan soon has to leave to the United States. Her last dinner with Ali is at the Ritz. He is neatly dressed, and she looks elegant in a dark silk dress. Candles on the table glow with steady, soft light.

Happy and relaxed, she smiles as she looks at him.

ALI

Your eyes are willing to talk. What's on your mind?

SUSAN

With you, I feel safe and secure, as well as other things I missed in life.

ALI

Do you know what you are to me, Susan? You're a heart that can heal the wounds of the world. That's how I always think of you.

SUSAN

Don't you feel something else?

ALI

(silent for a moment)

You remember when I sat motionless in that wheelchair, and you spent hours with me, hoping I'd recover?

SUSAN

Those sad days are carved in my memory.

ALI

You admitted your love for me with words of tenderness and sympathy. Those words revived my heart and pushed it toward salvation.

SUSAN

(astonished)

I thought you were delirious, and I was talking only to myself.

ALI

Your words, mixed with tears, touched my heart and made me feel your loyalty and devotion. Susan you're unmatched in the whole world.

SUSAN

Has your heart responded to my words, or are you still in love with her?

ALI

What do you mean?

SUSAN

Aren't you the one who once said your heart would never love anyone else?

His features contract and she understands his heart is still dominated by his love to Diana.

SUSAN (CON'T)

(softening the conversation)

I told you I wouldn't ask for anything you couldn't give.

Dinner is served.

SUSAN (CON'T)

(with a laugh)

Let's enjoy this superb meal and good drink.

ALI

I wished it was champagne, but here, they know my favorite is orange juice.

She laughs gaily, sipping her orange juice.

ALI (CON'T)

(beat)

Love can take many forms. Strong friendship is a very exciting form of love.

SUSAN

(trying to hide her desperation)

Sweetheart, women long only for love of the heart.

ALI

Will you believe me if I say that our strong friendship surpasses the love of the heart?

He puts his hand in his jacket pocket and takes out a black velvet box. Opening it, he shows her a necklace of red rubies set with large diamonds. It is so beautiful she is stunned into silence.

ALI (CON'T)

This modest present expresses our strong friendship.

SUSAN

It's a fortune, not a necklace!

ALI

It can't match the true fortunes that fill your heart.

SUSAN

How I love to hear your words.

He places the necklace around her neck and admiringly she touches the beads with delicate fingers.

Holding her hands in his, he presses them gently.

SUSAN
(closing her eyes)
I love you.

Opening her eyes, she sees him smiling at her.

SUSAN (CONT)
Please let me say that. It comes from my heart.

ALI
Say it as often as you wish. There's no doubt that I love you, too.

SUSAN
You mean the love of friendship. I don't mind having that from you if it pleases you.

EXT. JAGUAR – LONDON STREETS - NIGHT

On their way back home, she sits beside him in the Jaguar, fascinated by his handsome face.

SUSAN
You never told anyone you were that rich.

ALI
Riches aren't something to be proud of.

SUSAN
Your wealth might have gotten you what you longed for.

ALI
(sadness moves within him)
You mean Diana might have accepted me as her husband if she knew I was rich? I offered her the most precious thing I own, my heart. She threw me over for money.

SUSAN

Let me do her justice. Her father exerted a lot of pressure on her to accept James as her husband. He was seen as an element for her future success.

ALI

She gave me her word she'd be faithful. Then, when she possessed my heart, she violated her covenant. I was faithful to my vow of love and never broke it. She could've refused James if she truly wished, but her materialistic thinking made her accept him. I almost died while defending my love.

SUSAN

What did Diana have to do with your accident?

ALI

I have a hunch that the crime was carefully prepared by either James or the Senator.

SUSAN

You have no proof of that.

ALI

My heart tells me so. It has never failed me. Susan please forget about Diana. I don't love her anymore, she doesn't deserve my heart.

EXT. DOORSTEP OF SELIM'S MANSION – MORNING

Selim, Safia, and Nadia stand at the doorstep of the mansion bidding Susan farewell. Ali stands beside his car to give Susan a ride to the airport.

Selim shakes hands with Susan and smiles in gratitude. Safia and Nadia embrace her warmly.

SUSAN

(with tears in her eyes)

I came to love you in such a short time.

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT – MORNING (CON'T)

Ali gives Susan a ride to the airport. At the terminal they sit in a sad silence.

SUSAN

(sadly)

When I'm with you, I feel the beauty of the world. I don't want this feeling to end.

ALI

Your presence has given me hope and revived my soul.

SUSAN

(beat)

Do you know I have lost all interest in men? Perhaps it's because what I went through at the university. When I long for a man, your face comes to me and comforts my heart.

SUSAN (CONT)

Ah! This is my boarding call. I must go now.

They hold each other tightly for a long time.

ALI

(looking into her eyes)

I feel I'll see you often.

SUSAN

(smiling)

That would be nice.

She walks to the gate, waving farewell. He stands looking at the long, black hair swirling down her back with her elegant quick steps. A sad yearning envelops him. He feels a strong desire to fly with her to the place he wants to forget – the valley of love.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN

To be continued.

EPISODE 4

INT. SELIM'S OFFICE – DAY

Ali drives aimlessly down the streets of London, he finds himself unintentionally stopping before his father's office. Working with his father still isn't in his thoughts, but, with boredom eating at him, he parks his car in the parking lot and goes to his father's office.

The secretary is busy arranging some books in a book-case behind her desk.

ALI

Good morning, is my father alone?

SECRETARY

Good morning Mr. Ali. Mr. Selim is in the middle of a meeting with two Swiss businessmen. Just a minute please.

SECRETARY (CON'T)

(pressing a button)

Sir, your son is here and wishes to see you

SELIM

(surprised by the unexpected visit)

Let him in.

SELIM (CON'T)

(as Ali enters the room)

Are you OK? Do you need anything?

ALI

I'm fine. It's just that I don't know where else to go.

SELIM

So that what brought you here – boredom – you are here out of sheer boredom. I thought you longed for work.

ALI

I hope I'm not interrupting anything. I'll sit over there as peaceful as a dove.

Ali sits in a corner and amuses himself by watching the conversation. The businessmen eye him doubtfully.

SELIM

(looking at the business men and pointing at Ali)
My son Ali. I expect him to take over after me.

SELIM

(looking at the businessmen)
Sorry for the interruption. Where were we?

BUSINESSMAN (1)

Our company is specialized in producing electronic tools that help manufacture computers. The company needs capital to buy modern machinery for its planned expansion.

BUSINESSMAN (2)

Our company will issue a large amount of stocks. We suggest that you buy them altogether. I assure you that within three years you'll have a guaranteed profit.

SELIM

(after a moment silence)
I would like more time to consider this.

Suddenly Ali speaks.

ALI

What 's the stock value?

BUSINESSMAN (1)

Three million dollars.

ALI

Can I see the documents that show the costs of the new machines,
their market value, and the interest rate?

BUSINESSMAN (1)

Of course. Here.

ALI

I would also like to know of any sudden changes in the interest
rate. A sharp increase there would ruin the whole deal. I need a list
of fluctuations of interest rates over the past six months.

BUSINESSMAN (2)

We don't have that right now, but we can get it from the bank very
quickly.

SELIM

(rises from his chair and walks up to Ali)

Ali, this is your deal. Sit with our guests and discuss this with
them. The decisions will be yours, and that depends on how you
study the matter.

ALI

But father...

SELIM

(whispering to Ali so that the businessmen cannot hear what he is saying)

Your interest in doing business has lain dormant for more than
three years. It's about time you take care of my money and yours.

SELIM (CONT)

(turning to the business men)

I've to leave now. I leave my son in charge of this deal. It's up to
him to decide its worth.

Selim leaves the room. The chauffeur of his Rolls Royce opens the
door for him. The Rolls Royce moves forward heading to the Ritz.
Selim calls his wife through his cell phone.

SELIM

Safia, Meet me at the Ritz for launch. I have a surprise for you.

INT. RITZ CLUB RESTAURANT – DAY

Selim and Safia sit at the Ritz restaurant having launch.

SAFIA

what's the surprise you're talking about?

SELIM

(enthusiastically)

Ali visited me today. He seemed bored when he entered the office and sat carelessly in a corner with no apparent interest in the business discussion. Suddenly, he began asking questions and showed he had good economic sense. I authorized him to make all decisions on the deal.

SAFIA

(her eyes glowing with happiness)

Thank God. Ali's power for action is being renewed. I know my son. Once he sets on a course, he won't shift from it. How strange the world is. Things seem to happen by chance, but it is actually due to God's planning and absolute wisdom.

While having launch, Selim receives a call from Ali.

INTERCUT BETWEEN SELIM AND ALI

ALI

(talking from Selim's office)

Dad, there's a good possibility from investment in the Swiss project.

SELIM

All right, boy. I authorize you to close the deal. I'll buy the stocks in your name. We'll split the profits 50-50. By the way, your mother and I have decided to stay in Cairo for a while. You're on your own now kid.

ALI

But father...

SELIM

You've 1.7 billion pound Sterling to play with. Bye kid.

INT. SELIM'S OFFICE – DAY

With the passage of time Ali becomes known as an intelligent businessman with a sense of modesty and a strong will to act. He goes out on his own and gradually builds an empire over which he has absolute control.

THE CAMERA moves forward to reveal Ali running his business from his father's office.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALI AND HENRY, THE STOCKBROKER

ALI

(talking on the phone to his stockbroker)

Henry, Martin and LILI are going public. Place an order to buy their stocks. Get the best price you can.

HENRY

But these companies are small and new in the market. Their stocks are of low value. You don't want to hold stocks with little demand. Besides, you already bought stocks in 15 strong corporations. Your portfolio is well diversified.

ALI

I also buy stocks in small companies, then controlling, guiding and directing their management until they prosper and their stock become profitable when sold in the market. Buy their stocks now.

HENRY

Yes, Sir.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN: "Five years later - Cairo"

INT. SELIM'S VILLA IN CAIRO – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Selim lies down on the couch reading a book. The telephone rings.
Selim answers it.

SELIM
Hello.

ALI
Hi dad.

INTERCUT BETWEEN SELIM AND ALI

SELIM
Ali! How nice of you to call. How are you boy?

ALI
I'm fine dad. You've been staying in Cairo for quite a while. Aren't
you coming to London soon?

SELIM
Maybe in a week or two.

SELIM (CON'T)
(smiling)
I've been pursuing your news in the London Daily Mail. They say
everything you touch turns into gold. Since you entered the world
of business your own fortune amounted to 1.8 billion pound
Sterling, in addition to my fortune which escalated to a similar
figure.

ALI
(laughing)
Well, more or less.

SELIM
The Daily Mail also says that you bought a new jet to go around
the world racing from one opportunity to another.

ALI
I find solace in work in the various sites around the world.

SELIM
(worriedly)

Solace! Do you work that hard to find solace! Is that girl still occupying your mind? Are you still drunk with love?

ALI

Not at all dad. I'm sober as a judge. I'm hardworking that's all.

ALI (CON'T)

Dad, I'm calling to know your opinion about an important matter.

SELIM

(frowning)

I'm listening.

ALI

I'm thinking of establishing a bank. How you like the idea?

SELIM

(a moment silence)

It's a giant step Ali.

SELIM CON'T)

(beat)

Why not? Go ahead, you have my blessings.

ALI

Thank you dad. I'll take the necessary steps right away.

INT. ALI'S BANK – LONDON – DAY

THE CAMERA moves through London streets until it settles on a bronze sign having the words "Investment Bank". THE CAMERA moves across the offices and compartments of the employees until it settles on a wooden door with a bronze sign having the words "Chairman". THE CAMERA penetrates into the vast room to reveal Ali sitting at his desk talking on the phone.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALI AND HENRY, THE STOCKBROKER

ALI

Henry, more investors are currently buying. The stock price is moving up, sell my shares in LIL and Martin, and place an order to buy shares in Ford and Walt Disney.

HENRY
Yes Sir.

HENRY (CON'T)
Congratulations for the new bank. The world of finance is talking about this huge step.

ALI
Thank you Henry. I took several steps to harmonize the bank's policies with the changes that resulted from the liberalization of the world's major stock markets.

HENRY
How so?

ALI
I purchased a British company specialized in buying and selling stock in international markets.

HENRY
O! Very smart of you.
ALI
How about working for me, Henry.

HENRY
Silence.

ALI
Your new title will be: "Director of the International Stock and Investment Company". The company will be stationed here in the bank. You know, the bank is the nerve center from which my final decisions are made.

HENRY
It's my pleasure to work with you Mr. Ali.

ALI
Your office is ready for you. You can start tomorrow.

INT. LONDON - SELIM'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM -
EVENING

Selim and Ali sit in the drawing room chatting on business matters.

SELIM

What about your private life? Sometimes you seem sad, and you seldom speak unless spoken to. That relaxed expression you always carry is hiding something. Haven't you thought of marriage?

ALI

I haven't.

SELIM

Your mother and I hope to live to see your wedding day.

ALI

I barely have time for myself. How could any woman accept that?

SELIM

I want to see my grandsons before I die, son.

ALI

No woman will share her life with me unless I love her first.

SELIM

I just want to see you happy.

ALI

Don't worry about me father. I'm leading a triumphant life, and it grows fuller everyday.

Selim is silent for a while, then changes the subject.

SELIM

Did you pay the Zakat (poor due) of your wealth during all these years?

ALI

Zakat due on my savings amounts to millions. The problem is, I don't know where to spend it.

SELIM

Listen carefully my son. Zakat is the fourth pillar of Islam. It is an obligation prescribed by God on those Muslim men and women who possess enough means to distribute a certain percentage of their annual savings or capital among the poor and the needy.

SELIM (CON'T)

The literal meaning of the word Zakat is 'purity'. Zakat purifies the soul and cures the lust for wealth. The root of all evil is the love of worldly things. If a Muslim can save himself from the lure of wealth, he will be able to protect himself from many other vices.

SELIM (CON'T)

Zakat is not a tax levied by a government, nor is it a voluntary contribution. It is first and foremost a duty enjoined by God and hence a form of worship. Thus, while a prayer is an act of worship through words and bodily action, Zakat is a devotional act through one's wealth.

ALI

All right father. From now on, I'll pay Zakat. I'll estimate its value over the past years and pay it to those who deserve it.

SELIM

Tell me about your bank. Is it usurious?

ALI

I'm afraid so. Usurious banks in the West play an important role in promoting world economy.

SELIM

All religions forbid usurious transactions. To Islam, usury is the root of many social evils.

ALI

How would an Islamic bank benefit from lending without interest?

SELIM

Participation, not the loan at interest, is the way to profit and to increase capital. Financing by participation means that the bank shares in the capital of productive projects, and becomes a partner in its ownership and management. The bank also shares in the profit or loss according to agreed-upon proportions. This participation obliges each of the two partners to do his best to make the investment-project thrive.

INT. NOTRH CAROLINA - COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

The Senator, Clark, James and Diana gather around the meeting table to discuss business matters.

JAMES

As planned, the company offered stock valued at twenty million dollars. The bank bought all of it and the loan would be repaid after seven years at 16% yearly interest. We bought new machines, established four new production lines, and hired additional workers.

DIANA

The expansion we made increased production and covered the demands of local and international markets. Profits rose to 8 million dollars a year.

CLARK

Although annual interest is 3.2 million dollars, James is also paying the bank part of the loan in the amount of 2.8 million with the hope of paying it off before the grace period ends.

SENATOR

This means that the cost of the loan and its interest consume most of the profits.

SENATOR (CON'T)

(reading in some papers before him)

And as I see here, when the profits fell in some years James fulfilled our commitment to the bank by paying part of the loan and its yearly interest from our own accounts.

JAMES

Our position is good. The situation is working out well.

SENATOR

Yes, James. We rely on you completely to keep the company solvent. We had already put all our shares in your hands since the expansion began.

INT. COMPANY – PRODUCTION LINES – JAMES OFFICE

THE CAMERA dives into the production lines to show Diana moving between the equipments and machines while talking to the workers. THE CAMERA pans with her for a moment then follows her to James office. She enters into James office to see him gazing terrified at a letter from the bank.

DIANA

Is there something I should know?

JAMES

(lits a cigarette and inhales deeply)

It's a letter from the bank saying that the interest rate has risen to 18%. This means the interest rate would be 3.6 million dollars a year, not 3.2.

DIANA

In that case the debt would amount to 6.4 million a year if we also pay the yearly part of the loan. What would happen if the yearly debt exceeded the profits?

JAMES

This would be an unavoidable disaster.

DIANA

Don't pay the yearly part of the loan this year, just pay the interest rate.

JAMES

That's exactly what I have in mind. Anyway, the markets are still consuming all our products at a fair price.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE IN THE CONGRESS

The Senator sits at his desk reading a newspaper.

INSERT HEAD LINE THAT READS:

Low oil prices reduce imports of OPEC countries.

The Senator calls James at his office.

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE SENATOR AND JAMES

SENATOR

James, have you read the news?

JAMES

Yes, Sir.

SENATOR

The lowering of oil prices reduced the revenues of oil countries.
The recession in international trade would certainly affect our
revenues. The chain seems to tighten around our neck.

JAMES

Oil countries had to follow a policy of self-restraint and began
reducing their foreign imports. Two thirds of our goods remained
in the warehouses for three successive years.

SENATOR

Try to concentrate on local markets. You might spot a niche
without serious competition.

JAMES

I sent my appraisers to survey the local markets. They came with
the conclusion that the big companies could easily ruin us. They
are able to maintain their price- fixing cartels, and make enormous
profits, and continue to win.

SENATOR

Easy boy. Keep your mind clear till the end. You will find a way
out I'm sure.

James put down the receiver and calls Diana at her office.

JAMES

Diana, come to my office please.

Diana enters into James office to see him in considerable distress.

DIANA

What's the matter James! Is the situation so hopeless?

JAMES

I've decided to reduce the staff and workers to the minimum. We must reduce 50% of the operating costs.

DIANA

There's no point getting into a panic about the situation. We've got plenty of time.

JAMES

(sharply)

Give them one month's notice and fire them.

DIANA

James, it's a panic decision, we do not need to rush.

JAMES

(shouting at her)

Don't argue with me, do as you are told.

EXT. COMPANY'S INNER COURTYARD – DAY

THE CAMERA moves forward to reveal the fired workers violently demonstrating against James at the inner courtyard of the company.

THE CAMERA then moves to the office of James secretary and focuses on a man asking to see James.

MAN

Can I see Mr. James? I represent workers union.

SECRETARY

Mr. James, a man from workers union wants to see you.

THE CAMERA moves into James office to reveal James rising angrily from his chair, dashes to the door, opens it, and stands in the doorway shouting at the union man.

JAMES

You bastard, I had enough of you and your workers. Get out of my sight.

James then enters into his office and slams the door shut.

INT. BANK OF NORTH CAROLINA – DAY

THE CAMERA dives into the bank to reveal James sitting with the manager discussing financial matters.

JAMES

I want to retabulate my debts until I could sell some of my capital assets.

MANAGER

The Senator asked me to make things easier for you.

JAMES

My credibility is well known to the bank. I've been regularly paying all my debts during the past years.

MANAGER

Your credibility is beyond doubt Mr. James. You're who you claim to be, and can therefore be trusted.

MANAGER (CON'T)

But I must warn you Mr. James, the debt had consumed all you paid for in interest and loans over the past few years. This would make the principal interest a compound.

MANAGER (CON'T)

I'll send you my representative with the tabulation we see fit under the current situation.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – MORNING

James is having breakfast with Diana in the dining room.

JAMES

(muttering to himself while eating)

The company is running 75% short of normal profits. The losses are formidable, and prices slide downward.

JAMES

(shouting desperately)

The bastards are going to shaft me. They want to push me out of business.

James is about to leave for work when he feels a sudden, strong pain in the right side of his belly. He rushes to the bathroom and vomits blood. He screams calling Diana. Diana runs in and quickly takes James to bed. She calls the family doctor, who comes to examine James.

DOCTOR

Is he still drinking too much?

DIANA

Yes.

DOCTOR

Have him taken to the hospital immediately.

INT. HOSPITAL – DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

THE CAMERA swoops toward the entrance of the hospital, then penetrates inside to reveal James lying in bed and exposed to thorough clinical examination. Diana watches with signs of worry shown on her face.

THE CAMERA focuses on a printer printing a sheet of paper. A nurse removes the sheet from the printer. THE CAMERA follows her to the doctor's office.

NURSE

Sir, Mr. James report.

The doctor reads the report and frowns with apparent worry. He picks up the receiver and talks to his secretary.

DOCTOR

Call room 16 and ask Mrs. Robertson to come to my office immediately.

Upon receiving the call in James room, Diana rushes to the doctor's office.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid James medical case is extremely serious.

DIANA

(extremely worried)
I don't understand.

DOCTOR

The prolonged use of alcohol has resulted into a severe liver fibrosis. The analysis also revealed spleen swelling and gastric bleeding.

DIANA

What do you suggest, doctor?

DOCTOR

A few weeks in the hospital will put him to rights.

Diana leaves the doctor's office quickly and rushes to James room. She finds him fully dressed preparing to leave.

DIANA

(shouting)

James, what are you doing? The doctor said you must stay at the hospital for a few weeks.

JAMES

I can't leave the company that long, especially under the present circumstances.

DIANA

James, please, it's your life. That's more important than anything else.

JAMES

(leaving in haste)
I'll think it over.

The doctor suddenly appears at the door. James stands still for a moment, then elbows his way through the door. The doctor stands aside and lets him pass. Diana tries to catch up with James but the doctor's words stop her.

DOCTOR

His body's wearing out. I don't know what he's doing to himself. You'd better convince him to enter the hospital. If you don't, he'll be dead within two months.

DIANA

(her expression registering fear)
What about his child? I'm two months pregnant.

DOCTOR

Does he know?

DIANA

I was waiting for the right moment to tell him, but he was always busy.

DOCTOR

Please tell him. There isn't enough time to hide anything from him.

INT. JAMES BEDROOM – NIGHT

James is in bed with a bottle of wine. He is exhausted by blood loss.

DIANA

James, please, Stop drinking, you're simply killing yourself.

He obeys for a few hours, but tremors and terrible headaches blast his body, forcing him to drink copiously again.

DIANA

(crying)

James, dear, come to yourself. I'm carrying your baby. I'm two months pregnant.

But James gives no sign of hearing her.

JAMES

(delirious and more distant than ever before)

The company will be sold to pay off the bank. I must do something before the axe falls.

Bleeding and convulsions wrack him. His body breaks down, leaving him in a coma.

INT. HOSPITAL – NIGHT

At the hospital doctors examine James' motionless body. The Senator, Diana and Clark Robertson gather around James' bed, watching sadly. They know he is near death.

James remains unconscious for hours, then suddenly opens his eyes and, distracted, looks at the ceiling.

JAMES

(in a weak trembling voice)

I wonder about the young man you once loved. I tried to have him killed. It was an ambush. His image has remained in my memory ever since. I still remember his words, because everything he said has happened. He told me that whatever one plans for tomorrow isn't sufficient to predict anything in the womb of the future, because that is in God's hand and occurs only according to His will. What man must do is plan for tomorrow, work hard during the day,

and resign to God what may come. I planned for everything, but I didn't consider...consider...

His eyes become dull, his voice stops, and he takes his last breath.

Diana looks into James' eyes. They are blank, cold and dead. Instead of feeling sad, rage shakes her from head to foot. She runs from the room with his words ringing in her ears and inflaming her blood.

The Senator runs after her in the corridor. He finds her leaning on the wall crying. He holds her dearly. His tender touch increases her agony and makes her cry uncontrollably. The Senator seats her on a near bench trying to calm her down.

SENATOR

I understand. The loss of James is a great blow to you.

DIANA

(through her tears)

I don't weep over his death. How dare he try to kill Ali? The only man I loved. What had he gained from such a murderous act?

SENATOR

Is that man still lingering in your mind Diana? Look ahead of you. You have a company to run under difficult circumstances.

DIANA

You forced me to marry a man I don't love. I never cared for him. He was brute and a fool with nothing to offer but pain. My future with him was in vain.

SENATOR

(with tears in his eyes)

Don't be hard on me baby. I'm too fragile to be left with a sense of guilt.

DIANA

He'd been nothing but a stormy wind that swept into my life, filling it with misery.

SENATOR

Be fair my child, admit his favor upon you. He taught you a lot.

DIANA

I depended on him for guidance, taking it along with doses of bitterness.

DIANA (CON'T)

What had I gained? Nothing but a penniless orphaned child, and days of infinite fatigue.

DIANA (CON'T)

What happened to our dream dad? We've gone up the mountain in order to get a ride down?

INT. COMPANY – DAY

Diana takes over the company after James' death. She sits at James' office not knowing what to do. She escapes her panic through drinking. Several drinks a day consol her soul and help her believe she could cope with the crisis.

She walks to the mini bar and fetch herself a double.

The secretary calls her.

SECRETARY

Mrs. Robertson, a representative from the bank wants to see you.

DIANA

Let him in.

The bank representative enters the room, Diana ushers him to sit down.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

Several months had passed and you haven't fulfilled your commitment toward the bank. The bank is worried concerning the way you run the business around here.

DIANA

(sipping her Whisky)

James had done his best to get things moving. He reduced 50% of the operating costs.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

You have nothing to run except debts Mrs. Robertson. The tabulation Mr. James made with the bank before he died seems useless.

DIANA

(laughing ironically)

I'm like a sheep trying to avoid the hand of a butcher.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

I'm here to warn you Mrs. Robertson. As the major shareholder, the bank may sell the company to another owner.

DIANA

You've said what you've to say.

DIANA (CON'T)

(pointing at the door)

Now, Mr. Bank representative. I've work to do. You know your way out of course.

The bank representative leaves the room embarrassed, and signs of anger are shown on his face.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – DRAWING ROOM – NIGHT

The Senator sits exhausted in the drawing room. Diana stands at the mini bar fetching herself a drink.

SENATOR

You drink yourself into oblivion Diana.

DIANA

(laughing ironically)

Liquor – that's what James really taught me...ha, ha...

SENATOR

You disappoint me, Diana. I come home every night to find you in a drunken stupor. Wine is not the solution.

DIANA

It was your idea that I marry James. Now look what I have become,
a useless frightened creature.

SENATOR

Don't blame me Diana. Everything is controlled by fate. You
married James according to fate.

DIANA

(laughing in derision)

A fate worse than death, don't you think? The bank is talking about
liquidation. The overall picture is grim, Senator.

SENATOR

(tears in his eyes)

The crisis had come down on me too. Seeing you all alone
watching the company going into the grave is intolerable.

The Senator begins to cry aloud. Diana kneels before him and
holds his face in her arms for long moments. She kisses his hair,
then rises to her feet and leaves the room.

INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Diana is in bed with a glass of Whisky in her hand. Mary places a
pillow behind her back, then sits on the edge of the bed waiting for
Diana to sleep.

DIANA

(befuddled)

I've decided to get rid of the baby. I don't want anything to remind
me with James.

MARY

Don't reject God's generous gift to you. You've a reason to rejoice,
not to reject. I raised you since you're a child. I'll be happy to raise
your child too.

DIANA

You're the only mother I knew. You are my only friend.

DIANA (CON'T)
(singing in a low voice)

My heart had once a mate, but now it's lonesome and desolate.

DIANA (CON'T)
(still singing)

They ruined my life when they took my love away.

MARY

You can find love in your baby. Just love your baby.

MARY (CON'T)
(while taking the empty glass away)

Now, child, promise me not to touch that poison again.

DIANA
(laughing ironically)
I promise you, just this one night.

Mary kisses Diana good night and leaves the room.

INT. SENATOR'S DRAWING ROOM – NIGHT (CON'T)

Mary goes downstairs to the drawing room to see if the Senator needs anything before she retires to her room. The Senator sits in his chair; his white head bends down over his chest as if falling into slumber.

MARY

Sir, is there anything you need before I retire to my room?

Senator
(lifting his head slowly to her)
Is Diana okay?

MARY

I put her to bed a few minutes ago.

SENATOR

(As if talking to himself)

Diana is my only child. I love her. I never meant to cause her pain.
I just wished that she takes over for me when I retire, that's all.

SENATOR (CON'T)

She ...she failed to see the logic behind my plans.

MARY

There's no logic in forcing Diana to marry a man she didn't love.

SENATOR

(as if he didn't hear her)

My plans for her hadn't ever taken into account that she could let
herself fall in love with a stranger. It amazed me that she had
surrendered to such passion. Women sometimes defend their love
by being unrealistic.

MARY

Diana is sentimental like her mother. Her mother always ran after
you, asking for a warm place to settle after your marriage, but you
were too busy closing a deal or executing a project.

MARY

(beat)

I remember her dying words, "Let Diana live her own life and don't
impose anything on her against her will." At that time, you couldn't
see what she meant, but as it seems you finally understood.

SENATOR

Damn it. The only intention this stranger had was to dominate her
fortune. I tried to manage her, so she wouldn't get hurt. James was
the solution. I chose the most suitable man for her.

MARY

That man ruined her life. His heart was only fed with figures. Man
loves with his heart and not with figures in his mind.

SENATOR

(angrily)

You have no right to talk to me like that. Get out of my sight you old fool.

MARY

I have all the right to protect Diana. She is my daughter. I raised her since she was two years-old.

SENATOR

Get out of my sight, I said.

MARY

(leaving the room)

Good night, Senator.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – DIANA'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Diana is eight month pregnant. Tremors of anxiety seize her as the date of birth approaches. She escapes her panic through drinking. Mary keeps her in bed most of the time. She watches over her to keep her away from drinking. But Diana manages to drink a few glasses of whisky every day behind her back. Diana is in bed. Mary is holding her and patting her back tenderly.

DIANA

I had the intention of getting rid of the baby, but now I want him more. The baby would bring me salvation.

MARY

The baby is a blessing from God. Thank goodness for His blessings.

DIANA

(suddenly rejoicing - puts Mary's hand on her belly)

Mary, look, look, the baby is kicking. I love that baby. Now I have something to live for.

DIANA (CON'T)

But someone might come to steal my baby. Hadn't they already taken everything I had? I'm surrounded by enemies trying to hurt me.

MARY

Diana, have you been drinking behind my back? You are hallucinating!

MARY (CON'T)

(with tears in her eyes)

Those kicks could be the baby's rejection of the wine you pour into him while he is imprisoned in your womb unable to defend himself.

INT. HOSPITAL – DAY

The date of birth arrives. Diana lies in bed at the hospital gripping the bed linens convulsively. The Senator and Mary are waiting worriedly outside Diana's room. The Senator looks old and desiccated as a withered leaf.

The intervals between Diana's contractions become shorter, and the contractions grow in strength. The doctor reaches into Diana and touches the baby's shoulder and head. He brings the head toward the birth canal. Diana screams as her whole body tries to expel the child. The focus of her world narrows until she sees nothing but her baby.

DIANA

(screaming with pain)

I want my baby, I want to see my baby.

The doctor hesitates, but Diana keeps screaming hysterically.

DIANA

Where is my baby? I want to see my baby.

The doctor nods to the nurse. The nurse shows Diana her baby. What she sees is a large malformed baby dead already.

DIANA

(screaming hysterically)

You fucking bastards. I hate you. You killed my baby. Mary they killed my baby.

The doctor gives her a strong sedative to put her into a long sleep.

The doctor leaves the room to see the Senator. The Senator and Mary see the doctor coming. They rise to their feet to receive the news. The doctor tells them the sad news. Mary bursts into tears. The Senator sits again feeling a terrible pain. He tries to speak but words become stuck in his throat. He struggles to get to his feet, but he's lost the partial use of his arms and legs, though he could barely still talk.

With tearful eyes, Diana leaves the hospital without a child to fill her life with joy, and wheeling a crippled father in a wheelchair.

EXT. ST. MORITZ – SNOW HILLS AND SLOPES – SUMMER
– DAY

At that time Ali summers at ST. Moritz, enjoying nature's beauty. He spends weeks trying to learn ski. He chooses a slope, hit the snow with his poles, and rushes down, enjoying the wind whistling in his ears. After a moment his speed increases. When he tries to stop, he falls down. He tries several times without success.

A skillful woman skier stands and watches as Ali stumbles and falls. She laughs as she approaches, waiting for him to repeat his attempt. He rushes down the slope, and she goes with him, keeping him in sight. He falls so hard he decides to stop and returns to the hotel.

As Ali lies on the ground, he sees the woman laughing at him from above, holding her sides as if they ache.

ALI

I thought I could learn how to ski without taking lessons.

WOMAN

(offering a hand to help him up)

Learning how to ski has never been easier. How could you attempt a dangerous sport like this without lessons?

ALI

I thought if I watched others, I'd learn.

He glances at her without ascertaining her features under her snow hat and dark glasses. She couldn't see his face, either, for the same reason.

WOMAN

I don't mind giving you one free lesson, so you can enjoy skiing at St. Moritz.

ALI

I was about to give up, but you give me hope.

THE CAMERA focuses on the woman giving Ali some instructions, then skiing with him in easy slopes.

WOMAN

Ski within your limits and take only the easy slopes. I'm going to a steeper slope where I usually ski.

ALI

May I ask you your name? I'm Ali.

WOMAN

I'm Simone.

INT. ST. MORITZ – HOTEL'S RESTAURANT – NOON

At the hotel's restaurant, a beautiful woman, with long, dark hair swirling behind her back passes in front of Ali looking for an empty seat. She quickly looks around and sees the waiter nodding to an empty seat at Ali's table.

She sits opposite to Ali and salutes him with a smile and nod before reading quickly through the menu and tossing it carelessly to the table. Her elbow on the table, she leans her chin on her lace fingers and examines Ali with a woman's eye. His beauty and athleticism are admirable. She first assumes he is from Latin America or Spain, but she soon realizes he is from Arabia.

The waiter arrives to take the orders.

SIMONE

Casual lunch and a bottle of red wine.

ALI

(smiling)

Exactly as Miss Simone has ordered, but without the wine.

SIMONE

(surprised)

How'd you know my name?

ALI

(smiling)

From your voice.

SIMONE

(burst into laughter)

You're Ali?

ALI

Yes.

SIMON

Where do you come from?

ALI

Egypt.

SIMONE

I'm French.

Their lunches arrive. They eat while they talk.

ALI

Are you here on vacation?

SIMONE

I haven't given myself a vacation for three years.

ALI

Does that mean you work on your own account?

SIMONE

Yes. I own a perfume plant in Paris.

ALI

That sounds interesting.

SIMONE

What's so interesting about it?

ALI

Perfume is like a collection of exciting melodies that soothe one's heart

SIMONE

People differ about what perfume means to them. Some see it as temptation and enchantment. Others see it as a mystery or a ghost.

ALI

It might also mean treachery. There's a perfume by that name.

SIMONE

Some equate perfume with snake spitting venom at people's hearts.

SIMONE

(stops eating and looks at him for a long time)

Perfumes have magic horizons like mystery and excitement. No one can discover the secret of a perfume vial save behind a woman's ear.

He smiles, and asks the waiter for a cup of coffee. He calmly sips the coffee as he watches Simone pour a glass of wine. She holds the glass in both hands and tastes the wine, her eyes glowing with mischief.

ALI

You incline to excitement when you compare perfume with a snake, meaning a woman, of course. I don't see it like that. Perfume may resemble things more calm, like night in its silence, and love in its mystery.

SIMONE

You compare perfume with love, treachery, and night. It seems that you've fallen in love, then been lonesome in the night as you search for love among the stars.

ALI

(surprised by her sharp intelligence)
It's like that if you wish.

SIMONE

I don't look at the stars searching for love. I don't confine myself to one man. I move from one man to another without hurting my heart.

ALI

(lifting his eyebrows in surprise)
How can you do that?

SIMONE

Each man has a special flavor. I don't confine myself to just one.

ALI

Every beautiful woman has a special taste, but the heart loves only one.

SIMONE

That's if you wish to be engaged to a particular woman. If you want to be free, you'll realize my point of view.

SIMONE (CON'T)

Aren't you going to share wine with me?

ALI

Sorry. I don't drink.

SIMONE

(laughing)

You're an ideal man then. What have you also deprived yourself of?

ALI

We don't touch wine, and we forbid going from one love to another save with a marriage contract.

SIMONE

(sarcastically)

I understand. There are many Arabs in France. I'm familiar with their customs.

ALI

I hope my views don't bother you.

SIMONE

Not at all. To me, you're an exciting adventure I wish to explore.

ALI

How's that?

SIMONE

I'll try living with a saint. I'll put sexual instincts aside and try to live in your idealistic world.

ALI

My world is the world of virtue and loyalty.

SIMONE

(as if looking for a new adventure)

I want to see that world. It seems luminous.

ALI

Why do you want to leave your world for mine?

SIMONE

(simply)

Because you're a very good looking man.

ALI

(smiling)

I'm not offering anything but friendship.

SIMONE

(laughing)

I accept you saint.

EXT. ST. MORETZ – RESTAURANTS – CAFÈS – ICY
MOUNTAINS- SLOPES

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH LONG DIALOGUES

Ali invites Simone to elegant restaurants and charming cafés. They become inseparable save for another date that may be within a few moments. She looks grand at every meeting. Her perfumes and costumes

diversify according to the time of each date and the nature of each occasion.

- 1- Ali and Simone climb the mountain in an elevator.
- 2- Ali and Simone skiing together.
- 3- Ali and Simone are having launch in a cozy restaurant. They chat together:

ALI

Tell me about perfume composition.

SIMONE

Perfume is composed of carefully selected fragrances. It is made alluring by the addition of precious wood sap, tender oriental elements, lily, musk, ambergris, Bulgarian flowers, and lilies of the valley.

- 4- Ali and Simone are having coffee in a café shop. He says to her:

ALI

Why Bulgarian flowers are selected in particular to produce a good perfume?

SIMONE

At the foot of the Balkan Mountains in Bulgaria, there's a valley called Kazanlak, in which the best flowers are grown. They mature at the end of May. Pickers gather at dawn to collect them. Two thousand flowers produce only one gram of essence, and perfumers strive to use it in making perfumes.

INT. HOTEL'S RESTAURANT – NOON

Simone's vacation ends. Before she leaves she has launch with Ali at the hotel's restaurant. After they finish, she rises preparing to leave. A look of sorrow shows clearly in her eyes. But Ali stops her by putting his hand over hers.

ALI

A small present for you.

He holds up a red-velvet box. She looks at him in surprise.

SIMONE

Women accept gifts from men if there's something special between them. Our relationship is only a passing one.

ALI

You gave me beautiful moments that pleased my heart. It's done me good to talk with a remarkable lady like you.

SIMONE

(with a fading smile)

I don't want to have anything to remind me of you. I feel that, if I stay longer with you, my heart will restrict itself to only one man. You give only friendship.

ALI

Friendship has a beautiful meaning that gathers people's hearts.

SIMONE

It's not enough for a woman who wants to be alone with you.

She opens the box and finds a gold watch set with diamonds and glowing with rubies. He smiles at her astonishment, then laughs.

SIMONE

It's not a watch but a flower shining with diamonds and glowing with rubies.

ALI

There you are, talking the language of flowers again. You know what I feel right now? I want to see the valley of flowers at the bottom of the Balkan Mountains.

SIMONE

I'll be there in May to close some deals.

ALI

I'll go with you. Give me your address in Paris.

SIMONE

(While giving him her card)

Have you given all the women you've known before gifts like this?

ALI

Only those who pleased my heart.

SIMONE

Are they many?

ALI

They don't surpass the fingers of one hand.

SIMONE

I'm sorry if I am intruding on your private life. I don't know what's happening to me. I feel I want to know all about you. You arouse deep emotions in me that might carry me to a merciless love.

ALI

(laughing)

I won't let you.

SIMONE

(sadness edging her voice)

Who can prevent a soul from loving an amiable heart?

Simone stands suddenly as if escaping. He escorts her to her elegant Alfa Romeo sports car. She gets in and looks up at his eyes. She waves and drives off, escaping from a love she knows would make her heart bleed.

Ali feels a pang of loneliness after Simone left, so he decides to return to London.

INT. SELIM'S MANSION – DINING ROOM – ALI'S BEDROOM -
COLD WINTER – NIGHT

Ali leaves his office at the bank late at night, and drives home. Saber opens the door for him and takes his coat.

SABER

How was your day, Ali?

ALI

As usual, work, work, work.

SABER

You are late. You'll eat dinner alone I'm afraid.

Ali eats his dinner in silence, then goes upstairs to his room. He puts himself into a pair of pajamas and slid into bed. Sleep abandons him; he takes a book from a small table beside his bed and begins reading it. After he tires of that, he turns off the light and sleeps.

He dreams he walks amid snowy mountains, with snow coming up to his knees. The cold is severe, penetrating to the bone and almost stopping the flow of blood in his veins.

Despite his heavy coat, he shivers uncontrollably and wonders where he should go. The place is strange to him. As far as he could see, there is nothing but snowy mountains surrounded by intense fog.

Suddenly he hears a faint, distant moan. He follows the sound, hearing the moan grow clearer until he identifies it as a woman weeping in the snow. He hurries to offer help.

He finds a woman sitting on the ice, her hands folded on her knees, her head drooping to her chest, her eyes closed, her brows knitted as if in pain.

She wears a thin undergarment that doesn't offer any shelter against the frost or even cover her adequately. She is nearly naked, and her whole body quivers with cold and weeping.

He sits on his knees before her, putting his hand on her hair, but she doesn't move. Lifting her head, he sees tears flowing from gray-green eyes he knows very well.

He awakes shouting in grief, "Diana are you all right?"

His heart sinks with horror at the thought of her in danger.

Ali picks up the receiver and calls Henry.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALI AND HENRY – NIGHT

ALI

Henry, see if Stevenson and Robertson has stock for sale in the market. If not, I want to know the company's financial status.

HENRY

Yes Mr. Ali. Just give me ten minutes.

Ali put the receiver down. He walks the room back and forth waiting impatiently for Henry's call. Henry calls at last. Ali rushes to the telephone.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALI AND HENRY

ALI

Henry, well!

HENRY

The company is 30 million dollars in debt.

ALI

Has the company any stocks in the market?

HENRY

The creditor bank has decided to submit half the debt in the market. At present the company has stocks in the market valuing 15 million dollars.

ALI

Buy all the stocks in my name.

HENRY

Are you sure? It's a bad bargain, you have never concluded a deal at a loss before.

ALI

Do as I say.

ALI (CONT)

Put the condition to the creditor bank that arrangements would be discussed and negotiated with Mr. Wallace, my lawyer in North Carolina. Tell Mr. Wallace to represent me in the board.

HENRY

Yes, Sir.

INT. SENATOR'S COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Diana is in the meeting room convening with the bank representative and Mr. Wallace, Ali's lawyer.

BANK REPRESENTATIVE

I'm here to inform you Mrs. Robertson that the bank is not the sole proprietor of the company anymore. We've managed to sell half the debt to another investor.

DIANA

I don't care who bought half the debt. In this company I run nothing but debts.

WALLACE

(giving Diana a document)

This document indicates that half the debt has moved to another investor. From now on I'll represent him in the board until he finds enough time to attend in person.

DIANA

(ironically)

Is he so busy?

WALLACE

Yes, Mrs. Robertson. He is indeed. I'm here to explain the rights of my client and to emphasize the importance of paying the interest on time.

DIANA

Is there among you someone who could talk about profits, gains, hope! I feel like a prisoner surrounded by his executioners.

DIANA (CON'T)

(rising from her seat)

Enough for today. All you talk about is how to serve the debt and collect its interest. You two are not interested in the good of the company, but only in your own interest. Good day gentlemen.

Diana quits the room leaving the two men looking at each other in confusion.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Diana eases herself into a chair in the living room with a drink in her hand. The Senator in his wheelchair looks at her in sadness.

DIANA

How these morons expect me to pay the debt? An outstanding debt of 30 million dollars! Father, rejoice, we'll die heavily in debt.

SENATOR

(with difficulty)

Anxiety is bad to your health, child. As long as you have your health, nothing else matters.

DIANA

They were talking a load of rubbish. They only care about their own interest. The good of the company is not in their horizon.

DIANA (CON'T)

How had we managed to run up so many debts? It's a bad debt dad, a bad debt.

SENATOR

I hate to see you going to the bad. Stop worrying about the debt.

DIANA

I must've done something bad to deserve it. I married James. Now you realize it had been a bad decision in your part.

SENATOR

Grow up child. You will always have the bad as well as the good in the world.

DIANA

(angrily)

I'm just trying to find the answer to the problem, dad. Do you have a problem with that?

SENATOR

Be patient with me Diana. I'm trying to relieve you of some of your pains.

DIANA

(while leaving to her room)

My headache is getting worse. I'll try to get some sleep.

The Senator follows her with weeping eyes.

INT. PERFUME PLANT – PARIS – MONTH OF MAY – DAY

Ali stands at Simone's office door watching her work like a bee. She looks like a first-class businesswoman. Her desk is littered with legal accounts, propositions, and contracts. Beside it is a wheeled table of precious wood carrying a long crystal boat that holds many perfume vials in carved niches.

Simone sees Ali standing at her office door watching her smilingly. She is utterly surprised. She rushes to his arms and holds him dearly.

SIMONE

(while in his arms)

You look wonderful. I missed my moments with you. What brings you to Paris?

ALI

I have a date with a lady who promised to take me to the valley of flowers at the bottom of the Balkan Mountains.

Simone pulls the wooden table closer and perfumes his forehead and palms with perfume from all the vials.

ALI

(laughing)

Isn't one enough?

SIMONE

This is to remind you of certain words spoken in St. Moritz.

ALI

What words?

SIMONE

Didn't you say that perfume is like a collection of exciting melodies
that soothe one's heart?

ALI

You remember all my words?

SIMONE

I've never met a man like you. You're someone to remember.

ALI

I'd pass by you at seven to have dinner together.

SIMONE

That would be nice.

INT. MAXIM'S RESTAURANT – NIGHT

In the famous Maxim's restaurant, they sit at a table for two. In the candlelight, a violinist comes to their table and plays a beautiful Russian melody. While eating Simone's inquisitive mind begins to act.

SIMONE

What line of work are you?

He stops eating and is about to reply when he realizes he couldn't give a specific answer. Could he say he works in numerous fields? He laughs until his eyes become moist with tears.

She laughs with him and waits impatiently for his answer.

ALI

I work in several areas of trade and marketing and banking, but this isn't the time and place to discuss it.

SIMONE

Where do you live?

He laughs again trying to wipe out tears streaming down his face. She presses his hand persistently, insisting on an answer.

ALI

The world is my residence. I pass my nights in hotels.

ALI (CON'T)

When will you be ready to escort me to the valley of flowers?

SIMONE

Tomorrow if you like.

ALI

I'll get you there on my magic carpet the day after tomorrow.

EXT. SIMON'S BUILDING – ORLY AIRPORT – ALI'S JET
PLANE – MORNING

A fancy limousine with Ali in it arrives at Simon's building. Simone slides into the car and kisses Ali good morning. The limousine arrives at Orly Airport. In few minutes Simone finds herself ascending the stairs to a private jet. The pilot standing on top of the stairs welcomes her with a broad smile.

ALI

Larry, my private pilot.

SIMONE

(bewildered)

Is this the pilot of your magic carpet?

ALI

Yes. He'll take you directly to the valley of flowers.

SIMONE

I'm afraid I don't understand. Events are moving too fast.

ALI

(while fastening her seat belt)

Don't bother your little head. Let's live every beautiful moment.

SIMONE

Who are you?

ALI

A man who loves beauty and pursues it everywhere.

SIMONE

You're all romance, magic and mystique.

ALI

Those are perfume names.

SIMONE

How do you see me

ALI

As a spirit exuding its magic, gathering around her all who love
beauty, like me.

LARRY

(from his cabin)

The plane is ready for take-off, Sir.

ALI

Larry, take us to the valley of flowers. Simone will turn it into a
perfume that animates hearts.

EXT. BALKAN MOUNTAINS – KAZANLAK – VALLEY OF
FLOWERS – EARLY MORNING

In Kazanlak they visit the valley of flowers. Flowers are everywhere,
and butterflies fly in swarms. Simone watches Ali standing amid the
flowers, listening to their soft talk. She calls to him tenderly.

SIMONE

Ali!

ALI

(as if in dream)

Look at the clear water running through the rocks to vitalize the
flowers. The scent ravishes my soul and fills my heart with joy. This
glittering beauty shows God's admirable ability to shape the universe.
Do you see what I see, or do I dream alone?

SIMONE

(hearing the beating of her own heart)

Beauty is in you. Your eyes see nothing else. Your feet walk on dust,
and your heart lives in the light.

He looks at her tenderly, puts an arm around her shoulders, and walks
with her down rows of flowers, enjoying nature's beauty.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Simone and Ali visit a flower merchant. Ali sits in a corner
watching Simone admiringly making deals to buy flower essence at
a fair price.
- 2- The take-off of Ali's plane from Sofia Airport heading to Paris.

INT. ALI'S PRIVATE JET – DAY

While in the plane heading back from Sofia to Paris.

SIMONE

How long can you be in Paris?

ALI

I'll leave today.

SIMONE

I suggest that you stay a few days to watch an important fashion show
at Lafayette exhibition.

SIMONE (CON'T)

(laughing)

Who knows? Maybe by attending, I might close a deal.

INT. LAFAYETTE EXHIBITION – NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali sits beside Simone watching female models introducing
diversified dress collections of big dress designers. The designers

also offer a variety of perfumes enclosed in delicate, beautiful vials.

- 2- Ali, Simone and the watchers applaud the models.
- 3- After each show, Simone makes deals with designers to purvey the perfumes they need.
- 4- Ali watches her impressed, admiring her propriety and adroitness.

INT. ALI'S ROOM AT HILTON HOTEL – PARIS – DAY

Ali from his room at the Hilton calls Simone at her perfume plant.

ALI

Simone, I want to see you before I leave today for London. Choose the time and place.

SIMONE

(sad)

Meet me at the plant. A poetic place might excite my emotions.

INT. SIMON'S PLANT – DAY

Simone waits for Ali amid the extraction and distillation instruments, trying to keep busy and avoids showing her true feelings. Ali shows up at the door of her laboratory. He holds out his hand in farewell, and she takes it.

SIMONE

(with tears in her eyes)

I wish our farewell could've been in a more poetic place.

ALI

There's no more poetic place than being amid the odor of perfume.

ALI (CON'T)

(seeing tears in her eyes)

There's nothing more beautiful than love drops glimmering in your eyes.

She embraces him warmly and weeps in his arms. He kisses her hair and her hands.

ALI
(whispers in her ears)
I'll keep in touch. I promise.

INT. ALI'S OFFICE AT THE BANK – DAY

Ali enters his office at the bank and sits at his desk. He finds a letter in the morning mail from North Carolina University. It is an invitation to attend the platinum jubilee. The university is celebrating its 100th year.

INSERT WORDS THAT READ: "Invitation to the Platinum jubilee of North Carolina University."

A cold shiver goes down his spine. Would Diana attend the jubilee? She must have received a similar invitation. What would happen if they meet again? Would love revive in his heart and become as strong as before, or would the barrier he created make it nothing but a memory that would quickly vanish? Was she still fascinating, or had time altered her beauty and affected her body?

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN

To be continued.

EPISODE 5

EXT. RALEIGH – DURBAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT –
ALI'S PRIVATE JET – DAY

THE CAMERA photographs Ali's private jet while touching the ground at Raleigh-Durban Airport.

INT. PRIVATE GARAGE – THE FERRARI - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- 1- Ali leaves the hotel and takes a cab to a private garage. He meets the owner of the garage and enquires about the Ferrari.
- 2- The garage owner points at the car parking in a remote corner.
- 3- Ali and the garage owner walk to the car.
- 4- Ali inspects the car admiringly.

GARAGE OWNER
Are you Mr. Selim?

ALI
I'm his son.

GARAGE OWNER
For a period of over seven years, I received a regular check from your father to take care of the car.

ALI
The car has remained intact after all these years. Thank you for your care.

GARAGE OWNER
You're welcome. Here are the keys. Enjoy driving the magnificent Ferrari.

EXT. VALLEY OF LOVE – LAKE – DAY (CON'T)

Ali drives the Ferrari to the valley of love. He walks into the valley trying to remember the old beautiful days.

His gaze roams the valley's sides for many minutes. Between the flowers she whispered the words of love. At the lake, her laughter filled the place with joy.

FLASH BACK

Diana looks up the hill and sees Ali watching. She holds out her arms to him, and he runs down to her. He picks her up and whirls her

around. She looks down at him, her tears raining on his eyes, her long hair kisses his face. He sets her down and holds her tightly.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – JUBILEE CEREMONY - DAY

At the jubilee ceremony, rows of tables are filled with food and drink. A band plays country melodies and old popular songs, reminding him of the old days.

FLASH BACK

- 1- Between those bushes, their hands entwined, and their smiles kissed.
- 2- There was the old library where they gazed at each other as if they saw the beginning and the end of the world.

He leans against a tree trunk, staring at the crowd through his sunglasses. Perhaps he may see some of his old colleagues.

Finally he sees Susan shaking hands with John. John introduces her to his wife, and she bends to kiss their children.

Ali walks up with a smile. Susan is the first to notice him. For an instance she stares in wonder, then she gives a wide, lovely smile that illuminates her face with happiness. She runs to him with open arms to hug and kiss him.

Ali shakes hands with John, and John introduces him to his wife. Other colleagues come over to salute the famous karate champion of the previous decade.

Susan excuses herself to greet other friends.

SUSAN

Ali, do not wander off. I'll return in a few minutes.

He smiles and nods, 'OK'.

He looks at the crowd, searching for Diana. She isn't there. Perhaps she wouldn't attend. It might be better that way, because he doesn't know what would happen if they meet. What does he fear? She lived with another man who ruined everything he loved in her. His years of darkness are over. He learned a good deal in the past seven

years and managed to heal his wounds until all that remained were faint scars. He'd gotten over his shock and crossed the barriers of agony and despair.

Suddenly, he sees her coming from afar, twinkling like a star on the horizon. How charming she is while walking between the tables, shaking hands with old friends and laughing at their jokes. She moves with lovely, flowing dignity. Well dressed and in good mood. She wears pale lilac silk, her long, blond hair on her shoulders.

She looks ravishing. Her gray-green eyes are as clear as he remembers, while the faint lines at their corners make her eyes more expressive. Her figure has matured and became lovelier. She is more beautiful than he remembers.

At that moment he knew nothing had changed. The years vanished in an instant, and he is as much in love with her as ever.

While laughing at a joke, Diana glances up and sees Ali in the crowd, staring at her from behind his eyeglasses. She feels paralyzed, as if the world stops. There is no sound, light or movement. She views him from top to toe and sees that he is still beautiful and lovely. No man is more handsome. He hasn't changed since they first met. He is as gorgeous as ever and still has the body of a fit, superb athlete.

She walks toward him without resistance. He moves slowly towards her until they meet halfway. Taking off his sunglasses, he looks steadily into her eyes.

The melancholy in that gaze takes away all the words she is about to say, and she wishes he'd speak and relieve her heart.

When he speaks, his words are like the lash of a whip.

ALI

I'm Ali. Do you remember?

DIANA

(in a trembling voice)

How could I forget the most-beautiful days of my life?

DIANA

(pointing to a table away from the rest of the party)
Let's sit there so I can have a good look at you.

They sit opposite each other to talk.

DIANA

Do you still remember our beautiful days? I was happy then.

ALI

Youth must have its fling. It was sheer folly. Since then, I've aged a thousand years in wisdom and experience.

DIANA

Our lives have gone their separate ways for a long time, but you really don't think in your heart that what we had was absurd.

ALI

(smiling bitterly)

You mean the feelings we used to have? They were no more than illusions.

Feeling his bitterness she changed the subject.

DIANA

How many children do you have?

ALI

I never married.

DIANA

(astonished)

How could a man like you not marry?

ALI

I'm still in the flower of my age. Beautiful women are many, but I don't find in them the glow that attracts my heart.

DIANA

What do you mean the glow?

ALI

Purity and clearness. I don't know why those two are so quickly extinguished in women. Oscar Wild once said, 'men get married after being tired of playing around. Women get married for curiosity. All start by failure and frustration'.

DIANA

It seems that the years have changed much of your thinking.

ALI

Time changes people. I've learned that pain shouldn't keep me from realizing the real values of life and that work to achieve happiness is happiness itself.

DIANA

I'm happy, because you know how to enjoy your life.

ALI

I still dream of a better world based on truth, goodness, and beauty.

DIANA

I thought you'd changed, but you're still the same old Ali who wants to save the world.

ALI

Clean heart and pure love could change the world if they chose the righteousness upon which God created the universe.

DIANA

You say heart and love! Two words I forgot many years ago.

Feeling her misery, he tries not to let it show. Instead, he busies himself by putting a piece of cake on her dish and his.

ALI

What about you? Many years have passed since I last saw you.

DIANA

(without thinking)

Nothing's worth saying. I got married. My husband died from liquor. My father became paralyzed, and his political career ended. My company is sunk in debt. I'm left to face my fate alone.

DIANA (CON'T)

What do you do for a living?

ALI

I work in the areas of banking, finance, stocks and bonds, trade, industry, marketing, and several other things.

DIANA

(laughing)

You're a billionaire, then.

ALI

Say that about my father. He's been preparing me since I was a student at the university to help him manage his millions. I carry the load of his fortune and the burden of my own wealth, which I established over the years.

DIANA

(utterly astonished)

You never told me that before.

ALI

Was it necessary?

Diana stares into the distance and sinks into sad silence.

Susan arrives with a big smile. Diana receives her with a warm welcome, because they haven't seen each other in years.

SUSAN

(laughing)

How the years affect people's appearance! John's hair is thinning, and he has a wife and three kids. Timmy has grown old under a domineering wife.

SUSAN (CON'T)

(while happily touching the necklace of rubies and diamonds)
No one who has seen this hasn't expressed admiration. I'll always remember the night you gave it to me. It was like a night of a thousand and one nights.

ALI

(smiling)

I wish our meetings had been more frequent, but its business. Your beautiful neck is decorating that necklace, not the opposite.

SUSAN

(laughing)

You always fascinate the ears with sweet words. How are your father, mother and sister? I miss them very much.

ALI

They're fine thank you. They remember the beautiful days you spent with them. Perhaps we can all meet again.

Suddenly, Ali stands.

ALI

How time flies. I'm afraid too much of me is business. I have work to do before I leave for London. I must be off.

SUSAN

Don't leave us before we can see you again.

ALI

I feel I'll see you often.

SUSAN

That's what you said five years ago, but since then, I haven't seen you.

ALI

(while shaking Susan's hand)

It won't be as long this time. I promise.

When he presses Diana's hand he feels her unwillingness to end the meeting.

Ali leaves the party. Diana and Susan continue chatting.

DIANA

How did you get on with Ali? It seems your relationship with him has deepened. I see that in the necklace he gave you.

SUSAN

I detect a little jealousy, dear.

DIANA

What for? Our love is an old story. That time is gone.

SUSAN

Come off it. The way you just looked at him, it's got to be love. It seems he got through to you again. You two looked like lovers sitting at that remote table.

DIANA

Stop imagining things.

SUSAN

I'm not dear. If love has revived in your heart, don't count on it. Ali's love for you died when you married James. His heart stopped beating as you flew to Hawaii with James for your honeymoon.

SUSAN (CON'T)

When he returned to life, he was completely paralyzed for two years. It wasn't a physical sickness. It was a rejection of life after you stepped on his loving heart.

DIANA

I was young and had to satisfy my sick father. You know I was forced into it. When I returned from Hawaii, I went to the hospital to see Ali. They said he was paralyzed, but at least he was still alive.

SUSAN

I spent weeks at the hospital with him. I watched him go to pieces. You don't know what you did to him. You broke his heart, and I doubt he'll ever forget that.

SUSAN (CON'T)

I warned you about James. I told you he was nothing but a mirage, but you didn't listen. Everything that happened was to be expected. You rejected love, the most beautiful thing in life, and ran after money and wealth, which are fleeting.

DIANA
(while standing)
I'd better go now.

She kisses Susan good-bye and walks away.

INT. ALI'S SUITE AT THE HOTEL – DAY (CON'T)

Ali returns to his suite, his mind filled with anxious thoughts. He sinks into a chair and closes his eyes. Yes he still loves Diana, but his love is mingled with justifiable cruelty.

He whispers to himself:

ALI (V.O.)

Why had love been taken from me? For what crime had I been condemned to seven years of sorrow? You've injured me beyond forgiveness. I laid the treasure of my heart at your feet, and you cared nothing for me. I'd been near death in the hospital when you married a man you didn't love. I kept my heart clean for you all these years while you and James were busy making money. I would never admit my love for you again. It would remain hidden in my soul, never mentioned.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM – DAY-
(CON'T)

In the living room, Diana relives meeting Ali. The sight of him took her breath away. He looked impossibly handsome, just like when they first met. She remembers their treasured past.

She whispers to herself:

DIANA (V.O.)
(tears in her eyes)

Darling, you don't know how miserable I've been. I went through my own hell. Are you still angry after everything I have suffered? I didn't start living again until I saw you at the jubilee. The reserve in your manner and the sadness in your eyes showed the wounds of the past. I wanted to say I've passed through my own bitter moments, but your sharp expression kept me silent. I wanted to tell

you that being away from you was like a knife in my heart, but the cruelty in your eyes made the words die on my lips. Do you still love me as before, or is that gone? Why try to revive hope when you left without even giving me your address?

INT. WALLACE OFFICE – DAY

Ali meets Mr. Wallace in his office.

ALI

Thank you for representing me on the board. I also thank you for your effort in collecting the interest and depositing it in my account.

WALLACE

You pay generously, Mr. Razek for my work.

ALI

The interest is rather high nowadays. Do you think the company financial status would allow paying the interest to the creditors?

WALLACE

I doubt it, because the company's also paying interest to the bank. The total amount of yearly interest is around five million dollars, plus they have operation, labor, maintenance, and insurance costs.

ALI

How about the loan? The due date for payment is approaching.

WALLACE

I don't think, under the present circumstances, the company will be able to pay the loan to you or the bank. The company is dying and you know it.

ALI

When will the board meet again?

WALLACE

In three weeks.

ALI

It seems it's time for me to attend a board meeting.

WALLACE

I've wondered for a long time when you'd do that.

ALI

I'll attend board meetings from now on. I want you there for me.

WALLACE

Of course.

ALI

(as he stands)

By the way, I'd like you to buy me a horse farm. I know one in Virginia of 1,000 acres. The price is rather high. Try to reach a reasonable price with the owner and contact me at my hotel. The details are in the morning papers.

EXT. HORSE FARM – VIRGINIA

After one week from Ali's conversation with Mr. Wallace, Ali became the owner of the Virginia horse farm.

THE CAMERA explores the farm: A big white house overlooking a large arena surrounded by a white, wooden fence. There are many corals and barns. The horses are watching the arena from their boxes.

Ali arrives at the farm in the white Ferrari. He is received by Edgar, whom he appointed to run the farm. Ali and Edgar take a tour exploring the farm. They then lean on the white fence discussing the future of the farm.

ALI

The existing horses would slowly be replaced by Arabians of noble birth. The excess acreage would be cultivated with vegetables and fruit trees with the purpose of marketing the produce later.

EDGAR

Yes Sir.

ALI

We'll travel to the Middle East for buying Arabian horses. Prepare yourself for the trip.

EXT. ALI'S JET PLANE – DUBAI INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT – HORSE FARMS

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali's jet plane touches the ground of Dubai international airport.
- 2- Ali and Edgar take a limousine to a horse farm famous of raising pure Arabian horses.
- 3- The horses are released in the arena for Ali and Edgar to select what they need.
- 4- Edgar supervises their shipping in a huge chartered plain.
- 5- The chartered plane lands safely at Norfolk International Airport.
- 6- Ali and Edgar lean on the farm's white wooden fence watching the horses running before them, raising dust clouds, their colors mingling.

ALI

(as if dreaming)

We have 20 mares with stallions to match. These horses will become legends in their own time. They rival those of King Solomon.

EDGAR

Mr. Razek, you're a man who admires beauty.

ALI

The Arabian horse is a noble animal. He gathers strength and beauty, which endow him with dignity and honor, two characteristics that make him dear to the heart.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

The company board meeting, headed by Diana, is held. Mr. Anderson, the bank representative, and Ali's lawyer, Mr. Wallace, attended. The department heads sit tensely around the table.

Within minutes, Diana's secretary enters the room and whispers:

SECRETARY

The new creditor is asking permission to attend the meeting.

Diana nods, okay.

ALI

(walks in)

Good morning.

Mr. Wallace gives him his seat and sits beside him.

Diana is too shocked to move. Her heart throbs and surprise holds her tongue. She lits a cigarette and inhales deeply, then crushes it out in an ashtray with a nervous movement. As her heart beats erratically, she tries to compose her expression. Making a supreme effort to regain her self-control, Diana finds silence is the best strategy.

WALLACE

I'd like to introduce the new creditor, Mr. Ali Abdel Razek. Because of his busy schedule, I've had to represent him at several board meetings. His presence with us today is a good opportunity for him to see the financial status during the critical circumstances the company faces.

ALI

Thank you Mr. Wallace. I've studied the company's financial status during the past months. The deterioration was due to expansion at the expense of the company's returns.

ANDERSON

Mr. Razek, we're not in a position to criticize the company. That will lead nowhere. We, as creditors, must coordinate our efforts to protect our rights. Our main concern should be to collect the interest and the main loan on time.

ALI

How can we do that, when the total interest is five million dollars a year? The main loan is thirty million, and the due date comes soon.

I want to find ways to support the company and allow it to continue.

ANDERSON

What do you have in mind?

ALI

We can start by retabulating the debts.

ANDERSON

We did that before with Mr. James Robertson.

ALI

Retabulation of debt could be in the form of profit sharing, so the company can generate enough money for more production.

ANDERSON

I'm afraid I don't understand.

ALI

The creditors would receive only half of the profits for a certain time, perhaps five years, then, with the increase of production over time, the profit share would increase. The company can repay the interest and a good portion of the loan.

ANDERSON

Our bank specializes in lending at interest. However, I'll submit your view to my superiors. You'll have the answer at our next meeting.

DIANA

(looking at the other board members)
Is there anything else to discuss?

ALI

Yes. I want to see in the next meeting reports showing the status of each department.

DIANA

(addressing the heads of the departments)
Well, you heard what Mr. Ali said.

DIANA (CON'T)
This meeting is over.

The board members leave the room, while Ali remains in his seat, examining some papers.

DIANA
(smiling)

At last, we've met after all these years, Mr. A.S. Razek. The first letters of your name were on these papers all the time, and I didn't recognize them as yours. I can hardly catch my breath. Events are moving so quickly. First, I saw you at the jubilee. Next you surprise me by being the owner of half our debt. Why did you invest in a project at a loss like this one?

ALI
I've never invested in projects at a loss before.

DIANA
Why do you come to North Carolina? I don't see any privilege in investing in my company.

ALI
I invest in stocks and bonds. Your company offered stock on the market.

Diana walks to a small bar and prepares a drink for herself.

DIANA
Would you like something to drink?

ALI
I don't touch alcohol.

DIANA
(laughing)
Ah, I forgot. Your religion forbids it.

DIANA
(sipping slowly)
Nothing beats a dry martini.

He watches how she drinks and realizes she's been drinking for a long time. Her hand shakes as she lits a cigarette.

DIANA

Somehow, I feel you didn't come here to invest your money, but rather to recall our beautiful old days.

ALI

Are they worth fifteen million dollars?

DIANA

You've already paid, my dear.

ALI

You're just imagining things Mrs. Robertson.

DIANA

(sadly)

My name's Diana, or have you forgotten?

ALI

That's the name on these papers.

DIANA

I remember you as tender and dreamy. Now you show a cruelty I never saw before.

ALI

Mercy may look like cruelty to some people.

DIANA

I want to thank you for the suggestion of debt retabulation. Although you're one of the creditors, I feel you want to stand by me.

ALI

I do what I find proper for my investments.

DIANA

How long will you be in North Carolina?

ALI

I'm splitting my time between here and Virginia. I bought a farm there for raising horses. You'll see me at board meetings, anyway.

DIANA

It'll be beautiful to see so much of you. I need your help.

He feels compassionate sympathy for her. Knowing his feelings are beginning to show, he steels himself against them and stands.

ALI

Good-bye, Mrs. Robertson.

DIANA

Please call me Diana.

He smiles in regret and walks toward the door. She watches him leave. Despite his cruelty, she feels her soul going with him.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – LIVING ROOM

Diana walks to the well-stocked bar in the living room and prepares a Scotch with a splash of ginger. She then sits and thinks over the day's events.

She listened to Ali talk at the board meeting with a feeling of happiness flowing through her like warm wine. Even though she just left him, she desperately wants him to tell her everything would be all right. Their once chattered relationship could be repaired, so there is hope.

The Senator wheeled by Mary, the governess, enters the room. Mary leaves the two together. The Senator notices that Diana is lost in thoughts.

SENATOR

(with difficulty)

What's on your mind?

DIANA

A beautiful past I thought was over. It's returned to put life into my heart.

SENATOR

What do you mean?

DIANA

(sarcastically)

Do you remember Ali? The one you deprived me of, the man James nearly killed? He has returned to put warmth into my heart and give meaning to my existence.

SENATOR

I read the jubilee invitation. I suppose you met him there. That doesn't mean he's back to reawaken what died years ago.

DIANA

How enchanting he was when he surprised me by turning out to be my new creditor. Yes, father. He paid fifteen million dollars to own half the debt.

SENATOR

Don't trust the man's intentions. He's evil. You being near him is like oil near a fire. His love will burn you. Stay away from him.

DIANA

Being burned by a man I'm captured by is better than being burned by one I didn't love, someone who was imposed on me through a pretext of future success.

DIANA (CON'T)

You tried to kill his love in my heart. You took me away from him, but I always knew one day, my knight would ride up on his white horse and lift me upon the saddle to take me away. When I saw him at the jubilee, I felt as if I, who had never truly lived, was finally going to taste life.

SENATOR

You're drunk. Stop drinking the poison that killed your husband?

DIANA

I don't want to hear any more of your advice. It ruined my life before.

SENATOR

Is this what our relationship has become? You can't even bear to look at me.

DIANA

I don't have another life for you to ruin.

He stares at her bitterly, rings a bell, and waits for Mary to wheel him to his room.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

The board convenes again. Ali, Diana, Anderson and the heads of the departments sit around the table. Ali reads some papers before him, then commences the talk.

ALI

The separate reports from the department heads showed deficits in all fields. They also lack insight on how to rescue the company from its peril. I suggest that all department heads submit one complete report identifying the least-expensive alternatives for solving the problems we face.

ALI (CON'T)

(glancing at Mr. Anderson)

You promised at the last meeting to discuss with your superiors debt retabulation in the form of profit sharing without collecting interest for five years. What did you decide?

ANDERSON

I'd prefer to talk with you and Mrs. Robertson alone on that.

DIANA

(addressing the heads of the departments)

Well, gentlemen. You may leave us, and don't forget to prepare the report Mr. Ali asked for.

The heads of the departments quit the room leaving Ali, Diana and Anderson alone.

ANDERSON

They refused at the bank to retabulate the debt and insisted on collecting the interest when it's due. They also raised the issue of the loan, which comes due in five months. They authorized me to suggest that we sell the unprofitable product lines. As creditors, that would enable us to regain a good portion of the loan.

ALI

That's what I call the unfairness of the system. I invested money in this company to see it develop. There can be no development without productive assets. I want growth and advancement, not liquidation.

ANDERSON

I'm sorry, but we at the bank feel that liquidation would be a good solution to restore our share of the loan and debt. We feel the company has negative value.

ALI

Is there no justice in the world? Shutting down the company would be a severe blow. You offer drastic solutions that consider only the bank's benefit, not the company's. Can't we agree on something beneficial for both sides?

ANDERSON

At the bank we make decisions for the benefit of our clients.

A long silence fills the room.

ANDERSON

As I've noticed, you're very interested in development and growth. Why don't you buy our shares and become the sole proprietor?

A long silence fills the room again.

ALI

I hope you don't mind if Mrs. Robertson and I have a few words alone.

ANDERSON
(while leaving the room)
Of course.

DIANA
(worriedly)
What decision have you reached?

ALI
What Anderson suggested is along the same lines of my thoughts. I have done such a thing before with declining companies. If I were the only owner, I could make the company prosperous again.

ALI (CON'T)
Now, let's evaluate the present situation. The true value of the company is around fourteen million dollars. The debt is thirty million, in addition to five million in yearly interest. The truth is that you own nearly nothing in the company, and you're running it on the creditor's accounts. I'll buy the bank's debt, and I'll leave you twenty-five percent of the shares. You become vice president and will receive ten percent of all excess profit.

DIANA
(tears in her eyes)
Ali, what are you doing? Rescuing a lady in distress?

ALI
It's a kind of economic reform. I hate interest. I hate usury that brings any investment to the ground. Killing such a company is almost like murder. Letting it die without every effort to save it would be a cruel crime. We're in the middle of a great tragedy that involves hundreds of lives. We have to fight to stay in existence. I want to take on that challenge.

DIANA
(with a shaking voice)
What would my responsibilities be?

ALI
I'll take the whole matter into my hands, because I'm the major shareholder. You'll be my personal assistant in charge of all other details. Wallace will check with you later today about the contract.

DIANA

How can I reach you?

ALI

I left my phone numbers with your secretary.

Ali rises and walks to the door.

DIANA

Ali? Thanks.

ALI

See you later.

Diana turns away and moves to the window, watching as Ali gets into his car. It is the white Ferrari! The same car they've driven in the past, wandering the city streets.

She stares at the car until it turns a corner and disappears.

INT. WALLACE OFFICE – DAY

Ali, Diana and Wallace sit at Wallace's office and sign the contract.

ALI

The company belongs to us now. We've taken a giant step. We don't have to fear those debts anymore.

DIANA

Is the company that important to you?

ALI

Yes. When I was a student at the university, the Stevenson name was a symbol for the state. I want it to remain that way. Your family name will be the only one listed with the company, as you've seen in the contract.

DIANA

(after a pause)

You seem to be trying to give life to the dead.

ALI

(as he leaves)

Why plunge into pessimism? Rise to the heights of optimism.
Years of darkness are needed to make possible years of light.

DIANA

I remember your old words about man and nature. You told me, 'I feel that man's a part of nature. When he stretches out his hand with good to others, he becomes exactly like this lake, which waters the green plants. When he believes in truth and establishes it among people, he's like the sun when it rises on the valley and changes darkness to light.' The old days are like a beautiful dream I still recall.

ALI

That was a long time ago. It's so far in the past that I can't remember it. See you tomorrow at the company.

He nods to Diana and Wallace as he leaves.

WALLACE

Mrs. Robertson, you're the luckiest woman I've ever met. He paid more than thirty million dollars for a company that was already dead.

DIANA

I know that perfectly well. I wonder why he is doing it.

WALLACE

There's only one logical explanation. He cares about the company future rather than his own good.

DIANA

(as if whispering to herself)

He denies our beautiful days, though they still live in his heart.

WALLACE

Pardon? I didn't hear you.

DIANA

(while heading to the door)

Nothing, Mr. Wallace. Good morning.

INT. COMPANY – DAY

THE CAMERA moves forward until it settles on Ali standing with workers instructing them to make changes in the administration department.

COSE UP: The workers remove the old signs having the names: Chairman Edward Stevenson; Vice Chairman Clark Robertson. Director James Robertson.

The Camera then moves to reveal the workers working actively to combine the owner's three offices into one spacious meeting room. Thereafter the workers bring in luxurious furniture. Ali doesn't get himself a desk, but a comfortable and luxurious chair at the head of the table.

The Camera explores the new spacious meeting room to reveal a huge oval table placed in the middle of the room, surrounded by forty chairs. In the middle of the ceiling is a huge crystal chandelier. In a nearby corner, lit by a small table lamp, is a leather sofa with two big chairs of the same style.

At the other side of the vast room is a giant screen set into the wall. Paintings of Arabian horses are decorating the walls.

Diana watches all these changes and wonders about such extravagance.

DIANA

Why you want such luxury?

ALI

I hate narrow spaces.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali Diana and the heads of the departments gather in the new spacious meeting room. Ali sits at the head of the table.

Ali

(addressing the heads of the departments)

I read the report you had prepared. None of your ideas seemed good.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (1)

The economy is in deep recession. That's why our products remain stagnant in the warehouse.

ALI

We then need active policies to pull the company out of recession.

To reduce storage to a minimum, production rate must be determined by true market need. I demand rationalization of labor use and the association of wages with production rates and level of quality needed.

ALI (CON'T)

I want to see a rational expenditure for each product, including the exact amount of raw material, time required, and energy needed for each stage of production. This information would help us eliminate waste and extravagance.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (2)

Some of the contractors didn't want to pay in cash, which led to accumulation of production.

ALI

We then need a more positive marketing program. The marketing department must widen its base of circulation and deal only with contractors able to pay in cash.

ALI (CON'T)

(addressing Diana)

Mrs. Robertson, we need to establish a new division for advertising. Cooperation between that division and the marketing department could create a slight demand in the market and our products might circulate better.

SERIES OF BRIEF SHOTS

- 1- The employees leave the company to their homes after the working hours.
- 2-Diana watches Ali working constantly in the meeting room long after the working hours.
- 3- Diana enters the meeting room and commences a talk with Ali.

DIANA

You work long hours. Aren't you going home?

ALI

(as if he didn't hear her)

I've to make sure everything is the way I like. My means of keeping the company afloat is to see the products of the minds I have working for me. Bringing the company back to life involves using their imagination.

DIANA

You take an enormous workload. You spend endless days shut up in your room. Danger seems to stimulate you.

ALI

My major concern is to maintain sustainable dynamics and exploit the company's potential to the maximum.

DIANA

(disappointed)

Do you need anything before I leave?

ALI

We have a board meeting tomorrow. See you then.

Diana leaves Ali disappointed. He cares only for business and apparently has lost interest in her.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

The board convenes again.

HEAD OF THE MARKETING DEPARTMENT

The market slowly consumed more of our products during the last four months. I suggest that we increase production.

ALI

I prefer to wait. I spent hours studying real market capacity and the price of similar products. I realized in the end that it was premature

to attempt to reach a mass market. We still have a lot of work to do, though the basic materials were at hand.

DIANA

I fully agree with you. Our results showed clearly that the price of raw materials and distribution was rising. Increasing production might not generate profits but rather raise labor and operational costs.

ALI

Yes. It's too early to expose the company to market demand.

ALI (CONT)

Mrs. Robertson, the fiscal year has ended. I want you to prepare the yearly budget in concert with the accounting division. I wish that you audit each budget item before submitting the final report to me.

DIANA

I'll see to it.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY (CONT)

After the budget is finished, Dina enters Ali's room and gives him the report. He reads it then gives his comment.

ALI

Why expenditures are nearly equal to returns when the reports I received from the accounting division showed a profit margin of 2-3%? You should've expected the partial success in marketing that occurred over the last months!

DIANA

(embarrassed)

I really don't know, I...

ALI

(calling his secretary)

Send me the chief of the accounting division.

The chief of the accounting division enters Ali's room. Ali gives him the report.

ALI

The budget is incorrect, revise it, and get it ready in an hour.

Diana walks back to her office anxious to see the result. Diana and the chief of the accounting division come back with the corrected budget. Ali's expectations are right. The budget reflects a 3% profit margin.

ALI

(addressing the head of the accounting division)

In this company we don't accept mistakes. Give Mrs. Robertson a copy of the corrected budget.

HEAD OF THE ACCOUNTING DIVISION

Yes Sir.

The man leaves the room.

DIANA

Ali, I'm really sorry. I...

ALI

(cutting her short with gloomy expression on his face)

The error has been contained.

ALI (CON'T)

To achieve success, all departments must work together with devotion, competence and skill. I straightened out the situation to achieve that. All departments worked in harmony except the accounting division.

DIANA

Ali, I refuse to slow you down. I wouldn't make any of your work be in vain. I'm trying to work with you as an equal.

ALI

Of course, Mrs. Robertson.

Diana leaves the room with a broken heart. When would she be able to ask him if they could repair the chattered pieces of their lives? How could she when he hardly looks at her and confines all conversation to business?

INT. MEETING ROOM – NIGHT

CLOSE UP: Ali sits alone in the meeting room, reading dozens of reports.

He spends the night reading until daylight.

ALI (V.O.)

The accounting division needs restructuring in order to be harmonious with the others. It has to work with the spirit of a team, perhaps even friendship...Friendship! Susan, friend of my heart. Aren't you working as an accountant for Bechtel in San Francisco? Would you agree to work for me here? Your reassuring smile and confident affection have always delighted my soul. I'll fly to you, because you've entwined yourself around my heart.

Ali calls his secretary.

ALI

Tell Larry to have the jet ready by tomorrow.

He then calls Diana in her office.

ALI (CON'T)

Mrs. Robertson, Can I see you for a minute please?

Diana enters the meeting room and sits near Ali.

ALI

I reorganized my obligations to give myself a few days' liberty.

DIANA

What do you mean?

ALI

It would be good for me to take a breath of fresh air after being so busy for several months.

DIANA

(trembling like a leaf)

Are you leaving me?...I mean us.

ALI

Just for a few days. I'll leave in the morning.

DIANA

I'll drive you to the airport.

ALI

There is no need for you to...

DIANA

I insist.

EXT. WHITE FERRARI – DURHAM AIRPORT – DAY

Ali sits calmly beside Diana in his white Ferrari. They both recall the many times they cheerfully drove through the city together. His glances at her as she drives his car are sad and sorrowful. She feels his passion, though his heart tries not to be touched.

DIANA

How long will you be away?

ALI

Two weeks.

The words swim in her head until she fights back tears. She stares straight ahead so he couldn't see the moisture in her eyes.

They ride in sad silence until they reach the airport. They leave the car and proceed to the gate. With a calm smile, he shakes her hand, but his smile fades when he sees her eyes are filled with tears that she doesn't bother trying to wipe away.

DIANA

By leaving, you put death in my heart.

As he walks toward the gate, his soul shouts:

ALI (V.O.)

Don't cry! Bidding you farewell is like bidding life farewell,
though my heart is still bleeding from wounds of the past.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO – BECHTEL CORPORATION –
SUSAN'S OFFICE – DAY

In San Francisco Ali surprises Susan by walking into her office.

SUSAN

(hugging Ali joyfully)

Darling, how nice to see you.

Touched, he hugs her in return. She seats him in a comfortable
chair and sits before him.

SUSAN

How sweet of you to come.

ALI

I came to restore the beautiful memories of golden days.

SUSAN

(laughing)

Those were grand days.

ALI

How about getting back the dream of youth and the glow of
hilarity?

SUSAN

How can we do that?

ALI

Come to North Carolina and work for me.

SUSAN

Wait a minute I don't understand.

ALI

I'm the major shareholder in the Stevenson Company. I need a
good
accountant like you.

SUSAN
(staring into his eyes)
Why'd you return to the States?

ALI
To reestablish a broken company. I always do that with broken
firms.

SUSAN
(laughing to hide her despair)
You returned for Diana of course. You still love her.

ALI
I'm not ready to rush into a love affair of any kind.

Susan lapses into silence.

ALI (CONT)
Come on Susan, don't let your mind wander. Let's have some fun.
Be my
guide in San Francisco.

SUSAN
Yes, let's live beautiful moments.

INT. CAFÉ ARGUELLO – NIGHT

Ali and Susan dine at Café Arguello. They talk while eating.

ALI
Are you happy here?

SUSAN
I've a good salary. I know how to spend it, but that's nothing
because I'm always sad. I spend my nights in my room, living a life
as still as the grave.

ALI

The flowers of youth can be restored if we call them back.

SUSAN

(laughing)

You're unforgettable. I can't stop thinking about you.

ALI

I always think of you when I long for something beautiful.

EXT. ASILOMAR STATE BEACH – DAY

They drive to Asilomar Beach. They swim and lie on the sand watching the rocky coves. They walk along the beach holding hands. Ali then stops and looks deeply into her eyes.

ALI

You'll leave with me. I don't accept refusals.

SUSAN

You're the only man who could warm my heart and make me feel secure. I don't care whether your love for me is that of the heart or of friendship. What matters is that you need me, and I'd see more of you in the future. Hadn't you crossed the States to see me? I'll go with you to search for our happier days.

She laughs when happiness fills his face, and his eyes flash with joy.

INT. ALI'S JET PLANE – DAY

Susan sits beside Ali in his jet plane.

SUSAN

(laughing)

I accuse you of exorbitant wealth.

SUSAN (CON'T)

I wonder how Diana will accept my return.

ALI

Surely she'll welcome you.

SUSAN

(laughing again)

No, we're two women struggling to win the heart of one man.

ALI

(staring sullenly ahead)

I don't look at it that way.

INT. COMPANY – DAY

Diana is surprised to see Susan at her office door, smiling at her. She receives her with a warm welcome.

DIANA

What brought you to North Carolina?

SUSAN

Ali flew to San Francisco to spend beautiful days with me, as beautiful as the days we spent in London. He insisted I leave my job and work for him here as the new head for the accounting division. He offered me a salary higher than that I had in Bechtel.

Susan watches Diana carefully, waiting for a reaction, and sees fidgeting, annoyance, and disappointment.

Diana enters Ali's room to welcome him.

DIANA

Ali, welcome back. How's San Francisco?

ALI

Ah, you met Susan I suppose?

DIANA

(angrily)

You should have told me about her new job. You appointed her without my knowledge.

ALI

She's quite capable of organizing the accounting division. Besides, her big heart puts smiles on frowning faces and adds merriments to desperate souls. I like to see those things where I work.

DIANA

Does that mean she replaced the chief of the accounting division?

ALI

Exactly. He'll work as her assistant. It's better than firing him.
Don't you think?

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN: "Several months later."

Ali is in his room working alone. Susan enters the room with two reports in her hand. She puts one of them before Ali and sits beside him. He reads the report and smiles.

ALI

You skillfully adjusted the accounts and adequately organized a detailed budget.

SUSAN

(giving him the second report)

I also conducted a study emphasizing ways for upgrading the company and cost needs. The study revealed more investment for the production of new dress fashions appealing to consumers, hence the quick circulation of merchandise in the market, leading to production increase.

ALI

(smiling)

I finally found another mind to support my ideas and fulfill my wish that work in the company should be a team spirit.

ALI

(beat)

Susan, we are about to take a drastic decision.

INT. COMPANY – BOARD MEETING – DAY

Ali summons the board to his room.

ALI

Now we're in a position to consider the fierce competition we face each month for our share in the market. Susan conducted a study on ways for upgrading the company. She concluded that more investment was needed to produce new dress fashions appealing to consumers.

ALI

(pointing at the head of the production department)
What's your opinion on ways we could develop?

HEAD OF THE PRODUCTION LINE

There's no need to rush. More investment for the production of new dress fashions at this stage is premature.

ALI

(turning to Diana)
Mrs. Robertson, what do you think?

DIANA

I warmly welcome Susan's opinion. We should contact European dress designers. I'd say Gerar the French, for women's dresses and Roberto the Italian, for men's clothing.

ALI

I like that idea. Susan, you travel there immediately and see if we could sign a contract with those two designers.

EXT. ALI'S JET PLANE – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- The jet plane touches the ground at Orly Airport.
- 2- Susan emerges from the plane with a brief case in her hand.
- 3- Susan meets Gerar at his office and talks to him about the contract. Gerar nods (OK).
- 4- The jet touches the ground at Rome International Airport.

5- Susan meets Roberto at his office and talks to him about the contract. He shakes hands with her (OK).

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM - Day

The two designers convene with Ali and Diana in the meeting room.

ALI

A blend of European and American fashions would keep the company prosperous. A novel fashion that matches the American manner, style and character, would stimulate our customer's sense of what is harmonious, beautiful, and socially proper. I also want you to design novel clothes for children that are inspired by the designs for adults.

ALI (CON'T)

If these designs are successful and accrue profits, I'll renew your contracts and add three percent of the profits.

The designers leave the room delighted and full of enthusiasm.

Diana looks at Ali in love and admiration.

ALI

New designs can easily be seen in collections of ready-made clothes. Ready-made clothes are the link between designers and consumers. If novel designs match the consumers' taste, they become attractive fashions that last for years.

DIANA

You've given me hope for the future of this company.

DIANA (CON'T)

You need release from all the pressure, though. How about having dinner someplace quiet, away from here?

ALI

I'm afraid I have a lot of work to do.

DIANA
(disappointed)

As you wish.

Her heart broken, she rises to leave the room, but Ali stops her.

ALI

Mrs. Robertson, a second please. I charge you of supervising Gerar because you're specialized in women's fashions. I'll supervise Roberto regarding men's fashion.

Diana nods twice regretfully and leaves the room.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- The two designers are totally absorbed in their work.
- 2- Gerar and Diana mix raw materials with happy colors, producing poetic designs.
- 3- Roberto produces attractive designs admired by Ali.
- 4- Roberto and Gerar join together to create many new ideas, taking children to an elegant kingdom that matches their innocent thoughts.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali calls Diana at her office.

ALI

Mrs. Robertson give orders to the advertising division to hire models of both sexes to present the new fashions at the exhibition hall. I want the show recorded on video for national advertising on TV.

INT. COMPANY – EXHIBITION HALL – DAY

Ali, Diana, Gerar and Roberto sit in the exhibition hall watching the models from both sexes presenting the designs of both designers.

ALI

(addressing Diana in a low voice while watching the show)

I've decided to stop producing traditional clothes and replace them with the new designs. Release of the new designs must be preceded by an intensive TV advertising campaign. I'm leaving this in your charge.

He then leaves the exhibition room in the middle of the show.

Diana watches him leaving in sadness.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – WINTER – DAY

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN: 'A year later'.

Ali summons the board. He nods to Diana to begin the talk.

DIANA

The new fashion lines created by Gerar and Roberto have opened enormous possibilities. Our new dresses became familiar in several American states and appealed to the public.

Ali points at Susan to elaborate.

SUSAN

Sales figures climbed, and the company had a backlog of orders. The company flourished and achieved eight million dollar's net profit.

ALI

Susan, give bonuses to the employees, and give Gerar and Roberto three percent of net profit.

ALI (CON'T)

Our business has become successful enough that we can now afford not only to appeal to a mass market but to keep all production lines working at full capacity.

ALI (CON'T)

(after a moment silence)

I've decided to take a long trip to London. My departure would be Christmas Eve.

Grief is clearly shown on Diana's face.

INT. MEETING ROOM – CHRISTMAS EVE – NIGHT

Hours before he leaves to London, Ali stands in his room shaking hands with the members of the board.

SUSAN
I'll miss you a lot.

ALI
I'll miss you too.

Diana shakes his hand, her smile hiding her grief.

The members of the board quit the room leaving Ali alone. He spends the first hours of Christmas Eve on the sofa, trying to relax. A light knock comes, and he goes to open the door. Diana is there to see him before his departure. She is dazzling in metallic-blue silk, her blonde hair piled atop her head. He stands for a long while looking at her amazing beauty then ushers her into the meeting room.

He sits on the sofa. She sits close enough to him that the warmth of her body creeps into his heart. Her sad smile makes his pulse hammer. She is glad to find herself alone with him.

For a while they sit in perfect silence.

DIANA
I hope you don't mind my coming to see you.

ALI
Not at all. Please make yourself comfortable.

DIANA
Who wants to spend the night shut up in a cold room? Are you sure you wouldn't want to celebrate Christmas with the others?

ALI
I have to visit several places in Europe to make sure things are prospering as well can be expected. I also want to see my parents in London. I haven't visited them in a long time.

DIANA

Your business must be pressing.

ALI

I criss-cross the ocean several times a year.

DIANA

Will you be away long?

ALI

I expect it'll be two months.

Tears come to her eyes. Silence fills the room, broken by her deep sighs.

DIANA

When do you leave?

ALI

In two hours.

DIANA

I'll stay with you for those two hours, then.

ALI

Don't bother with me. Go enjoy Christmas with the others.

DIANA

The happiness of my soul is with you.

A shiver goes through him. He stands and walks to the large table, busying himself reading some papers.

ALI

I worked hard to make sure everything run smoothly without me with only a little effort from you. I'd like to make sure you'll be able to run the company in my absence. If you've any trouble, don't hesitate to get in touch with me through my London bank. I'll straighten out any difficulties.

She looks at him in regret. He hasn't shown any sign of interest in her. Instead, he gives orders to make sure the company would be

all right during his absence. Panic seizes her at the thought of his sudden departure.

DIANA

Why are you leaving at night?

ALI

Sometimes, I feel so lonely, I take darkness as my companion.

DIANA

Don't you have someone to comfort your heart?

He returns to the sofa and sits beside her.

ALI

I'm accustomed to silent company.

DIANA

It seems you have strong relations with Susan.

ALI

She stood by me when darkness drowned my heart.

He rises suddenly, and pulls on a well-tailored camelhair coat.

ALI

Well, I must start for London.

DIANA

(rising with him)

I'll take you to the airport.

ALI

I don't want to burden you.

DIANA

I'd love to do it.

EXT. AIRPORT – PRIVATE JET – NIGHT

Diana drives Ali to the airport. He glances at her face and trembling lips and realizes how much his departure hurts her.

His tormented soul exclaims:

ALI (V.O.)

Oh, ornament of the world and utmost object of desire, when shall we remain as once we were? Who can keep from enjoying the beauty of your face? Your image is within my eyelids, and I think of you when my heart throbs or is quiet. I wish my tongue would become free to utter the words of love, but the pain in my heart makes such words never cross my lips.

At the airport he bids her farewell. With a sad look and wave, he strides away. She watches with weeping eyes, waving from afar. Instead of saying, "Good- bye, she murmurs, "I love you."

He boards his private jet and settles into a lounge chair. Larry, the pilot takes off and flies across a clear, starry sky.

LARRY

Would you care for anything, Sir, before we cross the Atlantic?

ALI

(sighing and staring out the window)

Fly above the clouds, near the stars. Maybe, we can find a moon I left there years ago.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – DIANA'S BED ROOM –
NIGHT

Diana shuts herself in her room, crying bitterly. All her friends celebrate Christmas Eve, while she sits alone with a crushed spirit. She feels immensely alone and already misses Ali frightfully.

She reaches for a bottle of Scotch and pours some into a glass, then drinks it as if it were water. She looks at the mirror, seeing a

shadow, a stranger. Her knees buckling, she sinks down to hug herself and rocks it in tight misery.

DIANA

What's to become of me now? I wish I were dead.

Unsteadily, she rises to her feet again, leaning against the wall, feeling her head spin. She laughs and cries, though her laugh is hard and bitter.

Mary, hearing her groaning, comes to see what is wrong. She finds Diana beside herself with grief and tears. Mary holds her and tenderly pats her hair.

DIANA

(trembling in Mary's arms)

Mary, he's gone. I won't see him for months. Go fetch him. I want him to know he's the only man I ever loved. I can't take this anymore. You have to talk to him for me.

MARY

Put all worry from your head, child. He still loves you, but he won't admit it until the right moment. Do you know why he returned? To help you through your great distress. He reorganized the company and made it prosper just for you. He wanted to clean you up and settle you down, to rescue you from your sordid condition.

DIANA

He's left, and I'll be empty again. Look of what I've become. I feel sorry for myself.

MARY

The day will come when he realizes the extent of your love for him. Now, my child, don't drink yourself to the edge of death. It's over. You're safe now.

As Mary put her to bed, Diana cries like a little girl. Filled with anxiety, Mary walks down the stairs to her room.

EXT. DURHAM AIRPORT - DAY

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN: "Two months later"

Ali sends a cable from his bank in London announcing the date of his return. Diana waits for him at the airport. Tremendous joy overwhelms her when she sees him. A sweet smile comes to her face, and she laughs with delight, following his movements with eyes filled with joyful tears.

Seeing her waiting he smiles. She runs to meet him and holds onto him passionately, gazing at him with eyes misty with tears. At that moment his love for her overflows to reach its climax.

As she drives he watches her carefully. Shadows are visible under her fine eyes. Her hands are shaking and her face is pale. She is losing the battle with alcohol, and he has to be prepared for any emergency.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali stands in the middle of the meeting room receiving greetings from his employees. Susan walks in with a broad smile and holds him affectionately. They sit near each other on the sofa alone.

ALI

(handing her a letter)
A letter from my sister.

SUSAN

(unfolding the letter and reading it)
How is Nadia and your parents?

ALI

They're well and long to see you.

Diana enters the room to find Ali and Susan sitting there, chatting and laughing. The idea of having a relationship with Susan tortures her.

DIANA

Am I in the way?

ALI

Not at all. Come in.

Diana joins them.

SUSAN

Where'd you spent your vacation? Don't say you spent it all in London.

ALI

I spent one month there, another in St. Moritz.

SUSAN

St. Moritz at that time of year? Ice covers everything.

ALI

That's where I find the solitude I seek after months of hard work.

SUSAN

Don't say you sat alone in the snow without a companion.

ALI

I'm accustomed to loneliness.

SUSAN

It's common for a young man like you to have ladies escort him on such trips.

ALI

Susan, you're imagining things.

Susan smiles wickedly and puts a handful of letters on the table.

SUSAN

Your mail was put on my desk by mistake. There were a lot of Christmas cards sent to you by British ladies.

ALI

Those are from my old acquaintances in London. Do you ever stop doubting my good intentions?

SUSAN

How could that be, when a French lady sent you a letter from
Paris?

ALI

Simone! Did she really write a letter? How nice of her.

SUSAN

Who's Simone, or is she a secret?

ALI

A French lady who escorted me to the valley of flowers at the
bottom of the Balkan Mountains.

DIANA

It seems you know very well how to enjoy your time.

ALI

Coincidence may sometimes play a part in people's acquaintance.

DIANA

(rising and excusing herself)

Will you excuse me? I've some work to do.

SUSAN

(rising too)

I've to return to work. See you later.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALI AND SIMONE

Once alone, Ali picks up Simone's letter and opens it.

INSERT SIMONE'S LETTER

I, the perfume maker, have longed for a special perfume, not made
of flower nectar, but of the light inhabiting your heart and flooding
with love all those who surround you.

Merry Christmas

Simone

Simone in her plant in Paris picks Ali's letter from a pile of letters
and reads it smilingly.

INSERT ALI'S LETTER

The effect of your words was like magic to my soul and perfume to my heart. I keep thinking of them, for they soothe my heart.

Merry Christmas

Ali

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali summons the board to discuss an important matter.

ALI

After the success of the Stevenson dresses on the market, I decided to upgrade cosmetics in the same manner. I read a report about the kinds of cosmetics produced in the company, and the distribution of each. The cosmetics we currently produce had been designed ten years earlier and became obsolete. I wonder about the possibility of contracting new experts acquainted with recent developments in cosmetics.

SUSAN

We could change the market to our benefit when we flood it with quality products at fair price.

DIANA

Davidson Laboratories are the best in the field.

ALI

Mrs. Robertson. Could you escort me to Davidson Laboratories after the meeting?

DIANA

Of course.

INT. DAVIDSON LABORATORIES – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS WITH SHORT DIALOGUE

- 1- THE CAMERA IS RUNNING FORWARD to reveal a building with a sign having the words 'Davidson Laboratories'.
- 2- The head of the laboratories take Ali and Diana on a tour and explains recent developments in cosmetic research.

- 3- Ali, Diana and the head of the laboratories sit at a table reading the terms of the contract.
- 4- Diana adds some conditions to the contract.

DIANA

I accept on the condition that production would occur at the Stevenson Company. Davidson experts would supervise the installation of the new equipments after disposing the old. They would also supervise the blending of the ingredients in proper proportions in the mixing tanks.

INT. COMPANY – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Workers install the new instruments.
- 2- Davidson experts test the new production to quality specifications established in their own laboratories.
- 3- The production lines are working in full capacity.
- 4- Advertising on TV and in magazines focusing on women's elegance and beauty.
- 5- The new products are released, and are completely sold out in a few weeks.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN

To be continued.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – AFTER NOON

Ali performs afternoon prayers when Diana enters his room. She sits to contemplate him. He wears a rich camelhair cloak as he bows in worship. After he finishes his prayers, he rises from his oratory, put the cloak on a nearby chair, and sits down.

ALI

The Company's annual revenues rose by 50%. I made up for my losses, and had enough left over. You prospered too and your share amounted to millions.

DIANA

Thank you Ali for everything.

DIANA (CON'T)

I smell the odor of a beautiful perfume. Is it from the East?

ALI

It's a perfume whose ingredients I mixed myself. It contains flower extract, ambergris, and musk.

DIANA

I didn't know you liked perfumes!

ALI

I perfume my hands and face before I pray.

DIANA

I appreciate your being religious.

ALI

Living without faith is like walking in the desert without landmarks or sailing the sea without a sail.

ALI (CON'T)

Is there something in your mind?

DIANA

Not really. I just wanted to see you before I leave.

DIANA (CON'T)

A little thought came to me while you prayed. How about adding a perfume to our collection?

ALI

That's a splendid idea. We could use the French experience in making perfume.

DIANA

You know I trust your judgment.

ALI

I've to go to Paris for a few days.

DIANA

(extremely upset)

Please don't. Being away from you is the end of my world.

ALI

(trying hard to look normal)

It won't be long, I promise.

INT. PARIS – FANCY RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Ali sits at a table in a fancy restaurant in Paris waiting for Simone to show up. She comes in a dazzling evening gown. She laughs gaily when she sees him. He rises to greet her. She hugs him and kisses him, then sits looking at him fascinated.

SIMONE

What brought you to Paris?

ALI

(smiling)

I'm searching for a special perfume that reveals the odor of paradise.

SIMONE

(laughing)

How could I know the odor of paradise when I haven't been there?

ALI

When we visited the valley of flowers, the sweet fragrance emanating from everywhere, made me ask what the odor of paradise might be. At that moment, I thought you were the only one who might answer my question.

SIMONE

What would you do with a perfume inspired by the odor of paradise?

ALI

I'd perfume every heart to pulsate purity and beauty.

SIMONE

How much I've missed your sweet words.

Dinner arrives. They continue chatting while eating.

ALI

I'm investing money in an American company in North Carolina that manufactures cosmetics and clothes for both sexes. I need a perfume for women and an eau de cologne for men to complete the company's collection in the market.

ALI (CON'T)

Why don't you come to the states to prepare the two perfumes in our laboratories?

Simone stops eating, and looks at him in amazement.

ALI (CON'T)

If you accept, I'll pay you a good salary and also three percent of the net profits during the first three years of mass production, after which all profits go to the company.

SIMONE

I accept on the condition that I become your agent for marketing the perfumes in France and Europe.

ALI

It's a deal. When can you come to the states?

SIMONE

I've unfinished business in Paris. I must remain in France for a month or so.
How long can you be in Paris?

ALI
I'm here for only a few hours. But of course I'll see you in North Carolina quite often.

SIMONE
(raising her glass of wine to him)
Cheers.
ALI
(raising his glass of orange juice to her)
Cheers.

INT. ALI'S HOTEL SUITE – NORTH CAROLINA – NIGHT

In his hotel suite at North Carolina, Ali hears a soft knock on his door and opens it to see an old woman with a kind face.

MARY
I'm Mary, Diana's governess. Can I see you for a minute?

Ali welcomes her cordially, offers her a seat, and sits before her.

ALI
Diana spoke about you often when we were at the university. That made me love you more than what I knew about her parents.

MARY
I've looked after her since she was a baby. I watched over her like a mother. I came to thank you for what you've done for her.

ALI
All I did was investing some money. That's all.

MARY
No. You came to rescue a heart from drowning. I appreciate very much the favor you did for her and her family, but I must warn you that unless you give her love and sympathy, she'll collapse.

ALI

What have I done? Has she complained of something I did wrong?

MARY

No, but don't make the situation worse for her. Your withdrawal from her life has set her back. She's drinking herself to the edge of death.

ALI

You talk about her despair as if it were my fault. You blame me for every problem she encountered with her late husband. I had nothing to do with her misery and fears. She must face that for herself.

MARY

When Diana was a young woman at the university, I watched your love growing strong in her heart. When they forced her to marry James, her love for you didn't die. On the contrary, she resorted to drink to tolerate the pain she had with James. He degraded her by torturing her soul into sadness. He pushed her to drink after he killed every beautiful feeling she had.

MARY (CON'T)

When you returned into her life, she didn't regret the past, because she loved you during it. Now your love burns her being, yet she receives nothing from you but desertion and deprivation. Your neglecting maximized the feeling that she was a lifeless land, without shadow or fruit.

ALI

I've done all I could to help her by not digging up a past I've completely buried. I wanted, as I still do, to help everyone.

MARY

Maybe she wouldn't be in business today without you, but unless you give her your love, all your efforts will be in vain. Diana needs love to warm her heart, and you have plenty of that.

ALI

I gave her my heart once. She slaughtered it and threw it away, then went to live with another man who gave her nothing but pain and loss.

MARY

Don't take revenge from a loving, suffering heart.

ALI

She didn't suffer like I did.

MARY

For that reason she loves you more, hoping you can forget a past she was forced into against her will.

MARY (CON'T)

With a mother's heart, I ask you to take care of her. Try to warm her heart with love. Now will you excuse me? I must leave.

He walks her to the door. She opens it, then stops as if remembering something.

MARY

After her husband died, and she lost her baby, the Senator was paralyzed, and her business had collapsed, I went to her room at midnight to make sure she slept in peace. She wasn't in her bed or anywhere else in the house. Terrified, I wondered where she might be on such a cold, icy night. Rain lashed the panes, and the wind was howling.

MARY (CON'T)

You know where I found her? She was in the garden sitting in the snow, wearing nothing but a short night gown. She was trembling and crying in the cold. She said through her tears words you once said to her, 'Remember always that my love will surround you with peace and security. Even when I'm away, I leave my soul and heart behind to protect you from life's iniquities. Where are you now? Did you really mean what you said, or were those just words said by a loving heart?

MARY (CON'T)

I'm sure you heard her call, or you wouldn't be here, talking to me right now. Please don't tell her I came to see you.

Mary turns to go, but Ali stops her.

ALI

These are my telephone numbers. A call will bring me immediately.

He stands alone in the vestibule, thinking over her words. His heart throbs strongly. Diana still remembers his words to the verbatim. His memory is engraved in her heart and would never be erased by passing time. Her groan on that cold night is her soliloquy to him to come to her rescue.

He'd do anything to save her but one – offer his heart again. He offered her millions, but he'd never offer his heart twice. That is the most precious thing he owns. As long as his heart carries that blast from hell, burning the memory of his days with her, he would never love her again.

INT. CITY HOSPITAL – DAY

Mary's visit to Ali isn't in vain. Ali watches Diana carefully. It's clear she is breaking down before his eyes, though at work, she tries not to look as she feels.

The best way to help Diana, he thought, is to visit the City Hospital and see if they have an addiction ward.

THE CAMERA moves across the city streets, until it settles on the city hospital. THE CAMERA swoops toward the entrance, then dives inside to reveal Ali sitting with the hospital's director in his office.

ALI

(handing the director a check)

I'm accustomed to donating funds to organizations that look after human rights and health.

DIRECTOR

(looking at the check)

Oh! It's quite a deal of money. Thank you for your generosity.

ALI

Do you have a department for addiction?

DIRECTOR

Of course. We receive dozens of cases each year

ALI

(while preparing to leave)
Can I take your direct phone number in case I needed the hospital
for an urgent matter?

DIRECTOR
(handing Ali his card)
By all means.

Ali leaves the director's office and walks toward the elevator.
Suddenly, a door opens, and a nurse comes out carrying solution
bottles. Ali glances and is stunned to see Susan on a bed with IV
tubes in her arms. A plastic bag of blood hung on a rack, feeding
into her arm.

Tongue –tied, he stands in the doorway. Her eyes are closed, as if
she were at peace. Ali quietly walks to the bed and stares down at
her in wonder.

Susan opens her eyes and sees him gazing at her in confusion. A
faint smile comes to her lips.

ALI
What are you doing here?

SUSAN
(with laughter that sounds like weeping)
As you see, I replace my blood with another's.

ALI
What for?

SUSAN
(shaking her shoulder as if making light of the matter)
That's what they do for blood cancer.

He sinks into a chair, his elbows on his knees, his face in his hand
in pain.

SUSAN (CON'T)
Don't feel so miserable. Life is still worth living.

ALI

You're my dearest friend. My gratitude to you is fixed in my innermost soul.

SUSAN

I didn't do anything that deserves such appreciation.

ALI

You're the most loyal heart I've ever met. I'll always be with you. We'll cure the pains of the present with the dreams of the future.

ALI (CON'T)

Since when have you been ill?

SUSAN

More than a year.

ALI

(shouting)

Since you were in San Francisco?

SUSAN

Yes.

ALI

Why didn't you tell me?

SUSAN

I didn't want to bother you with my problems. It's a little secret I keep to myself. You're the only one who knows.

SUSAN (CON'T)

How'd you know I was here?

ALI

It was a coincidence. I donate to charities regularly.

SUSAN

You always feel other people's pain and appear when you're needed.

ALI

I always remember how you infused my soul with goodness when I gave up life.

SUSAN

How beautiful it was to see you today. I was thinking of you, then I saw you standing there.

SUSAN (CON'T)

I don't want to bother you with my problems. You're a very busy person.

He stares at her with a sad smile. He takes her empty hand in his palms, pressing it against his chest before touching it to his cheek. Tears run from his eyes. He gently kisses her hand.

SUSAN

(feeling his agony)

I'll remember you until I breathe my last.

The nurse comes in and is surprised to see Ali with her patient.

NURSE

Please leave, Sir. My patient's taken a sedative that will send her into a long sleep soon.

Ali kisses Susan's forehead and walks to the door with heavy steps. At the door, he stops and asks:

ALI

When do you leave here?

SUSAN

In a week.

ALI

The company will cover all expenses.

She smiles and nods.

ALI

I'll visit you every day

SUSAN

I look forward to it.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali visits Susan every day. If sedatives make her sleep, he sits on a chair watching her for hours.
- 2- When she awakes, he rushes to her, taking her hand in his and talking to her.
- 3- He tells her delicate and beautiful fairy tales, like the ones his mother told when he was a boy.

ALI

Once upon a time...

He floods Susan with sympathy and tenderness, until she wants to stay in bed forever to have him to herself.

EXT. HOSPITAL – FANCY HONDA CAR – ELEGANT VILLA
– DAY

Susan leaves the hospital to see Ali waiting for her with a large smile. She laughs at seeing him bows and points to get into an elegant Honda. When she sits behind the steering wheel, he says:

ALI

A small gift for you.

She drives away feeling abundant happiness. He guides her to an elegant villa with a private garage, white wooden fence, and flower garden in front.

ALI

Another gift for you.

She glances at him in surprise. He gets out, opens the door for her, and takes her hand to help her out of the car. He walks her to the front door, opens it with a key, and gives it to her.

ALI

Rose, where are you?

A middle-aged woman hurries out to welcome Susan.

ALI (CON'T)

Rose is here to take care of you.

He takes Susan's hand to pull her inside and gives her a tour of the house.

ALI (CON'T)

Here's the living room, with a view of the garden. This is the dining room, and this is the kitchen. The bedroom's in the best part of the house. The sun shines on it until noon. In your closet are the most-recent clothes available, and, at your mirror, are the latest perfumes and makeup items.

They walk through a sliding-glass door to the garden

ALI

See, the beautiful flowers are surrounded by white acacias.

SUSAN

(trying to catch her breath)

Wait. I can't catch up.

ALI

I'm sorry to give you such trouble.

SUSAN

I can't accept all this luxury. I want to live the rest of my life in peace.

ALI

You need a change of scene. It's my right to live beautiful days with you.

SUSAN

Live with me? Will I see you frequently?

ALI

(holding her in his arms)

Yes.

With a tormented heart he whispers in his depths while holding her:

ALI (V.O.)

How little have I offered you – just a little money. I wish I could give you what you long for – my heart.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali and Susan dine by candlelight at her new home.
- 2- Ali and Susan enjoy outdoor pleasure excursions, sharing meals.
- 3- Ali visits Susan's office frequently, begging her not to exhaust herself.
- 4- At the end of the work day, he escorts her home, then visits her each evening for dinner.
- 5- Diana watches all that with a broken heart.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Diana enters the meeting room to see Ali sitting at the top of the table reading some papers.

DIANA

Simone, the perfume expert, called saying she'll arrive today at 11 am.

ALI

(looking at his watch)

Ah, it's about time to go to the airport to fetch her.

DIANA

I'll go with you.

INT. DURHAM AIRPORT – ARRIVAL GATE –DAY

Diana drives to the airport with Ali sitting beside her. She is surprised when Simone hugs Ali affectionately.

ALI

(looking at Diana)

Simone and I are old acquaintances.

Diana puts on an empty smile and gives Simone a cold welcome. They all take the car and Diana drives back to the city.

ALI

Simone, I reserved a beautiful sweet for you. I also assigned for you a car and a chauffeur.

SIMONE

(laughing)

You never cease to amaze me.

The car stops at a five stars hotel. Simone gets out of the car. The hotel's valet takes her luggage and proceeds to the entrance. Simone waves to Ali and Diana good bye.

SIMONE

See you tomorrow at the company.

Diana drives Ali to the company. She drives in silence for a while, then finds the nerve to reproach Ali.

DIANA

Why all this luxury when she's getting a huge salary and percentage of the profits.

ALI

That's how I like to be with my guests.

His reply fills her with sorrow and regret.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali, Diana, and Simone sit in the meeting room discussing the perfume and eau de cologne.

SIMONE

I've settled on the ingredients for the perfume and eau de cologne. I have to travel to several countries and make contracts. The perfume will be composed of jasmine and lilies from the Nile Valley, famous Bulgarian flowers, lemon flowers from Morocco, and

Asian flowers from China. The eau de cologne will bring together flowers from Virginia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Madagascar and southern France.

ALI

Here's my checkbook with my signature. Use it for your deals. My private jet and pilot, Larry are at your service.

SIMONE

(smiling)

I'll go to the valley of flowers at the bottom of the Balkan Mountains. Aren't you coming with me?

ALI

Not this time. I've many things to do.

SIMONE

I thought we'd travel around the world on your magic carpet to collect the ingredients for the perfume.

ALI

I'll wait until you mix the components.

DIANA

(angrily)

Simone, remember to submit to Susan an explanatory report about the costs of your deals.

Simone looks at her carelessly. Stands, and turns her back on her. At the door she stops.

SIMONE

You're talking about something very obvious my dear. All the costs will be recorded in the contracts between the company and the purveyors. I'm the one who'll conclude the contracts, because most of the purveyors are my clients. Of course, all contracts will be owned by the company.

Simone leaves the meeting room.

ALI

Why'd you alienate her like that?

DIANA

(nervously)

I don't like her. She's a flirt who likes to show off. You've filled the company with women you've had affairs with – Susan and now Simone.

ALI

(quietly)

You talk about my affairs with women? You consider them many?

DIANA

(sharply)

How about the house and car for Susan? Her colleagues wonder about the high standard she suddenly attained. You're the reason for that. As for the French woman from Paris, she was practically flirting with you before my eyes. She doesn't mind inviting you to go with her to anywhere she wants.

ALI

Susan needs my care. It satisfies me to offer her anything that can make her happy. As for Simone, she's a good deal that'll bring us millions. Those are the two women you're talking about.

Diana tries to light a cigarette with a match, but her hand shakes too hard. He holds it firmly until it stabilizes.

ALI

The trembling is worse. Is it alcohol?

DIANA

(as she walks toward the door)

I'm free to do whatever I like. No one can interfere with my private life, not even you.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Simone travels with Ali's jet plane to several capitals of the world to get the materials she needs.
- 2- Simone returns to the states, and stands in her laboratory looking at the wooden boxes having the materials she bought.
- 3- THE CAMERA focuses on the names printed on the wooden boxes (Jasmine, lilies of the Nile, Bulgarian flowers).

INT. COMPANY – SIMONE'S LABORATORY – DAY

Simone in her white coat stands in the laboratory conducting several experiments on the proportions of the ingredients for the perfume and eau de cologne. She gives instructions to one of her associates:

SIMONE

Send the flowers to the cutting machine, then pass them through the process of extraction and clean up.

She then gives instructions to another associate:

SIMONE (CON'T)

Place the pure extracts in containers before mixing them in the required concentrations.

After several days of work Simone arrives at the final formula. She calls Ali in the meeting room. Diana and Susan are with him discussing the budget of the previous fiscal year.

SIMONE

Ali, the perfume and eau de cologne are ready, come over and breathe their fragrance.

ALI

(addressing Diana and Susan)

Let's all go to watch the birth of the new perfume and eau de cologne.

At the laboratory, Simone moves around her visitors with pots of perfume, asking them to smell and give their opinion.

SUSAN

It's warm, refreshing, and exciting.

DIANA

I never imagined you're so proficient. It reflects a poetic, tender soul.

SIMONE

(glancing at Ali)

What do you think?

ALI

It emphasizes the idea of eternal love that makes life peaceful and delightful.

SIMONE

I kept my promise. I produced a perfume for you with which you can fill every heart pulsating with beauty and purity. What will you call it?

ALI

(beat)

Paradise.

SIMONE

(offering the pots of eau de cologne to Ali and Diana)

I want your opinion about the eau de cologne too.

DIANA

It reminds me of the magic and mystery of the East. Let's call it East.

ALI

A poignant name that reminds me of my homeland. I couldn't agree more. Let's call it East.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali sits alone in the meeting room, thinking of Susan's unique way of resisting illness. She knows she is dying, yet she fills the world around her with joy and hilarity.

Ali calls Susan at her house. Rose answers the phone.

ALI

Rose, please tell Susan I'll come to dinner tonight.

ROSE

She's away for a few days, but she left you a message.

ALI
Read it please.

ROSE
"I want to hang onto life, because it has a beautiful taste with you."

ALI
I understand. Thanks.

INT. HOSPITAL- NIGHT

Ali drives to the hospital. He finds Susan in bed receiving another transfusion. Her eyes are closed as she sleeps.

He sits beside her bed throughout the night, watching over her. She awakes and looks at him. He smiles back.

SUSAN
Did you get my message?

ALI
Yes. I came to enjoy life with you.

She smiles, then closes her eyes, and the sedative takes her back into deep sleep.

She awakes after one hour.

SUSAN
Have you been here the whole time?

ALI
Yes.

SUSAN
Don't you find it lonesome to sit in that chair?

ALI
Being with you delights my heart. Your way of accepting fate supports me with strength and stimulates valor in me.

SUSAN
I don't understand.

ALI
You'll know at the next board meeting.

INT. COMPANY – BOARD MEETING – DAY

The meeting is held. Susan is there.

ALI
In the past this company had been exposed to whirlwinds and earthquakes. When efforts were made to protect it against loss, the company showed profits, and we witnessed a revival that places heavy load on our shoulders.

ALI (CON'T)
Let's move forward even harder. I've decided to give a fashion parade at Lafayette exhibition, a big show of all our production lines for clothes, cosmetics and perfumes. We'll conquer Paris, the city of arts, fashion, and perfumes, with our novel production.

ALI (CON'T)
(glancing at Gerar)
The show is next fall. Your designs must look like beautiful, attractive paintings. Women's clothes must match all seasons.

ALI (CON'T)
(looking at Roberto)
I want to see designs for men who rush toward life and don't wait for its gifts.

ALI (CON'T)
(turning to Diana)
Mrs. Robertson, you will be responsible for organizing and presenting our new cosmetic collection, as well as commenting on our exhibits in English.

ALI (CON'T)
(turning to Simone)

Simone, make arrangements with the Lafayette director. I want to rent the place for one day during November.

SIMONE

Paris attracts the world's excellence. Have you carefully estimated the results of this risk? Critics might lower the value of your products.

ALI

(earnestly)

Go there and tell them that the Stevenson fashion house is coming to compete in the heart of your homeland.

SIMONE

(laughing)

I just want you to be prepared for unexpected results.

ALI

(glancing at the head of the advertising section then points at the giant TV screen set into the wall behind him)

I want to see Gerar and Roberto's designs on video tape.

ALI (CON'T)

Susan, you'll come with us of course to take care of all the expenses.

Before ending the meeting, he looks at Gerar and Roberto as if he's forgotten something.

ALI

Remember designs for children clothes. The women who attend such shows are mothers.

The members of the board leave the room except Diana who still sits beside Ali.

DIANA

(after a moment silence)

You've kept the company safe and made it prosper. For that, I'm grateful.

ALI

After the show at Lafayette, I'll consider my job here done.

The grief she feels inside keeps her from speaking.

INT. LAFAYETTE EXHIBITION – FRANCE – NIGHT

Guests begin arriving at Lafayette doors. At each door stands a hostess in one of Gerard's gowns, presenting each woman who arrives with Paradise perfume in a superb green vial. The main passages of the building are decorated with photographs showing the originality of Stevenson in the world of fashion, style, and cosmetics.

Under the dome of the famous Lafayette, a huge illuminated vial of Paradise perfume twinkles in the air as if it were a giant pyramid.

Guests take position around the platform. At a special table sits Ali, the famous young billionaire. Men in dark suits and women in their best dresses watch him admiringly.

The stage lights dim and the audience watches attentively as the show begins. It is the start of a successful story, displaying dress fashions for autumn, winter, spring and summer.

As the fashion models begin to exhibit the new designs, Simone opens the show.

SIMONE

The plaid taffeta and tiny cashmere sweater. It's covered up enough for a business event, yet it's fun and makes me feel like having breakfast with a sweetheart in a cozy place.

DIANA

The ankle-skimming velvet skirt and long, lacy, vest are a little offbeat and eclectic. It's the one-of-a-kind look that you prefer. You don't want to see ten other women on the street wearing what you're wearing.

SIMONE

The poetic blouse, vest, and sheer-at-the-bottom skirt. The pieces are very sexy but not too revealing.

An image of the perfume vial appears on a giant TV screen.

DIANA

Only nature could inspire a fragrance as perfect as paradise, a new perfume for women. This warmhearted, wonderfully feminine fragrance is a marriage of Oriental and Western flowers.

Stevenson cosmetic appears on the screen

SIMONE

Stevenson presents the renewal night cream concentrate. It carries away flakes, dead surface cells, and discoloration.

DIANA

Now for a refreshing change. Makeup that does more than cover up. It actually cares for your skin. Colors for all seasons are in the makeup kit by Stevenson.

That is followed by men's clothing.

DIANA

Sport coats and blazers, classic and contemporary styles from Stevenson.

The eau de cologne appears on the screen

SIMONE

East, a new perfume for men. A master piece of masculinity and romance. A blend of flowers with spicy sandalwoods.

Diana terminates the show by commenting on children's fashion.

DIANA

We're big hit with little kids. Entire stocks of children's outerwear are available, including jackets, parkas, snowsuits and dress coats.

Nonstop applause indicates the show is a smash hit. The lights come on, and Diana, Susan and Simone glance at Ali's table only to see it vacant. When they walk to it, they find letters addressed to them. One is addressed to all in general, while they also find letters addressed to them in particular.

Susan opens the general letter and reads it.

SUSAN

I offer my sincere thanks to all of you for the tender touches I saw this evening. I've asked Larry to fly me to the sky to look at you from above and see you as twinkling stars smoothing every difficulty and making the impossible easy to achieve. See you in the spring.

Susan opens her personal letter next.

SUSAN (CON'T)

Owner of the big heart, how much I've learned from you. Tonight's success was inspired from sitting with you. Your refined acceptance of the realities of life makes me bow in esteem. I arise to the sky, for, maybe, God will grant me some of your characteristics.

Susan smiles regretfully and sits at the table.

SUSAN (CON'T)

He sent a love bouquet that will fade over the winter until spring arrives to restore its bloom.

Simone opens her letter and finds a large check and a few words.

SIMONE

Perfume maker, you filled the parade with joy and perfumed it with the odor of paradise. I wonder what man could wish for more.

SIMONE (CON'T)

This check reminds me of a winter frost. I was hoping to spend the night with him. Sorry, I mean...I mean that we'd all spend time with him.

Diana takes her letter but decides to open it in her room. When she returns there, she finds a fox fur on her bed – possibly the most-expensive fur in Paris. She turns the letter over in her hand, then tears it open and finds a few lines of writing. She reads in sad silence.

DIANA

A piece of warm fur to protect you from the winter cold.

Her hand trembles. She looks at his admirable present, hold it, and brushes its softness against her face. Going to the window, she looks at the brilliant stars in the dark vault of the sky.

DIANA

(whispering)

Words of love are warmer than any fur.

Fear rises, pressing against her. She picks up the receiver and asks for a bottle of whisky.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN: Spring.

Spring comes with its growing trees and blooming flowers.

EXT. DURHAM AIRPORT – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Ali's private jet touches the ground at Durham Airport.
- 2- Ali takes the Ferrari from the parking lot and drives to the company.
- 3- The employees cheerfully greet him while heading to the meeting room.
- 4- Ali sits in his regular chair in the meeting room and calls his secretary.

ALI

Tell Mrs. Robertson I want to see her please.

SECRETARY

Mrs. Robertson hadn't been in the office for two weeks, though her governess, Mary called for you several times.

After a brief hesitation Ali dials Diana's number. Mary answers the phone.

ALI

Mary, this is Ali. Is Diana okay?

MARY

(weeping)

I did everything I could to keep liquor from her, but my efforts were in vain. She's locked herself in for three days, and I think she's collapsed. Please come and do something.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – DIANA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ali is there within minutes, Mary, waiting at the door, escorts him in. The Senator sits in his wheelchair, shaking in fear for his daughter.

SENATOR

(asking Mary with difficulty)

Who's that?

MARY

Mr. Ali, Diana's partner.

SENATOR

(shouting angrily)

Your presence has complicated her life.

Ali ignores him, Mary points to Diana's room on the first floor, and Ali takes the steps two at a time. He knocks but receives no answer.

ALI

(shouting)

Diana, open up! It's me, Ali.

He tries the handle but finds it locked. He breaks open the door and goes in.

Diana lies on a chaise long with a glass full of wine in her stiffened hand. She wears a nightgown, her hair shining like burnished gold. She stares at him as if he were a ghost.

ALI

Diana, are you all right?

DIANA

(sarcastically)

The elegant billionaire comes at last? What do you want? How dare you force your way into my room? You've a lot of nerve coming in here. How dare you invade my privacy?

Her face is so white, her eyes stare so hard, he fears she would faint. She stands and puts her hands to her throat as if suffocating. Her knees give away, and she utters harsh cries, hurling her glass at a mirror. It shatters, leaving whisky stains on the carpet.

Her knees buckle and she collapses. He lifts her in his arms and carries her downstairs to place her on the sofa. His heart aches for her. The Senator and Mary cry upon watching Diana in this sordid condition.

Ali calls the director of the city hospital, reminds him of who he is, and asks for an ambulance.

INT. CITY HOSPITAL - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE – DAY

Soon the ambulance takes Diana to the hospital. Ali escorts her and doesn't leave until he makes certain she's under the doctor's care.

Ali visits her in the hospital every day but she's heavily sedated, unaware of what is going on around her.

Ali spends many hours discussing her care with the hospital's director.

ALI

Could you give me a brief account of her condition?

DIRECTOR

The patient is suffering from minor and major withdrawal symptoms. Minor withdrawal symptoms could include insomnia, general weakness, tremors, hallucination and convulsions. Those would peak within 10-30 hours after she stopped drinking and would last for 40-50 hours.

DIRECTOR (CON'T)

Major withdrawal symptoms would have their onset between 60-80 hours after she stopped drinking. They are characterized by extreme autonomic hyperactivity, tremors, fever, hallucination, and global confusion.

ALI

Are there any effective treatments for such symptoms?

DIRECTOR

The patient's early minor signs were treated with strong sedatives to prevent the onset of the major withdrawal symptoms.

DIRECTOR (CON'T)

We've decided that physical and psychotherapy should proceed simultaneously. Although the treatments ran in parallel, the patient fell into an agony of despair that pushed her to frustration.

ALI

How so?

DIRECTOR

She refused to talk to the psychiatrist. As it seems, sedatives didn't help much in preventing her from surrendering to nothingness.

ALI

The patient and I are old friends, can I see her?

DIRECTOR

You can, but don't stay any longer than ten minutes. Remember, she is heavily sedated, she can't talk.

Ali enters Diana's room. She sits silently on a chair, her eyes closed, her head hanging down to her chest. She looks exhausted.

ALI
(softly)
Diana?

She slowly lifts her head to look at him with suffering eyes. He sits beside her and tenderly holds her palms in his.

ALI
Diana, everything will come out right in the end. You mustn't take it too hard. Try to understand the wisdom of calamity. God has put you to the test.

She turns away regretfully.

DIANA (V.O.)
Spare me your advice and utters the words I long to hear.

ALI
One has to accept the rough with the smooth. Don't surrender to despair.

DIANA (V.O.)
You talk about despair! You put despair into my heart, and only you can remove it. Medicine won't heal my wounds, nor will the doctors. Just one small word from you will, though. If you say, 'I love you', I'll recover and fly with you to your world.

She waits hoping to hear the words she longs for. She feels them in his heart and on his lips, but he doesn't speak them, so she stares miserably at him.

She realizes an agitation paroxysm is coming on. She doesn't want it to happen in his presence. A terrible sense of shame sweeps over her, making her feel unclean. The pain would strip her of all dignity and courage before him. Why doesn't he leave and let her face her agony alone? Seeing her like that would erase the love he might still have for her. That would be the final indignity.

As she begins trembling, she demands:

DIANA
Please leave the room.

He sees her panic and feels the tremors going through her. Feeling her hands shaking in his, he decides to stay until the first shock waves off.

The paroxysm comes like a raging sea, washing away her soul, body and dignity. She clings to him, clenching her hands tightly on his.

DIANA

Give me one hope that might make me feel that life is worth living.

ALI

You must not despair. It's not like you to surrender. Hold on tight.

She shakes her head rejecting his words.

DIANA

Say something else I want to hear. Say, 'Diana, I love you.'

Looking at her in misery he doesn't reply.

DIANA (CON'T)

(shaking him)

Just say, 'Diana, I love you'. Say that to ease my heartache.

Bitterness in his soul prevents him from admitting his love.

DIANA (CON'T)

You're so cruel. You can't utter a small word to save a soul from ruin? Say something modest then. Say, 'Diana, keep up your strength for me.'

Crying, she throws herself into his arms.

DIANA (CON'T)

You're my whole world. My love for you is the only thing still standing.

ALI

Diana, keep up your strength for me.

DIANA

Take me to bed and call the doctor.

He lifts her and puts her in bed. She curls up trying to end the strong quivering that shakes her.

Ali rushes from the room to summon the doctor. Grabbing the man's arm, he points to Diana's room without a word.

Ali sinks into a chair and covers his face with his hands.

The doctor gives Diana a subcutaneous injection that would knock her out.

The doctor returns to Ali, who looks at the doctor with tearful eyes.

DOCTOR

You can't visit her again until she's completely cured. Your presence has complicated her condition and made her liable to such attacks. They should be less frequent now, not more, under the present treatment.

INT. HOSPITAL – DIANA'S ROOM – DAY

Every day, Ali sends Diana a flower bouquet with a card containing a few words.

In one he writes:

INSERT – CARD CONTAINING FEW WORDS

Sorry if I've deserted exultation. I've lost the glow of happiness in loneliness.

In a second he writes:

INSERT – CARD CONTAINING FEW WORDS

Don't back up now. Most of our lives are still ahead of us.

In a third he writes:

INSERT – CARD CONTAINING FEW WORDS

It's no time for clouds. Misfortunes don't last. You'll get over.

Diana becomes anxious to receive his morning bouquets and read the tenor of his words. A strange tipsiness floods her when she reads those notes. They express his hidden love and the desert where he lives alone.

Diana treatment finally ends. On the day she leaves the hospital she receives a bouquet with a card that reads:

INSERT – CARD CONTAINING FEW WORDS

I'll wait outside to carry you to a more beautiful world.

EXT. HOSPITAL – FERRARI – DAY

Diana leaves the hospital and sees Ali waiting for her beside the Ferrari - the car that witnessed the best days of their lives. She slid in the passenger seat, feeling her romance would continue somehow after all.

DIANA

Thank you for everything.

ALI

Thank you because you've seen that life is worth living.

ALI (CON'T)

A change of scene is what you need. It will be appropriate if you spend a few days at my horse farm. I want to show you my collection of mares and stallions.

DIANA

I don't mind going anywhere you want as long as we are together.

INT. SENATOR'S MANSION – DAY

The Senator and Mary await Diana at the mansion's door. The Ferrari arrives and Diana opens the door and steps out of the car. She glances at Ali inviting him inside.

DIANA

Ali, aren't you coming?

ALI

I've to make arrangements at the farm before your visit.

Ali drives away. Diana bends over her father's head and kisses it, then she holds out her arms to Mary and hugs her tenderly. All three of them cry.

They enter the house. Diana ascends the staircase to her room, but the Senator, speaking with great difficulty stops her.

SENATOR

Diana, that man loves you.

DIANA

(looks at him with a sad smile)

How much I wished he'd utter those words of love.

She continues going upstairs, enters her room, and slams the door shut.

SENATOR

(staring at her closed door)

How can love still burn in her heart after all these years?

MARY

That's not so strange. With him life is peaceful and admirable. The point is, he loves her the same way but won't admit his love.

SENATOR

Nothing can keep them apart now.

MARY

His heart is more precious than the millions he possesses. He offered her his heart once, but she refused it. He won't offer it again, and who can blame him? That man of whom you deprived her, felt her suffering thousands of miles away and reappeared from God knows where to make her fortune and rescue her from liquor and loss.

MARY (CON'T)

Astonishingly enough, he did it quietly and persistently. He loves her in silence without showing his emotions. He looks like a mother showing her love to her baby by feeding it and fulfilling all its needs without being able to take it in her arms and kiss it.

MARY (CON'T)

The beauty in his heart is enough to attract any woman, let alone Diana, whose heart has been opened to his love since her youth. Now she feels his eager desire to regain her as clean and pure as she was at the university. Nothing in the world has ever been as sweet to her as his return into her life.

MARY (CON'T)

(after a moment silence)

Although he's generous and helpful, the force of his love frightens me, because it might hurt Diana. His love shakes her soul, and she'll keep running after him to her last breath until she gets him back or falls into destruction and failure. She'll never be safe until he unchain his heart and lets it rest in her bosom.

SENATOR

(angrily)

Shut up woman. You filled my heart with worry.

MARY

(walking from the room)

Sometimes they seem like one soul wandering astray, looking for something embedded in its profoundness.

EXT. SELIM'S ROLLS ROYCE – HEATHROW AIRPORT –
MORNING

Selim's Rolls Royce approaches Heathrow Airport with Selim, Safia and Nadia in it. Selim calls Ali from the Rolls Royce.

INTERCUT BETWEEN SELIM AND ALI

SELIM

How are you boy? I'm coming to the states to attend a business conference in New York. Your mother and sister are coming with me.

ALI

Splendid! I'll reserve a suite for you in my hotel. I'll also make arrangements for you to visit my horse farm in Virginia.

SELIM

I'm not sure. I've a hectic schedule for the next few days, but I can surely make the time to see you. Your mother will accompany me to New York. Nadia wishes to stay with you for more days before joining us in London.

INT. SELIM'S SUITE AT ALI'S HOTEL IN NORTH CAROLINA –
NIGHT

Selim, Safia, and Nadia gather around Ali at Selim's suite filling their eyes with the sight of him.

NADIA

How is Susan?

ALI

She's fine. I'll make sure you meet soon.

SAFIA

All that remains is for you to get a wife who can please your eyes
and rejoice your heart.

ALI

(smiling)

That time hasn't come yet.

SAFIA

(standing)

Nadia, let's check our rooms and unpack.

Safia and Nadia leave Ali alone with Selim.

SELIM

Your North Carolina projects keep you busy. We don't see you as
often as before.

ALI

I invested a lot of money here. I can't just disappear until I'm sure the company is doing well.

SELIM

Why'd you invest in this company? To be near her! Don't think I don't know what's going on when you're away from me, especially here in North Carolina. This state may remind you of the beautiful days of the past, but it also witnessed your downfall over a girl who married another man. Despite that, you returned after all these years to make her fortune. Do you still love her?

ALI

I love her as unbelievable as that may seem, yet I find myself unable to admit it to her.

SELIM

Even when you know she was a drunkard? You've seen her clothed in nothing but misery and pain.

ALI

That made me loves her even more. You know why she suffers? Because she loves me and I can't make her feel the same.

SELIM

What keeps you from admitting your love?

ALI

Bitterness that accumulated over the years. When she was suffering at the hospital, she clung to me, pleading for words of love, and I couldn't say them.

SELIM

Listen to me carefully. You've performed your duty toward her beautifully. Her company had recovered, and you made her benefit from your investments in it. This woman might hurt you again. It's about time to sell your share and find another project somewhere else.

ALI

Who knows? I might do that someday.

SELIM

Get her out of your life and marry someone who could move in
your social sphere.

ALI

It's not in my hand, dad. What I felt for Diana in the past, what I
still feel for her now, I can't feel for another woman.

SELIM

I wonder about you. What kind of love hides in the depths and
refuses to surface to make both of you happy? You seem to be
taking revenge because of something she didn't do on purpose,
something that was forced on her.

ALI

I don't look at it that way. I always thought she could have chosen
me if she wished. She didn't feel my suffering when I fought death
and disability because of her.

SELIM

(sullenly)

I wonder what the future of your love will be. It might destroy you
both.

INT. SUSAN'S VILLA – NIGHT

Ali and Nadia in the Ferrari heading to Susan's villa for dinner. Ali
calls Susan from his car.

ALI

Susan, consider another guest for dinner.

SUSAN

Who is it?

ALI

Wait until you see for yourself.

Susan is pleasantly surprised when Ali arrives with Nadia. Susan
receives Nadia warmly. They sit chatting during dinner.

ALI

Nadia has graduated from the school of Fine Art. She's interesting
in painting.

NADIA

Susan, could we meet frequently enough for me to draw your portrait?

SUSAN

I'd love that.

ALI

I'll be going to Virginia to rest awhile on my farm.

NADIA

That would make a good opportunity for me to draw some of your fine horses, whose reputation has already reached London.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- Susan takes Nadia to a sightseeing tour around North Carolina.
- 2- Susan invites Nadia to her office and introduces her to her associates.
- 3- Susan poses for Nadia in the living room to be painted.
- 4- Nadia finishes Susan's portrait and gives it to her. Susan delightfully hangs it above the fire place.

EXT. SENATOR'S MANSION – MORNING

Ali drives a van to the Senator's mansion with Nadia sitting beside him. He picks up Diana who sits in the back seat.

ALI

(making the acquaintance)

Nadia, my sister. Diana, friend and colleague.

ALI (CON'T)

My parents arrived yesterday. My father is in New York for a conference with my mother. Nadia stays with me. She's anxious to see my horses. She wants to paint them.

INT. FARM HOUSE – VIRGINIA – DAY

After driving for hours, they arrive in Virginia and find the farmhouse neat and welcoming

THE CAMERA EXPLORES THE FARMHOUSE

The house has a tiled roof and airy rooms, with large deep windows. White walls and a polished wooden floor give it quiet dignity. Bowls of fresh-cut flowers stand on small, round, wooden corner tables. Paintings of horses from superb collections hang on the walls. A few Oriental rugs lay on the floor, adding color and warmth. The large, well-lit kitchen seems a comfortable place to work. From the house, the view of the farm is spectacular.

INT. FARMHOUSE – TERRACE – MORNING

Diana stands in her room, looking out the window at the flowers in the front garden. Joy fills her heart. She goes down to the garden, touching the flowers and leaves.

Edgar's wife appears at the entrance.

EDGAR'S WIFE

Madam, breakfast is ready.

Diana finds Ali sitting at the table in the terrace waiting for her.

ALI

Good morning - did you sleep well?

DIANA

(smiling)

I slept solidly for eight hours. Where's Nadia?

ALI

She was up at dawn to look for horses to paint.

Ali eats breakfast with Diana at the terrace.

ALI

(helping Diana up)

Come. I want to show you around.

EXT. BOX STALLS – MORNING (CON'T)

Ali walks Diana toward the stalls.

ALI

(While walking toward the stalls)

I'm gradually turning the farm into a productive operation. We have horses to sell without touching the breeding stock, and we have vegetables and fruits to market at good prices.

They reach the stalls. He opens the windows of several box stalls. Beautiful horse heads come out to gaze at them. He pats their foreheads and necks as he gives them sugar cubes.

ALI (CON'T)

These horses inherited their slender grace from the blood of fine Arabians. You can see the character of the purebred horse in its splendor, affection, and loyalty to its owner. One characteristic, indicating its dignity, is that it won't eat the leftovers of another horse's fodder.

DIANA

What do they mean to you?

ALI

Courage, endurance and intelligence.

DIANA

Raising horses is expensive.

ALI

One who spends money on horses is like a man stretching his hand with charity and alms never taking it back. Stinginess never finds its way to him.

DIANA

I thought the undulation of color and the interweaving of petal colors within the flower were enough to please the heart, but after seeing the horses moving around you, I felt like I was watching an exhibition of color beyond the skill of any artist.

He smiles at her lovingly. The transparency he once loved in her is returning.

INT. HORSEFARM – LIVING ROOM – EVENING

Diana sits alone in the terrace. Nadia shows up with her paintings. She sits with Diana and shows her, her paintings.

NADIA

What do you think?

DIANA

Very impressive. You also made paintings of the mechanics of their movement at walk, trot, and canter.

NADIA

The job requires an eye for detail.

DIANA

Definitely.

NADIA

(after a moment silence)

How long have you known Ali?

DIANA

(hesitantly)

Since we were students at the university.

NADIA

You know Susan, then?

DIANA

Of course. We were colleagues. She works with us at the company.

NADIA

What's your position there?

DIANA

My father, with another partner, were the owners before Ali became the major shareholder. I own one fourth of the shares.

NADIA

Are you the girl he loved at the university?

DIANA

(worriedly)

Yes.

NADIA

(after a moment silence)

Do you still love him?

DIANA

I never stopped.

NADIA

How about him?

DIANA

I don't know.

NADIA

You think he'd admit his love to you after all that happened?

DIANA

I hope so. I hope he can forget the bitter moments of the past.

NADIA

I don't think that'll be easy for him.

DIANA

I was young then. I fought hard to protect our love, but I couldn't stand up to my father. I passed through bitter moments, too, which eventually led to worry and depression.

NADIA

Did you admit your love to him after all these years?

DIANA

Yes, when I was at the hospital, clinging to the hope that would give life to my dying heart.

NADIA

What were you doing at the hospital?

DIANA

Being treated for alcoholism. Ali brought me here for my recovery period.

NADIA

Did he admit his love to you?

DIANA

No, but I hope he will.

NADIA

That's what I expected. The wound of the past is still deep inside.
The tenderness he shows you hides a fire burning in his heart.
Those of us from the East are sensitive to such matters.

DIANA

I can see that in the sadness of his eyes and in his long silence. I'm terrified by the thought of living a desperate love.

EXT. HORSEFARM – HORSE AUCTION – MORNING

Auction day arrives. Folding chairs are set up in rows opposite the horse arena. Diana and Nadia sit beside Ali. People watch attentively, studying the conformation of the horses. Bidders compete eagerly. One horse sold for \$100,000, another for \$500,000, and a third for \$ 1000,000.

DIANA

(asking Ali)

Why the big difference in prices, when all the horses are of noble origin?

ALI

The features of the horse that sold for one million closely approached the breed's basic qualities.

DIANA

(smiling)

You turn even beauty into gold.

He replies with a smile.

EXT. HORSEFARM – HORSE ARENA - NEAR SUNSET

Ali is not in the house. Diana goes searching for him. She finds him performing prayers in the middle of the horse arena. The sun sinks toward the distant blue horizon in a blaze of glittering golden light. She leans against the fence and watches in tender silence.

It is time to exercise the horses, and Edgar releases them into the arena without noticing Ali is already there. Diana becomes terrified and shouts a warning, worried the horses might trample him.

DIANA

(shouting)

Ali, watch out, the horses might trample you.

The horses run toward Ali but stop as they near. Slowly, they form a big circle and watch him. Ali finishes his prayers, stand, and smile at them. They gleam in the fading sunlight, pushing one another, each wanting its share of Ali's compassion. He pats their necks and foreheads with love and joy.

Diana walks between the horses until she reaches Ali.

DIANA

I feared they'd trample you while you prayed.

ALI

How could that be, when they know a man's prayers?

He stares at her face. The sunlight is gold on her skin, casting a web of light on her blonde hair.

ALI

You're twinkling beauty.

His words penetrate deeply, subduing her heart and sending a rush of emotions to her eyes.

He looks around and chooses a delicately built pearly white mare.

ALI

This young mare has been well-trained. I offer her to you as a present.

DIANA
(surprised)

A gift for me? That's too much.

ALI

With your slender frame, there's something fitting about horse and rider.

Diana fights back tears. She wishes to hear the words of love she so desired. She loves that mare and exercises her twice a day.

INT. HORSEFARM – DINING ROOM – BALCONY – NIGHT

Ali, Diana and Nadia sit at the dining room, eating dinner. After dinner Ali walks to the balcony to sit alone in a far corner. Diana calmly approaches him and sits beside him.

DIANA
What's up? You seem worried.

ALI
(taking a deep breath)
Verily, God has smoothed all my affairs for me. We ought to be benevolent and pay alms.

DIANA
That's what you called Zakat in your religion, I suppose. I remember your speaking of it in that seminar years ago.

ALI
You still remember?

DIANA
My moments with you are unforgettable.

He returns to deep silence.

DIANA

How much is your almsgiving?

ALI

Millions each year.

DIANA

Millions! You could invest that in profitable projects. Why waste it?

ALI

Our religion prompts us to spend money in goodness and charity. It's a profitable trade with God.

DIANA

I still don't understand the wisdom of spending all that money without any return.

ALI

May God protect me. I trade with Him by paying charity, and almsgiving. In return, I'm blessed with livelihood, health, and wealth.

DIANA

Where will you spend all that money?

ALI

On starving people in Africa.

DIANA

Don't you think they're the reason for the famine? They don't work to earn a living.

ALI

To us, people are of two kinds – either a brother in religion or an equal in creation. Both deserve almsgiving and charity. That's God's instruction to us to earn His blessing.

DIANA

Is that what has made you worried these past few days?

ALI

Yes

DIANA

How will you spend these millions in Africa?

ALI

By departing to areas afflicted with calamities. I make a trip like this each year to approach God.

DIANA

It seems these trips are encompassed with toil and pain.

ALI

They are indeed. Nonetheless, there you can feel the strangest of all impressions. It's like a blur of light, in the midst of which you can see the real value of life that fits the facts of existence.

DIANA

It sounds heavenly. When will you leave?

ALI

I gave orders to some of my companies to ship foodstuffs to Sudan, which is already suffering from drought and starvation. I'll leave as soon I receive permission from the Sudanese authorities to enter the affected areas.

DIANA

How long will you stay there?

ALI

One or two months.

Her face pales at the thought of being deprived of his nearness. She fears, after his departure, she might resort to liquor again.

EXT. HOUSEFARM – CARDEN – MORNING

On a sunny day, Ali, Diana and Nadia sit in the garden, eating breakfast. Edgar comes to the table and places a telegram before Ali. Ali reads the telegram.

ALI

Everything is set.

Diana realizes his departure for Africa is near. She stops eating and feels hysteria rising in her. She bolts toward the house.

Ali goes after her and finds her sitting in the lobby, her eyes wet with tears. He sits beside her.

ALI

Diana, what's wrong?

She breaks into hysterical sobbing. She shakes her head in rejection.

DIANA

Don't fly away. Don't tear out my heart with your departure. I don't want to be burned again. You're all I could hope for. I see nothing but you.

She smiles through her tears and whispers:

DIANA

Say the words of love.

ALI

Diana, be sensible. We are good friends. We are partners. Gone is the time when you and I were lovers. That was ages ago.

DIANA

What do you want of me? I've never stopped loving you.

Her voice dying in a sob.

ALI

(takes her hand in his)

For God's sake, don't make this any harder.

DIANA

I want you to talk about your feelings. I'm sure there's a chance we can begin again.

Tense silence falls.

DIANA

(trying to pull herself together)

I won't beg love from you again. I'll wait until you realize how much I love you. I'll bury the pain in my heart and won't complain about being forsaken and repulsed. The days will prove to you that your soul inhabits mine, and my love burns in your heart.

He releases her hand, his black eyes blazing with fury.

ALI

(shaking)

My life is a barren desert. I travel through its quick sand searching for a flower that once perfumed my heart but there's nothing but a mirage.

DIANA

(smiling through her tears)

How beautiful are your words. Do you love me that much?

ALI

(quickly)

I didn't admit any thing.

DIANA

No, my beloved. You did, but your love is joined with pain. I'll give you compassion that will rejoice your heart and love that will heal your wound until you whisper the words I long to hear.

ALI

(trying to escape his weakness)

I leave for Africa now.

DIANA

(confidently)

I'll go with you.

ALI

Don't press me too far.

DIANA

I don't think you like the idea of leaving me by myself for too long.

ALI

My trip won't be about fun. It's hard there.

DIANA

Nothing would induce me to stay behind.

A beautiful smile dawns on her face when she detects tacit consent in his long silence.

EXT. STATION WAGON – ON THEIR WAY BACK TO
NORTH CAROLINA – DAY

Ali drives the station wagon back to North Carolina. Diana sits beside him. Nadia sits in the passenger seat.
Ali reopens the subject of Diana's travel to Africa.

ALI

Diana you're still recovering. You might not be able to withstand the hardships of such a trip. Please reconsider.

DIANA

I'd be traveling under your protection. I've nothing to fear.

Nadia, listening, surprises them both.

NADIA

I'd definitely find fertile nature there that I could draw.

Ali and Diana laugh at the unexpected surprise.

INT. SUSAN'S VILLA – DINING ROOM – NIGHT

Susan opens the door for Ali. She hugs him tightly as if drowning her fears by clinging to him. They sit eating dinner. Seeing the fragile appearance of her face, his heart aches for her.

ALI

You look pale, are you feeling unwell?

SUSAN

I'm getting transfusion every ten days.

Noticing his worry, she laughs.

SUSAN (CON'T)

There's nothing to worry about. They take good care of me at the hospital.

SUSAN (CON'T)

So you're going to Africa?

ALI

Yes.

SUSAN

Is Diana going with you.

ALI

She insisted.

SUSAN

That would keep her away from liquor and would show her another side of the world.

ALI

Yes. The trip will be a good opportunity for her to see something of the world, and discover the secrets of her soul.

ALI (CON'T)

(while rising)

I'm afraid I have to leave now. I must get some rest before departing.

Susan walks him to the door. He hugs her hard, and she holds onto him tearfully.

As Susan watches him go, she has a moment of overwhelming fear.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN

To be continued.

EPISODE 7

EXT. ALI'S PRIVATE JET - KHARTOUM AIRPORT - DAY

Ali's private jet touches down at Khartoum airport. Ali, Diana and Nadia disembark to find a representative of the Sudanese government waiting.

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

I'm here to convey my government's thanks for the sincere effort you devoted to help the hungry. I've given orders to the authorities to help you in any way they can.

ALI

I hope they can help me locate fifteen drivers and twenty carriers supposed to bear provisions to affected areas.

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

I'll take you to them. This way please.

The government representative takes Ali and his companions in a van to the waiting trucks. When they reached there, Ali shakes hands with the man.

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

This is your pass to cross to Sudanese territories without any obstacles. I wish you all a successful trip.

ALI

Thank you for your help.

EXT. ROAD TO DARFOUR – OPEN DESERT – FLEET OF TRUCKS
– DAY

The stream of Lorrie starts their journey to Darfour in the far west. After several hundred miles, the fleet of trucks reaches Wadi Madany, the capital of the middle region, Cordovan. They refuel and continue until they stop near Costy city for the night. Ali gives orders to set up tents. In an hour, everything is prepared.

The sun has already sunk behind the horizon, casting a faint, trembling light on the sandy earth.

Ali sits before his tent, staring ahead. Heat and glare from the sun are replaced by the coolness of the night. After a while the moon rises.

Suddenly, a black driver stands and calls to prayer. Ali and all men gather in rows to pray. Diana watches them bow as one in adoration to God. They look equal, casting off difference in color, language, and wealth. Her heart is filled with respect and reverence. After prayers, Ali leaves the crowd and sits on a sandy hill, watching the moon's soft light.

Diana joins him and sits beside him.

DIANA

I see signs of contentment on your face.

ALI

I feel close to God.

DIANA

Can you describe that feeling?

ALI

It put happiness into my heart and reassurance into my soul.

DIANA

While you prayed, you looked as if you were embracing the earth. I felt the power of giving flowing out of you to water this land.

ALI

The prayers you've seen purify man's soul from showy civilization and materialistic extravagance.

DIANA

I'm puzzled. In the past, you're very romantic. Then you became realistic. Now you look at things spiritually.

ALI

Both material and spiritual lives join in believer's hearts. God created the universe based on truth, justice, and mercy. Those are the characteristics of perfection, which believers strive to adhere to and pursue through life.

His words take her to a world of light. He glances at her with affectionate eyes. Looking at her countenance delights his soul.

ALI

You look luminous, elegant and comely.

She smiles, then laughs with tearful eyes.

EXT. ROAD TO ELFASHER – PERMANENT CAMP – DAY
(CON'T)

Early the following morning, the fleet continues moving toward Elabiad city in the Cordovan region. The lorries have great difficulty getting through. The air is so warm and still, it seems as if not a blade of grass or single cloud moves.

After many long hours of difficult driving they reach their final destination at Elfasher city in the far west of the Darfour region, near the border with Chad.

Tents are set up, and sheets are placed on the ground with food stuffs on them.

Ali sends scouts north, south, and east of the camp to look for the hungry and guide them to the place of food and drink.

The following afternoon, masses of the hungry begin appearing. Ali watches them through binoculars and gives orders to the carriers to prepare to distribute food.

Nadia and Diana look ahead, trying to locate them, but all they see is burning sand. Ali loans them his binoculars, and they take turns looking through them, seeing emaciated bodies dressed in rags, some so weak they could scarcely drag their bare, bruised feet along. They're exhausted from the strain of their long walk.

Ali couldn't wait, he runs toward the hungry, and Diana keeps up on the hot, bright sand, her hand instinctively seek Ali's arm.

They run until they reach the hungry. They stand amazed and astounded. Waves of bony bodies slowly pass them, looking painfully ahead. They seem hardly human. All are hungry, famished, and in pain. Lips and knuckles are split and bleeding, and their hair is dry as straw. Some of the men with bent backs lean on sticks and drag their legs painfully along, often breaking down.

Diana's heart beats so violently, she thinks it might break.

Ali, speaking to them in Arabic, points at the camp, where the food is.

EXT. CAMP FOR THE HUNGRY – FOOD AND WATER DISTRIBUTION – DAY

Back at the camp Ali instructs the two ladies.

ALI

Diana supervises food distribution for women. Nadia takes care of
their drink.

Diana stands amid the women, giving them food and seeing that their needs are fulfilled. Nadia goes around the women with pots of water.

They eat and drink, then take shelter under the trees.

Diana sits amidst the women looking at them in compassion. She realizes by helping them, she is helping herself. Women with linen kerchiefs on their heads glare at Diana with piercing eyes.

Tired and exhausted, Diana stretches out on the ground under a shady tree and goes into a deep sleep.

Ali moves among the exhausted bodies. Men sit in circles, staring at him sullenly. Some fall to their knees from exhaustion while waiting for food. Others push and shove to get water. Ali offers them food and water, then sits in a remote place to watch them with tear- filled eyes.

EXT. CAMP – HUNGRY WOMEN APPRECIATING DIANA'S WORK – DAY

Diana awakes and looks around. The women, who previously looked at her sternly, are now warm and affectionate. One old woman, who feels motherly toward Diana, sits before her with a smile. With a trembling hand, she plaits Diana's hair into one long braid behind her back. Diana looks at the long braid and smiles her thanks to the old woman.

Other women come and dye Diana's hands with Henna. She stares at their faces – thankful, simple, calm African faces that are pleasant to look upon. With food in their stomachs, the women smile until their faces are as bright as day.

DIANA
(murmurs gratefully)
Thank you.

Then bursts into tears.

EXT. CAMP – ALI FEEDS HUNGRY CHILDREN – DAY

Diana needs to see Ali and finds him sitting among small children. Within minutes, they eat from his hands.

She stands behind him a long time, watching him at his work.

FLASH BACK

She remembers how he compassionately petted his horses and fed them sugar cubes.

After the children are satisfied, Ali stretches his hand to a piece of bread and is about to put it in his mouth when a small boy comes out of nowhere, snatches it, and swallows it. Ali keeps feeding the boy until he is full.

Diana puts her hand on Ali's shoulder.

ALI

(lifting his sad eyes to her)

What were we doing on the other side of the world while people were starving here?

She sits shoulder – to shoulder beside him.

DIANA

I find my own happiness here while living a hermit's life.

ALI

The rough life we live here is our safeguard against the destruction of our souls. Here, we tame our souls to become content with giving and feeling other people's pain.

ALI (CON'T)

I always pray that God will put life in my hand, not in my heart. Life in the hand of believers means charity, almsgiving, fidelity and mercy.

ALI (CON'T)

God will differentiate between people on the Day of Resurrection according to piety and not wealth. If people knew that, they'd take the road of piety and godliness as a path to Him. Only here will God send his blessings. Then dearth and famine will turn into abundance and fruitfulness.

EXT. CAMP – NADIA PAINTS THE HUNGRY – HUNGRY
CHILDREN BREAK INTO ALI'S TENT SEARCHING FOR FOOD

Nadia chooses a spot overlooking the hungry and paints pictures expressing the sights of misery.

Days pass, and more of the hungry comes to the camp. What is truly agonizing are the children. Their bony bodies move slowly with hollow eyes and swollen bellies.

Ali watches them with a bleeding heart. Ali receives them with compassion and feeds them with his own hands. They have confidence in him and break into his tent, seeking more of his care.

Ali likes most the boy who snatched the piece of bread from his hand. That boy follows him everywhere, as if he feels Ali would give him the parental love he lost after the death of his parents in the desert.

Ali grows fond of the boy whose smile shines like sunrise.

EXT. CAMP – DIANA'S TENT – ALI INVITES DIANA TO A CUP OF TEA – DAY

The constant work Diana gives to women is like nourishment to her parched soul. Ali watches her blossoming every day. He watches her for weeks, stepping among the hungry with food and water. She does her job with great simplicity. Whenever she feels exhausted or filled with fear, she continues working with fresh energy.

After a full day of work, Diana is very tired, she tries to sleep in her tent, but she couldn't.

ALI
(whispering outside her tent)
Diana, are you awake?

DIANA
(glad to hear your voice)
Is anything wrong?

ALI
I just wanted to invite you to a cup of tea.

She comes out of the tent with a radiant face reflecting her love for him.

ALI

Your face is as bright as an angel's from heaven.

She smiles, then laughs, happy to hear his tender words.

He escorts her to a fire before his tent. They sit on the sand, which glitters white under the soft moon light.

He gives her a cup of tea that she sips slowly while looking into his strangely beautiful eyes.

DIANA

How beautiful to sit in the desert and enjoy the beauty of the moonlight.

ALI

Beauty is a prominent feature of the universe. Discovering beauty and enjoying it is one of the ways to worship God. God made the universe open to man's reflection to see signs of His existence and oneness.

DIANA

You talk about the universe as if it were a living being.

ALI

It was created to praise God and worship Him.

DIANA

Is that how your religion looks at the universe?

ALI

It's not only that. In communism, nature is exploited for the benefit of the ruling class. In capitalism, it's exploited for the benefit of the individual. As for us, we forbid what's prohibited, and we allow what's lawful.

Nadia joins them, and Ali offers her a cup of tea. She drinks it down thirstily. From under her garment, she takes out a painting of the boy Ali likes most. Ali is pleased by the resemblance.

ALI

This is the best work you've ever done. I'll pay you a fair price for it.

NADIA

No, it's a present. I didn't know you loved children so much.

As they sit and drink tea, a guide comes up.

GUIDE

We have discovered groups of hungry men and women wandering six kilometers from our camp. We showed them the way here, but they haven't arrived.

ALI

Prepare your men, we will start searching for them at dawn.

As the day draws toward dawn, Ali and his scouts search for the hungry. It doesn't take long to find them. Their withered, bony bodies lay on the hot sand, groaning in pain.

Ali looks around in dismay.

ALI

(to his men)

We must save them at any cost. Carry them back to camp.

EXT. CAMP – LARGE UMBRELLA – WITHERED BODIES LAY UNDERNEATH – DAY

At the camp, under a large umbrella, a doctor examines the patients as the bearers bring in more dying men. The doctor shakes his head at Ali to tell him many would die.

Diana and Nadia look at the dying men and women with terrible grief.

NADIA

This is how the world will end.

EXT. ALI WITH HIS MEN ON A HILL DIGGING GRAVES FOR THE DEAD – JUST BEFORE SUNSET

Diana seeks Ali to take refuge and finds him standing on a hill with his men, digging graves for the dead.

Ali spends days at the edge of the graves, burying the dead and offering with his men funeral prayers.

Diana comes near in silence. Ali stares at her gravely.

ALI

They were undone by heat and famine. It makes no difference now. They rest in the arms of death. Six feet from their heads to their heels was all they needed. They need not bow to anyone now.

More corpses carried on stretchers come to the burying spot. With difficulty Ali pushes his way through the corpses until he reaches his tent, then sits on the ground and holds his face in his hands.

Diana watches him with sadness. She listens to his sobbing and sees his shoulders shaking with grief.

INT. ALI'S TENT – NIGHT

Ali takes refuge in his tent for hours. Diana becomes worried. She asks Nadia to check Ali in his tent. Nadia finds him lying on the ground, eyes shut, breathing with difficulty, perspiring heavily.

NADIA

(shouting terrified)

Diana.

Diana runs into the tent, and watches with eyes that glistened with fear as she kneels.

DIANA

(smoothing his hair back from his forehead)

You'll be fine.

Nadia calls the bearers to put Ali in bed. Diana sends for the doctor.

Doctor

(after careful examination)

He suffers from malaria.

The doctor takes tablets from his bag.

DOCTOR

(addressing Diana)

He will be fine after taking these pills.

Diana and Nadia alternate nursing Ali. Diana is like a tigress, hovering over Ali and letting Nadia help only when she is ready to drop from exhaustion.

In a far corner of the tent sits Ali's new friend, the little boy, waiting impatiently for him to recover.

INT. CAMP – ALI'S TENT – NIGHT (CON'T)

Diana sits beside Ali's bed for hours, sponging his face with a cool cloth. Diana softly says his name. He tries to focus on her with sore eyes.

Burning waves of fever make him rave:

ALI

Calamity befell them. How cruel man is when satiation blinds him from seeing the other side of his face.

Diana takes him in her arms and kisses him tenderly with tears overflowing.

Under the influence of tired nerves and restlessness from lack of sleep, Diana works harder than before. Ali is alive, so she, too, is alive.

Ali struggling through layers of pain, sees Diana's face swims into focus. He smiles when he recognizes her during such episodes.

ALI

(with difficulty)

Go take care of the women.

DIANA

(holding him in tenderness)

You'll be okay, I'm sure.

ALI

(while another wave of nausea sweeps through him)

I've confidence in God.

Diana's heart pounds painfully when Ali begins raving again. Her face looks pale in the lamplight.

ALI

They got me. I'm done. Let me die in peace. Death is better than being alone decrying our separation.

She remembers those words. He said them when he was stabbed many years earlier, and collapsed in her arms with his blood running like a river. Does he still remember those dark days? Why couldn't he forget the wounds of the past? She is free now, and he could have her anytime he wants.

After a while, his raving voice sinks to a whisper.

ALI

No, I won't surrender to death. I'll cling to life, but what's the use of being alive when all I have loved in you has been extinguished by another man?
What are you doing with my body? I don't want to live.

Diana shudders and sobs. His disjointed phrases give a terribly clear picture of what he feels in his subconscious.

She leans down to kiss his chest and buries her face against his neck, her tears warm against his skin.

Her voice threatens to fail, so she speaks barely above a whisper.

DIANA

Stop blaming me. Your words are like a fire in my heart. Don't say all that I've loved in you has been extinguished. Your eyes say that you love me. I love you, because you're the dream of my youth and the support of my life. I'd risk my life for love of you.

Quickly straightening up, she lifts her head as if fearing he would feel her tears.

INT. CAMP – ALI'S TENT – DAY

Ali's recovery is slow and painful. He becomes more his normal self, and he regains his mobility. Diana's heart melts when he opens his eyes and smiles at her. Tenderness floods through her, filling her eyes with tears.

DIANA

(whispering)

You'll be all right, because I love you best in the world.

ALI

(smiling at her words)

I feel better now.

Nothing could lessen the boy's joy when Ali opened his eyes and told Diana he felt better.

The boy notices Ali doesn't fade from consciousness again but remains alert. A large smile comes to the boy's face.

Ali stares at the boy, who runs to him. Ali wraps his arms around him tightly.

Diana takes the child in her arms and cradles him right and left while joyful tears run down her face as she cries and laughs simultaneously.

EXT. CAMP – DAY

Days drift past while Ali recovers completely. He and Diana walk around the hungry feeding them and offering drink. Diana listens to him while talking to the hungry.

ALI

People will be pressed together hungry and thirsty at Judgment Day. Those who feed others and give them drink on earth, God feeds them and gives them drink on Judgment Day.

EXT. CAMP – DAY OF DEPARTURE – DAY

The journey is near its end. Ali and his companions prepare to leave. The station wagon is ready to travel back to Khartoum.

On a sandy hill, Ali goes down on his knees and prays to God.

ALI

(raising his hands to the sky)

God, You're rich, and we're poor. People want water, but they don't find it. They need food, but it's not enough. Misery shows in their eyes, and pain grinds their hearts. Have mercy upon us. Wipe out their pain and send your rain.

Ali then stands and speaks to the people, pointing to the nearby graves.

ALI

Their life was agony, their fittest place a burial ground. No soul can die except by Allah's wish and at the appointed time. Nothing can befall us save that which Allah has decreed for us. I've prayed to Allah to turn desert into green. Maybe my prayers shall be answered. I bid you farewell. Peace, mercy, and the blessing of Allah upon you.

His sincere words fill their hearts. They shout: "God is the greatest, God is the greatest."

The women come to bid Diana and Nadia farewell, offering baskets made of palm leaves. The wagon moves off, heading to Khartoum.

Crying, the little boy runs after the wagon. Ali stops the wagon, goes to the boy, and holds him tenderly.

ALI

This desert looks bare now, but soon, there'll be plants again. The blessing of God is coming. I want you to be the first to receive it. You're deeply rooted in this land, so stay and don't leave.

The boy doesn't understand Ali's words, but a sense of calm fills him, and he releases the wagon without further weeping.

The wagon takes four days to reach Khartoum. When they approach the city, they stop to rest. Suddenly they see slashes of lightning. Hear the explosion of thunder, and watch huge cloud masses gather.

Rain falls onto the dry earth, and the rich, damp smell is like the sweet taste of perfume.

It rains on and off for hours. The drought is broken. The prayers have been answered. Ali feels God has accepted his alms. He bows in worship to God.

Diana watches Ali pray and sees God's presence in him.

EXT. KHARTOUM AIRPORT – ALI'S JET PLANE – DAY

They take the plane, and Larry flies them to London. Nadia sits in the back, busily arranging her paintings. Some are finished. Others are still just sketches, waiting to be completed later.

Ali and Diana sit together. He stares out of the window as the African continent is getting smaller and smaller below.

DIANA

I appreciate your loyalty for the continent from which you came.

ALI

It's the land of prophets and religions. From it I receive my inheritance and personal traits.

DIANA

Taking me to Sudan had been an awakening for my soul. It brought me to myself. I was on the verge of exhaustion each day, but I felt my body growing stronger while serving the hungry.

DIANA (CON'T)

My life there had a completeness that gave it beauty. I've never been as grateful to you as I am right now.

ALI

The world of giving is full of bright glamour that never dims. To my relief, you were strong enough for almost anything.

DIANA

I saw light where there was only darkness.

DIANA (CON'T)

(smiling)

You're the cause of all the good things that happened to me.

He smiles without commenting.

Her memory wanders through the beautiful past, seeking joy and happiness, and a question suddenly comes to mind.

DIANA

How'd you know of my tribulation with the bank?

He gazes at her thoughtfully for a while.

ALI

I saw you in a dream, sitting amid snowy mountains on a cold, frosty night. Your naked body quivered with cold and shook with tearful weeping.

Seized with astonishment, she lifts his hand to her lips and kisses it. He looks passionately into her eyes and sees her tears as purer than pearls, and as more radiant than moonlight. He smooths her hair back from her forehead.

Her face softens and shines. His care for her soothes and relieves her. She puts her head on his shoulder and sleeps peacefully.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT – NIGHT

The plane lands at Heathrow Airport. Ali decides to remain with his parents awhile. Diana continues her trip to the States. Ali and Nadia bid her farewell at the airport. They wave until she disappears among the crowd boarding an American airline.

Nadia turns to gaze at Ali.

NADIA

She waited on you hand and foot. She tore herself away for you. She sat by your bed for hours, sponging you during your fever, watching over you with anxious love.

ALI

(staring at the gate)

When fever ate into my body, she softly cried my name. I opened my eyes and saw damp tears on her eyelashes. I fear I said something that hurt her.

THESE WORDS APPEAR ON THE SCREEN

To be continued.

EPISODE 8

INT. COMPANY – DIANA'S OFFICE – DAY

After a long absence, Diana sits in her office working.

DIANA
(calling her secretary)
Get me Susan on the phone.

SECRETARY

Miss Susan's been in the hospital for three weeks. She's receiving treatment for blood cancer. She kept it as secret for a long time, but she realized, once she knew the disease was incurable, it would be better to have her doctor call us and explain, so work in the accounting division would continue smoothly without her.

Diana feels as if a vise squeezes her head.

Simone comes into Diana's office.

SIMONE

As soon as Ali's back from London, I'll leave to Paris. I've done all that you need. My share in the profits from perfume sales will be sent to my bank in Paris.

DIANA

Why this sudden desire to leave?

SIMONE

Susan and I have become intimate friends these past months. I don't want to stay here and shed tears while seeing her to the grave.

INT. ALI'S BANK - LONDON – DAY

Ali sits at his desk in his bank in London. He receives a phone call from Diana.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALI AND DIANA

DIANA

Ali, Susan is very ill. Please come as quickly as you can.

Ali – tongue – tied feels that Susan is dying.

INT. HOSPITAL – SUSAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM – NIGHT

Diana drives to the hospital to see Susan. She's terrified to see her so emaciated. Her shoulder and chest bones stand out through her transparent skin. With tears in her eyes, Diana hugs her.

SUSAN

The whole matter is in God's hands now. Thank God you came to see me.
I always wondered when I'd be able to see you.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Listen carefully. I don't have much time left. I don't want you to think that Ali and I had an affair. I wanted to give him my body and soul, but he never asked for anything. I still remember his words: "I don't want to hurt your feelings, but my heart could never love someone else."

SUSAN (CON'T)
(panting for breath)

It's you he meant of course. I stood by him in times of distress, not only because we were friends, but because I loved him with all my heart. Because he couldn't love me the same way, he offered an everlasting friendship that lit the darkness in my soul.

SUSAN (CON'T)

In San Francisco, I lived alone in a desolate apartment. I hated men because of the incident I experienced at the university. I felt bored with my monotonous life and prayed God would send me a glimpse of hope, something to make my life joyful.

SUSAN (CON'T)

Ali felt my grief and came to offer happiness. His sudden appearance in my life was not a surprise because several times before that, I saw him in my dreams coming to me from afar with a fascinating smile on his face and his hand out. That smile eased my restless soul and put hope into my dying heart.

SUSAN (CON'T)

When he invited me to work with him, I felt everything behind without thinking. I kept my illness to myself in order not to trouble him with my pain, he felt my agony again, and one day, I found him innocently standing at my hospital bed asking what brought me there. When he knew of my illness, he gave me beautiful moments that enabled me to face my destiny and accept my fate.

SUSAN (CON'T)

I received strength from him to live, but he left, and now death threatens me at any moment.

SUSAN (CON'T)

Diana, I thought you could send for him, so I could see him before I die, but there's no need for that now. I see him coming from afar, crossing the distance with his hands outstretched and a reassuring smile on his face.

SUSAN (CON'T)

Diana, open that drawer. Inside is a precious necklace he once gave me. Put it around my neck please.

Tears flowing from her eyes, Diana obey. Susan touches the necklace in admiration.

SUSAN (CON'T)

Diana, comb my hair back so he can see me as beautiful as I can be.

Diana combs her hair back tenderly with tears overflowing.

SUSAN (CON'T)

(before going into a deep sleep)

The last thing I want before I die is to look into his eyes. How I miss their love, and beauty.

Diana sits at her bedside, crying silently. She doesn't know why, but Ali's words return to her.

FLASH BACK

We see Ali and Diana in the jet plane while returning from Khartoum.

ALI (V.O.).

I saw you in a dream, sitting amid snowy mountains on a cold, frosty night. Your naked body quivered with cold and shook with tearful weeping.

INT. HOSPITAL – SUSAN'S HOSPITAL ROOM – NIGHT (CON'T)

Susan awakes in an hour, her eyes open and focuses on the door.

SUSAN

It's time.

The door opens, and Ali walks in. Diana leaves them alone.

At sight of his dearest friend, Ali knew it's over. Something has died in her. Her softness is gone. Her lips are thin and blue, and the only life leaves to her is in her dark eyes.

He is helpless to do more than hold her tenderly.

SUSAN

(touching the necklace with a frail hand)
The necklace is for you after I'm gone. I've no family but you.

He nods, tears falling constantly from his eyes.

SUSAN (CON'T)
You infused my soul with care and love.

ALI
It's you who gave without return. You've been a dear friend and guide to me through life.

SUSAN
I feel a huge relief at having said those words. Now I can die in peace.

ALI
Gently, my love. You'll be fine. I'm sure.

SUSAN
You said, 'my love'! I've waited so long to hear those words.

ALI
(crying)
I've loved you without doubt.

SUSAN
(holding his hand)
Put your pitying hand on my face and wipe away tears of deprivation.
He wipes tears from her eyes.

SUSAN (CON'T)
Hold me tightly.

He hugs her gently, feeling she's nothing but skin and bone.

SUSAN
How wonderful to die in the arms of those whom you love. Now I release you from loving me. I'll sleep a little. Don't be sad.

Peacefully, she closes her eyes. Her last breath flutters from her like a falling autumn leaf. He studies her face and feels his heart turns to stone, never to feel emotion again.

He releases her onto the bed, and burst into tears. After long moments of sadness, he gently removes the necklace and puts it in his pocket.

Diana enters the room, seeing immediately that Susan is dead. She puts a compassionate hand on Ali's shoulder to console him.

ALI

(lifting tearful eyes to her)

I thought I stopped burying the dead, but here I am, burying part of my soul.

EXT. BLACK LIMOUSINES – CEMETRY – SUSAN'S COFFIN - DAY

Black limousines slowly move to the cemetery. The coffin is gently lowered to the grave.

Ali, Diana, Simone and the company staff stand holding flowers and listening to the priest's prayers. After he finishes, they throw their flowers onto the coffin.

Ali stares at the coffin with all the sadness in the world in his eyes.

ALI (V.O.).

(tosses in his bouquet)

There'll always be much of you left. The sparkle in your eyes, your jolly smile, our endless friendship, the loyalty we shared – all those decorate a necklace I once offered to you. I put it in the bouquet I just tossed to you.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali sits in the meeting room, sullenly staring at the table before him. Simone walks in to see him sitting alone with eyes deeply sad. She sits beside him. Respecting his silence she doesn't speak

ALI

(looking at the chandelier overhead)

What's up, Simone?

SIMONE

I came to offer my condolences for Susan.

ALI

Thank you.

SIMONE

I don't find North Carolina as beautiful as before. I wish to return to Paris.

ALI

What are you escaping from?

SIMONE

I don't like sadness. I hesitated a long time before attending the funeral,
but Diana insisted.

ALI

I see what you mean. Sadness might be tolerable without confrontation.

SIMONE

I've already discussed my wish to leave with Diana. We agreed she'd send
my share of the perfume sales to my bank in Paris.

ALI

As you wish.

As she stands to go, Ali walks her to the door, and she hugs him dearly.

SIMONE

I'll be gone in a few hours. I'll definitely see you again.

ALI

(dumbfounded)

It's a small world.

He returns to his seat and stares at the crystal chandelier shining in the
sunlight.

Diana comes in calmly and sits beside him. Ali continues looking at the
chandelier.

ALI

(without looking at her)

What's the use of life when it becomes empty of pitying hands and sincere friendship?

ALI (CON'T)

(turning to Diana and looking deeply into her eyes)

I've done a lot of thinking recently. The company's doing a handsome profit. Our balance sheet is healthy. I want to sell my business to you on terms to be arranged. There's nothing left for me to do here. My job's done. I'm going home.

Rage shakes her from head to foot. She looks as if she were hit by a train. She isn't prepared to face not seeing him again. Her heart pauses as she feels her world crumbling. Her face white with grief, she leaps to her feet.

DIANA

How dare you say that?

He thinks of consoling her, but she never gives him the chance as she runs from the room.

A moment later, he hears her car start, then the sound of tires screeching as the car careens down the driveway.

EXT. DIANA'S CAR – STREETS – PASSERBY – AMBULANCE – HOSPITAL - DAY

Diana races toward the highway, pressing down hard on the gas pedal until she is doing 100 miles per hour. Pain drives her beyond the limit of endurance. She looks blindly ahead with eyes filled with tears of suffering and pain.

Atop a small rise, the car strikes the shoulder and shot into the air like a bullet before it rolls several times across a field.

Passerby pulls Diana unconscious body from the car and calls an ambulance. Not seriously injured, she has only minor cuts and bruises. The doctor orders her to stay in the hospital for two days.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – DAY

Ali receives a phone call from Mary, Diana's governess.

MARY

Mr. Ali, Diana was in a car accident a few minutes ago. She's in the hospital.

EXT. STREETS – PASSERBY – CITY HOSPITAL - DAY

Panicked, Ali drops the receiver and runs from the room to the street. The bad news diverts his thoughts from taking his car.

He runs down the street like a mad man, fighting the throngs of rush-hour people. Strolling groups turn their heads in astonishment as he races past. He never hears the squeal of brakes and the angry shouts of drivers as he crossed city streets.

Outrageous thoughts race through his mind. His instincts tell him she's died. He's buried the dead in Africa, then Susan, and now his soul. He's the cause of her death. His words of separation killed her.

He shouts while running like a mad man:

ALI

Wait, my love! Don't go now. If you die, I die with you. I'll ask them to bury my body with yours.

INT. CITY HOSPITAL – RECEPTION – DIANA'S ROOM

He reaches the hospital out of breath. At the information desk, they give him Diana's room number. He fights back tears as he rushes to her room. Opening the door, he stands abashed and motionless in the center of the room, staring at her with grave, wondering eyes.

Dear God, she is alive.

She sits in bed with her golden hair falling down her back. She looks at him regretfully before turning away in pain.

He walks to her and sits beside her on the bed, looking at the woman he once loved and never stopped loving. His body quivers and his face is pale. He runs trembling fingertips over her forehead, beautiful eyes, delicate nose, and tender lips. He brushes back the silky, golden strands of her hair. His fingers go down her neck and cling to a large golden heart he once gave her.

Waves of weeping push up from within his depths to become abundant tears as strong sobs shake him.

Suddenly, he takes her in his arms and burst into tears.

Her mind is paralyzed, and she falls through vast endless space. Is it true she's in his arms, or is it a dream? Is her spirit wandering the universe, dreaming of his embrace?

He continues weeping as he holds tightly onto her.

ALI

I thought you were dead. I felt dead inside. What on earth did you do it for?

DIANA

I didn't think, when I admitted my love for you, that you'd treat me with such alienation. You're selfish, caring only for yourself. Nothing moves you except news of my death.

ALI

You're my heart. No one can steal that from me, not even you.

DIANA

Your heart's made of stone. The supposition that I died was what made you come here.

There was a supreme instant, during which a wish to see his tears burned within her.

DIANA

Let me be. I want to see your tears.

ALI

(trying hard to stop weeping)
Stop that.

DIANA
I insist.

He tenderly releases her. She looks into his tearful, loving eyes, crying in anguish for her, and runs her fingers through the dampness covering his face.

DIANA
You shed tears for me?

ALI
I love you.

She couldn't believe it.

DIANA
What did you say? I didn't hear you.

He hugs her hard while still crying.

ALI
I never stopped loving you. I adore you as much as ever. I see nothing but you. You're the air I breathe.

DIANA
You kept your love hidden in your heart. You even denied it, though it made me suffer.

ALI
The wound in my heart was deep. The passage of time didn't heal it.

DIANA
For a long time I wanted to make you happy, but you refused. You ruined our youth.

She releases herself tenderly from his arms.

DIANA (CON'T)
I'm afraid of you.

ALI
Don't fear a loving heart.

DIANA

Your love flow endlessly when you feel the groans of the needy, yet you refuse to admit love to a heart that never stopped loving you.

DIANA (CON'T)

You put hope into my heart, but when I long for you, you fly away. How many times have you left me alone? I won't let you play with my feelings again.

ALI

I travel around the world to think of you.

DIANA

(Determinedly)

I won't let pain hurt my heart again. I won't follow you just to be burned.

ALI

How do you want me to correct myself? I beg you don't go away.

He lifts her hands to his lips and kisses them, wetting them with his tears.

She puts her arms around his neck and hugs him to her.

DIANA

(staring into space)

I'll give up the struggle. I'll leave you.

ALI

(Grieved)

Leave me? I can't live without you.

DIANA

I surrendered myself completely to your love, and had forgotten all about dignity. I look forward to an independent life away from you.

DIANA (CON'T)

I'll tour the states for a change of air. I need something to calm my nerves.

She releases him tenderly. He looks into her eyes with tears rolling down his face.

ALI

Who knows? Maybe, when you're away, you'll understand facts you don't see now.

DIANA

(tenderly)

I want to be by myself. I want to be left alone

With difficulty, he stands and walks to the door feeling completely dispirited. She watches him with regretful eyes until he is gone.

She hasn't wept yet. She looks at her hands and sees they are still wet with his hot tears. Lifting them to her lips, she kisses them, then cries her heart out.

EXT. DURHAM AIRPORT – FLIGHT TO NEWORLEANS – HOTEL
– DAY

From Durham Airport, Diana takes a flight to New Orleans. In New Orleans she easily finds a room in a fancy hotel.

DIANA

(talking to the receptionist)

I want a room for the night, please.

RECEPTIONIST

(handing her the key)

Of course, madam.

A black man and his wife and child come in.

BLACK MAN

I need a room with two beds, please.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry – we're fully booked.

Downhearted, the black family leaves.

Diana extremely annoyed, goes to her room. She sits in a big, comfortable chair to close her eyes and relaxes her tired body.

Ali rises in her imagination.

FLASH BACK

ALI (V.O.).

People are of two kinds – either a brother in religion or an equal in creation.

DIANA

(whispers to herself)

Wasn't that equality in its perfect form?

Suddenly, she opens her eyes as if blaming herself for letting her thoughts turn to him.

She walks to the window, opens it, and leans out to look down. Light wind runs through the flowers shaking them.

FLASH BACK

Diana holding Ali's feverish body in her arms. Burning waves of fever make him shiver in her arms.

She finds herself whispering:

DIANA

(while looking at the flowers)

Your body was shivering with fever in my arms exactly like those flowers shake on the breeze.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS AIRPORT – FLIGHT TO NEVADA – LAS VEGAS – CASINO- NIGHT

Diana feeling bored, decides to travel to a distant state. She flies to Nevada and stays in Las Vegas for a few days, hoping to entertain herself and forgets the memories that haunt her.

She enters a casino, planning to try roulette first. She buys chips from a cashier and places bet in seventeen. The wheel spins and stops. Diana loses a few thousands.

She sits down to play cards and loses a few more thousands. She doesn't care about recovering her losses.

She walks carelessly among the intent gamblers; her nostril assailed by cigarette smoke and whisky fumes.

Ali's words come to her again.

ALI (V.O.).

We forbid what is prohibited and allow what is lawful.

What is happening to her? Whenever she travels, she finds herself attracted to him like a moth attracted to light.

EXT. SIGHTSEEING TOUR TO THE SAHARA – NEVADA – DAY

She feels a strong need to escape to the Sahara where she could find sanity and reality. She makes a sightseeing tour to Nevada desert.

She looks at the miles of desert around her. How she longs for Ali's tent in the middle of the Sahara, it was like a star twinkling in the sky.

FLASH BACK

Ali and Diana sit on the sand before his tent. The sand glitters white under the soft moonlight. He gives her a cup of tea that she sips slowly while looking into his eyes.

EXT. ON HORSEBACK – DESERT – ROCKY MOUNTAINS – NEVADA – DAY

On horseback she rides for miles in a desert bare of everything except rocky mountains.

FLASH BACK

She remembers Ali standing on a hill delivering his farewell speech, and the watchers reply: "God is the greatest, God is the greatest."

INT. DIANA'S HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

In her room at the hotel she sits in burning silence. With worry and boredom hovering nearby, she talks to herself.

DIANA (V.O)

God, where can I escape from him? His memory besieges my soul everywhere I go.

FLASH BACK

She remembers Ali at the hospital justifying why he was flying away leaving her behind.

His words flow over her:

ALI (V.O.).

I travel around the world to think of you.

She talks to herself:

DIANA (V.O)

The tears in his eyes stab my heart. I've become frightened of him.

FLASH BACK

Diana at the hospital releasing herself tenderly from his arms.

DIANA

I'm afraid of you.

ALI

Don't fear a loving heart.

EXT. FLIGHT FROM NEVADA TO WASHINGTON – SEATTLE – LAKES

From Nevada she flies to Washington to spend few days in Seattle and enjoy the beauty of its famous lakes.

She stands before the lakes and remembers the valley of love and its blue lake.

FLASH BLACK

Ali and Diana walk shoulder to shoulder along the bank of the lake. They run and laugh and splash each other with the lake's water.

EXT. FLIGHT TO CALIFORNIA – SAN FRANCISCO – DAY

In San Francisco, she walks the city looking at shops and the attractive trams going up and down the hills.

On the hanging bridge with its golden gate, she watches boats sailing into San Francisco bay.

A voice talks to her:

VOICE (V.O.)

You sail away from him searching for security while you know he carries with him a circle of timeless peace and reassurance.

INT. DIANA'S HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Tired and bored with travel, she locks herself in her room and sinks into deep silence, gazing into the dark for hours.

Suddenly, she cries aloud:

DIANA

What am I doing here without you? Wait, don't go away! I'm coming to you. Walking along the road of life without you is an extravagance of time. Being away from you is nothing but loss and emptiness.

INT. FLIGHT BACK TO NORTH CAROLINA - SENATOR'S MANSSION – DIANA'S ROOM – DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1- She collects her possessions and flies back to North Carolina.
- 2- She reaches home and hurries up to her room.
- 3- She walks in her closet to find the most beautiful dress she owns, one that would suit the occasion.
- 4- She finds the white dress she wore years earlier when she first met Ali in the valley. To her surprise, it still fit like new.
- 5- She dresses quickly and brushes her hair. She doesn't bother with makeup.
- 6- Her reflection is satisfactory when she studies herself in the mirror. She looks as if she were seventeen.

INT. COMPANY – MEETING ROOM – AFTERNOON

Diana arrives at the company, opens the door of the meeting room and walks in. She sees Ali convening with the board.

Surprised, he stares at her as ardent longing fills his heart with love.

ALI

(without taking his eyes off her)

Gentlemen, we'll continue this meeting later.

The board members look at each other in surprise, then leave the room.

DIANA

You want to sell me your shares? You want me to sign the contract of your departure from me? How can that be when I'm the heart beating in your chest and the eyes with which you look at the world? Don't you ever stop wasting precious time?

His eyes twinkle. He rushes to her and takes her hand firmly, pulling her close.

She closes her eyes and smiles, because she knew without doubt where he is leading her.

EXT. WHITE FERRARI – VALLEY OF LOVE – LAKE – LATE AFTERNOON

They reach his white Ferrari. She sits beside him as he drives, her loose hair flowing around her.

He takes her to the valley of love that witnessed the most-beautiful days of their lives.

They leave the car and stand on the hill looking at the lake which sparkles down below reflecting the afternoon sun.

Removing their shoes, they run toward the lake with the sweetness of love flooding their hearts.

Rose scent engulfs them. Cool water laps at their ankles. She glances at his eyes, and she surrenders completely.

He takes her hand, and they wade in to their waists.

With his palms, he wipes her hair and face with water that looks like beads of pure pearl.

She feels a deeper, stronger love reborn in her heart and delightfully surrenders to his touches, feeling his feelings and existing through his existence.

ALI

With water of love, I put love in your heart that raises you above the wounds of the years. I'm the arm you lean on while crossing the bridge of life. I'm the boat you sail with across the vicissitudes of times. I'm the man in your life. I'm hope, I'm love. I see you as I first saw you, a pure heart that knew no one but me. Now, you can see that I love you with all the power of my soul.

A last wave of clarity breaks through her. She puts her arm around his neck and draws him close, looking deep into his eyes.

DIANA

For a long time, I asked myself who you were. I thought you were the man I loved, but only now do I understand who you are – a Man from the East.

He kisses her passionately on the lips, and she kisses him back.

OUT

FADE

THE END

