

CONFIDENTIAL

“Living is easy with eyes closed” ----- JOHN LENNON

Shoot the Piano Player

A Sriram Raghavan film

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Khulli nazar kya khel dikhega duniya ka...
Bandh aankh se dekh tamasha duniya ka...

----- *Majrooh Sultanpuri in Manmohan Desai's Parvarish.*

EXT. VEGETABLE FIELD. DAY.

A half-eaten cabbage. And another. And now we see a wild hare feasting on a cabbage patch. A scarecrow in the distance stands guard in vain. We are in a vegetable patch in a field... besides a desolate road, leading to a distant highway.

And now we see a pair of feet cautiously moving forward thru the field. It's an angry farmer with a rifle.....

The hare's ears perk up as the farmer quietly advances thru the bushes and shrubs. The hare darts across the field, tensing up. And now we see the hare in close up. It's got nasty scars where the eyes should be... **We now realize the hare is blind.**

The farmer cocks his gun and aims at the hare.

The blind hare senses danger.... It dashes blindly in the opposite direction, hitting the scarecrow pole full force...The scarecrow shakes a bit and stops.

The hare recovers... frozen for a second. The farmer advances stealthily. The farmer steps on a dry bisleri bottle in the field.

THE SOUND alerts the hare.

It hops on the road....Stands at a milestone, on its hind legs, ears upright....alert...

The farmer gets a clear view. The farmer sucks his breath and aims the rifle....

We see the blind hare in the cross hairs, resting against the milestone.

The milestone reads PUNE 32 km though we are too coiled to read it.

The farmer squeezes the trigger.

finger on the trigger. On the SOUND OF THE GUNSHOT, we cut to BLACK.

On black we hear the screech of a car. A shattering noise and after a beat, an EXPLOSION.

Titles

VIACOM presents

A MATCHBOX FILMS production

SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER

Fade in on:

INT. ONE BHK FLAT. PUNE. DAY.

The notes of a piano fill the air as we see a tree lined lane in the Prabhat Road area of Pune.

A two storied building with a board saying LADY BARVE TRUST FOR THE DISABLED.

Inside a modest old flat we see a **young man 27**, playing the piano with total focus and concentration. We see a cat on a chair listening... It reminds us of an EDWARD HOPPER painting. It's a digital piano on which there's a picture of Kishore Kumar at some recording.

This is **AKASH**, a passionate piano player... his fingers dance on the keys... and now we see his eyes... they are glazed. We realize he is blind.

The blindness does not seem to affect his passionate play. And then he abruptly stops. And tries the last bit again. And Again. Stops. We sense he is stuck. He checks his braille watch and rises from the piano seat

EXT. ONE BHK FLAT. DAY.

Akash locks the door. He has dark glasses on. He taps his way down the stairs.

Below, we see a kid hear the cane...and quickly tie a *sutli* rope across the stairs. Akash trips... and has a near nasty fall. The kid watches amused, as he untangles his leg and proceeds towards the gate.

The kid is **KERSI**... son of the Istree walla who lives behind the house.

'Hey, I can drop you to the bus stop...for five bucks'.

Akash turns and smiles. "Ah Kersi....thank you so much. Deal.'

He extends his hand and Kersi grabs it. And WINCES... **AAOOOUUUCHH...**
AKASH IS SQUEEZING HIS FINGERS.... The next time you tie a rope na...remember this handshake...Now the sooner you call out an auto for me...."

Kersi screams at a passing auto.

INT. AUTO. DAY.

The auto is winding thru a busy road. Akash takes off his glasses and wipes the sweat on his nose. The driver notices his foggy eyes...

Akash: Take it from the left.....near the school....

Driver: That's a long cut Sir....

Akash: It's ok....and slow down near the school gate....

The driver stops near the gate. WE SEE inside, the girls of the school are doing a *lezim* dance.

Akash is enjoying the music and energy....

The meter drops again...

The driver curiously watches Akash LISTEN and enjoy.

CUT TO:

EXT. GITA SOCIETY. DAY.

Akash gets off the rickshaw. The building guard comes to help Akash.

INT. GITA SOCIETY APARTMENT. DAY.

Akash explaining the basics to two kids who are more interested in playing with his folding cane.

In the distance is an old lady on a chair knitting a sweater. The kid's mother darts in and out. YELLING AT THEM TO CONCENTRATE.

CUT TO

INT. BOAT CLUB ROAD HOUSE. TUITION # 2. DAY.

Akash playing *Fur Elise*...as a middle aged lady MRS JONEJA places her fingers on his. Akash continues playing as she continues gliding her fingers alongside.... and suddenly Mrs. Joneja gives him a tight hug or plants a kiss on his lips. CUT TO:

INT. MUSIC HOUSE. DAY.

We are in a shop selling musical instruments. The owner Alurkar, an affable middle aged Maharashtrian with Akash.

Akash:arre then what? The bell rang....luckily.....her husband came... I wonder what would have happened otherwise... I have decided sir. No tuitions till I crack the piece for the competition.

Alurkar: But you need to save money for the trip too, na? How will you do that?

Akash: I don't know and right now I don't care...No tuitions.

ALURKAR COMES CLOSER TO HIM.

Alurkar: That Mrs. Joneja...maybe she can sponsor your trip, eh?

Akash: (laughs) Sir, I'm looking for a muse, not a f*ck.

INT. AKASH'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

We catch Akash playing his unfinished piece again. And he stops at the same point. Once again. Stuck.

We hold on frustrated Akashas the camera moves from him to the photo of Kishore Kumar in a frame transition to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghS8KekFnk4>

EXT. INT. PRAMOD SINHA HOUSE. DAY.

A SWANKY RED CAR ENTERS A POSH BUILDING....A MAN GETS OUT WITH A RED PLASTIC BUCKET IN HIS HAND. WE SEE THE BUCKET HAS A BIG CRAB IN IT.

The man ENTERS HIS HOUSE USING HIS KEY.... We still don't see his face.

And then we see a good looking HERO, dancing around trees with a beautiful girl in a scenic spot.

Pull out and we see it's the same actor, only 30 or more years later.

THIS IS **PRAMOD SINHA**, yes, the 70s star- famous for his bold films, family dramas, and the first start to work in a horror film too.

He is now retired and living in Pune. He is a flamboyant man, with a youthful spring in his stride.

He reads the comments below the song.

'Purani yaadein taaza kar di....Where are you, Pramod Kumar.'

He presses a **like** on a comment. In the bg we get a glimpse of his wife, emerging from her bath perhaps.

This is **SIMI**. She's beautiful and much much younger. She seems like a fun person.....

Pramod: Denmark se aaya hai yeh comment....

Simi: wo Hamlet bhi wahin ka tha na? *(for a second, we wonder if she's the one who's posted it?)*

CUT TO:

INT. SWANKY KITCHEN. SOME TIME LATER.

Simi in a bright apron, looking even sexier.
There's loud music on the PORTABLE BLUE TOOTH SPEAKER and she's humming to herself as she CUTS A JUICY ROOT OF GINGER..... SMASHING GARLIC CLOVES and PLUCKING MINT LEAVES....as she takes a large sip of RED WINE.

She's also dry roasting BEGDI MIRCH as we see a BIG POT of water on the boil.

Pramod Sinha walks in, whilst talking on the phone. A face time call.

On the phone we see a 17 year old girl... She is **DAANI**, daughter of Pramod's first wife, now deceased.

Pramod: Here....talk to your mother.

He hands the phone to Simi....

Simi: Hello darling.... All good....and wow you are going scuba diving?

Daani: Yesssssss!!! Did dad meet Dr. Mehan for the tests?

Simi: Yes...all good and he walks an hour in the morning.....

Daani: Thanks and bye Aunty....

Simi hangs up and hands the phone to Pramod.

Simi: Why does she call me Aunty? She can call me Simi na...?

Pramod: Give her time....

Simi: Two years is a long time.....

Pramod: Arre, she loves me. I love you. so she loves you.

Pramod pops an olive in his mouth as he starts shooting her with his Iphone.

As if on cue....Simi tosses her hair and turns to camera.....

Simi:and now for the main course. *Putting the crab in boiling water will kill it but I don't want to give the poor thing a shock. So I put the crustacean in the deep freeze for about two hours. And then.....when he is in deep sleep I simply take him out and put him in boiling water.*

The frozen crab is immersed in boiling water.

Simi: ...*They say that crab meat is an aphrodisiac. I can't spell the word but we all know what it means.... Coming up after the break...a chettinad crab masala*

Pramod Sinha is shooting his wife on his phone. He CONTINUES SHOOTING AS HE MOVES CLOSER TO GET A BETTER ANGLE

Pramod: Wow...you are too good. You must do a show. I'm going to talk to my friends in TV. Cookery shows are huge today.

Simi: Shaddup Pammi. You also promised to launch me as a heroine... REMEMBER? Nurse Radha Part two.

Pramod: Darling.....Nurse Radha flopped. That film had a message....but nobody got it.

Simi: What message?

Pramod: a message for me. Pramod, better you quit.

Simi: (laughs) Pass me the chilly powder

Simi GROUNDS THE MASALAS and the CRAB IS BOILING and Pramod is still shooting her. And NOW, Pramod Sinha places the camera near the blue tooth speaker and grabs Simi.....

Pramod: GARMA GARAM...SIMI KE SAATH.....How's that title of your cookery show.

the crab turning red...

...Simi protests sexily and tries to push Pramod away....but he has her in a hug and she turns.....

HER FINGERS FULL OF CHILLY POWDER PASTE, she puts her arms around PRAMOD SINHA'S NECK.

CUT TO

ON BLACK. A car screeching.

A girl's voice screaming, **"ANDHAA HAI KYA?"**

EXT. EAST STREET. DAY.

A young woman is yelling at a car driver who broke a signal and almost hit the blind Akash.

Angry girl: Can't you see it's RED for you and GREEN for pedestrians.

She holds Akash as she whips out her phone and take a pic of the driver and his number plate. She continues yelling at the guy to apologize.

Angry girl: (to Akash) Are you ok??

Akash: Thank you. Are you ok?

She helps him across the street.

Girl: "Where do you want to go?"

Akash: Koregaon Park.....

Girl: Oh that's exactly where I'm going. I can drop you if you promise not to fall off the scooter? I'm SOPHIE.

Akash: Akash....

STREETS...

Akash seated behind her on scooter. Feeling the wind and speed. She's got a helmet and mask.

Sophie: Hold tight, there are speed breakers ahead.
THE SCOOTER GOES OVER THREE SUCCESSIVE SPEED BREAKERS.
Akash can't help but bump into her each time.

Akash: Sorry...

Sophie: Fine...I know you are still there.... Where in Koregaon Park?

Akash: I have a date at a place called Franco's. It's near the Fire Station I was told.

SHE BREAKS THE BIKE. AND LOOKS AT HIM.....

Sophie: Do you believe in COINCIDENCES? They say it's God's way of letting us know he exists.

Cut to:

INT. FRANCO'S. DAY.

It's an old Jazz café in Koregaon Park, with Irani marble top tables and bended wood chairs. AND THIS GIRL SOPHIE'S FATHER OWNS THE PLACE. Photos and posters of jazz greats adorn the walls.

There is a grand piano on an elevated stage. She leads Akash to it.

Sophie: Now evaluate this white elephant for us...and give us the best price.

Akash feels it. Strums a few keys. With his fingers, he reads the embossed brand name on the side.

Akash: (in awe) It is an original Steinway...in perfect condition....why do you want to sell it??

Fonseca: She does...not me...

Sophie: *Dad...Char Tables aur aa sakte hain yahan.....aur aaj kal yeh piano viano kaun sunta hai? (to Akash)... tum kyon nahin kharid lete??*

Akash: Kaash.

AKASH STARTS PLAYING... the incomplete piece, which we heard him play before...He plays with passion...

He cannot see but Old Man Fonseca is awed. Two cooks and an accountant too run out to watch, listen, marvel.

In the middle of this, Alurkar too comes in... silently greeting Franko.

Akash is playing his piece.....And then he stops. The assembled crowd claps.

Akash: It's a fantastic piano... and if you must sell it, don't sell it for less than ten....

Franco: Hey, Alurkar ...you said the max I could get was 3.

Alurkar: Hey Akash....I only said there was an offer of 3....

Franco: ... What do you do in the evening my boy? (to Sophie) Arre let him play till we get a customer...

Sophie: Dad but.....

Akash: Sir I'd love to....

Sophie: No salary...only tips....

Akash: I'd pay to practice on this piano.

EXT. INT. AKASH'S HOUSE. DAY.

Prabhat road lane. Scooter comes and stops. Sophie reads aloud.

Sophie: 'Prabhat Road Gully kramak 4. Aa gaya tumharakya hai yeh jagah?

Akash: NGO...Handicapped logon ke liye. Teen mahine ke liye mila hai. Bhada sirf 300 per month. It's a beautiful place. There must be lots of trees here. I wake up every morning to a symphony of bird sounds.

He walks confidently towards the bannister.

Akash: 18 steps..... *Coffee?*

Sophie: aaj bahut kaam hai. I'll pick you up at 5 ok.

She is about to leave. She watches Akash at the door.

HE IS ABOUT TO OPEN THE DOOR...when he hears CLAPPING. He turns.

Sophie: Your piano piece was FANTASTIC. Dad ke saamne khadoos acting kar rahi thi.... BUT I LOVED IT.

Akash: Aaj poora karoonga pucca...

Sophie: *Tumhe adhura kyon lagta hain...*

Akash: *Matlab?*

Sophie: *Mujhe toh perfect laga... Maybe some things are meant to be unfinished / Shayad uska adhoorapan hi usse poora karta hai.../...abhi usse aur ungli karke bigado mat. (THIS LINE IS VITAL....improve) See you...*

AKASH HEARS HER GO. HE STARES. **HE'S HAD A MOMENT OF EPIPHANY.** HE ENTERS HIS HOUSE AND RUSHES INSIDE.

INT. AKASH'S HOUSE. DAY.

He opens door and hurriedly rushes in...stumbles too. He walks to a drawer and removes a little box. And then we see his eyes.

THE GLAZED LOOK EYES.

AND NOW WE SEE SOMETHING THAT MAKES US VERY CURIOUS. In CLOSE UP WE SEE HIM REMOVING A CONTACT LENS. *Light floods half the frame.* HE REMOVES THE OTHER.

We see the lit full frame. We see his eyes. Alive. HE CAN SEE. Akash hurriedly puts the lenses in the cleaning solution and RUSHES TO THE WINDOW. All he can see is Sophie's back as she's riding out on her scooter. Akash cranes his head. BELOW, UNKNOWN TO AKASH, WE SEE KERSI WATCHING HIM CURIOUSLY. FADE TO BLACK...

Cut to:

OPTIONAL SCENE: Flashback

INT. CONTACT LENS CLINIC. MUMBAI. DAY. DELETED. SHOOT AFTER EDIT, IN CASE PEOPLE DON'T GET IT.

From **BLACK** we fade into an ECU of a CONTACT LENS being removed.....revealing an Eye Doctor with his torch headgear. Curiously, half the screen is still black.

The doc now looks to the other side of the screen and the second lens comes off, flooding the screen with Akash's POV - the smiley ophthalmologist.

Doc: So? What do you think?

Akash: Wow... doctor, bilkul nahin dikhai deta...I can now practice for the play...

Doc: ...you should try acting instead of this method stuff... anyway...take them off at night...and every four hours....

The doc takes off his headgear and gives instructions on how to use the lenses....**BUT WE HEAR AKASH'S VO:** Three months I decided to be blind. It will help me focus on my music.....it's been three weeks.....

Transition to: PRESENT.

EXT/INT. AKASH'S HOUSE/ROOM. EVENING.

Akash wearing one of the opaque lenses...

Akash debates....and FINALLY.... He removes the other lens, puts it in the box and simply wears his glasses. Akash locks door and exits.

His POV: She's leaning on the bike. Akash SEES HER FOR THE FIRST TIME.

INT. FRANCO'S. EVENING.

HAPPY HOURS... AT FRANCO'S. Akash's first day. He is behind dark glasses *but he can see Sophie*. She places a glass bowl on the piano side. And puts a few 20 and 50 buck notes.

Sophie: Hello everyone. Give a big hand to Akash... our new pianist.

We hear some sundry claps.

Sophie: He is blind, but can hear very well....

The claps are louder.

And AMONG THE CROWD at the bar WE SEE PRAMOD SINHA . Some youngsters click selfies.....and he happily poses.

Akash: thank you everybody.....¹

He introduces the piece he is going to play.

AKASH PLAYING... There is something spiritual that happens when a talented musician plays, not for commerce, but for his own sake... from his or her heart, for the sheer joy of the process.

That's what should happen when we watch Akash's dexterous fingers... dancing on the keys.....does he have two fingers or twenty...Akash is playing with sheer abandon. An acoustic piano and a Steinway to boot. He is in heaven.

And for that brief while so are we soon every conversation around the bar stops.... everyone is listening.

Akash concludes. And Pramod starts clapping. The others join too. THE CLAPS ARE NOW THUNDEROUS. Sophie is floored. Rushes to Akash but Pramod Sinha is already there.

Pramod: Behtareen Fantastic Mindblowing! You have a gift my boy.... Hey Franco...this boy will make your bar famous....

AKASH OF COURSE, CAN SEE THE MAN BEHIND HIS DARK GLASSES.

AKASH: Thank you Sir. If I am not mistaken....am I speaking to the actor.....Pramod Sinha?

The old star is floored. *Oh my God, how did you? I mean....*

¹ [REDACTED]

Akash: *Sir....my mom was a big fan of your films. I could see till I was 14. I've seen THE SPY OF SHANGHAI...six times.*

Akash plays a few chords from the number... It's a RETRO PRAMOD SINHA SONG FROM A JAMES BOND STYLE 70s HINDI FILM... song with Chinese beats maybe. ²

PRAMOD TAKING THE MIKE.....BELTING OUT SLURRY LINES....

AKASH SEES PRAMOD PUT A 2000 rupee note in the tips box. Sophie eyes the tip and smiles. The bar is doing well.

The mood should be NASIR HUSAIN.

NIGHT. EXT. FRANCO'S + STREETS.

Akash and Sophie...walking to her scooter.

"So how did you go blind?"

Akash says 14... a cricket ball hit my head....I blacked out. Woke up...The optic nerve had got damaged they said.... can't we talk of more cheerful things?

Sophie: You got over 4000 in tips. That's a record at Franco's.

Akash: If I make two lakhs, I get to go to London for the competition. I'm on a sabbatical actually, practicing for the Bernstein Competition.

EXT. ROADSIDE EATERY. DAY.

Akash in dark glasses, munching a Cream Roll and sipping chai.

He is enjoying the varied sounds of the busy Amrutulya.....The ginger being crushed....the stove being pumped....the rattle of coins, the bhajyas being deep fried.

Akash is paying the bill....a tune already forming in his head.

² SONG should be in the zone of classic Kalyanji Anandji

FOR A MOMENT, as he is counting his change, WE WONDER IS HE WEARING HIS OPAQUE CONTACTS OR IS HE STILL 'CHEATING'.

A lottery selling lady grabs his hand. WE SEE she has a large tattoo of Shivji and snake on her arm.

Lady: *koi bhi ticket ko touch kijiye sir... (to customer) inka teesra aankh hota hai.... / yeh andha aapki kismat khol dega....(to Akash) ek ticket nikaliye sir...*

Akash obliges. The auntie sells a 100 rupee ticket to a customer.

An auto stops and Murli approaches the tea shop. It's the auto driver we saw earlier ferrying Akash.

'ek cutting, kya re Saroja, koi jackpot laga ke nahin... (spots Akash) Arre Akash bhai ...Yaad hai? Mein Murli....lezim dance...yaad hai?.'

Akash: (realizes it's the same guy) Arre Murli.

Akash 'sees' the auntie and Murli chatand then a stray cat or some interesting sound distracts him.

We CUT TO:

EXT. FRANCO'S. DAY.

Murli's auto drops Akash at Franco's. Sophie is busy with some activity.

She's surprised to see him here. So early.

He says I was wondering if I could just come and hang out HERE. For me happy hours are when I'm at the piano.

She says sure....it's all yours. She's baking the bread in their bakery.

Akash is 'watching' all this as **A BIRD DROPPING HITS HIS GOGGLES.**

Oh shit, says Sophie and takes off his glasses. Akash switches to the blank blind man look.

Sophie washes the glasses under a tap and dries with her chunni and as she hands it to him.... she notices his EYES.

Sophie: Your eyes.....they are so....so alive.....Do you see anything at all?

Akash is on thin ice.....

Akash: I do have a sense of light and dark....**(smiles)** They say it's lucky if a bird shits on you? Do you believe that?

HE WEARS THE DARK GLASSES.

Sophie: I believe in Kismet. What if instead of bird shit, a coconut had dropped on your head? And you died on the spot? Or better still, the coconut hit the same optic nerve on your head and suddenly when you woke up you could see again.... Call it Kismet or Manmohan Desai, I know but it's these things happen. Do you know World War One happened because a postman stopped to have a sandwich.

Akash looks at her.

Akash: You are a song...you know that...

FREEZE ON AKASH'S FACE: VO BEGINS. '....She has seen my eyes....so I can't wear the lenses again....But I want to keep looking at her.... so thank you... bird.

CUT TO:

Happy Hours MONTAGE. Various locations around Pune, including Franco's.

ON A MEDLEY OF PIANO PIECES AND SNATCHES OF SONGS at FRANCO'S.
We see Sophie and Akash connecting.³

³ This can be a MEDLEY again in the Nasir Husain mode, but done like 'our way', whatever that means. I'd rather Mr Nasir Husain direct this sequence.

We intercut this with brief scenes of Sophie and Akash outside Franco's....and various other locations.

EXT. FRANCO'S: DAY.

Akash with Sophie: They are sitting on some steps at Franco's. And talking. Mostly Akash talking and Sophie listening.

Akash:Bethoven was deaf when he composed the 9th symphony.....The fact that I can't see cuts out a lot but also helps me focus.....on my music.

Sophie: Wow. And how do you choose clothes and all....I mean...

Akash: Oh I chat with the salesgirl and if I like her, I let her choose.....

Sophie: And how do you know whether you like a person?

Akash: From their voices, laughter and so on....I know quite a bit about you.....

Sophie: Describe me.....

Franco comes out...with a poster.....

Franco: Hey... Sophie! 6 tables have been booked by Ex Vincentians. 77 batch. Fuckers love thick French fries....go select the potatoes.

She rises....and he grabs her and whispers.

"Like, lust or love? I don't care as long as you don't break his heart. send a couple of beers"

He puts up a poster at the entrance.

WELCOME BATCH OF 77.

BOYS. LET YOUR HAIR DOWN IF YOU HAVE ANY. ☺

Franco goes sits next to Akash. *"Like, lust or love? I don't care as long as you don't break her heart."*

They clink beers and we cut to:

HAPPY HOURS AT FRANCO'S. EVENING.

Pramod Sinha enters.....heads to the bar..... Franko gives him his usual and Pramod settles.....with his bowl of olives. He is sipping a drink as people wave to him. Some click selfies.

Akash is at the piano....doing a terrific jazz improvisation....

Sophie darts in and out.....serving the fuddy duddies of St Vincent's batch of 77 who are alternately comparing notes on their diabetic levels....and reminiscing about sexy teachers of their time.

Pramod and Franko are watching reminiscing about their own times.

At some point, Franko gets busy. Pramod watches Akash play.....

Pramod walks straight up to Akash and whispers something in his ear....

Sophie watches curiously as Pramod puts 10K in Akash's jacket pocket and his card.

Pramod: (to Akash) One Pm tomorrow....And remember, she's a bigger fan of Rajesh Khanna....

Sophie comes as Pramod is leaving.

Sophie: (to Akash) What was all that about?

Akash: Sorry. It's a secret.

EXT. FRANCO'S. NIGHT.

WE FOLLOW PRAMOD AS HE WALKS OUTAND GOES TO HIS CAR...

INT. FENG SHUI SHOP. NIGHT.

Simi with a young couple... congratulates them on their marriage....and the new home.....as PRAMOD walks in.

Simi: (bidding the couple goodbye...turns to Pramod) 12 sleeping Buddhastwo for each room. Guess why....coz they want twins. (laughs uproariously)Wait....I'm just winding up....

Pramod: Darling I've to go to Bangalore tomorrow.

Simi: And when will you be back?

Pramod: Day after.

Simi: (upset) But tomorrow is...

Pramod: What?

Simi: You forgot OUR ANNIVERSARY???????

Pramod: Oh God. I am so sorry. Ab kya karoon?

Simi makes a GRRRRRR expression and we cut to:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pt_1r5JCVDc

INT PRAMOD SINHA HOUSE. NIGHT.

Pramod is having a highball and watching his own song on Youtube. In the distance, we see Simi reading a book with cotton in her ears.

The book is Agatha Christie's HICKORY DICKORY DEATH

A burst of thunder. And we cut to:

AKASH'S HOUSE. Night.

The door opens. And Akash and Sophie rush in.

It's raining and they are slightly drenched. Sophie invites herself into his house. The downpour increases.

Akash keeps his cane on the side and removes his goggles. It's dark.

Akash: I'll get a towel... Sorry...lights wahan pe hai...

He or she switches on the lights. We see them properly.

He goes and pulls out a fresh towel. Gives it to her. They are DRENCHED. But in a good happy mood.

Akash returns with a towel for her as he scrubs himself with a large napkin....

Sophie: Can I borrow a T shirt?

Akash: Sure...

Akash goes to a cupboard and pulls out T Shirt. Gives her.
He goes to drawer near the kitchen area....Puts his tips money in a box.
He turns to see:
Akash pov: Sophie pulling off her Tshirt. She's wearing a lime green bra.
For a moment....he stares....and turns away....

He goes inside to bedroom. As he pulls out his change....he notices she's followed him.
She's looking at him. He takes off his wet shirt....vest....wears a towel and is pulling off his wet jeans.

He can sense her watching him throughout.
If he had a tinge of guilt, she doesn't seem to have it. Just as he's about to strip off his pants though, Sophie knocks on the door. Akash turns to face her.

Sophie: Hi, tumhaare paas wine opener hai?

CUT TO:

They are on his sofa....they clink glasses.

Sophie: Cheers to Secrets.

Akash: To Pune rains.

Sophie: To your music.

Akash: To you for cracking my unfinished piece.

Sophie: to Music

Akash: To coincidences.

Sophie: Ok whoever runs out of things to cheer about has to pay a price.

Akash: Cheers to speed breakers in Pune.

Sophie: (looks around and spots frame on piano) Cheers to Kishore Kumar.

And she notices the BLINDFOLD under the PHOTO FRAME.

Sophie: yeh blindfold tumhara hai?

Akash: (THIN ICE) Raat ko neend nahin aati to pehenta hoon.

HE SEES HER WEARING IT AND GROPE AROUND. SHE IS ABOUT TO KNOCK OUT HER WINE GLASS BUT AKASH SAVES IT.

Akash: kya kar rahi ho?

Sophie: (bumps into him) Oh sorry....Mera glass dhoond rahi hoon.

Akash: yehin kahin hoga...

Sophie: God, it's so tough...

Akash: Kya?

Akash: Glass tut jayega...

Sophie: Wine glass ka tootna matlab good luck.

Akash: Madam billi aate jaate rehti hai...please...aah...mil gaya tumhara glass.

Sophie: Wow....Cheers....She tries to clink glasses blind. He of course, ensures contact.

There's a silence. Though it's not awkward.

She takes his hand and puts it on her face.

Akash: Tumne... eye mask kyun pehna hai...?

Sophie: Describe me....

His fingers over her blindfold goes down to her lips.

Suddenly she bites into his finger. Doesn't let go.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

A love making scene....we see she is still wearing the blindfold.

He, of course can see.

Gotta be edgy, Bertolucci☺

INT. AKASH'S HOUSE. MORNING.

We see the messiest kitchen ever. Sophie is making an omelet with the blindfold still on.

Akash smells something burning and wakes up. Rushes out to put the gas off.....

Sophie hears him and whips off the blindfold.

Sophie is making eggs. She says I tried to do it with my eyes closed.
Almost burnt my fingers.

He is again on thin ice. He constantly looks down, avoiding her gaze...He holds her fingers.

He takes a bite of her omelet. Says the best omelet I've ever had.

She says hah....no Oscar for your performance Sir.

Akash stares at her. *Bol de....Bol de....Bol..bol de... Bol de....Bol de....Bol..bol de... Bol de....Bol de....Bol..bol de...Bol*

He converts his guilt into a tune.....as we see....it can even be a chotta peg of a song.

Zip Zap Zoom shots of an auto speedingon Pune streets.

EXT. PRAMOD SINHA'S BUILDING. DAY.

The auto drops Akash to Pramod Sinha's building lobby.

Akash gropes his way to the lift..... Akash exits lift.

There are two doors. One says PRAMODAkash is playing blind of course. Goes to Pramod door. Rings bell. Akash rings bell again. No response. He looks around and rings bell again, this time longer.

SUDDENLY.....

EXT + INT. PRAMOD SINHA'S HOUSE. DAY. The door opens. WE SEE **SIMI looking annoyed and angry.** Yes?? Akash says he's here for Mr. Pramod Sinha...

Simi is puzzled. Says her husband is not home. Akash says but I WAS TOLD TO COME HERE AT 1.30 PM... She insists that he has gone to Bengaluru and will be back tomo morning. Akash:(surprised) But *he called me today... I am the piano player at Franco's. He said it's his wedding anniversary and...*

*SIMI: Yes, it's our anniversary but he's out of town today. She's about to shut the door.... **SUDDENLY...THE OPPOSITE HOUSE DOOR OPENS AND AN OLD LADY PEERS OUT...SHE STARES CURIOUSLY....AS AKASH SPEAKS.** "he said he wanted to give you a surprise... he paid me an advance... can you please call him..."*

The opposite door opens... and an old lady MRS. D'SA peeps out.

Akash hears the sound.

"Shayad aa gaye....?"

Simi asks Akash to come in....

She shuts the door and leads Akash in.

She sits him at the piano and CALLS PRAMOD ON HER PHONE.

Hello PAMMI... there is this YOUNG MAN....what? Oh darling... WHAT A SURPRISE! this is so lovely....idiot why didn't you tell me...come soon come soon.... Pls come ... God I am not even dressed for the occasion...

"My husband is on the way....he is coming in ten minutes. My husband na... I tell you... he is an actor how do I always forget..."

Akash gets a feel of the instrument... admires it.

Simi says tell me.... Are you totally blind or.... Partial vision?

Akash tells her the story of the cricket ball and optic nerve damage. She says why don't you play something...?

Akash plays a few keys...and then **suddenly...** he sees **A PAIR OF FEET STICKING OUT OF A FAR CORNER OF THE ROOM... THERE IS A POOL OF BLOOD AT THE FEET.**

AKASH SKIPS A BEAT AND STOPS PLAYING. SIMI CLAPS. WOW, WHAT A NICE SURPRISE MY HUSBAND GAVE ME. ABHI BHI ROMANTIC HERO HAIN...

Akash IS RATTLED...

Akash: can I use the restroom please. Simi leads him to the restroom...

ON THE WAY... AKASH SEES A BROKEN CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE AND A BOUQUET OF ORCHIDS ON THE FLOOR... A box of chocolates...a jewel box....

AKASH SHUTS THE DOOR AND TURNS.... **TO 'SEE' A BAREBODIED STUD (mid 30s well-built) WITH A BUSHY MOUSTACHE...** standing behind the shower curtain... **a GUN IN HIS HAND.** He stares at AKASH menacingly as Akash UNZIPS HIS PANTS AND TRIES TO PEE. THE MAN CONTINUES STARING AS AKASH ZIPS HIS PANTS AND GETS OUT....

- SIMI LEADS AKASH TO THE PIANO... AND NOW HE SEES THE DEAD MAN. **IT IS PRAMOD SINHA. HE'S BEEN SHOT IN THE NECK.** She seats Akash at piano... asks him to play some music. SHE INSTRUCTS THE MAN FROM THE BATHROOM **IN DUMBCHARADES...**TO FETCH SOMETHING FROM INSIDE. THE MAN returns with towels and a bucket. HIS NAME IS MANOHAR.
- Akash playing the piano AND PROVIDING background music as he watches: MANOHAR AND SIMI SWIFTLY CLEAN UP THE AREA....They SHOVE PRAMOD SINHA'S BODY INTO the SUITCASE. *Simi stops and removes the ROLEX watch from Pramod's wrist. She shoves it in a drawer.* Akash watching all this thru his dark glasses He CONTINUES PLAYING AS Simi and Manohar confer.
- SIMI FURIOUSLY cleans the floor of glass pieces and Manohar drags the body across to an inside room.
- Akash playing.....barely looking up. Simi has now come to the piano..... Akash plays like a blind man playing for his life.
- Simi moves to the passage as Manohar wheels in a suitcase.....Once again, they discuss something...and Manohar OPENS THE SUITCASE AND PULLS OUT A HAND. Simi quickly removes Pramod Sinha's watch but the ring proves to be stubborn.
- Manohar snaps the finger and pulls out the ring. Akash watches Simi wince.....

- Simi runs in again and fetches Pramod's beige jacket and cap. She also brings the BLUE TOOTH speaker, which we have seen a couple of times. We are trying to figure out what she's up to...
- Manohar watches Akash who is STILL playing... Simi does something with Pramod's phone. (she's syncing the phone to the **BLUE TOOTH SPEAKER** ... and gestures Manohar IN DUMBCHARADAS TO GO TO THE DOOR AND RING THE BELL....MANOHAR, A BIT PUZZLED OBEYS.
- THE BELL RINGS. And Simi springs to the door...*ah I think Pramod is back.....*Simi ushers MANOHAR to continue the clean up as Simi talks: *Arre, Pammi such a lovely surprise....Oooh....he plays so well... AKASH PLAYS SOME SOLID ROMANTIC TUNE AS MANOHAR puts on Sinha's jacket and stare STUPIFIED.*
- *Akash nearing the end of the piece. Simi is ready. She signals Manohar to clap AND WE HEAR PRAMOD'S VOICE. Wah Wah Bahut Achhe Behtereen... Wah (THE HOME VIDEO OF SIMI AND PRAMOD ON A HAPPIER DAY) We realize she is using Pramod Sinha's recorded voice to construct a conversation with him.*
- *Akash watches Simi escort 'PRAMOD' to the inside room. He waits... like Manohar waits...both staring at each other...IN THE BACKGROUND....we hear SIMI ARGUING with 'Pramod'. We mostly hear Simi speak... What... the builder is waiting for you? Why now? Cant it wait? Oh Pramod.....come back soon....this boy is waiting.*
- SIMI GESTURES MANOHAR TO LEAVE... Manohar wheels out the suitcase. EXITS.
- SIMI: "Would you like a juice Akash? No, thank you, ma'am. Simi watches SINHA'S CAR DRIVE OUT OF THE BUILDING. WE SEE HER GO TO A PHOTO OF PRAMOD...maybe she's a bit overwhelmed.... SHE SITS ON A SOFA. SHE BREAKSDOWN FOR REAL....THOUGH SHE HAS TO ENSURE THAT THE BLIND MAN DOESN'T HEAR HER.
- We see Akash playing the piano....in the distance she's crying. THE PHONE RINGS... a call from Manohar. She talks like she's speaking to Pramod. ".....haan Pramod....where are you? Oh dear. Ok...I'll see you there... She turns to Akash.....Sorry. Today's session is cancelled.

He is held up. How much do I pay. Akash says Sir has paid me..... I will go now. She says ok....Let me drop you home. AKASH SAYS THANKS BUT I CAN MANAGE....

INT. AUTO. DAY.

Akash feels the bile rising.....he wants to puke.....

Akash: Police Station chalo.....

EXT. INT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

AKASH GETS OFF AT POLICE STATION. HE IS PLAYING BLIND.

We introduce SUB INSPECTOR KAMDAR Yes?

Akash says I want to report a crime/murder I want to meet the SHO.

Kamdar stares curiously at him and leads him inside. Makes him sit.

‘SAAB TOILET MEIN HAIN.’

We hear the flush and the door opens and THE CHIEF INSPECTOR STEPS OUT.

IT’S MANOHAR IN UNIFORM.

BOTH AKASH AND MANOHAR DO A DOUBLE TAKE.

KAMDAR says... he wants to report a murder....

AKASH *almost* drops a glass of water...SAYS*my CAT ... IT’S MISSING.*

MAYBE MURDERED. There is a boy in the building....Kesari....i suspect he killed it.

Akash makes a bit of a fool of himself but Manohar is extremely suspicious...

EXT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

As Manohar puts Akash in his car / jeep and is to drive off. A car comes to a screeching halt on the other side of the road and a fuming lady comes out and accosts Manohar.

WE realize it's his wife RASIKA... and Manohar has stood her up for a lunch date.....And he's not answering her calls too.

Akash sits quiet...wondering how he can make Manohar believe his cat missing story....

Rasika is a dominating virago...and she charges into Manohar from the side of his car through the window.

Manohar somehow mumbles that he is on an important case and promises dinner and escapes...

As Manohar drives off Rasika thunders at the police guard who was watching the fracas.....the guard quickly looks away.

MANOHAR at AKASH'S BUILDING.

He examines Akash's house. Looking around suspiciously.

Poking his head in the bathroom...strumming the piano... Opening drawers etc.... Akash watching...

Manohar spots a hammer in a kitchen drawer. Manohar SUDDENLY leaps over a teepoy and makes a move as if to attack Akash with hammer. AKASH is scared but prepared. DOESN'T FLINCH.

Can I see your eyes...PULLS OUT AKASH'S GOGS. Akash is prepared. Manohar stares at his vacant eyes. We hear a school bus. Akash says that's the kid's school bus. Grill him about the cat sir....MANOHAR IS CONVINCED THIS BOY IS BLIND. AND THEN HE SEES THE CAT coming in thru window. Meeow. Akash grabs the cat... thank you... Sir...

EXT. INT. FRANCO'S NIGHT.

A car stops and we see Simi get out. She's LOOKING STUNNING.

Simi enters and announces to FONSECA and SOPHIE that it's her anniversary and Pramod will be coming any minute.

Can you make the crab the way he likes it? She comes up to Akash and says hello.

AKASH playing in a FRENZY... SUDDENLY SKIPS A BEAT

“So we decided to come here and celebrate....”

AKASH NODS. Have a great evening Ma’am.
He starts playing, a Rajesh Khanna song.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_i2bqZxStA

ON WHICH WE CUT TO:

INT. PRAMOD’S HOUSE. DAY.

Pramod Sinha enters his house, laden with a bouquet and a bottle of wine and many other presents.
He is on tip toe...as he searches for Simi in different rooms.

And then, he hears a sound in the kitchen. Ah. That’s where she is.
He moves towards the kitchen when he notices a GUN on the table....
Curious he picks it up and stares as the kitchen door opens....

SIMI steps out adjusting her slip as Pramod says SURPRISE!

AND then he sees MANOHAR ON THE DINING TABLE... rising and wearing his pants.

THE CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE CRASHES ON FLOOR... Pramod grabs Manohar’s gun resting on his jeans and TRIES TO FIRE... AS Simi and Manohar struggle with Pramod. AND THEN PRAMOD FALLS... THEY STARE AT HIS BLEEDING BODY AS THE DOORBELL RINGS... SIMI LOOKS AT THE DOOR. *WE SEE THE ‘IMAGINED’ MURDER SEQUENCE which may well be how it happened.*

INT. FRANCOS. NIGHT.

In dissolves over music we see Simi....

She is sitting quietly....interacting with Franco....
She is sitting....somewhat angry....trying her phone again and again...
Sophie talks to Simi....who is now sort of anxious....
Simi with Franco again....she is about to sob....

Akash watching from the corner of his eye.....as Simi leaves the
restaurant in a huff....

NIGHT. EXT. FRANCO'S.

Sophie steps out with her scooter. Looks for Akash. Watchman says he
left in a rick. Sophie surprised.

Desolate UNDERCONSTRUCTION complex. DAY. (REF: The one we liked in Pune)
DELETED

GULLY CRICKET played by construction workers kids..... A 10 year old
batsman hits the ball.....high in the air.
Ball flies in the air....out of sight.
FIELDER KID 2 runs to retrieve ball.

Fielder kid passes **A BLACK SUV**....as he searches for the ball. HE LOOKS
UNDER THE SUV AND AROUND....CAN'T FIND BALL. HE GOES INSIDE THE
CONSTRUCTION.....AND SUDDENLY REACTS.....

His POV:

***ON THE FLOOR AMONGST SACK OF CEMENT.....A 500 RUPEE NOTE....
...AND HEY ONE MORE.....and a couple more in the distance....and
two more.....***

Trembling with excitement, he collects 7 damp notes of 500 bucks.
.....heck...enough for a new bat and stumps.

And then he gets the scare of his life. Pramod Sinha's dead body
PROPPED AMIDST CEMENT BAGS. **A bunch of 500 rupee notes in his
coiled fist.**

The kid tries to PULL the notes which are stuck in the RIGOR MORTIS
TIGHT FINGERS.

The BATSMAN IS MAKING HIS SEVENTH RUN.....

A SCREAM PIERCES THRU THE MORNING.

(Keep duration in mind....THINK of an alternative sequence. Just as an option)

The place swarming with COPS AND REPORTERS.

Flashes on police cameras...(optional...we see dead Pramod Sinha's face)

The area is a crime zone now....the kids are sitting in a distance...very pale...COP KAMDAR IS TALKING TO THEM. Maybe searching them for more currency notes.

Police cars are all over. Some journalists lurk in the background... A stretcher carries away a white sheet covered body to an ambulance. As Forensic guys mark the space and a few look around for more clues...

A REPORTER'S CAMERA CHARGES AT Kamdar AS HE APPROACHES.....

Kamdar: We are looking at all angles... looks like he was murdered somewhere else and dumped here....

Camera PULLS BACK TO REVEAL KAMDAR on TV SCREEN EVENING NEWS. WE ARE IN A SMOKY LOW DOWN BAR.

CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING BACK TO INCLUDE THE PROFILE OF A MAN IN FOREGROUND ...IN THE BAR DRINKING RUM... LET'S CALL HIM SURYA.HE IS SITTING IN THE BAR AND DRINKING WITH A COLLEAGUE. HE FINISHES HIS MURUKKU AND GULPS HIS DRINK.....

by then the TV is a distant object on a fridge by the counter....but we can still see and hear an excited news reporter....

Kamdar: (in Marathi) *There were some five hundred and two thousand rupees lying around....may be the killers were in a hurry so they did not have time to pick these up....all are being investigated...*

Reporter:It's really sad that such a senior actor who ruled Bollywood once will meet his end this way....as per his wife...he was lately investing in some real estate deals and went out carrying around One Crore in cash.....while we feel sad and ask the police to look into this more sharply...we also must comment here that such cash transaction in real estate still shows the government's claim of removing cash transaction is only a claim.....

SURYA WATCHES THE NEWS.....RISES..... he passes the bar on way to the toilet...

Mein to har mod par tujhzo dhoonda sada RENTS THE AIR.....AS SURYA GETS INTO THE TOILET.....AS WE SEE **a figure IN DARK rises and follow.**

SURYA IN THE LOO. TAKES A SOLID LEAK....AH...THE JOYS OF EMPTYING A FULL BLADDER. The FIGURE IN DARK ENTERS FOREGROUND.

SURYA FINISHES....GOES TO THE BASIN....TO WASH HIS HANDS....AND SUDDENLY REACTS...

THERE IS A **ROLEX WATCH** IN THE URINAL OPPOSITE HIM.

SURYA GULPS AND LOOKS AROUND. HE PICKS UP THE WATCH AND WASHES IT...FUCK IT LOOKS DAMN EXPENSIVE AND REAL DIAMONDS... CUT TO:

a RESOUNDING SLAP.....

WE ARE INSIDE a POLICE STATION interrogation room.

Surya's face contorts as he hollers and cries... and though unslapped... his friend FROM THE BAR starts crying too...

Manohar...in civvies...shirt sleeves rolled up....slaps Surya again who was sitting on a chair....

Manohar: Bastard...found the watch in Vijay Palace toilet ehh??? You think I am stupid.....

Surya : please sir...I did not do anything sir...

Manohar: (laughs) yes...5 years in Yerwada and you are innocent... listen carefully you fuckers...I also don't think you and this sidey here have the balls for murder...but tell me who did and how you got the watch.....and we can come to a compromise...OK??

Surya: please sir..please sir....

As Surya hollers....Manohar looks to the other chap on the chair....who shrinks.....Manohar pulls him up by the hair beside his ears...he yells
Manohar: (to another cop) Isko missal pao...usko poha....

He hits the guy solidly in the stomach....he croaks and falls... starts blabbering he is innocent...
Manohar goes out....

Manohar comes into HIS OFFICE.

Kamdar is taking down Simi's version... A girl is sitting next to Simi facing Kamdar...sobbing intermittently... we may not have a clear view of her in the first shot...but that's ok.

The ROLEX watch is lying inside a plastic cover with a number pasted on it.

Manohar: (rolls down his sleeves as he looks at Kamdar and Simi...who turns to see him) They will sing....matter of time. You are sure that's the watch ma'am??

SIMI NODS....hugs the sobbing girl who turns....Now we see her....Daani.

Daani: I chose it for him on his last birthday...

Manohar nods and sits on a bench...

Manohar: We will get them....

The far door opens.....Akash is escorted in by a police officer...

From Akash's POV...we see the room....

As Akash gropes...Daani gets up and holds his hand.....she escorts him to another chair in front of Kamdar.

Simi and Manohar watch...

Akash: You....are???

Daani: I am Daani...you are Akash no?? the musician who came and met Papa alive for the last time...didn't you?? How was he....

Akash: I... he was very happy....I was playing XXXXXX when he went out... he said he will come soon.....then he called to say he will meet us in evening....

Daani: (nods. Her voice breaks) he was always happy...you know...

They sit... Daani helping Akash...holding him... arranging him into the chair... they watch....

Kamdar coughs.....he has police work to do....

VOICE OVER OF KAMDAR, as he reads out from a prepared note the basic details of the day for Akash's benefit....⁴

CUT TO:

EXT. INT. CAMA HALL MEMORIAL MEET. DAY.

- Press photographers clicking Simi as she greets various guests including some celebs....
- FRANCO AND SOPHIE ARE THERE TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS TOO.
- Daani is standing dignified, greeting people with folded hands...
- AKASH PLAYING *YEH JEEVAN HAI.... ON PIANO...*

- Old Mrs. D'Sa gets off car... She enters the hall....takes it all in.
- She lights a candle, pays respects and sits down.
- Akash's fingers on the piano...
- Ms Marple likes Akash playing
- Flash: She remembers Akash saying 'shayad wo aa gaye?' and Simi saying 'Tum andar aao...'
- Her mind starts whirring

SHE CLUCKS HER TONGUE AS THE PRESS FAWNS OVER SOME CELEBRITY AND THEN SHE SPOTS COP KAMDAR.

⁴ Remember to shoot alt visuals for Akash's post blindness breakdown.

She sidles up to him.

Mrs. D'Sa: Any clues, Inspector P. Kamdar?

Kamdar: kya?

Mrs. D'Sa: Murder kaun kiya? Kuch maloom pada?

Kamdar: Ji.... aap kaun?

Mrs. D'Sa: Mrs Janice D'sa, retired principal Cathedral Convent. Pramod ki padosi. Ussi floor pe rehti hoon. Pramod aur mere husband (clasps her wrists) good friends. DRINK friends. Abhi dono upar cheers karenge...

Kamdar nods, his attention shifting to another actor who has just come in. He shouts some instruction.

Mrs. D'Sa: Wo teesra aadmi ... wo idhar nahin hai....wo kaun tha?

Kamdar: Kaun teesra aadmi?

Mrs. D'Sa: Sabse pehla jo aaya....phir Pramod aaye.... aur phir wo andha.....

Kamdar: (half listening...gets curious) Kaun?

Mrs. D'Sa: Mein dekhti hoon kaun hai jab bhi lift ka ting bajta hai. Pehle wo rough tough aadmi aaya....phir Pramod aaye...gifts ke saath....aur phir wo.....(points at Akash)

Kamdar: Galat. Pehla wo **Lalten** aaya phir Pramod Saab

Mrs. D'Sa: Lalten? kya shabd vaparta hai. Andha sabse last aaya. Poocho Simiji se...(whispers) jao casually poocho.... meri taraf mat dekho. Lalten se bhi poocho.

Mrs. D'Sa watches Kamdar lumber towards Simi and Daani. From the distance Mrs. D'Sa watches, Kamdar and Simi talking.

WE CUT TO THEM IN CLOSE.

Simi: (ALERT BUT CASUAL to Kamdar) *Kab ki baat kar rahi hai? Kaun teesra aadmi? Achha ... pichle hafte ki baat kar rahi hai. Pramod ne pizza order kiya tha.... delivery wala aaya phir Pramod aaye....*

Kamdar: Pizza delivery?

Simi: Pramod loved watching movies in his home theatre. With Pizza.

AKASH concludes the piece.

He can see Daani is close to him.

Daani: Will you teach me this song? Will you come home tomorrow and teach me this song?

Akash: Sure....

Mrs. D'Sa enters the frame....

Mrs. D'Sa: (to Daani) We saw this picture in Natraj Cinema...you were not even born then. Hey Pianoman... Us din jab tum Pramod ke ghar gaye... wo already ghar pe the na?

Akash looks up to see Simi and Kamdar are there too. There's a crowd around the piano.

Akash: Ji...Mein jaldi pahunch gaya actually. Pramod Sir kuch dus minute baad aaye....

Mrs. D'Sa: No, no... There was a Third Man. ...Builder type ka...I mean...body builder... Dekhoongi to pehchan loongi.

She gives a curious stare at Simi and leaves....

Kamdar: satiya gayi hai shayad....

SIMI: She loved my husband... She is only trying to help.....

Akash is listening to this.....

Akash: (to Daani) I'll see you tomorrow.

UNSPECIFIED LOCATION. NIGHT.

Akash spots **A TELEPHONE BOOTH**. He looks around. Nobody. He calls 100. 'I can't reveal my name. I saw SHO Manohar dispose Pramod Sinha's body.'

HE CUTS THE CALL. Wipes the phone....and returns.

INT. MANOHAR'S HOUSE. MORNING.

Rasika making poha....as Mahonar is getting dressed.

Kamdar is having a cup of tea.

Kamdar: Sir, there were many crank calls about the murder, including one in which this guy named you. Ha ha ha ha...

Manohar almost chokes....with laughter. ME??

Rasika pats his back...

Rasika: You have a lot of enemies....But you guys have almost caught the killer na?

Kamdar: (sighs) Saab is trying to make him talk.....

Rasika: You know what I thinkwhen I see Simi's face. I think man eater. She has a lover...I can bet on that. They killed him and planted the watch on the history sheeter.

Kamdar: *Ai laa*. That's what the old lady opposite said too....

Manohar: Which old lady... what did she say....

Kamdar: That there was a Teesra aadmi in the house...I didn't pay attention....

Rasika: Mannu....What are we waiting for? Go and interrogate her asap..
...this is a big case. You will both get promotions if you solve it.

Manohar goes to bathroom and pulls out his phone.

EXT. AKASH'S BUILDING. DAY.

As Akash leaves the building, Sophie's scooter comes in.

Sophie: Akash.

Akash: Sophie? Is everything ok?

Sophie: You tell me. Us raat restaurant se chale gaye... phir kal prayer meeting se akele nikal gaye...

He is quiet.

Sophie: Private kaam tha? Personal?

Akash: Nothing like that, Sophie...

Sophie: To aise odd kyun behave kar rahe ho phir?

Akash: Odd?

Sophie: Odd! Awkward. Strange. Cold. Jaise ki...tumhe lag raha hai it was a mistake...

Akash: Daani ko Pramod Sir ke gaanon ke notations dene hain... Baad mein baat karte hain...?

He seems so distant.... And she is extremely hurt.

Sophie: FYI, it wasn't a sympathy fuck from my side. Or casual. Agar tumhaare liye casual tha to at least openly bol do. Yeh invisible tension mujhe suit nahin karta. It gives me pimples! Ok?

She leaves, quite pissed off.

INT. EXT. PRAMOD'S HOUSE. MORNING.

Daani is cutting obit news items from various newspapers....

SIMI asks Daani to get her some medicines....she's got a bad migraine.

Daani leaves and Simi goes to the opposite door and rings bell.

Mrs. D'Sa opens the door.

Simi asks if she's got Crocin.

EXT. PRAMOD'S BUILDING. MORNING.

A rick drops Akash and he enters the lobby and proceeds to the Elevator. Enters and presses 7.

EXT INT. PRAMOD HOUSE.

MRS. D'SA COMES OUT WITH CROCIN and sees SIMI swaying like Rajesh Khanna in Premnagar...and then she faints.....

ALARMED, Mrs D'Sa rushes to her....Simi....Simi.... ... 'Are you ok?' SIMI AS IF....GRABS MRS D'SA FOR SUPPORT....AND

..... AS THE LIFT DOOR OPENS.

**AKASH POV: A PAIR OF FEET DISAPPEARING DOWN.... OMG!!!!!!!
AKASH DROPS STICK...**

Imp: treat minimalistic.

SIMI TURNS. Akash pretending blind.....as he sees Simi stare at him....

MRS. D'SA'S GRANNY GLASSES ARE STUCK IN HER HAIR. She is hurriedly trying to extricate the glasses as we hear a SICK THUD.

AKASH BEHAVES LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED. HE TAPS HIS WAY TO PRAMOD HOUSE DOOR. *HE RINGS THE BELL...KNOWING FULLY WELL SIMI IS OUTSIDE. AND THEN WE HEAR A SCREAM BELOW.....*

SOME TIME LATER.

MRS. D'SA SPRAWLED IN A POOL OF BLOOD ON THE ITALIAN MARBLE....

COPS DOING THEIR BUSINESS. AS THE ENTIRE SOCIETY SEEMS TO HAVE GATHERED BELOW. THERE IS AN AMBULANCE AND ONLOOKERS...

Akash with Daani who is in tears...In the distance, KAMDAR AND MANOHAR discuss the unfortunate accident. POOR LADY DROPPED HER GLASSES AND FELL OFF THE STAIRS BY ACCIDENT says Kamdar as Manohar nods.

SIMI EMERGES FROM THE LOBBY AND COMES TOWARDS DAANI AND AKASH STANDING TOGETHER.

SIMI: (pulling Daani) Come, we got a Pooja to attend....
Simi gives Akash a sharp look as she leaves with Daani.

At the lift, they cross MANOHAR.
Simi and Manohar exchange looks.
We hold on Akash standing...as people crowd around the ambulance...

EXT + INT. AKASH'S HOUSE. DAY.

Auto drops AKASH who walks briskly to the stairs. He can spy Kersi in the distance watching him.

As Akash disappears we move with Kersi who runs behind and pulls out a selfie stick. He attaches it to a tall bamboo and climbs on to a car in the compound. He raises the bamboo selfie stick to Akash's window.

Int house. Akash enters and flings off his glasses and cane. He pulls out his phone and calls Sophie.

Akash: Hi...I need to talk to you. How soon can you come home. You come I'll tell you but come soon.

As he is talking, Akash pulls out milk from the fridge... puts water on the gas and loads two heapfuls of BRU FILTER COFFEE into the small steel filter. As the water boils, he cracks a boiled egg for the cat. (HIS KITCHEN PROPS MUST BE BLIND FRIENDLY)

Akash does NOT notice, the phone camera hovering about his kitchen window.

The Bell rings. Akash rushes to door....sees the dark gogs.... debates... and he wears it. **IN BG WE SEE THE SELFIE STICK GO DOWN....**

Akash opens the door.

It's SIMI. **He can see her!** She looks a little tense and upset. She has a big hand bag with her.

Simi is somberly standing.

'Mein andar aa sakti hoon....??

Akash zapped. Mrs Sinha....?

She enters the house. Akash shuts the door. Acts blind.

SIMI: Daani tumhein mandir mein dhoond rahi thi...Kahan chale gaye tum?

AKASH: Ji?

SIMI: Daani ne bataya nahin. Pramod ka asthi visarjan kiya humne....Yeh lo prasad...

Akash takes the prasad, touches to forehead. Puts it in his mouth.

Simi: Actually...mein tumhein personally thank karna chahti thi.your presence and music has been a lot of help to Daani...helped her somewhat cope with this...this...event...

Akash: Ji...aap baithiye....coffee peyengi?

Simi: I would love some.

Akash GOES TO KITCHEN..... SIMI FOLLOWS HIM.... AKASH BUSY MAKING THE COFFEE....
BEAT.

He can glimpse her BEHIND HIM ...staring at him. Akash finishes making the coffee and turns. She's not there.

WE GET A START. SIMI IN A SCREAM MASK STANDING JUST NEXT TO HIM. (A reveal shot, like the Bhoot in BHOOT)

But Akash DOES NOT FLINCH. Al Pacino would have been proud of his performance. He slowly finds his way to the table. Calls out to Simi, like a blind person would. SIMI REMOVES THE MASK and sits in front of him

Akash: Shakkar ...Doodh...?

Simi: black. Thank you.

He puts some sugar in his mug....

Simi waits for some time, THEN DELVES INTO HER BAG and brings a bottle marked POISON and puts three drops in Akash's cup. Waits... She puts a few more drops and very business-like puts the bottle back on the table.

SIMI STARES AT HIM....

'Thandi ho gayi hai....pee lo'

AKASH STIRS HIS CUP. She watches him.

Stalemate. They both wait.....'staring' at each other.....Akash shakily picks up the cup...

"Main Rusk leke aata hoon...." He rises, fumbles **and drops the coffee.....**

She dips into the bag...extracts a gun with one hand and jumps up.

Simi: That does it...../Bahut ho gaya naatak/ Pata tha tum yehi karoge/

She cocks the gun....as she thrusts it on Akash's face. Akash raises his hand....Simi laughs viciously..bitterly...helplessly....

Simi: Utaro Chasma! Do you need the glasses any more you rascal??

Akash takes off the glasses and stares at Simi...

Akash: Hi.

Simi: Mr. Fake Blind.....meet Fake gun.....(she fires phut phut phut ..the stunt gun just clicks...she drops the gun...sits back and laughs bitterly)..

Akash: I...I am sorry.....aapko mujhe ghar ke andar allow nahin karna chahiya tha/ Aapne mujhe andar kyon bulaya? Bahar se si bhej deti...Aapne mujhe ghar ke andar aane kyon diya...../Us din aap ne mujhe andar aane ke liye kyon kaha? you should have never let me in....

Simi: Mujhe kya maloom tha ki tum andhe nahin ho/ Andha samajhke allow kiya. Bahar wo Mrs D'sa sab sun rahi thi...

WHAT A BLOODY MESS! tum yeh drama kyon kar rahe ho..

Akash: Shuru mein riyaz tha...phir ek din mein Sophie se mila aur...

Simi: Sophie jaanti hai?

Akash: Koi nahin jaanta. Aapko mujhse koi problem nahin hogi....Meine statement bhi diya...Main Pune chodke jaa raha hoon. London...I have a competition in September.....

Simi: Tum ne Daani ko kuch bataya to nahin....?

Akash shakes his head... he is looking at her a bit dazed...

SIMI: Tum jo bhi samjho....Pammi ke saath mera sab theek hi tha...

Manohar is just a good..... Pammi mujhe surprise dena chahte the....kisko mila surprise.....?? Timing... bad timing....!?!? KYA HUA?

Akash is feeling all woozy suddenly. He tries to stand and falls...
...SOMETHING IS WRONG.

He looks up to see SIMI STARE AT HIM. SHE'S WAITING.....
His eyes go on the box of pedas.

Akash: Kya tha us pede mein....? Kya daala tumne us pede mein....

*SHE STARTS SHUTTING THE WINDOWS.....AS AKASH RUSHES TO
BASIN.....TRYING TO GAG...PUKE*

*Akash at the basin desperately trying to puke....and he **COLLAPSES**.....*

SIMI WHIPS OUT HER PHONE. CALLS MANOHAR....NO REPLY. She tries again.....the phone is ringing....

And suddenly the piano starts playing. Simi turns WITH A SHUDDER...to see THE CAT ON THE PIANO STARING AT HER.

INTERVAL

PRABHAT ROAD EXT. DAY.

Violent shots of a sharp knife slicing flesh. It's a coconut vendor dexterously slicing a coconut. Sophie is waiting, another coconut in her hand.

Cut to

EXT. AKASH'S HOUSE. DAY.

SOPHIE WALKING TO AKASH'S DOOR balancing TWO COCONUTS.

AT THE STAIRS. Kersi accosts Sophie.

Kersi: Didi.....ek video dikhana hai....breaking news....sirf 50 Rupaye....

Sophie shoos the kid off but Kersi insists.

Kersi: Achha video dekho phir paise do.... SEE!

SOPHIE LOOKS AT THE CLIP ON HIS PHONE. IT'S AKASH in the kitchen... without glasses.....HIS EYES WIDE OPEN.

SOPHIE STARES AT THE CLIP IN A LOOP...FUCK. Akash is sighted?

'Give me 50 bucks says Kersi as Sophie shoos him and strides up the stairs BEWILDERED to say the least.

Akash can see? SHE RINGS THE BELL...There's no response. She rings bell again. No response.

AND THEN WE HEAR THE BOLT.

The door opens to reveal SIMI. She has a sheet wrapped around her shoulder Simi looks like she's just woken up.

Sophie, looks STUNNED.

She barges in to see Akash sprawled on a sofa/diwan... his clothes strewn about too. A half empty bottle of wine on the window sill.....

Sophie calls out to Akash who is breathing heavily, like in a stupor... maybe he mumbles something.

Sophie turns to see Simi behind.

SOPHIE STARES AT SIMI....

Simi: I am so embarrassed. Sorry...I am sorry.... Pramod ke death ke baad.... pata nahin.... and Akashwas so kind.....understanding.....

SOPHIE: (INTERRUPTING) and sensitive and emotional and so wild in bed... *Wow..... I'm glad I'm not the only one who swallowed the sob story about how he lost his eyes. 14 saal ki umar mein.....*

SIMI: (feigns innocence) Kya? Akash andhaa nahin hai? Dekh sakta hai?

SOPHIE: (laughs) Mujhe abhi abhi breaking news mila....

Simi: magar....kaise I mean....

Sophie: Neeche us bachhe ke paas video hai.....

AND SUDDENLY SHE LOSES IT....

Sophie: (near hysterical) Jao video dekho...mujse kyon pooch rahi ho....

Simi: I'll leave.

Sophie: No pls stay... Uth jaaye to omelette bana dena. Usse extra mirchi pasand hai. Aur ek message de de na....Franco's ka piano bik gaya. His services are no longer required.

SOPHIE STORMS OUT OF THE ROOM, trying to control her tears.

OUTSIDE, KERSI ACCOSTS HER.

Kersi: Didi, Mere pachhas rupye?

Sophie gives him a tight slap....

She starts her bike and leaves.....Upstairs, at the window, we see Simi watching from behind curtain.

FADE OUT

INT. AKASH'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

We last saw Akash on the bed....He is still there....maybe a couple of hours have passed.

Akash wakes up.

WE SEE HIS FACE. WE SLOWLY GO TO HIS EYES.

THEY OPEN.

THEY ARE DAMAGED. IT'S AN UNSETTLING SIGHT.

He, and we, wonder as.....Akash keeps rubbing his eyes....and suddenly he gets up, We see him stumble, and flay his arms wildly.....

CUT TO:

Akash dunking his head in a bucket of water. Repeatedly.

He is kneeling in the bathroom over a red bucket.....

Again we see his bloody DAMAGED eyes.

And then he hears discordant sounds of the piano.

He stumbles out.

Simi is at the piano....she turns to see Akash at the doorway.

Akash: Mrs. Sinha....kya kiya tumne mere saath....mujhe kuch dikhayi nahin de raha....

Simi: Tum 14 ki umar se andhe ho na? Article bhi aaya tha paper mein.....

Akash GOES CRAZY.

Akash: Kya dala mere aankhon mein....Mujhe doctor ke paas le chalo....PLEASE.... Take me to a doctor NOW.... varna mein sab bol doonga....

Akash hears the clatter of his cane. And Simi speaks.

Simi: Jao doctor ke paas. Press mein bhi jao, police mein bhi jao, ek aur statement do... Simi Sinha ne Pramod Sinha ka murder kiya. Mujhe andha bhi bana diya. Ho sakta hai koi yakeen kar lega tumhara. Goodnight.

She heads to the door and turns.

Simi: Music pe dhyaan do.....artist ho na?

Akash hears the door shut.

EXT. AKASH'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Simi walks out coolly...in the distance, Kersi is sitting and reading. Simi calls out to him.

Simi: Kya video hai tumhare phone mein....?

She gives Kersi a 500 buck note.

Kersi shows the clip.

Simi DELETES it.

Simi: Hey kahan hai clip....?

Kersi snatches the phone to find the clip missing....

Kersi swiping his phone repeatedly....Simi snatches the *500 bucks back and leaves...*

INT. FRANCO'S. NIGHT.

A tearful Sophie on the phone.

Sophie: *Don't bother.... I saw it with my own eyes....The kid showed me the clip...you can see. **SHUT UP AND LISTEN TO ME.** You just broke my heart. Write a song about that you asshole. And **IF YOU CALL ME AGAIN, I'LL EXPOSE YOU TO THE COPS.**' **HANGS UP.***

In the distance, Fonseca puts a few coins in the Tips Bowl. Unaware of everything....

INT. AKASH'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Akash. Head bowed between legs. He's crying.

ON AUDIO, WE HEAR A BARRAGE OF VOICES...INTERRUPTING EACH OTHER. *(there can be flash-cut of faces too)*

Are you saying that all these days you were playing blind?

So you saw Pramod Sinha leave with a lot of money.

Oh you saw the murder and yet kept quiet about it.

Why did you give a false statement?

Maybe you had an accomplice and you tipped him off about the money with Pramod

What is Pramod Sinha's wedding ring doing in your flush tank?

Akash is on the floor, imagining all scenarios.

EXT. AKASH HOUSE. NIGHT.

We follow Kersi coming upstairs and peeping in thru the window. His pov: We see Akash crying. Kersi stares.....a bit unsettled to see the crying man.

Akash: (hearing a sound) Kaun hai...who's there...

Kersi just backs off... scared....

Cut to:

EXT. LAL DEVAL. NIGHT.

Manohar is completely flabbergasted...they sit in a parked car and talk...

Manohar: What do you mean, you blinded him? How?

Simi: There are a dozen ways on Google.

Manohar: How does blinding help?? Are you mad??? He can go to the press..I will be taken out of this investigation...and we will both be caught.....you should have killed him there....

Simi: Oh yeah... so I am the supari guy here....kill him..kill her..and I run?? am I to kill everybody when you not take my calls because you are with your bloody wife ??

Manohar: hey you also kept phones silent....you were married too...remember...

Simi: yeah...with a thousand times better person than what I got here... (turns and snaps) ...and why did you bring the gun to my house... that day ?? If you had not got the gun, none of this would have happened. (mimics) A big macho man....must carry a gun...while somebody else does the dirty jobs ehh? (she covers her face with hand) fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck.....

Manohar stares at her....thinking...

INT. AKASH HOUSE. LATE NIGHT

We hear some drawers being opened.

Akash gropes for a Tin box.....finally finds it.

HE REMOVES MONEY FROM THE BOX AND his passport. He stuffs them into his pocket. HE STUMBLES ON A COCONUT. He is flummoxed.

HE takes his passport and starts walking out of the room when a piece of cloth brushes his face.

It's a bedsheet.... hanging from the ceiling fan. And we realize it's a make shift NOOSE.

... and suddenly we glimpse MANOHAR in the shadows

Manohar grabs his neck and tightens the noose as Akash struggles to free himself and breathe....

SOLID STRUGGLE...

Akash is flaying his free arm....like Grace Kelly in Dial M for Murder.

And Akash lays his hands on one of the Spray Cans that Simi had kept out. Akash gets a chance to spray Manohar's face with Mortein's HIT.

Or it can be an electric iron that comes into Akash's hands and he whacks blindly with it and hits Manohar on the forehead. Manohar clutches his forehead and falls as Akash stumbles his way to a Wait until Dark escape.

EXT. LAW COLLEGE ROAD. NIGHT.

It's an empty road with occasional speeding traffic. A couple of dogs bark furiously as we see....

Akash totter....stumble.....and finally holds on to a lamp post.

He tries to stop a passing vehicle and then another but they just speed by....

Akash moves along the road....the sounds of dogs and distant music filling his ears.

And suddenly out of the blue, a chicken van turns the corner and wings Akash.....he falls on the ground.

The van speeds on....In the distance, an auto is approaching. The auto stops. CUT TO:

A few seconds later....We see a BLEEDING MANOHAR ON THE ROAD, searching....

CUT TO:

EXT. INT. HIDEOUT. DAY.

An isolated old building adjacent to a railway track. An express train thunders by.... A van is parked outside the building. Cut to:

Inside. We are in a municipal clinic....or some such place though it looks defunct.

There is a vague hooded light.....shining into camera....

With a start...Akash sits up...he is immediately held by somebody...we see **MURLI** holding him....

Dr. Swami checks Akash.....as SAROJA, is watching. We recognize Saroja as the lady who runs the lottery stall on Karve Road.

Swami taking away the torch from his eyes..Saroja watching...

Akash: where am I..what is this??

Murli: I am MURLI sir..auto driver....taken you around a few times....you fainted on the road last night.. what happened??

Akash: Murli....(tries to remember)..where am I??

Swami: In good hands my boy...I am a doctor..they called me in the morning...this is my nursing home.

Swami comes and pats him on the back.

Akash: (frantic) Doctor....pls....my eyes....there is something in my eyes... Doctor...it's burning....It's all dark....I can't see anything....earlier I could see...a bit...light...now....

Swami: I see your eyes are swollen...also some bruises...

Murli: He has been blind since age 14....

Swami: I've seen him play at Franco's. Wonderful. When God takes something, he gives something else.

Akash: what is wrong with my eyes....

Swami: This looks like very recent damage.....Did you pour some wrong drops in your eyes by mistake...?

Akash: No....I....can you tell me what is wrong?

Doctor: I need to take you to an eye specialist. But right now, you need some food and rest.(to Saroja) give him these pills and tomorrow you should be fine.

Akash: Murli..was somebody..somebody chasing me last night...did you see anybody...

Murli: No..why??

Akash falls silent.....Saroja comes forward....

Saroja: Is there anybody you would like us to inform....? You didn't have a phone....Your passport and money was in your pocket. It's safe....

Murli: This is my mausi sir....she sells lottery tickets...

Saroja:should we call somebody....

Akash: No....I want to meet the specialist....

Swami: Rest today....let me give you a tetanus shot, for safety...(presses a wound) this looks nasty.

Dr. Swami pulls out his doc bag and takes out a fresh syringe.

Swami: (dabs spirit on his forearm) Steady....

Akash WINCES as the doc injects the syringe. **We see him extract blood in the syringe. We wonder**

HIDEOUT. DAY.

Some time has passed. Murli brings out Akash from a sideroom...looks to be a bathroom...

Saroja opens some packets of Poha and vada. on a table....Murli takes Akash to the table...he sits.
Saroja pours a thin tea for him...

Mausi: So where is your family....beta?

Akash: My mother passed away....my father....is not in touch for many years....

Akash takes a sip of tea and rises.....

Murli: careful...It's a big room...let me help you...

He holds Akash and takes him out to a balcony....a train passes by...

Akash: which place is it...

Murli: Loni station is only 10 minutes walking...

Another TRAIN passes and we TRANSITION to:

EXT. INT. HIDEOUT. NIGHT.

We see the doctor drive towards the building in his OLD VAN. The doctor waves at Murli.....gesturing him to come down.

The doctor comes in... looks at Saroja and nods...Murli sees that and comes.....

Dr. Swami: It's done...total 2 lakhs for you...but both kidneys....he hasn't eaten anything no ? Good..we can do it now....

Saroja nods...Murli is shocked...

Murli: Both kidneys??...But...but how will he live??

Swami: Don't worryHe won't.....just take the body and put it on the track at night....who checks for missing kidneys in a run over case??? And he is blind...people will think he just wanted to cross....

Murli: Mausi...are...are you ok with this??

Saroja: Were you ok when your mother begged in trains....ehh??

Swami: (to Murli) get the things ready....Aah....Akash...you are looking much better.

He walks towards Akash.....we see Murli and Saroja contest a point ..we do not hear them..but Murli is losing...

Swami: I have fixed with Dr. Ambike for tomorrow morning. Come on...lie down and let me give you a proper examination. *SAYS SOMETHING FUNNY.*

Swami motions to Saroja and Murli...to get the equipment and start the work.....

We see Murli and Mausi wheel in some equipment and stuff.

Dr. Swami's mobile rings...he cuts...

Akash is relaxed as Swami leads him to to the centre of the room.

Swami: take off your shirt and trouser...and lie on your stomach.

Akash takes them off...and is helped on the steel bed...

Akash: ohh...it's cold..?? is it an OT bed?

Swami: (puts a rubber/plastic sheet below) Oh sorry....here.....Wear this....Yes....You are in my clinic....

Akash fleetingly wonders....clinic....with so much silences....no sign of other patients..... Swami pulls out a syringe...as Saroja comes and turns Akash over on his belly..

In close up, we see Dr. Swami make an injection.

A SURREAL GIALLO atmosphere. The soundtrack is SERGIO.

Akash on his belly.....AROUND HIM Saroja is wearing a surgical mask and Murli puts scalpel and scissors and forceps in boiling water.

The doctor wears his surgical gloves which makes their own chic chic sound. He is continuously chatting....putting the patient at ease....

Swami's mobile rings again. He cuts it.

Dr. Swami prepares the anesthesia and signals instructions to Saroja. Murli is watching....trying to make his peace with the situation. Akash is blissfully unaware.....⁵

Dr. Swami: Relax....I'm going to give you an injection.

Dr. Swami's mobile rings. Again. He frowns and looks up... Swami picks it up in a fury and shouts...

Swami: now you also...YES..I cut the cable connection...ask LADDOO to study and it will be back.....and instead of seeing those stupid serials you can help him study....I am in the middle of an operation.. so don't call for next one hour...

A BURST OF MUSIC.

He cuts the call....Akash tries to turn..

Akash: Hey..hey what operation is this?? What are you doing???

Murli..Mausi...hey...

Swami: Hold him....

Mausi holds the legs....Murli holds Akashs hands....

The doc quickly pushes the injection in.....he drops the syringe...takes a pen and draws mark around two kidneys...

⁵ Have a doc explain the process and equipment required. Also be on set !

Akash: What are you drawing there.... what are you trying to do...

Saroja: Fuck..he is kicking like a horse.....

Doc rushes to help her...

Murli: Don't fight..its just one kidney we will take...you will have another.....we are poor people....we need money...please..don't mind...yes??

Akash is slipping into darkness...

Akash: You are fools...I can give you much more....Mausi...listen to me....***your Shivji tattoo ki kasam..don't operate on me..I CAN GET YOU A CRORE.....listen to me....I AM YOUR BIGGEST LOTTERY.***

Akash goes limp.....Swami rises..

Swami: huh..some stud....(he goes to Akash's side and chuckles as he takes a scalpel)...one crore.....?? Ha...

Saroja is thinking..she suddenly says...

Saroja: Wait...(doc stops) how did he know I have a Shivji tattoo??

They stare at Akash who is unconscious.

SUITABLE TRANSITION to:

DREAM LIKE LOCATION. DAY.

It's a house with a terrace....or maybe a cottage in the woods.

It's a bright summer morning and Sophie is making breakfast.

Eggs...sunny side up.

SOPHIE IS BLINDFOLDED but she's doing everything perfectly.

Akash is sighted. Reading the papers. Sipping Watermelon Juice. The headline says SIMI MISSING. The toast pops up.

Sophie places the eggs in front of Akash and starts buttering the crisp toast.

Akash cuts out the yolks from the eggs....He places the yolks on a tissue... Sophie is *fentaoing* the coffee.

Akash walks out with the yolks. We hear birds. Crows.

And now we see Simi on the terrace.....she's lying on the mosaic tiles... her hands tied... her head between two solid bricks.

She looks at Akash and screams something though all we hear are the crows. The crows get louder and LOUDER as Akash places the egg yolks on her eyes...

One by one..... Simi screams and struggles but all we hear are crows and piano.... The crows descend on the egg yolks on Simi's eyes....

TIGHT CLOSE UP OF BEAK ATTACKING YOLK.

Akash walks away to meet blindfolded Sophie with a piping hot cup of coffee. 'here...have some coffee....'

ABRUPT CUT TO:

HIDEOUT: NIGHT. It's a couple of hours later....

Saroja: wake up..

Akash sits up on bed.....tries to look and feel around...

Saroja finds his hand and puts the coffee cup in...

Saroja: coffee...drink some....

Akash desperately feels around his back...no incision...Saroja watches impassively...then she says...

Saroja: you are lucky lucky..the doctor was planning to take both kidneys...we would have got 2 lakhs. (she stops)..now what about this one crore...and how did you know I have a tattoo...

Akash digests the fact that he has barely survived..he drinks coffee...then he says...

Akash: You are 5 feet 4 inches..generally wear red and yellow salwar...have a grey cardboard on which the lottety tickets are held in a clip...

Saroja stands up..zapped....Murli looks..

Murli: shit...

Akash: Murli is 5 feethas a thin mustasche..wears a bandanna....his auto has an aishwariya rai poster at the back....

He stops...they look at each other...

Saroja: you can see??

Akash: yes...two days back I could....and I saw the ONE CRORE... I know who has it. With your help we can get our hands on it.

INT. FENG SHUI SHOPPE. DAY.

Simi is explaining some objects to a couple....

Simi: For young couples like you...this Jade plant is very important...if you keep one at home at the right place...the instructions are there.....you will never run short of money. You can also have a crystal tortoise ..or a wooden wood chime for luck....

MANOHAR WALKS IN. HE HAS A NASTY CUT ON HIS FOREHEAD. He looks around the shop, pretending to inspect things.

Simi notices his grim face and the cut....

Simi: Why don't I do one thing....take my card..give me a call. I can visit your flat and advice...that way it will be customized...no charge at all...

The couple nod and leave with the card....Manohar sees them go and comes at the counter...

Simi: What happened?

Manohar: He escaped....bastard hit me with an iron too...

Simi stares hard at him.....zapped

Simi: A blind man..hit you and escaped....a police officer ??

Manohar avoids her gaze ..he feels the cut and gulps

Manohar: Don't worry....I am going to put men out...looking for him...
(he picks up the Buddha...)This is for luck...you said??

Simi stares at him.....Her face goes to the fresh garlanded picture of Pramod in the shop.

EXT. INT. SIMI'S HOUSE. DAY.

Simi exits lift and opens door. Simi walks in and reacts:
Akash is at the piano...with Daani, going over some notes.

Akash: Hello Mrs. Sinha... hello. Mein kal London ja raha hoon...Daani ko music notes dene aaya tha...Chalta hoon. (to Daani...you keep practicing)
He rises.

Simi: Ghar drop kar doon tumhein....?

Akash: that would be wonderful ma'am....Aap se thodi baat bhi karni thi....

Akash turns to find his cane... He gives Daani a hug...

Simi leads him out... Tells Daani to order a pizza... for both of them...

As he leaves he whispers something to Daani. Simi is watching curiously.

INT. PARKING LOT. DAY.

Simi opens the door on one side and puts Akash in...she bends down and straps him...as she does so..she presses a button on her cell...
She shuts the door and comes round the car... she stops at the back...and impatiently kicks the ground...she looks into the car...Akash impassively sitting.....back to her...

Simi: (hissing) pick up the phone ..

A guarded voice comes from the other side...

Manohar: Hello???

Simi: That blind chap is here.....sitting with me....in my car...he wants to talk....now what??

There is a sound of chair crashing....we may briefly CUT TO MANOHAR at a video conference from a room in the police station.

We see the chair topple..... an excited Manohar going to the window with hand cupped on his face....other officers look surprised...the smiling Buddha is on the table

Manohar: Fucking Feng Shui works....bring him to Range hill cemetery....I will be there...In 30.

He comes back and pats Harbhajan on the back.....

Manohar: Got a lead on that Joshi case...will tell you....(he pockets the Buddha and goes out...)

ON THE ROAD. IN CAR. DAY.

Simi drives...we see Range Hill Cemetery on GPS...she looks at Akash..who seems to be in deep thought..

Simi: You have some place you want me to drop you??

Akash: (as if out of reverie)..No..I ..I just want to get out of this mess...

Simi: (laughs) don't we all??

Akash: (suddenly vitriolic..almost charging)..No..you don't understand...I told you I will be quiet..i will go away from here..but then you fucked up my eyes..then Manohar tries to come and kill me...what is this??

Simi: He did??

Akash: I somehow managed to escape..caught an auto..I went to the bus stand..I went half through Mumbai...I wanted to go to police....

Simi goes pale...she looks at Akash...

Akash: and then....I thought police will take me to be an accomplice..i gave wrong statement too...nobody will believe me.....so I came back...

Simi: That's good thought....

Akash: But now I want my eyes to be fixed...I can get a cornea transplant in the black market....it will cost money. I need to go to London....you will need to pay me....I will go away if you give me ten lakhs...I promise...

Simi looks as an auto overtakes her.....she looks at GPS...they are nearing...

Simi: Ten lakhs...but ..I don't have that much...

Akash: I will need ten lakhs.....or you go to jail....

The auto in front has stopped....almost blocking the road.....Simi brakes the car....

Simi: Fuck that auto...(leans out and shouts) Hey...remove your vehicle... I am in a hurry...

Akash: What happened??

Simi: An auto...blocking the road....

Akash: Does it have an Aisharya Rai poster at the back??

Simi is zapped....she turns to Akash...

Simi: You...you can see???

Akash smacks a handkerchief on Simi's face. She is taken totally by surprise.....she struggles and gasps and finally gives up struggling.....

Akash: No...I cannot!!!

He presses the horn twice. We see Murli and Saroja get out of the auto. As the Sinhgad Express thunders above the bridge.

MANOHAR'S HOUSE. POLICE QUARTERS. EVENING.

Manohar looking pretty zapped....tries Simi's number...hears it is switched off and keeps it on the table...

He has just come home. He sits on the sofa trying to contemplate wtf is happening...he puts his gun and the Buddha on the table....

Rasika comes smiling and puts the tea and poha on the table..

Rasika: This is Chinese poha...taste and tell me...(she looks at him) anything wrong....(Manohar shakes head..picks up Poha.....as the landphone rings) .. you relax...I'll take it.

Rasika goes...Manohar takes a spoonful of Poha...makes a face..quickly puts it down and sips tea....

Manohar: It's superb....

Intercut with Hideout as we show Akash talking....(we can even DISCOVER it at the end of conversation that it was Akash)

HIDEOUT. LATE EVENING.

Akash on the phone

Akash: Rasika ma'am...I am detective **ISMAIL**....good evening ma'am...

Rasika: (zapped) you want my husband??

Akash: No No ma'am I need to talk to you....

Rasika: Me?? What about??

Akash: Something very important ma'am....

Manohar (VO) Who is that??

Rasika: (quickly thinks)...It's Mallika....

Akash: Thank you ma'am..see this is very delicate...Pramodji ...let his soul be in peace...suspected that his wife Simi was having an affair..so he appointed me..to keep a tab on her. I followed her for two months.. got all report ma'am... photographs....spent around 50 thousand from my pocket...you see...hotel...food..conveyance....but but then Pramodji died...now who will reimburse this money and pay my fees??

Rasika: (zapped) how do I know...why are you telling me all these?? .. Go to Simi....

Akash: Chii....the report is against her no?? I have got all proof....she is having an affairso I thought...may be you will

Rasika: (more zapped) Me????? Why?????

Akash: Because ma'am it's with your husband Simiji was having an affair with....

Rasika: WHAT???

Akash: Yes..ma'am I have got proof...and more than that..Simiji and Manoharji killed Pramod Sinha saab..i was outside....I saw your husband take the body away in a suitcase. I saw you later at the police station talking to your husband... they killed him for 1 crore money....now ma'am if you give me that money...then everything will be well...I will return all the proof I have....

Rasika is stunned...she almost collapses.....one can hear the other side still talking.....then a click sound...

Akash puts the phone down.

INT.MANOHAR HOUSE. NIGHT.

BLAM....BLAM.....two shots ring through the door....taking away half the pane...Manohar yelps....he is wearing only a towel....he is standing on the commode.....

Through the hole...the Buddha comes and falls on the bathroom floor....Manohar looks at it...

Outside a crying...hysterical Rasika aims the gun again....as she screams...

Rasika: That's from her fucking shop...I know it....you come out ..you rat..... I will kill you...

Manohar: Rasika put down the gun...please..you will hurt yourself.. it's all nonsense. please....I made a mistake... .I love you only....

Rasika: So you think she is more beautiful than me??

Manohar: Am I mad??? She is a lying bitch...a witch...I went mad.....(all quiet...only Rasika sniffing outside...Manohar sneezes)..please...can I come out...give me the gun first...

Silence.....Manohar tiptoes down...

His mobile rings on the bathroom counter....

BLAM....another shot....Manohar leaps back..the towel falls...

Rasika: That's her...that's her...I know that's her...

Manohar picks up....it's Kamdar...

Manohar: It's Kamdar....

Rasika: I don't believe you...put it on speaker....

Manohar does...

Manohar: Hello....??

Kamdar: Sir....Simiji's car is found at the hillside sir....it seems she has jumped and committed suicide...

The door opens....naked Manohar comes out...gaping with the phone in hand....Rasika looks at him...

TV NEWS. VARIOUS LOCATIONS.

We see Simi's car near the raging waters....
There is a crowd of onlookers....as divers are getting ready for a search...

On TV we see the police bandobast on the cliff side....Manohar and Kamdar...a stunned Daani is comforted by a policewoman...

Anchor: Within a week of Pramod Sinha's brutal murder...his wife Simi goes missing. Her car is found at the hillside...Police suspect she may have committed suicide out of grief....but there is no suicide note found...

We can move from anchor to anchor...

Manohar: (on TV) we are looking into this...that's all I can say....

INT. FRANCO'S. NIGHT

Manohar: (on TV) we are looking into this...that's all I can say...

Daani: Mother left with my music teacher....

Anchor: Intrrestingly.....Akash the blind music teacher is also not found at his place...

Sophie watches....she smirks..

Sophie: they have eloped.

Franco watching TV too....

Franco: you are too negative....give the boy a chance to explain..

Sophie: Do you know he lied to me??

INT. HIDEOUT. NIGHT.

As the anchor reads the news Simi is wheeled into the room.....
She is struggling...she finds her eyes are taped and her hands and feet
are tied.....even her mouth is gagged....

Suddenly she falls very quiet as the news are read out....we sees tears
are trickling down from under her taped eyes... (we should feel
sympathy at this point)

Murli helps Akash to Simi's chair (should be a bizarre sort of scene)

Akash feels Simi's face.. Simi cringes ... Under her gag Simi is sobbing
She tries to move her hands and legs...but much more feebly this
time...Akash feels the eyes...gagged mouth...stops at tears.... Murli
whispers to him..

Murli: she is crying...

Akash feels and then fumbles and opens the gag at the mouth...

Akash: Crying at the news of your own death....??

Simi starts shouting....

Simi: Help....please help....

Akash holds his hand over her mouth...

Akash: listen to me....you cannot get away from here....I want to blind
you and take your eyes..and the people who are helping me....they want
to take your kidneys and sell that.....there is no escape till you do as you
are told....

Akash calls out....

Akash: Doctor....

Swami comes and puts in a syringe..extracts the blood...

Simi: (screams) what are you doing?? What is this....

Akash: I cannot see...cannot tell....possibly the doctor is taking some blood....some blood group needs to be matched.

Simi: You can't be serious.....you cannot do this....Manohar will get you....

Akash: Oh I cannot do this....really?? and one person can go around killing and blinding people.....?? (he laughs) by the way ..Manohar thinks you are dead...and his wife knows about you now...so....guess he will not be so keen...

Simi: What...what do you want...

Saroja: One crore...

Simi: who...who was that?? How many are here...

Akash: you can count when we open your eyes....now...why not start with a confession.. tell us what happened....

Simi: (takes a breath...looks around) hey....why don't you take this man and sell his kidneys or whatever....I will pay you double for what you will get if you let me go and take him instead.....is that a deal??

There is an uneasy silence...then Dr. Swami speaks

Swami: that makes sense to me...

Simi: doesn't it?? Open my eyes....i will pay triple if you let me watch as you cut this guy open....

Akash: She doesn't even have ten lakhs she told me.

Simi: I lied...

Murli: You lie, you kill your husband....that's why I don't like you....

Saroja: Imagine a bahu like this for you....

Simi: Who killed her husband...???

Akash: you did..I saw..you forgot i was there...you helped Manohar pack the body...

Simi: I just helped him... it was an accident....Manoahar brought his gun...PRAMOD picked it up....they struggled ..the gun went off...

Akash: but that's not what police know..do they?? May be you planned it with your lover...

Simi: I tell you it was an accident....Manohar called me up to wish for the anniversary... ..heard I was alone so came over....only if stupid Pramod would not be so daft as to lie...

Saroja: So why did Manohar come ehh.....may be you planned it all along and used him to kill your husband...

Simi: me using him??....huh...it was him all along...he was sort of blackmailing me....threatening to tell Pramod....I was forced to go along..... please believe me...you are a woman...what will you do in my place?? ... he threatened my home..family...husband...(she weeps) please.. I loved my husband....It was Manohar's gun....he shot him..not me...

OPTIONAL:

QUICK CUTAWAY TO MANOHAR

Manohar contrite sitting with a banyan and shorts...speaking earnestly to Rasika who is watching him..

Manohar: I was forced to go along....She was almost blackmailing me... threatening to inform my bosses...inform you....please put me in my position...what was I supposed to do?? She threatened my family...my job....yes it was a mistake...but I loved only you.....it was her who pulled the trigger...not me...

BACK TO THE HIDEOUT.

Simi sneezes....

Simi: Sorry...my tears are getting into my nose...please I have been punished enough...please let me go...

Akash: What about Ms. D'sa, eh?..I saw you push her over...

Simi: (suddenly loses it and shouts) Hey....is this a court or what??? You guys are killers too.....and I paying you to kill this creep.....(turns face to general direction of Akash) ..yes..I killed her..you also would have done the same....she would have identified Manohar straight away...as such strange people were sending messages...

Akash: yes..that was me...

Simi: Hell..Manohar was right...I should have killed you...instead of blinding you....

Akash: (to Murli) OK....That's it...

There is some sound.... Simi is zapped..

Simi: what is?? *(she is zapped more as she hears her own voice being played from a mobile...we see Murli holding one up..smiling)*... is..is that a recording??

Akash: A great confession....thank you... you deserve a kiss...

He fumbles and brings his mouth near her ears....whispers

Akash: we are dead....if we are not together in this....

As Akash gives a big kiss on cheek...Simi head butts him on the nose....Akash is stumped and falls..others laugh...

Simi: Bastard..you got me into this....wait till I get out of here...

Akash: (Tries to get up..Murli helps).....You are not getting out of here till we get our money....And remember the world thinks you are dead....they are looking for you in the river...

Swami: (to himself)so many bodies just go waste.....everybody wants to go to heaven with his kidneys....

EVENING AT THE HIDEOUT.

They are having Drinks in the evening. Doctor, Akash and Murli....Dr pours rum and they strike glasses....Murli helping Akash to meet the other glasses.

Dr. Swami slaps Akash on the back..

Swami: You are drinking..so if even I want I can't operate on you before 48 hours...some sort of insurance eh?? Haha....

Murli: What will you do with the money Doctor?

Swami: (before he answers mobile rings and he picks it up)..Arre I am coming....wrapping up..hey..how is that TV on?? You have...what do you mean..

He goes off...enraged...gesticulating on phone....

Akash: What will you do Murli...

Murli: Don't know sir....never had so much in my life...maybe..maybe get married??

At the back...Saroja escorts Simi out of the loo....She is still blindfolded.

Simi: I am telling you..there is no money..it's a lie...

Saroja is impassive..

Saroja: I heard on TV...

Simi: We lied to cover the death.....don't you realize?

Saroja: You think we are fools? Your boyfriend has agreed to hand over the money...you are lying...

Simi: Arre..why will I lie now?? What is more valuable..my life or 1 crore...

Saroja: I have met nobody who is more valuable than one crore.... 3 lakh will be max....that too if everything gets sold...

A train thunders by in the night.

NEXT MORNING AT DR. SWAMI'S HOUSE.

Swami reads the paper at the veranda.....he takes a sip of tea..looks up to see his son watching cartoon with TV on mute in the drawing room.....

He gets up..goes in...switches the TV off and comes back...

Swami: This time when I cut the cable...your mom also won't be able to get it back....understand...

Son: (SMIRKS) mom and I will go stay with granpa...

Swami sighs and sits....the nurse Sandhya comes with some papers...he nods and picks it up...

Suddenly something catches his eyes..he sits up like a bolt....starts reading something avidly...then clutching some papers rush inside.. nurse is zapped..

Nurse: something wrong sir...

Swami: ehh...no..nothing...everything is fine.....

INT. MANOHAR HOUSE. DAY.

we catch Rasika and Manohar at the dining table.
He has just taken a vow never to look at another woman again. She is wrapping rubber bands on bundles of 2000 RUPEE NOTES.

THE LANDLINE RINGS.....Manohar puts the phone on SPEAKER and gives it to Rasika.

Hello?

This time it's Murli on the other side.

Manohar can't recognize the voice.

Murli: Is the money ready?

Rasika: Yes....ok....

Murli: Give the money and your cell phone to Manohar...And if he's not listening, tell him I'll be waiting at KALPATRU HEIGHTS at 10am.
Tell him to come alone or I will sell the tapes to news channels. They pay well too.

RASIKA HANGS UP.

Rasika coldly hands him his gun and says GO CLEAN UP THE MESS.

Manohar dips rusk in his tea and stares at her. The rusk disappears.

INT. HIDEOUT. DAY.

Murli shakes Akash by hand...

Murli: best of luck..when we come back we will drink and celebrate...

Saroja holds Akash and brings him to a chair...

Saroja: you will hurt yourself..please sit...

Akash sits..only to be caught by Murli against the chair as Saroja quickly ties him..

Akash: ehh...what happened ...why are you tying me up??

Saroja: we will be back in one hour. keep quiet..you are too bhola.....Simi will intimidate you or trick you....this is for your own good....

Simi laughs out hearing this.....

INT. HIDEOUT. DAY.

Simi: So... plans went wrong Mr. Akash..you seems to be as tied up as I am...

Akash: Why don't you keep quiet??

Simi: (laughs) so you have set out an amateur gang to meet Manohar for some fictitious money....Manohar will just eat them up... then come here and whip your ass. Meanwhile of course you planned to escape with that confession and create some problem for us.....nothing like that is going to happen now of course....only I will like to see what Manohar does to you....

Akash: And once he has killed me it will be very easy for him to use the same gun to put a bullet through you too...saying the organ guys kidnapped both of us and killed us....that will take care of Rasika too....

Simi falls silent....

Akash: Not very cheerful now...are we??

Simi: You lie...

Akash: Why don't you find out?? Yes, I hoped to escape but now we both are in equal danger. If the organ mafia returns without the money... I wonder whether they would spare either of us. Manohar or the gang... We will know in one hour.

Simi: ...tell me how are your hands tied..

Akash: Back to the chair why??

Simi: Lets come closer...you sing or shout...

Akash sings badly from the Spy From Shanghai..

Simi: you know only one song??

Akash sings ...Simi scraping her chair....trying to get closer to him.
It's an odd sight.

....she places her chair opposite to Akash... They are now back to
back.....their fingers touch.

Simi: Hold still. I can feel the knots....

Akash: (snatches his hand away) I am not going to trust you ever again...

Simi: (laughs) So how will two blind people escape from a closed room
my dear???(We hear a train passing) don't be daft...I will still be tied
here....I can guide you to escape....

Akash: Why will you do that??

Simi: Because....i can use that to bargain with the organ duo...Come on...i
want to help you escape....Quick....we are losing time every minute....

CUT TO:

EXT. KALPATRU HEIGHTS. DAY.

**In a top Angle shot we see MANOHAR GETS OFF HIS MOBIKE AND ENTER
THE COMPLEX with a bag.**

He stands under a board which says **THIS PROPERTY IS UNDER COURT
RECIEVER.** *An old chowkidar enjoying a siesta in the shade.* HIS PHONE
RINGS.

MURLI ON THE 11TH FLOOR is watching Manohar.

Murli: *Go to the Lobby of C BLOCK Tower 6. Put the money in the Lift and wait outside. I will send the proof down. **If you get into the lift, I won't respond.***

MANOHAR walks to the designated block and enters.
There is nobody there. But the lift is working. He looks around.

He opens the lift... And puts the BAG inside and shuts the lift.
A beat. And the LIFT STARTS GOING UP.
Manohar watches... the lift crosses First floor and **MANOHAR STARTS RUNNING UP...SPRINTING ON THE STAIRS... TAKING TWO OR THREE STEPS AT A TIME...**

MANOHAR RACING WITH THE LIFT...

Manohar is on the ninth floor when the lift stops at the 11th FLOOR.

Murli opens the lift and pulls out the BAG as Manohar BURSTS OUT OF THE STAIRCASE brandishing a gun.

HANDS UP ISMAIL!!

MURLI PANICS AND TRIES TO MAKE A DASH FOR THE STAIRS... AS MANOHAR SHOOTS HIM IN THE BACK.

MURLI FALLS... his phone rolls down a step...It's live.

MANOHAR JUMPS ON HIM IN TRUE COP STYLE AND holds gun to his forehead.

Manohar: Where **THE FUCK IS THE EVIDENCE?**

MANOHAR GUN BUTTS HIM ACROSS THE FACE.

Murli howls... for Saroja.

WHERE IS THE EVIDENCE SCREAMS MANOHAR...

A bleeding Murli says 'basement ...MY SISTER...SAROJA...SHE IS IN THE BASEMENT'

MANOHAR runs to the lift and presses G **AS WE CUT TO**

INT. BASEMENT. DAY.

SAROJA IN THE BASEMENT... WITH PHONE...

SHE SHOUTS INTO PHONE... MURLI... YOU OK?

MURLI: He has got into the lift. I got the money....

SAROJA smiles...**HER HAND ON THE MAINS. SHE SWITCHES OFF THE POWER AND THE LIFT HALTS BETWEEN THE 8TH AND 9TH FLOOR...**

MANOHAR PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS.

Manohar PRESSES THE SWITCHES AND BANGS ON THE STEEL DOOR. HIS PHONE SHOWS NO SIGNAL... he pulls out a lighter...

The lighter falls... Manohar gropes for it and bangs the door... FRANTICALLY...gun in hand. ON BLACK WE HEAR THE STEEL WALLS BANGING....

BACK AT THE HIDEOUT.

Simi is dexterously at the ropes.....

Simi: ... by the way what was your plan??

Akash: There's a balcony out there.....I heard a pebble drop.....that's not very high...I can make a rope out of the bedclothes and escape....the station is near...

Simi works on and the knots come loose...Akash leaps up...

He feels his way to the table and starts tearing bedclothes for the rope...

Simi: you forgot my blindfold...

Akash: No...I am not going to take that off.

Simi: You fool...I can guide you....I will still be tied... Come on. They should be back any moment.....

Akash deliberates....Yes....he could require some help.

He goes and takes off her eye tapes.....

Simi looks around wildly.... assessing the situation.....
She sees some medical boxes....some equipment.....

Simi: You will need to cut the bedsheets.....there is a box there....with equipment....maybe a knife or scalpel..... To your right....little left....

Akash gropes for the box. We realize that Simi is guiding him somewhat wrong. A bottle crashes.....

Simi: Careful.....the box is on the left....

Meanwhile Simi is inching towards the medicine box which is on the right.

But Akash manages to find a large piece of broken glass....He uses it to tear the bedsheet....

Simi:. But you will need another bedsheet....there is one under the bed....

Akash gropes as we see Simi reach for a box of tools.....near the Operating Table.

.....she tries to get the box open...but it falls and scatters on the floor...

Akash stops, hearing the noise...

Akash: Simi.....(no answer)...fuck...

Akash hurries to the balcony with his 'rope' ...tries tying it around the banister...

Simi has picked up a razor thin scalpel....she is working on her ropes....eyes...set in stone...on Akash...

Akash ties the rope as Simi tries to cut hers....

Akash has tied his rope's end...he throws it over and tries to get over....

Footsteps....he turns...he cannot see.....

A solid piece of iron pipe.... catches him by the jaw and he falls...

Simi: (now free and brandishing the weapon)....Bastard....

She hits Akash solidlyhe totters and falls.....AND WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CAR. Simi stops.

Akash: They are back.

We hold on Akash....Simi has disappeared....

Simi waiting at the door with the weapon.

It's Dr. Swami. He enters the place.....and is TAKEN BY SURPRISE AS SIMI HITS HIM WITH FULL FORCE.

Simi: (laughs) it's that fucking doctor.....

Swami tries to crawl and move away....Simi hits him again....and then she throws the iron pipe away....Akash hears the sound....

Simi picks up a scalpel....Swami screams in fear...

Simi: Where are your kidneys....Should I cut here...?

She swings...Swami screams as the scalpel cuts skin....or should I cut your throat first....

Swami: Listen....please...

Simi bends down and pulls up Swami.....she is panting....she laughs...

Simi: Nurse Radha Part Two. Carnage at the clinic....how's it for a movie name...ehh??

THWACK.....the spade hits her and she falls....Akash stands..

Akash: very bad title....

Simi falls.

The bleeding Doctor removes an injection and sticks it into Simi who is still reeling. Simi goes unconscious.

Swami comes and embraces Akash....his mobile rings...Akash laughs..

Akash: Laddoo??

Swami checks...he smiles too....

Swami: heck no.....Saroja....but forget them my boy....I have a great surprise....just help me out ..ok...???

CUT TO

INT. MURLI'S AUTO. DAY.

Saroja is driving frantically...a bleeding Murli lies on the backseat... trying to hold the wound....and the bag with the money.....

Murli: (getting weak)..Mausi...my share... give to my mom....

Saroja: (snaps as she cries) ... don't dieplease please please don't die.....please...

She opens her mouth in wordless crying....swerves madly past a car...

Murli: (tries to smile) you drive better than me...(he faints)

SAROJA AT HOSPITAL

The auto screeches into a hospital compound...Saroja leaps in and rushes...

After a while...

Saroja sits with the suitcase clutched...a doctor comes in...he looks grim...

Doctor: I am sorry...he lost too much blood....but in case.... if you want you can donate his organs....you know....that way....

Saroja screams.....

Saroja: Noooo....make him live....just make him leave....here take all the money I have...please....

She grabs the bag and opens it....tries grabbing a fistfulthe neatly cut bundles of Rs 2000 notes are only a front. Inside, it's just blank paper.....

Doctor: what the fuck is this??

Saroja looks at the cut-pieces around...slowly she sits on them...

INT SWAMI'S WAGON.

The car moves...it's a goods cum multipurpose vehicle and makes noises....As he drives...Swami pants..he looks at Akash and chuckles... even pats him once as the car picks up speed.

Swami: You did a good job there lad.....you won't regret it...(he fishes out a thermos and drinks from it...hands it over) ..here..have a sip...

Akash: Where..where are we going..?

Swami: We are going to be very rich...that's where we are going. (he looks at Akash) there's a private flight to Qatar tonight...we are going to Mumbai to meet that...(he fetches a mobile as he speaks...switches it on)...look at this./oh heck you cannot see...then listen...

Swami puts the mobile on the dashboard and plays...we see an middle aged Sheik..with a sickly daughter on his lap....speak earnestly on phone..

Sheik: Meet Dr. Nagerkar..he will do the rest..if the liver matches...I promise there will be one million dollars for you tonight...

Swami laughs like a wolf and switches it off...

Swami: that's 6 crore and more...go figure...will give you one crore ... you saved me and I am a good guy...you can have the best transplant done in that money...you will also be able to see....
He smacks Akash's knee in excitement....

Akash: I did not understand....what is it??

Swami: Jackpot dear...the Sheik daughter ...she needs a liver transplant... but she has a rare blood group and guess who has that??

Akash: me???

Swami: Arre then how will you get 1 crore...it's your Lady Macbeth... eh?? Sweet revenge...what do you say...she takes your eyes...we take her liver for me..and her eyes for you....you will be rich...and maybe see again...

Akash: (stunned) but...that means she will be killed...

Swami: Well I have not seen many people alive without a liver....have you??...hahahaha....

The car drives.....Akash sits in stunned silence....Swami checks watch...

A new noise adds to the noises of the car.....Swami frowns..he listens..

Swami: Heck..what is that??

He concentrates....then it is heard again...somebody is kicking the floor....Swami sighs..

Swami: Shit...could not push the full dose in it seems..she has woken up...

He takes the car to the side...and parks. He switches on the radio.... turns on his seat...reaches out and gets the medical bag. He opens and takes out a syringe and some vials..

Swami: This will do the trick....Hold this....

Akash: Listen....I have already forwarded the confession....she will be arrested anyway....why don't we just let her go...??

Swami looks at Akash.... His face changes...

Swami: Let 6 crore walk out of here?? Am I mad??...(he stares) are you feeling sorry for her?? She killed two people...blinded you....and you want her to go free??

Akash: But...this...this is not right...

Swami: (takes the liquid into the syringe carefully...then looks at Akash and sighs) listenthe car is parked..and I see a bus-stand..if you do not want to be a part of this..then just walk out...take a bus and go home with your confession...ok?? I am letting you go because I am basically a decent man..and because you can't do fuck to me....you don't even know who I am or what I look like...so take your choice....

(he opens the car door on the other side and steps out...then peeks in)

I understand how you are feeling..but you know what..the world gives a fuck about how you feel....(he chuckles)

"Eko briksha somarurha nana paksha bihangama / probhate chaw disho janti..ka kossho poribedona" .. birds of all sorts gather for the night on a tree...in the morning..they all go their ways..who weeps for whom??

That is life my dear.....If you need to cry...save the tears for yourself.....

The doctor goes out....

Akash sits there....he fumbles around....his hand touches the thermos..he is thinking.....groping for something....his fingers touch the car radio and

it goes on. *"Rafta Rafta dekho aankh meri ladi hai"* A Kishore Kumar song from Kahani Kismat Ki....

Akash sits stunned there...we see tears rolling down his eyes...On a close up of his eyes.....we hear the sound of the car dicky opening.

CUT TO:

LONDON OXFORD STREET. DAY.

We see Sophie walking and suddenly she sees a board. She peeps into a PUB. We can hear a melodious piano playing inside.....

The piano melody fills the air. We see fingers playing on it...fast...expert ...and the music rises to a crescendo...

SUPER: 18 months later....

The music ends...there is clapping...we pull back sharply to see..

Akash in dark goggles plays...there is also a walking stick beside the piano...

The people turns and clap...Akash speaks in a microphone..

Akash: Thank you...thank you...this was a love song composed back in India where I fell in love with a girl....

He goes back to the piano...and tunes....when he hears a voice...

Sophie (VO): So..the con is still on...Congrats nevertheless.. the piece was good....

Akash is surprised...he looks around...his face changes and we SEE Sophie...standing next to the piano....she takes his hand in her grip and shakes...

Akash: SOPHIE???

OUTSIDE PUB.

Two coffees are drawn and a waiter comes outside and puts them down.
They fall quiet....

Sophie is looking at Akash incongruously....beside her....at a different table sits a guy (RONY) (Somewhere in the conversation he will lean in and show Sophie the watch and she will nod)

They wait as the waiter does some complicated maneuver with the ordered stuff...

Sophie: It's so unbelievable Playing blind for music and then really losing your eyes.....And I was so sure you saw me and pulled a fast one with that piece...

Akash: (smiles sadly)...yes...it was like magic...I play and there you are...

Sophie: So Bernstein did not happen??

Akash: No...but I am more prepared this year....let's see....

The waiter finally retreats....Sophie leans in....her eyes burn in eagerness

Sophie:THEN???

Akash takes a breath....

Akash: Kismet....like you said. That song perhaps saved me....

Sophie: Means what?

'Arre Rafta Rafta dekho aankh meri ladi re....' THE KISHORE KUMAR SONG FILLS THE AIR AS

WE GO BACK TO THE ROAD LEADING TO THE HIGHWAY. FLASHBACK.

A brief flash of what happened...

Swami with injection in hand, opens the car boot.

And is viciously slashed by Simi,with A RUSTY NUMBER PLATE..... ..

Swami holds his throat and collapses.....

....Simi jumps down...she viciously hits the doc twice...then lifts and pushes his limp body into the dicky. She looks like a woman possessed.....she turns to go...sees the syringe lying on the ground...comes and picks it up...

The music fills the car.

Akash is staring ahead...the car door opens and we see..... SIMI peering in....the injection in her hand....

Akash looks towards the open door...

HE THINKS IT'S DR. SWAMI.

Akash: Listen...I cannot live if I kill somebody for her eyes....I won't be able to play music anymore...what I said in that room was just to frighten her.....*(he pauses...there is no sound...Simi watching him....Akash speaks again)*....and I will not let you harvest her too...for liver...kidney...or whatever....I know enough to bring you to trouble....I suggest you put us both down here and go away....I will not tell about you....

Simi laughs... Akash is bewildered.... Simi gets into the car and starts... the car comes onto the road....she still holds the syringe...

Akash: You!!!!

Simi: I am dropping you after a mile.....find you own way home...seems I have to disappear....thanks to you....

Akash shrinks the furthest corner

Akash: He was trying to harvest us...I tried to save us... (It's an empty stretch.....Simi halts the car....)... ..

Simi gets out... comes to the other side...opens the door and drags Akash to the middle of the road....

Akash: No...what are you doing??

Simi stabs Akash with the syringe in his buttocks....presses the liquid in...

Simi: Making it look like an accident...goodbye...

She pushes Akash and goes to the car...she gets in behind the wheel and starts....

Akash feels the world reeling about him...he tries to run...falls...tries to get up....and WHAM....the car has hit into him and gone forward.....lifting him and throwing him aside.....

Akash screams.....SIMI backs the car and runs over his ankle....Akash screams....

Simi moves the car forward.....Akash gets up...there's excruciating pain in one leg..its almost dead....he tries to limp...and screams in pain....he half crawls..half drags himself...but he has come to the middle of the road....

The world is reeling and turning into a vortex around him...he stands...and can hardly hear the car take a U turn and rev up...

Simi sees Akash bang in the line of the car...she bares her teeth...wipes tears of anger from her eyes...revs and revs the car...then changes gear and the car zips forward....

Akash can hear the car come...he can hardly move... he throws up his hands...in an attempt to save himself....

WHEN

We CUT TO THE PRE TITLES SCENE. THE FARMER HUNTING THE BLIND HARE.

The farmer shoots.... the blind hare takes a running jump.... comes flying and hits the car's windshield....

Simi screams in shock/tries to turn the wheel...the car topples....turns turtle sideways a number of times...hits a milestone and drops in the field below...

Akash is stunned...he calls out..

Akash: Simi...

He starts going towards the thud the overturned car made.....when the car explodes...Akash is thrown sideways on the road...

Akash tries to rise...but collapses....

LONDON PUB.

Akash smiles... Sophie stares at him...

Akash: I got my senses back after a couple of days...they said there was an accident.....I was in Mumbai.....thought of going back...but what would I say? Who would believe me?? So I managed to get abroad....

Sophie: That's why they never found her...she died in the car... wonder how the accident happened.....

Akash finishes his coffee....

Sophie: (pensive) they found Manohar after about a week...he survived but left police....You know.....she was a complete bitch..... you should have taken her eyes...

Akash takes off the glasses and looks at Sophie...his eyes look like they used to.....For a second we wonder, is he blind or can he see?

Akash: (smiles) Do you think it's easy to be a monster??

Akash claps for the waiter...

The waiter comes out...and hands Akash his cane....

Akash thanks him...We may or may not notice.....there is a hare's head on the cane.....

Akash: Bye, Sophie....Hope to meet you more often....

CUT TO:

SOPHIE WATCHES....as Akash feels the street and gets down from the curb... he limps in one leg....but his strides are purposeful...he crosses by the zebra....a confident blind man walking down.

A car almost comes on the zebra....and barely misses him...Akash sidesteps instantly and then proceeds on his way again.

RONY: The cab has come...

INSIDE CAB

Sophie is frowning as the cab pulls out...she turns back to see Akash..one can still see him take a turn ...suddenly Sophie shouts..

Sophie: Stop the car...take a turn...go back....

A bewildered driver does that....RONY looks at Sophie

Ronie: What happened??

Sophie: What if he has lied..what if he can see..what if all he told us did not happen..and he allowed Simi to be sold and harvested her eyes??

Rony: wow..wow..not so fast....

Sophie: We only have his version of what he said.... what if he has made all up??...maybe it was not co-incidence...he saw me there and played that piece....and you saw him cross that street....how could he side-step that car??

Rony: sometimes these men can hear far more acutely...you see when one organ.....

They have arrived at the other side of the road....

Sophie jumps down..peeks in and shouts....

Sophie: I need to know whether he is the same person I lovedor has he become a monster.....

Sophie runs to the square... pigeons fly....she looks everywhere....she sees the evening crowd...but not Akash...

The camera moves to top....now we can see Akash walking by through streets... Sophie is looking for him too but is going further away...

As he walks....in CU we see the bobbing rabbit's head...and then from top we see Akash hit a beer can on the sidewalk....

On the flying beer can...we cut to:

BLACK.

END TITLES BEGIN... a montage of piano clips of every Indian star who's ever done a piano song...right from Saigal to Bhagwan to Dev Anand and Shammi Kapoor, Shashi Kapoor, and Raj Kapoor and Rajesh Khanna and Dharmendra and Vinod Mehra and Sunil Dutt and Raj Babbar and Ashok Kumar and Rajendra Kumar and more and finally Pramod Sinha from a vintage film playing the piano.... He looks into camera and smiles.

□

FIN