

HOPE IN DARK

Written by

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EXT. KATHRINA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

A quiet suburban street, lined with trees and spaced-out houses. Warm early afternoon sunlight bathes the scene.

KATHRINA (18), fragile yet resilient, sits on a garden bench in front of her house. Her short hair flutters slightly in the breeze. She closes her eyes, breathing deeply, immersed in the moment.

KATHRINA
(softly, to herself)
Today... just a quiet day. I'll live
in the moment.

She opens her eyes, gazing at the blue sky, a peaceful smile on her lips.

Suddenly, she notices MAHMOUD, her neighbor, walking past. He pauses for a brief moment when he sees her, then quickly continues, avoiding eye contact.

MAHMOUD
(murmuring shyly)
Hello...

Kathrina smiles gently but doesn't respond, returning to her quiet contemplation.

MAHMOUD keeps walking, his gaze flicking toward the house next door—where JASON lives. A shadow of worry crosses his face.

EXT. JASON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mahmoud glances at Jason's house as he walks by. He stops briefly at the door, smiles sadly to himself, then continues down the street.

BACK TO KATHRINA

Kathrina closes her eyes, lost in a soft reminiscence.

JASON approaches from the opposite direction, a warm smile on his face.

JASON
Hey Kathrina. How are you today?

KATHRINA
(smiling, masking a brief
hesitation)
(MORE)

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
Hi Jason. I'm fine, thank God. And
you?

EXT. KATHRINA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

JASON
(smiling warmly)
Better now that I've seen you. You
look wonderful, as always.

He sits beside her on the bench, eyes fixed on her with genuine admiration. Kathrina looks down for a moment, hiding how his words make her heart race.

JASON (CONT'D)
(with a wider smile)
I was thinking... maybe we could go
out tonight. What do you think?

Kathrina hesitates, her heartbeat quickening, a flush rising to her cheeks.

KATHRINA
(smiling, masking her
nerves)
That sounds lovely. I'd be happy
to.

They sit together in a comfortable silence, the air between them gentle, full of unspoken words.

EXT. MAHMOUD'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

MAHMOUD sits in a wooden rocking chair, eyes quietly fixed on Kathrina across the street. His posture is that of a watchful guardian—alert, protective, yet unobtrusive.

He pulls out a cigarette pack, lights one, and exhales slowly, lost in thought.

MAHMOUD
(muttering)
Thank God for the blessings of
health... and righteous friends.

He takes another slow drag, contemplative.

MAHMOUD (CONT'D)
(low, philosophical)
Life is beautiful... if you live by
its rules.

Smoke curls into the warm afternoon air as he stares ahead, lost in his musings.

Suddenly, his little sister AISHA (10), hair long and brown, eyes wide with curiosity and innocence, bursts from the house. She wears a bright, colorful dress and tiny shoes that barely make a sound as she skids to a halt, spotting the cigarette.

AISHA
(pointing, shocked)
Mahmoud! You were smoking!

Mahmoud freezes mid-drag, caught between contemplation and reprimand.

EXT. MAHMOUD'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Mahmoud smirks, quickly stubbing out the cigarette with his foot.

MAHMOUD
(playing innocent)
No, I wasn't.

AISHA
(hands on hips, stern)
Liar! A Muslim shouldn't lie!

She glares at him, then shouts toward the house:

AISHA (CONT'D)
Mom! MOM!

Mahmoud crouches to her level, grinning slyly.

MAHMOUD
(whispering, teasing)
Don't tell anyone... and I'll do whatever you want.

Aisha's eyes light up with mischief.

AISHA
(challenging, grabbing his hand)
Anything?

Before he can answer, she dashes off, giggling. Mahmoud laughs, chasing after her, careful to keep her in sight.

EXT. KATHRINA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

The street is quiet. Jason sits on the bench in Kathrina's garden, watching the road. Suddenly, Mahmoud appears, chasing after Aisha, who runs ahead, full of energy and laughter.

JASON
(softly, curious)
Isn't that your... Arab friend?
What's his name again?

Kathrina glances toward them, a faint smile on her lips.

KATHRINA
I think it's Mahmoud.

JASON
(chuckling)
I always forget his name.

EXT. KATHRINA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Kathrina smiles gently, gesturing toward Mahmoud in the distance.

KATHRINA
Not his fault. He's... introverted.
Doesn't like getting close to
people.

JASON
(tilting his head,
intrigued)
Then how did he get close to you?

KATHRINA
(sighs, wistful)
It's a long story...

JASON
(grinning)
I've got time, if you don't mind
sharing.

Kathrina takes a soft breath, eyes distant as memories surface.

KATHRINA
In high school, he was the soccer
team's goalkeeper. My friend Fred
played striker.

(MORE)

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
 During the school cup finals, in
 the penalty shootout... he saved the
 team. We won the trophy.

She pauses, gathering herself.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
 (softly, almost
 whispering)
 We went to congratulate the team..
 and suddenly, I had a breakdown—my
 illness.

JASON
 (startled, concerned)
 You... you're sick?

KATHRINA
 (looking down, sad)
 Yeah... breast cancer.

Jason's face shows shock as he processes her words.

JASON
 But... what happened next?

KATHRINA
 (low, reliving it)
 I'd forgotten my phone at home. So
 he... carried me.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
 Ran all the way to the hospital.
 Stayed by my side until I woke up.

JASON
 (staring in awe)
 Why didn't he talk to you after? Or
 let you thank him?

KATHRINA
 (sighs, regretful)
 He left. No words. No chance to say
 thanks.

Jason studies her for a long moment, absorbing the weight of
 her story.

JASON
 (admiring, glancing at
 Mahmoud in the distance)
 Mahmoud... that guy's real gold.

Kathrina smiles faintly, a touch of sadness lingering. Jason turns his gaze back toward the street, piecing together the mystery of this quiet friend.

Suddenly, AISHA sprints toward Kathrina, throwing her arms around her in a tight hug, giggling.

AISHA
(excited, squeezing)
Hi, Kathrina!

Pulling back, she eyes Jason mischievously.

AISHA (CONT'D)
(pointing)
Hi, stranger!

JASON
(grinning, playing along)
I'm Jason. And you are, little stranger?

AISHA
(chin raised, dramatic)
I'm Aisha! Queen Aisha!

Light laughter ripples through the group—until MAHMOUD steps forward, cutting through the moment.

MAHMOUD
(low, firm, to Aisha)
Aisha. Why are you here?

EXT. KATHRINA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

JASON
(teasing, hands raised)
Easy, man. Let her stay.

Kathrina leans closer to Jason, nudging him gently.

KATHRINA
(whispering, warning)
Don't. Disrespect him, and he'll handle you his own way.

Mahmoud shoots Jason a sharp look.

MAHMOUD
(cold, edged)
What did you say?

JASON
(backpedaling, forced
smile)
Nothing, brother. Join us.

MAHMOUD
(flat, dismissive)
No thanks.

He snaps his fingers.

MAHMOUD (CONT'D)
Aisha. Here. Now.

Aisha scurries to him, innocent smile—mischief sparkling in her eyes.

AISHA
(batting her eyelashes)
Mahmoud... I need something.

MAHMOUD
(suspicious, softening)
What?

AISHA
(grinning)
A special Barbie. The pink one!

Mahmoud exhales, fighting a smile. He lights his cigarette.

MAHMOUD
(deadpan)
I'll pay for it.

Kathrina suddenly stands.

KATHRINA
No. I'll get it for her. Free.

She gestures to Aisha.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
Come with me.

Aisha cheers and skips after her. Mahmoud drops onto the bench beside Jason, lighting another cigarette.

Silence.

JASON
(studying him)
You're a strange guy, Mahmoud. Bet
you've got secrets.

Mahmoud exhales smoke, eyes steady.

MAHMOUD
Everyone does.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. KATHRINA'S FAMILY CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

The car idles near the garden. BARRY grips the wheel. ANNA sits beside him. In the back seat, Kathrina stares through the window—Mahmoud smoking alone in the fading light.

BARRY
(glancing in the mirror,
gruff)
Still smoking.

ANNA
(sharp, disapproving)
That boy... he'll kill himself one
day. Especially in his condition.

Barry suddenly SLAMS the brakes. PARKS.

BARRY
(ripping off seatbelt)
I'm talking to him.

ANNA
(reaching out)
Barry—wait—he's not well—

Too late. Barry storms out.

Anna watches as Barry YANKS the cigarette from Mahmoud's mouth and STOMPS it into the grass.

BARRY
(looming)
Think this is a game, boy?

Mahmoud smirks, eyes down—well-practiced indifference.

MAHMOUD
I don't play games, Barry.
Just... passing through your perfect
little world.

ANNA
(calling from the car)
You're sick, Mahmoud!
(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)
 If not for yourself—think of your
 family.
 Think of Kathrina!

Mahmoud looks toward her. His voice lowers—raw.

MAHMOUD
 I think of them... more than you
 know.
 But I can't—

He suddenly GASPS.

Hands to his chest. Eyes widen.

Mahmoud COLLAPSES, lifeless.

ANNA
 (screaming)
 BARRY!

Barry dives, catching him.

Anna bursts from the car.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 (breaking)
 MAHMOUD!

Chaos.

Barry checks for a pulse—panic rising.

Anna dials 911, hands shaking.

Kathrina drops to her knees, clutching Mahmoud's limp
 hand—tears streaming.

BARRY
 (hoarse)
 Tell them cardiac arrest. Now!

The CAMERA PULLS BACK—Mahmoud motionless, surrounded by
 frantic hands beneath the golden sunset.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

An ambulance SCREECHES away.

Jason stands frozen, shaken.

He turns to Anna, who watches the car disappear—haunted.

JASON
(stammering)
Mrs. Anna... what just happened to
Mahmoud?

Anna exhales, exhausted.

ANNA
(quiet)
He's... sick.
Don't tell Kathrina. That was his
wish.

EXT. KATHRINA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Jason stands, stunned, trying to process what just happened.

JASON
Why would he hide that from her?

Anna offers a bitter, tired smile.

ANNA
To him... she's just another friend.
Someone to protect—nothing more.
That's how he wants it.

Jason clenches his fists, frustration rising.

JASON
That's not true. Kathrina would
never—

ANNA
(cutting him off, weary)
You don't know my daughter like I
do.

Suddenly, AISHA bursts from the house, laughing—until she
sees their faces.

AISHA
(excited, then confused)
Where's Mahmoud? Where's my
brother?

Anna kneels to meet Aisha's gaze, tears welling.

ANNA
(soft, breaking)
He... won't be coming back for a
while.

Aisha's smile crumbles. She SCREAMS, a raw, guttural sound, and bolts down the street.

AISHA
(wailing)
MAHMOUD! COME BACK!

Kathrina rushes outside, panic in her eyes. She chases after Aisha.

KATHRINA
(calling out)
Aisha! What's wrong? Where did
Mahmoud go?

Anna turns away, voice hollow, retreating into the house.

ANNA
(quiet, bitter)
I warned you, Jason...

She walks inside, leaving Kathrina standing alone in the fading light.

Jason watches—the crying child, the shattered girl, the mother's retreat. He shakes his head, a mix of confusion and disgust.

JASON
(muttering, more to
himself)
I... I should go see a friend.

He leaves without another word. Kathrina doesn't notice—her gaze is fixed on the empty road where Mahmoud's car disappeared.

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Kathrina catches up to AISHA. Without a word, she gently takes her hand.

Aisha doesn't resist.

They walk side by side down the quiet street. No dialogue. Only footsteps.

Kathrina glances down— Aisha's face is wet with tears. Her lips tremble, but no sound comes out. She's crying silently.

Kathrina notices... Hesitates.

She wants to ask— But stops herself.

Instead, she tightens her grip on Aisha's hand and keeps walking.

EXT. AISHA & MAHMOUD'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

They reach the house.

Kathrina kneels, gently brushing Aisha's hair back. Still no words.

Aisha slips her hand free and slowly walks inside.

The door closes.

Kathrina remains standing alone.

She looks at the door. Then down the empty street. Then back at the house.

Questions flood her face—confusion, fear, unease.

Something is terribly wrong.

Kathrina turns and walks away.

The CAMERA HOLDS on her face as she leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The emergency doors BURST open.

BARRY rushes inside, carrying MAHMOUD in his arms—his body limp, unresponsive.

BARRY
(shouting, panicked)
I need a doctor! Now! Please!

A NURSE rushes toward him, sharp and professional.

NURSE
Put him here!

She quickly takes Mahmoud from Barry, lays him onto a rolling gurney, and pushes it forward at full speed.

BARRY
(breathless, following)
Please... save him..

The nurse doesn't look back. Her focus is absolute.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The gurney races down the corridor. Ceiling lights flash over Mahmoud's face in rapid intervals.

Just before entering the EMERGENCY ROOM, the nurse suddenly turns toward the RECEPTIONIST.

NURSE
(loud, commanding)
Inform him. Immediately!

She then pushes the gurney inside.

The DOORS SLAM SHUT.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR / WAITING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Barry stands alone.

He stares at the closed doors. Then begins pacing-back and forth, nonstop.

He runs a hand through his hair. Slams his fist against the wall. Checks his watch... then looks back at the doors.

Worry is etched all over his face. Fear. Guilt. Helplessness.

He suddenly stops... Whispers to himself:

BARRY
(broken)
Stay strong... stay strong...

The CAMERA slowly pulls back, leaving Barry alone in a long, sterile corridor-cold white lights overhead...and doors that refuse to open.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Monitors BEEP erratically. Mahmoud lies on the bed-pale, motionless.

NURSES and a JUNIOR DOCTOR work frantically.

NURSE #1
BP dropping!

NURSE #2
Pulse is weak-barely there!

Electrodes are slapped onto Mahmoud's chest. An oxygen mask is forced over his face.

The heart monitor suddenly FLATLINES.

A sharp, continuous TONE.

NURSE #1
We've lost him!

The doors BURST open.

DR. SAMUEL REYNOLDS (50s) enters—calm, commanding, eyes instantly locking on Mahmoud.

He FREEZES for half a second.

He knows this man.

DR. REYNOLDS
(low, shocked)
Mahmoud..

Then—professional mode.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
(loud)
Everyone step back. Now.

The room obeys.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
What happened?

JUNIOR DOCTOR
Sudden collapse. Possible cardiac
arrest. History unclear.

Dr. Reynolds steps closer, checking Mahmoud's pupils, chest, monitor.

DR. REYNOLDS
History is very clear.
(to the nurses)
He's got a congenital heart
condition. Severe arrhythmia.

The nurses exchange looks.

NURSE #2
Charging the defibrillator!

Dr. Reynolds places the paddles on Mahmoud's chest.

DR. REYNOLDS

Clear!

He SHOCKS him.

Mahmoud's body JERKS violently.

The monitor spikes— Then FLATLINES again.

NURSE #1

No pulse!

DR. REYNOLDS

Again. Higher charge.

Sweat beads on Reynolds' forehead.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Clear!

A SECOND SHOCK.

Nothing.

Reynolds slams the paddles down, frustrated but controlled.

DR. REYNOLDS

Come on, Mahmoud... don't you dare do
this to me.

He begins CHEST COMPRESSIONS—hard, relentless.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

(counting)

One—two—three—four—

A nurse injects medication.

NURSE #1

Epinephrine administered!

Reynolds stops.

Grabs the paddles again.

DR. REYNOLDS

Clear!

THIRD SHOCK.

The room HOLDS ITS BREATH.

A beat.

Another.

The monitor suddenly SPIKES.

BEEP...

BEEP...

BEEP.

A rhythm returns.

NURSE #2
We've got a pulse!

Relief crashes over the room.

Dr. Reynolds exhales sharply, hands trembling slightly.

He rests a hand on Mahmoud's chest.

DR. REYNOLDS
(quiet, personal)
You're not done yet...Not today.

He turns to the team.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
Get him stabilized. ICU. Now.

The nurses move fast.

As they wheel Mahmoud out, Dr. Reynolds stays behind for a moment—staring at the bed he nearly died on.

His face darkens.

This wasn't just a patient.

This was someone he tried—and failed—to save before.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

The doors to the emergency room SWING OPEN.

DR. SAMUEL REYNOLDS steps out, followed closely by two NURSES. His gloves are stained. His face is tight—but controlled.

Before he can take another step, BARRY practically lunges at him.

BARRY
(loud, desperate)
Doctor! How is he?! Is he alive?!

Dr. Reynolds raises a hand, steadying Barry.

DR. REYNOLDS
Calm down. Breathe.

Barry tries—but fails.

BARRY
Just tell me... please.

Dr. Reynolds looks him straight in the eye.

DR. REYNOLDS
He went into full cardiac arrest.
We lost him for a moment.

Barry's face drains of color.

BARRY
(swallowing hard)
But...?

DR. REYNOLDS
But we brought him back.

Barry exhales sharply, his knees almost giving way.

BARRY
Thank God... thank God.

Dr. Reynolds' expression hardens—this is not over.

DR. REYNOLDS
Listen to me carefully.
This time, he was lucky.

Barry looks up, confused.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
Very lucky.

He lowers his voice, firm, unmistakably serious.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
If he keeps smoking, next time
there won't be anyone to bring him
back.

Barry nods, shaken.

BARRY

I tried to stop him. He wouldn't listen.

DR. REYNOLDS

Then make him listen now.
His heart can't take another hit like this.

A beat.

BARRY

Is he going to be okay?

Dr. Reynolds hesitates—just for a second.

DR. REYNOLDS

He's stable... for now.
We're moving him to the ICU.

Barry rubs his face, overwhelmed.

BARRY

Can I see him?

DR. REYNOLDS

Not yet.
But you will.

Dr. Reynolds steps past him, already exhausted.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

And Barry...
Tell him this wasn't a warning.

He pauses.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

It was his last one.

Dr. Reynolds walks away down the corridor.

Barry stays frozen in place, the weight of those words crushing him.

The distant sound of monitors BEEPING echoes from behind the doors.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Barry sits alone, staring at his watch. He whispers to himself, barely audible.

BARRY
(low, anxious)
Come on... when will I see him?

Moments later, ANNA enters, carrying AISHA in her arms. She gently sets Aisha down.

Anna leans in, kisses Barry on the cheek.

ANNA
Hey, love. How is he?

Barry exhales deeply.

BARRY
He's alive...
But the doctor said next time, if
he keeps smoking, he'll meet his
God—and too young.

Anna sits beside him, takes his hand.

ANNA
Fatima will be coming... with her
children.

Barry nods, then frowns.

BARRY
What about his father?

Anna sighs.

ANNA
Did you forget?
He left them years ago.

BARRY
Oh... right.
I always forget.

Barry suddenly turns toward the hospital entrance.

His eyes widen.

ABDULJALIL (22) steps inside—tall, muscular, intimidating.
Dressed in an expensive black Italian suit.

Behind him, FATIMA, holding his arm, trying desperately to stop him.

FATIMA
Abduljalil, my son—stop!
Not now! He's sick!

Abduljalil yanks his arm free, rage burning in his eyes.

ABDULJALIL
I'll kill him.
If he wants to die, then I'll kill
him myself!

He storms toward the emergency area.

Barry steps in front of him—firm, unyielding.

BARRY
Enough.

I know what you're about to do—and it's not an option.

ABDULJALIL
Move out of my way.

BARRY
I won't let you hurt him.
Not while he's like this.

Abduljalil grabs Barry by the collar, lifting him slightly.

ABDULJALIL
I said—move!

Fatima rushes forward, panicked.

FATIMA
(shouting)
Stop! Abduljalil! My son!

She tries to pull him back.

Aisha starts crying.

NURSES look on, alarmed.

Suddenly—DR. SAMUEL REYNOLDS steps into the corridor.

His voice cuts through the chaos.

DR. REYNOLDS
That's enough!

Everyone freezes.

He looks directly at Abduljalil.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
 If you lay one more hand on anyone
 in this hospital,
 I will have security remove you—and
 you'll never see him again.

Abduljalil breathes heavily, fists clenched.

Dr. Reynolds steps closer—unafraid.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
 Your brother is alive because
 people fought for him tonight.
 If you really care... you'll stop
 trying to finish what his heart
 almost did.

Silence.

Abduljalil slowly releases Barry.

Fatima collapses into a chair, crying.

Abduljalil turns away, shaken—rage giving way to fear.

ABDULJALIL
 (quiet, broken)
 He scares me...
 That's why I'm angry.

Dr. Reynolds nods—understanding.

DR. REYNOLDS
 Then stay.
 Don't destroy what little time you
 still have.

Abduljalil looks toward the emergency room doors.

For the first time...his eyes fill with tears.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - LATER

Machines beep softly. MAHMOUD lies in bed, pale but alive.
 His eyes flutter open.

Barry stands nearby. Anna watches from the doorway.

The door opens—Abdeljalil steps in, tense, barely contained.

Mahmoud notices him.

MAHMOUD (WEAK SMILE)
So... you finally came.

ABDELJALIL
You almost destroyed our mother.

MAHMOUD
I didn't ask to be saved.

Abdeljalil steps closer, fists clenched.

ABDELJALIL
Next time, don't expect me to stop myself.

Mahmoud looks him straight in the eyes.

MAHMOUD
Then listen carefully—
(pauses, coughing)
I'm done running... and I'm done smoking.

Silence fills the room.

Abdeljalil doesn't respond. He turns and walks out.

Fatima watches from the corridor, tears in her eyes.

Barry exhales, knowing this wasn't the end—only the beginning.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Mohamed leans back against the pillow, staring silently at the ceiling. The steady sound of the heart monitor fills the room.

The door opens.

Barry, Anna, Fatima, and Aisha enter quietly. Abdeljalil is noticeably absent.

Mohamed slowly turns his head toward them.

MOHAMED
(softly)
You didn't have to come.

BARRY

Yeah, well... you don't get rid of us
that easily.

A faint smile appears on Mohamed's face, then fades.

ANNA

How are you feeling?

MOHAMED

Like someone borrowed my lungs... and
forgot to return them.

Fatima steps closer, her eyes full of worry.

FATIMA

Don't joke like that. You scared
me... you scared all of us.

Mohamed looks away, guilt creeping into his expression.

MOHAMED

I know.

Aisha walks closer, holding Fatima's hand, looking up at
Mohamed.

AISHA

Are you going to die?

The room freezes for a moment.

Mohamed swallows, forcing himself to sit up slightly.

MOHAMED

No... not today.

Barry clears his throat, trying to lighten the mood.

BARRY

Doctor says you're lucky.
(pauses)
But luck doesn't last forever.

Mohamed nods slowly.

MOHAMED

I heard.

Silence.

Fatima finally asks the question she's been holding back.

FATIMA
Where do you think Abdeljalil is
right now?

Mohamed exhales deeply.

MOHAMED
Trying not to hate me.

Anna gently places her hand over Mohamed's.

ANNA
He'll come around.

MOHAMED
Maybe.
(beat)
Or maybe this is the first time
he's right to stay away.

Barry looks at Mohamed, serious now.

BARRY
You scared him more than you think.

Mohamed closes his eyes.

MOHAMED
That was never my intention.

The heart monitor continues its steady rhythm.

Fatima wipes a tear, forcing herself to be strong.

FATIMA
Just promise me something.

Mohamed opens his eyes and looks at her.

MOHAMED
What?

FATIMA
That you'll stay alive long enough
for us to forgive you.

Mohamed nods.

MOHAMED
I promise.

A quiet, fragile peace settles over the room.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - MORNING

Mohamed walks slowly down the corridor, still pale but steady. The hospital noises fade as he pushes the exit door.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

The bell rings. Students flood the yard, laughter and chatter filling the air.

Mohamed sits under a large tree, leaning his back against the trunk. Beside him sits SAMIR, his close friend, relaxed, chewing gum.

Samir glances at a group of girls passing by.

SAMIR

(smiling)

You know... sometimes I think love is just bad timing mixed with bad choices.

Mohamed doesn't react. His eyes are distant.

SAMIR (CONT'D)

Come on. You never talk about girls anymore.
Not even Kathrina.

Mohamed shrugs, indifferent.

MOHAMED

Relationships are exhausting.
People want pieces of you... then complain when you bleed.

Samir looks at him, surprised.

SAMIR

That's cold, man.

MOHAMED

It's honest.

Just then, KATHRINA passes by. She notices Samir and smiles politely.

KATHRINA

Hi, Samir.

SAMIR

Hey.

She deliberately ignores Mohamed and keeps walking.

A beat.

Mohamed lifts his head calmly.

MOHAMED

(flat, loud enough)

Sorry... if your arrogant beauty made
you blind enough not to see me.

Kathrina stops.

She turns slowly, irritation flashing in her eyes.

KATHRINA

Excuse me?

MOHAMED

You heard me.

KATHRINA

I don't owe you a greeting.

Mohamed smiles faintly—cold, controlled.

MOHAMED

No.

You owe me nothing. Just like I owe
you my silence.

She steps closer, defensive.

KATHRINA

You think acting like this makes
you strong?

MOHAMED

No.

It makes me honest.

Her voice sharpens.

KATHRINA

You're just bitter because people
move on.

Mohamed finally looks directly at her—eyes empty.

MOHAMED

People don't move on.
They replace.
That hits.

She hesitates, then fires back.

KATHRINA

At least I feel something.
You? You're just hollow.

Mohamed stands slowly, towering slightly over her.

MOHAMED

Hollow?
No. I learned not to beg for
affection from people who only love
themselves.

Her eyes start to water.

KATHRINA

You think you're better than me?

MOHAMED

(quiet, lethal)
No.
I just stopped needing you.

Silence.

Kathrina's face collapses. Tears spill despite her effort to hold them back.

She turns away quickly, walking off as she wipes her face.

Samir watches her go, stunned.

He looks at Mohamed.

SAMIR

That was... brutal.

Mohamed sits back down against the tree, unfazed.

MOHAMED

She asked for honesty.
I just didn't soften it.

The school noise continues around them—life moving on.

Mohamed stares ahead, colder than before.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - AFTER THE BELL

The bell RINGS. Students explode into chatter.

SAMIR laughs loudly, joking with a GIRL beside him. Mohamed stays seated, silent, scanning the room like he doesn't belong to it.

His eyes stop.

KATHRINA sits a few rows away, staring at him with pure anger.

Mohamed meets her gaze... Then slowly, deliberately, raises his middle finger.

Kathrina clenches her jaw.

She leans toward her FRIEND, whispering sharply.

KATHRINA
(angry, bitter)
Look at him.
Who does he think he is?

FRIEND
(mocking)
The mysterious freak?

KATHRINA
Exactly.

Acts like he's special... like he's above everyone. Truth is? No one even likes him.

The friend smirks.

FRIEND
Then why does it bother you so much?

Kathrina hesitates.

KATHRINA
Because he thinks he won.

The friend leans closer, encouraging.

FRIEND
Go talk to him.
You're strong. Don't let him walk around like he owns the place.

A beat.

Kathrina stands up.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kathrina marches toward Mohamed's desk.

He doesn't move. Doesn't look up.

KATHRINA
(low, furious)
You think that was funny?

Mohamed finally glances at her—emotionless.

MOHAMED
Did you come to talk...or just
embarrass yourself?

Her eyes flare.

KATHRINA
You're not special, Mohamed.
You're just weird.

MOHAMED
(calculating, calm)
And yet... here you are.

She scoffs.

KATHRINA
No one likes you.
People laugh behind your back.

Mohamed leans back slightly, unfazed.

MOHAMED
Then why are you the one shaking?

That lands.

She raises her voice.

KATHRINA
You think you're better than
everyone?

Mohamed stands up slowly.

MOHAMED
No.
I just don't need approval from
people I don't respect.

Her face reddens.

KATHRINA
You're cold. Empty.
You'll end up alone.

Mohamed steps past her, brushing her shoulder lightly.

He stops—just long enough to finish her.

MOHAMED
(turning back, icy)
Alone is peaceful.
What you're doing right now? That's
desperate.

He walks away—leaving her mid-argument, stunned and
humiliated.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

SARA, a short girl with medical glasses, waves at Mohamed
nervously.

SARA
(smiling)
Hey... want to grab a coffee?

Mohamed doesn't hesitate.

MOHAMED
Sure.

They start walking.

Kathrina watches from behind, furious.

Mohamed glances back one last time—just enough for her to
hear.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
Coffee is better than talking to
trash that walks around pretending
it matters.

Kathrina freezes.

Sara looks at him, surprised.

Mohamed keeps walking, already done.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

The cafeteria hums with noise. Mohamed and SARA sit at a small corner table, two cups of coffee steaming between them.

Sara wraps both hands around her cup, nervous but smiling.

SARA
(softly)
I didn't think you'd actually come.

Mohamed takes a sip. Calm. Detached.

MOHAMED
I wanted coffee.

She laughs quietly.

SARA
At least you're honest.

A beat.

She studies him—careful, curious.

SARA (CONT'D)
You don't talk much... but when you do, people either hate you... or don't forget you.

MOHAMED
That's their problem.

Sara nods, accepting it.

SARA
You know...most people here pretend.
Laugh loud. Talk big. You don't.

Mohamed looks at her for the first time—really looks.

MOHAMED
Why are you talking to me?

She hesitates, then shrugs.

SARA
Because you're real.
And because you look like someone
who's tired of fighting.

That lands deeper than he expects.

Mohamed looks away.

MOHAMED
Don't confuse silence with peace.

SARA
(smiles gently)
I won't.

A comfortable silence settles. Not awkward. Honest.

Across the cafeteria—KATHRINA watches them. Her jaw tightens.
Her eyes burn.

She whispers to her FRIEND.

KATHRINA
(low, venomous)
He did this on purpose.

FRIEND
Forget him.

Kathrina doesn't.

She stands.

EXT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Mohamed and Sara exit, coffee cups in hand.

SARA
Thanks for... not being cruel to me.

Mohamed stops walking.

MOHAMED
I'm only cruel when someone asks
for it.

She smiles, a little sad.

SARA
Then I'll stay on your good side.

She waves and heads off.

Mohamed watches her go.

Then—KATHRINA'S VOICE cuts through the air.

KATHRINA
So this is your new game?

Mohamed turns.

Kathrina stands there, shaking with contained rage.

Students nearby slow down, sensing tension.

MOHAMED

You're blocking the exit.

KATHRINA

You humiliated me.
In front of everyone.

MOHAMED

You humiliated yourself.

That snaps something in her.

She steps closer.

KATHRINA

You think you're untouchable?

Mohamed leans in slightly—voice low, dangerous calm.

MOHAMED

No.
I just don't bleed easily.

Her eyes fill—not with tears this time—but fury.

KATHRINA

You don't know who you're messing
with.

MOHAMED

(flat)
Everyone says that right before
they lose control.

She SLAPS him.

The sound echoes.

Gasps ripple through the students.

Mohamed doesn't move.

Slowly, he turns his head back to her.

His voice is ice.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)

That was your last warning.

Kathrina realizes—too late—that she crossed a line.

A TEACHER'S VOICE shouts in the distance.

TEACHER (O.S.)
Hey! What's going on here?!

Kathrina backs away, breathing hard.

Mohamed steps past her.

MOHAMED
Next time...bring more than anger.

He walks off.

Kathrina stands frozen—humiliated, exposed, and now dangerous.

Her friend rushes to her side.

FRIEND
Kathrina... let it go.

Kathrina stares after Mohamed, eyes dark.

KATHRINA
No.
Now it's personal.

INT. KATHRINA HOUSE - NIGHT

The living room is quiet. Too quiet.

FATIMA sits stiffly, hands clenched in her lap. Beside her: ANNA and BARRY. Standing near the wall, arms crossed like stone—ABDELJALIL.

Fatima breaks the silence.

FATIMA
(low, controlled)
This boy... Mohamed.
He's walking the same road as his
father.

Barry exhales.

BARRY
He's angry. Young.
They all are.

Abdeljalil turns sharply.

ABDELJALIL
Anger doesn't excuse stupidity.

Anna looks at Fatima, worried.

ANNA
He's been alone for too long.

Fatima's eyes harden.

FATIMA
Loneliness doesn't protect the
heart.

She looks directly at Abdeljalil.

FATIMA (CONT'D)
If you see him smoke again...film
him.

Barry frowns.

BARRY
Film him?

ABDELJALIL
(cold, decisive)
Yes.
If he wants to destroy himself,
we'll make sure he can't hide it.

Anna hesitates.

ANNA
That could ruin him.

Abdeljalil steps closer.

ABDELJALIL
Better ruined than buried.

A beat.

None of them notice—Across the hall, half-hidden behind a
vending machine..

KATHRINA.

She has been listening the whole time.

A slow, poisonous smile curls on her lips.

KATHRINA
(whispering to herself)
I'll finish you, Mohamed.

EXT. KATHRINA'S STREET - NIGHT

Streetlights glow dimly.

Kathrina exits her house quietly.

Down the sidewalk— MOHAMED, hoodie up, hands in pockets,
walking alone.

Kathrina freezes... then follows.

Careful. Silent. Predatory.

EXT. ABANDONED CORRIDOR / ALLEY - NIGHT

A narrow, empty corridor between buildings. No people. No
cameras.

Mohamed stops.

Leans against the wall.

Pulls out a cigarette.

Lights it.

Inhales.

For a moment—peace.

Then—A faint click.

Mohamed stiffens.

From the shadows—Kathrina steps forward, phone raised,
RECORDING.

The red light blinks.

KATHRINA
(low, triumphant)
Smile, Mohamed.

He turns slowly.

Sees the phone.

Doesn't panic.

Doesn't rush.

Just disappointment.

MOHAMED
You followed me.

KATHRINA
I caught you.

She steps closer, filming his face, the cigarette.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
This goes to your family.
Your friends. Your little coffee
girl.

That lands.

Not rage.

Not fear.

Something sharper.

MOHAMED
Leave her out of this.

Kathrina's smile widens.

KATHRINA
So she matters.

She tilts the phone, enjoying it.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
Everyone has a weakness.
I finally found yours.

Mohamed crushes the cigarette under his shoe.

Steps closer—until the camera shakes slightly.

His voice is deadly calm.

MOHAMED
You're playing a game you don't
understand.

Kathrina doesn't back down.

KATHRINA
You don't scare me.

She lowers the phone just enough to look him in the eyes.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
You fall tomorrow.

She turns and walks away, laughing softly.

Mohamed stands alone.

The alley suddenly feels smaller.

Darker.

He looks at his hand—still trembling.

For the first time..

Not because of himself.

But because of Sara.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Students are scattered across the courtyard, laughing and chatting.

MOHAMED stands near a wall, calm as always. SARA is nearby, talking quietly with a friend, smiling shyly.

Suddenly—KATHRINA approaches, phone in hand. No whispers this time. Her voice is loud, deliberate.

KATHRINA
(sarcastic, for everyone
to hear)
Imagine... Mohamed, the perfect boy.
The sad little hero. Smoking like
he's in a cheap movie.

Whispers spread.

Mohamed doesn't flinch.

Kathrina raises her phone, showing the screen to a few students.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
One video...And everyone will know
who you really are.

Mohamed slowly turns his head. His eyes scan the crowd—then land on SARA.

He sees her. She understands the danger... but doesn't yet grasp it fully.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
(smiling wickedly)
By the way...Your new little friend
is so cute. Weak. Unlucky.

The silence snaps.

Mohamed suddenly steps forward— grabs the phone firmly yanks it from her hands in front of everyone.

Shock.

Before she can react—

He presses quickly. Sends the video.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Give it back! What are you doing?!

Mohamed raises the phone to her face.

MOHAMED
(loud, clear)
I sent it to my brother...
Abdeljalil.

Students freeze.

Kathrina pales.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
Do you think I'm afraid?

He leans closer. His voice drops... deadly calm.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
If you touch Sara again—I'll
destroy you.

The threat hits like ice.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
She's not like you.
She's not an arrogant fool.

He gestures toward Sara from afar.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
She's a rare gem.
And you... just noise.

Kathrina trembles with rage.

Mohamed pulls out a cigarette. Lights it calmly.

Exhales the smoke directly in her face.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
I smoke, you miserable girl.
If you want scandals- tweet it
privately.

Dead silence.

Suddenly-

VOICE (O.S.)
Mohamed!
No smoking in school!

The TEACHER appears, furious.

Mohamed doesn't look at her.

He walks away.

Raises his middle finger high-not at one person, but at everyone.

MOHAMED
Screw you all.
You can kiss my ass.

He leaves.

Students are in complete shock.

SARA stands frozen... tears in her eyes... but she sees something new in him:

Not cruelty. But choice.

CUT TO:

KATHRINA standing there, humiliated, pride shattered. Anger in her eyes shifts into something darker.

KATHRINA
(whispering to herself)
This isn't over.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATE AFTERNOON

Mohamed walks along the sidewalk beside SAMIR. Cars pass. The city hums quietly.

Samir jokes at first—then notices Mohamed's silence.

SAMIR

You've been quiet since school.
That's never a good sign.

Mohamed keeps walking.

MOHAMED

I didn't tell you everything.

Samir frowns.

SAMIR

About what?

Mohamed stops.

Looks at him.

No drama. No hesitation.

MOHAMED

I'm sick.

Samir freezes.

SAMIR

Sick... how sick?

A beat.

MOHAMED

Six months.
That's what the doctor said.

Samir's face drains of color.

SAMIR

Six... months?
You're joking.

MOHAMED

I don't joke about death.

Silence.

SAMIR
(voice breaking)
Does anyone else know?

MOHAMED
No.
And they won't.

Samir shakes his head, struggling.

SAMIR
Then why provoke Kathrina?
Why push everyone?

Mohamed exhales slowly.

Almost smiles.

MOHAMED
Because when the clock is running
out...you stop pretending to be nice.

He looks ahead.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
And annoying Kathrina?
That's just entertainment.

Samir stares at him, torn between anger and sadness.

They continue walking.

EXT. ABDELJALIL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - EVENING

ABDELJALIL sits on a wooden rocking chair, arms crossed,
smoking. A man carved from tension.

KATHRINA approaches casually.

Fake smile.

KATHRINA
Good evening.

Abdeljalil nods, unreadable.

ABDELJALIL
Evening.

She lingers.

Waits.

KATHRINA
I heard Mohamed's been... causing
trouble again.

Abdeljalil's jaw tightens.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
Smoking.

Fighting teachers. Threatening girls.

She sighs—fake concern.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
Someone should really control
him...before he destroys himself.

Abdeljalil clenches his fists.

Footsteps.

Mohamed and Samir arrive.

Abdeljalil stands immediately.

ABDELJALIL
You.

Mohamed stops.

ABDELJALIL (CONT'D)
I warned you about smoking.

Do you enjoy embarrassing this family?!

MOHAMED
You embarrass it just fine on your
own.

Kathrina smirks.

Abdeljalil steps closer, furious.

ABDELJALIL
Watch your mouth!

Mohamed leans in—voice calm, lethal.

MOHAMED
You want to talk about shame?
Let's talk about your "business."

Abdeljalil stiffens.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
The night meetings.
The cash. The men who don't ask
questions.

Kathrina's smile fades.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
You're not my guardian.
You're a gangster.

A heavy silence.

Abdeljalil explodes.

ABDELJALIL
Get out of my house!

He points to the street.

ABDELJALIL (CONT'D)
Now!

Mohamed doesn't hesitate.

Turns away.

MOHAMED
You'll regret this, you bastard.

He walks off.

Samir starts after him.

SAMIR
Wait, Mohamed—

Kathrina laughs softly.

KATHRINA
(smug)
Looks like I won this round.

Samir stops.

Turns slowly toward her.

His voice is cold.

SAMIR
You're really disgusting.
You know that?

Kathrina blinks.

SAMIR (CONT'D)
If you knew the truth about
him..you'd be ashamed to breathe
near him.

He turns away.

SAMIR (CONT'D)
I'm done.

Everyone watches him leave.

Abdeljalil steps forward.

ABDELJALIL
Wait.
What truth?

Samir doesn't turn back.

SAMIR
Go to hell.

He walks off.

Kathrina stands frozen.

For the first time.

ONE MONTH LATER

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

An empty classroom. Mohamed's chair untouched. - Teachers
whispering.

EXT. OUTSIDE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Sara standing at the school gate every afternoon... waiting.

INT. SAMIR ROOM - NIGHT

Samir calling Mohamed's phone. No answer.

INT. FATIMA ROOM - NIGHT.

Fatima praying silently.

EXT. ABDELJALIL'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT
 Abdeljalil staring at the street every night.
 Mohamed is gone.

INT. ABDELJALIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT
 Abdeljalil sits alone, head in his hands.
 Guilt eats him alive.
 His phone suddenly RINGS.
 He answers.

ABDELJALIL
 What?

TONY (V.O.)
 (low, urgent)
 It's Mohamed.

Abdeljalil freezes.

ABDELJALIL
 Where is he?

A pause.

TONY (V.O.)
 He's dealing now.
 Drugs.

Abdeljalil stands up violently.

ABDELJALIL
 WHAT?!

TONY (V.O.)
 Tonight.
 He's making a deal with Marco the
 Limp.

Abdeljalil's eyes burn.

ABDELJALIL
 (screaming)
 I'M COMING.
 WHERE?!

TONY (V.O.)
 The east warehouse.

The line goes dead.

INT. ABDELJALIL'S CAR - NIGHT

Abdeljalil drives fast through dark streets.

Hands shaking.

ABDELJALIL
(to himself)
I sent him to his death...Marco
doesn't forgive mistakes.

He swallows hard.

TONY
Allah forgive me.

EXT. EAST WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

An abandoned industrial area.

Abdeljalil's car stops.

He jumps out.

Silence.

Too much silence.

He enters.

INT. EAST WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A massacre.

Bodies everywhere. Blood on walls. Shell casings on the floor.

Abdeljalil moves through them, frantic.

Turning bodies.

ABDELJALIL
(shouting)
MOHAMED!
MOHAMED!

No answer.

He reaches the back of the warehouse.

Stops.

Sniffs the air.

Smoke.

ABDELJALIL (CONT'D)
(low, shaken)
That cigarette...
I know that smell.

He pushes a door open.

INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Dim light.

Smoke hanging in the air.

MOHAMED is slumped against the wall.

One hand pressed against his kidney, blood soaking through his clothes.

A gun lies near him.

Beside him MARCO THE LIMP, dead. A bullet through his head.

Abdeljalil rushes to Mohamed, dropping to his knees.

ABDELJALIL
(voice breaking)
What did you do... you madman?

Mohamed smiles weakly.

Barely conscious.

MOHAMED
(struggling to speak)
I told you...why wait...

He coughs. Blood on his lips.

MOHAMED (CONT'D)
If there's a chance...to return to
God...

His eyes flutter.

ABDELJALIL
What are you talking about?!

Mohamed slowly closes his eyes.

MOHAMED
Don't worry...death is just the
beginning.

Silence.

Abdeljalil shakes him.

ABDELJALIL
Mohamed?
MOHAMED?!

No response.

Abdeljalil screams—raw, broken.

He pulls Mohamed into his arms.

ABDELJALIL (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
NO...NO...
PLEASE...

Nothing.

The cigarette falls from Mohamed's fingers.

The smoke fades.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Harsh white lights.

The DR. REYNOLDS walks toward SARA, SAMIR, KATHRINA, FATIMA,
and ABDELJALIL.

Their faces are frozen with fear.

DR. REYNOLDS
He's alive...but he's in a coma.

Sara gasps, hand flying to her mouth.

SARA
(whispering)
A coma...?

DR. REYNOLDS
We don't know how long.
Hours. Days. Maybe more.

Sara's legs give out. Samir catches her just in time.

Kathrina steps back, stunned.

KATHRINA

No...He was just angry. Just stupid..

Her voice cracks.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)

He can't be dying.

Abdeljalil says nothing.

His face is stone—but his eyes are burning.

INT. ICU - CONTINUOUS

Mohamed lies motionless. Machines beep softly.

Sara approaches the bed, trembling.

She takes his hand.

SARA

(crying quietly)

You promised nothing..

You never said goodbye..

She presses her forehead to his hand.

SARA (CONT'D)

Wake up.

Please.

Behind her Kathrina stands at the door, unable to enter.

She watches Sara hold his hand.

Guilt eats her alive.

INT. DR. REYNOLDS OFFICE - LATER

DR. REYNOLDS sits nervously.

Abdeljalil stands across from him.

Fatima and Samir nearby.

DR. REYNOLDS

I'm sorry...That's all I can say.

Abdeljalil suddenly pulls a GUN.

Presses it gently—but firmly—against the doctor's neck.

ABDELJALIL

Speak.

The doctor freezes.

DOCTOR

I— I can't.
He asked me not to—

ABDELJALIL

(voice shaking with rage)
Speak...or I kill you.

Fatima screams.

FATIMA

Abdeljalil!
What are you doing?! Where did you
get a gun?!

Abdeljalil doesn't turn around.

ABDELJALIL

I'm trying to understand who
Mohamed really was.
Your question is not important now.

The doctor's hands tremble.

DR. REYNOLDS

He...
He had terminal cancer.

Silence.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Stage four.
Six months... maybe less.

The gun lowers slowly.

Abdeljalil's knees buckle.

DR. REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

He knew.
From the beginning.

Fatima lets out a broken cry.

FATIMA

Oh God...
My child...

Samir turns away, punching the wall.

SAMIR

(through tears)
He told me...
I thought he was lying...

Abdeljalil sinks into a chair.

The gun slips from his hand.

ABDELJALIL

(whispering)
All this time...
I threw him out...

His voice breaks.

ABDELJALIL (CONT'D)

He was dying...and I punished him.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kathrina stands alone.

She heard everything.

Her face collapses.

She stumbles into an empty room.

INT. EMPTY HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Kathrina shuts the door behind her.

Slides down the wall.

Breaks.

KATHRINA

(sobbing)
I didn't know...
I swear I didn't know...

She covers her face.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)

I wanted to hurt him...not kill him..

She laughs weakly through tears.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
He was protecting someone...and I was
destroying him.

She wipes her tears, shaking.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
If he wakes up...I'll beg him.

A beat.

Her voice drops to a whisper.

KATHRINA (CONT'D)
And if he doesn't...this will follow
me forever.

CUT TO:

INT. ICU - NIGHT

Mohamed lies still.

Machines beeping.

Sara sits beside him, holding his hand.

SARA
(soft, determined)
You chose life...even when it was
ending.

She leans closer.

SARA (CONT'D)
Now it's my turn to wait.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU ROOM - NIGHT

The steady beep of a heart monitor fills the silence. Cold white light. MOHAMED lies on the bed, tubes attached, pale face, eyes closed.

KATHERINA sits beside him. Exhausted. Her eyes are red from crying. She holds his hand... hesitates... then tightens her grip.

A long silence.

KATHERINA
(soft, broken)
Mohamed...
(swallowing)
You know... I've been rehearsing
these words for months...but I always
postponed them.

She looks at his face. No response.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
I kept telling myself: not now...not
at this time... not like this.

She lets out a faint, choked laugh.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
Sarah...I was jealous of her, yes.
Jealous because she was close to
you... while I hid behind cruelty...
provoking you... hurting you... just
because I didn't know how to be
vulnerable in front of you.

She pauses. Her grip on his hand tightens.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
(tears forming)
I needed the right moment...a normal
moment... not this... not you lying
here... motionless.

She leans closer.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
Then everything spiralled out of
control...you disappeared... you came
back broken... and now...
(her voice cracks)
Now I don't even know if you can
hear me.

She moves closer to his ear.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
But I'm going to say it anyway...
even if you don't hear me... even if
you never wake up.

She takes a deep breath.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
Mohamed...I love you. I have for a
long time. I love you honestly...
with my fear... my jealousy... even
with my mistakes.

Her tears fall onto his hand.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
Please...wake up.

Silence.

Only the monitor.

The camera slowly moves closer to Mohamed's face.

A single tear slides gently down his cheek.

Katherina notices. She freezes.

KATHERINA (CONT'D)
(trembling whisper)
Mohamed...?

Suddenly- Mohamed's fingers move slowly... and close around her
hand.

Katherina's eyes widen. Her tears turn into a stunned smile.

No words.

No explanation.

The camera lingers on their intertwined hands.

FADE TO BLACK.