On the edge of the frame

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Original script

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CHAPTER ONE - screenwriter

1. int. Metro passenger platform - evening

TITLES: Based on true events.

Behind the scenes music The Beatles - Help!

Sultan stands on the edge of the platform and looks toward the tunnel from where the train should appear

SULTAN is an Arab, an aspiring screenwriter, 28 years old. He gives the impression of a self-confident and good-natured man. He has light stubble on his face. He is dressed in a white T-shirt and classic jeans. Outwardly, he is attractive: thin and tall.

He has wireless headphones in his ears. As the camera moves closer to him, the music volume increases.

Suddenly a bell rings, and the music instantly goes silent.

Hear: the hum of a moving train, the voices of people...

Sultan

(on phone, whispering in Arabic)

Mom, I'm not going back. even if Daddy curses me.

(pause, voice trembling)

Remember when he burned my poetry notebooks? He said: "Arabs don't cry over papers."

FATHER'S VOICE

(reminiscing, angrily, in Arabic)

You have dishonored our family! What will you become? A penniless screenwriter?

Sultan

(gripping phone tighter, in Arabic)

I'll write a story he'll remember... even if it's the last thing I do.

Sultan hangs up, and looks at the screen phone, where to open a docs file with a white background.

The breeze from the approaching train flutters his hair.

2. int. METRO WAGON - evening

Close-up: Sultan fingers cling to the handrail. Behind the scenes, the brakes squeak and the announcement of the stop. Nearby, a passenger is leafing through a newspaper with a screaming headline.

The screen of 's cell phone flashes Sultan, saying, "NAT. NEW YORK METRO..."

3. nat. new york metro square - EVENING

A warm summer evening. Entrance/exit 4 to the metro station. Next to the metro, Sultan. is sitting on a bench. He is immersed in his thoughts, his gaze fixed downward.

After the phone rings, Sultan quickly upstands, wipes his hands on his jeans, takes the out phone of his pocket and picks it up.

SULTAN

(on phone, worried)

Hello?

(smiles)

...The metro, as agreed is now about...

(looking toward the metro entrance)

Fourth entrance...

(looking around even more intently)

I can't see you... Tell me, what do you see in front of you? A SHOPPING CENTER. I'll find it on the navigator and call you back.

He hangs up.

sultan

(deep breaths)

Damn! Why am I shaking so much?

4. NAT. Road to the shopping center - Evening

Sultan walks towards the mall, navigating by navigator.

Looking around, he tries to find the person he's talking to on the phone in the crowd.

Seeing a sign for a shopping center across the street, he doesn't hesitate to run across the road at a red light.

He's dialing a number. It's ringing...

SULTAN

(on phone)

Sofia? I'm at the mall. Where are you standing?

Sultan, talking on the phone, notices a tall red-haired girl. She is wearing a greenish-colored evening dress just above her knees and high-heeled shoes on her feet. She is carrying a small stylish handbag.

SOFIA, 36, documentary filmmaker. She is very meticulous, with a strong character and can sometimes be a bit excitable.

They immediately realize they were looking for each other.

SULTAN

(whispers)

It's okay! You can do it! Don't screw it up! Think of the script in your head! You're the main character! You're the main character

5. NAT. shopping center - evening

Sultan approaches Sofia and, overcome with excitement, embraces her like a brother and claps her on the back, then steps back.

Sofia is confused by the awkward embrace, but assesses him from head to toe.

SULTAN

(confused)

Hi... I thought you'd be wearing sneakers. You're, uh. (gestures at her heels) magazine heels.

SOFIA

(dryly, adjusts purse)

You look like you're from a migrant TV show. Where's your backpack of supplies?

Sultan awkwardly tucks his hands into his pockets. Sofia rolls her eyes, but there's a smile at the corner of her mouth.

SULTAN

(smiles, waves)

You look good!

Sofia

Thank you! after the I came straight to your place party. It was a birthday party.

SULTAN

And yes, happy birthday! All blessings and good health to you, Sofia! Happy birthday!

Sofia

Thank you! Where shall we go?

SULTAN

According to the navigator there are several coffee shops in the neighborhood, but by the time, they are closing. I suggest we go to the store, buy something and walk around.

Sofia

Heels are the way to go.

Sultan didn't get the joke.

6. INT. grocery store - Evening

Sultan and Sofia are standing in line at the self-service checkout, each holding a 0.5-liter bottle of Coke

They occasionally meet glances and smile, though they are a little awkward.

SULTAN

You don't want anything else?

Sofia

Just a Coke. I had a snack with my friends, thank you! Where are we going?

SULTAN

Isn't this your neighborhood? No parks around here?

Sofia

I offered you, but you turned me down.

SULTAN

Thought I was going to be held up late at work... Let's go to that park you were talking about.

A man tries to get in without queuing. Sofia puts her hand out sharply, blocking his way.

Sofia

(blocking the path)

Have you read the army regulations? Line up. This way.

The man backs away.

7. Nat. Pedestrian - evening

They walk along the crosswalk, and Sultan notices that Sofia is uncomfortable in her shoes. With courage, he takes her hand, though not immediately. Their fingers intertwine.

A smile appears on Sofia's face for a second. A woman walks by, smiling sweetly at them both.

8. NAT. sidewalk - evening

The sidewalk leading to the park is quite narrow, so pedestrians have to walk on it in both directions.

Sofia moves faster than normal pedestrians. Sultan can't keep up with her pace and moves closer to Sofia, then a little behind to allow others to pass. They are still holding hands.

Sultan

(with a touch of irony)

A director in heels is like a cameraman in ballet slippers. It's uncomfortable, but it's spectacular. How did you decide to go all the way out here?

Sofia

(dryly, but with a hint of a smile)

I take my heels off before editing. And as for "decided." When you get kicked out of a job, you run wherever you can. Metro, documentary.

Sultan

(softly)

So, I'm not the first to catch up with you?

Sofia

(stops abruptly)

Catching up? You're a step and a half behind. It's not a director's job to adjust to someone else's pace.

sultan

(laughs)

Will you tell me about your movie?

sofia

Two years ago, my friend and I started our own production company.

Listening to her, Sultan sometimes pushes her to the side or snuggles up to her.

sofia

(irritated)

Stop pushing me to the side!

sultan

What?

sofia

You're pushing me! I could fall and, like, break my leg.

SULTAN

You can start by not running, please!

(laughs)

I can barely keep up with you!

SOFIA

I'm sorry...

(she slows her step)

Sultan

Second, the path is very narrow, and if I walk behind you, your gait will be distracting and I won't be able to concentrate

(looking at her buttocks)

I'm protecting you from those coming from the left or our direction.

A burly man heads in their direction, and Sultan, squeezing lightly against her, lets him pass.

Sultan

I also enjoy snuggling up to you!

Sofia

(smiles)

Oh how. What were we talking about? Oh yes... The idea of talking about children with developmental disabilities and their parents in our challenging times.

Sultan

Quickly removed?

Sofia

They shot everything in two weeks, but the installation, paperwork, license and permits took a year.

sultan

(surprised)

A year?

Sofia

Bureaucracy... Let's not talk about that. The thought of paperwork makes me angry.

SULTAN

You've obviously had a hard time.

Sofia

It's a real pain in the ass, to make a long story short.

Sultan

But you still released your movie, which I liked.

There are fewer people, and they are walking in line with each other.

Sofia

Thank you!

9. nat. Road through darkness - evening

They approach a metal fence erected near the new building. It blocks their way, and the only option left is to overcome the darkness, mud and puddles left by the rain.

SULTAN

Where to next?

sofia

This way. My shoes are crying.

sultan

(laughs)

Now I understand how New York is different from New Jersey.

Sofia

(laughs)

Yes, you're absolutely right!

SULTAN

I'm right here to hold you, Sof.

Hearing Sultan words, Sofia becomes enraged and pushes him away.

Sultan pulls back but manages to keep his balance

Sofia

(abruptly pulls away)

He's the only one who ever called me that. Please don't say it again

Sultan

(confused)

Sorry… I didn't know. What’s your name then… Sofia?

Sofia

(holding back a shudder in her voice)

Sofia is enough.

(pulls hand in)

Come on...

(Sultan hovering in place)

Will you hold my hand so I don't fall?

sultan

Yes, of course!

He takes Sofia's hand and steps forward, turning on the flashlight on his phone to light her way.

sofia

It's my birthday today, and we're walking through a mud puddle. That's great

sultan

Sounds romantic to me

Both of them laugh.

They walk a little way and find themselves on a paved road

10. Nat. Park - evening

The park is a picturesque place with a pond, entertainment areas and a Ferris wheel.

The park is currently undergoing renovations, so there is almost no lighting

Sofia

I live near the park. Now the park is in the process of improvement... No proper lighting.

Sultan

Creepy...

Sofia

I partially agree, but my windows have a great view of the park all day long

Sultan takes Sofia's hands and they move toward the dark park.

sultan

Let's take a little walk while we're here. Where were we? Oh yeah, were you excited when you saw the movie in the theater?

sofia

Of course!

Sultan

What was it like?

Sofia

Working on the movie was very tiring. But when you sit in a dark room, watch your film on a big screen, and see your name in the credits, you realize that it was worth all the sleepless nights.

SULTAN

(jealous)

That's great! I wish I could feel it myself.

Despite the darkness, the clear sky is with stars, the weather is lovely, and they enjoy the beautiful views studded.

Sofia

I've never been out so late before. It's quiet, and it feels like I'm in the natural world, devoid of artificial light.

She glanced at Sultan, who nodded with approval, also admiring the beauty of the park

11. HAT. PARK BENCH - EVENING

A bench appears in the path of Sultan and Sofia, near which a lantern shines dimly

SULTAN

(points to bench

Let's sit a while here for.

They took a seat on a bench.

People pass by: a married couple, or just a lonely passerby.

Sofia's getting a call.

Sofia

(on phone)

Hello, my witches! We're fine. ...Walking through the park and sitting on a bench in the shade... Are the witches home yet?

(laughed and looked at Sultan)

I don’t know... Thank you for the evening and good night! Kisses... Yes? You should go to bed. Kisses!

Sofia places her purse on the bench between them. Sultan picks it up and puts it behind his back.

sultan

It's getting colder!

sofia

A little bit.

Sofia gets another call. She looks to see who it is, but doesn't answer and sets the phone to silent mode with the side button.

Sultan

Won’t you answer?

Sofia

I don't want to!

Sultan moves closer to her, their shoulders touch, and he takes her hand again.

sultan

I like having you around, not a person in correspondence. How long have you been on this site?

Sofia

Recently... A friend recommended it.

Sultan

And what are you looking for?

Sofia

After six months of divorce, I'm getting used to being single, but sometimes socializing and flirting lacking is.

sultan

Oh, I just recently signed up, too. You were the first girl I met in real life from this site.

sofia

It's hard to believe, but for some reason I believe you.

Sultan

Why?

Sofia

I ... I went on dates, but I couldn't find common interests. don't know it’s different with you, there's always something to talk about.

SULTAN

That's good to hear... We both love movies, especially good ones.

At this time, Sultan gently touches her palm with his fingertips. She likes it.

Sofia

I guess! By the way, have you seen the movie "Chocolate" with Johnny Depp?

sultan

Yes! It's so delicious and meditative... After watching it, you feel calm and immediately crave chocolate.

SOFIA

(interrupts)

The movie is visual popcorn. In the book, Jeannot burns the letters not out of love, but out of fear of being abandoned. That's more important!

SULTAN

(perking up)

But the camera showed her hands - they were shaking! The movie doesn't need words to say that!

SOFIA

(with a chuckle)

Is this how you're going to write your screenplays? Silent scenes about trembling hands?

Sultan leans toward her, his face a centimeter from hers.

SULTAN

(quietly)

Yes. Because sometimes words are lies.

They can't take their eyes off each other

Sultan gently strokes her palm with his thumb.

Sofia

(smiles)

That tickles.

Sultan

Should I stop?

A brief silence.

sofia

We talk about me all the time. Tell me, how did you decide to become a screenwriter?

She jerks her hand away abruptly and starts massaging her fingers.

Sofia

(laughs)

Stop raping my arm!

SULTAN

(laughs)

You're funny!

Sofia

So, tell me, why did you want to be a screenwriter?

Sultan

After reading Paulo Coelho's The Alchemist, I remembered my childhood. My mom used to tell fairy tales, but often fell asleep without finishing the story. And I had to come up with the ext.

When Sultan became engrossed in his story, Sofia pretended to fall asleep

Sultan laughed it off.

sofia

(laughs)

I'm sorry! Go on, please!

sultan

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho, found in the trash when I was at uni.

Sofia

Horror, who throws books in the trash?!

sultan

I agree, but this man gave me back the meaning of life. For several years now, I've been studying, reading scripts and writing.

Sofia

Good for you!

Sultan

I feel like I've found my calling.

sofia

I know the feeling.

Sultan

It's so nice to be understood.

Sultan tilts his head in her direction and their gazes meet.

SULTAN

(looking at her lips)

Do you mind if I kiss you?

sofia

No

Sultan, hearing her words, pounces and kisses her greedily on the lips.

sofia

(pushing hands away)

Wait-wait! You're in a big hurry.

sultan

How? How do you like it?

sofia

Take your time.

SULTAN

Hmmm... Okay!

Their lips barely touch, but they do not kiss. Sultan gently runs his palm over her cheek.

sofia

(sighs)

There you go...I love it!

sultan

And me.

They exchange gentle and unhurried kisses. Sultan wants to embrace Sofia, but she stops him.

sofia

No - no, take your time, please

They continue to kiss gently.

sultan

(sighs)

Now passionately

sofia

(sighs)

All right

They pressed tightly against each other. The kisses are full of passion.

sofia

(sighs)

I love it!

sultan

Your lips taste like…

Sofia moaned. Sultan loved it.

sultan

I've never tasted anything tastier.

She moaned even louder.

sultan

By French...

sofia

Uh-huh.

Sultan gently runs his hand down her legs and gently touches her cheek, pulling her to him.

He watches as she closes her eyes and enjoys his touch. Then he kisses her passionately, engaging his tongue in the kiss. Sofia stops his hand from going any higher and closes her knees.

Sofia

(whispers)

Not here!

Sultan kisses her neck, and her body trembles. Her knees move apart, and his hand touches her underwear.

At that moment, by an old man and his dog walk, and they hurriedly pull away from each other, trying to look like normal people who are just sitting and talking. When the old man disappears, they laugh as they look at each other.

Sofia

(squeezes eyes shut)

You're very sneaky! It all started with the salaam. You're a Muslim, how would your family react if they found out that you... you know, sleeping with a woman before marriage?

sultan

(with a smile)

They had already reacted. When I left, my father said: "You chose Moscow over us. So, the rules now are yours.

(laughs)

Let's not talk about religion.

sofia

You went straight to my underpants on the first date.

Sultan

Come on... We both got carried away.

Sofia

It's never been like this before. We need to keep our distance

sultan

This isn't going to be easy! You liked the correspondence yesterday, didn't you?

12. Flashback/Nat. PHONE RECORDING - overnight

Sultan view: The screen is split in two. Both are lying on the bed with their hands in their underwear. On the screen are erotic 18+ and writing sentences. gifs

Sofia

Come inside me, I beg you!

Sultan

I turn you over on your back so I can see your face and enter slowly while gently wrapping around my arm your neck.

Sultan immediately sends an 18+ of a guy and a girl having sex just as he described. Both of them have a moment of orgasm if.

THE END OF THE FLASHBACK.

13. NAT. PARK BENCH - EVENING

Sultan shakes his head, trying to come to his senses.

sofia

Yes, and a lot! I had girlfriends at my house and I had to go into the bathroom.

sultan

Like in the bathroom?

(upset)

You seem to like words more than touching.

sofia

(clenched eyes)

You're observant... How many girlfriends have you had?

SULTAN

(laughs)

Very little!

sofia

Liar! How much?

sultan

A lot less than you might think right now.

Sofia

Twenty?

Sultan gets a notification on his phone and, glancing at the time, rises swiftly from the bench.

SULTAN

It's half past one in the morning. I got to go!

sofia

Where to?

sultan

Home. The journey will take almost two hours, and the hostel where I live will close at one in the morning.

Sofia

(looking around)

Will you alone me here?

SULTAN

(looking at phone)

I thought you said you lived nearby.

sofia

Well, you 't can leave me alone in the dark, can you?

SULTAN

(looking at her)

You're an adult.

sofia

Eight years older. I come on, that's not very mature mean.

sultan

I really have to go. I wouldn't want to spend five hundred on a taxi.

Sofia touches her neck with her hand as if she's catching her breath.

sofia

You've upset me.

SULTAN

I wasn't expecting that kind of reaction... Let me walk you home and then I'll call you a cab, okay?

sofia

(pale, rude)

No... Go already!

sultan

(puts phone in pocket)

Now I can't leave

Sultan sits down on the bench again and hugs her tightly. She hugs him back, reluctantly, and begins to inhale and exhale deeply.

...Sofia stands up and begins to adjust her dress. Sultan enjoys watching her. She notices his gaze and smiles.

sofia

What?

sultan

You're very beautiful!

sofia

The manipulator! You wanted to leave me here alone a few minutes ago!

Sultan laughed, and so did she.

14. NAT. PARK POND - NIGHT

They walk towards the pond, holding hands. Sofia trips over a root and Sultan her by the waist.

Sofia

(with a nervous chuckle)

Directing technique: "Awkwardness as a symbol of the fragility of relationships." You approve?

Sultan

(not letting her go)

No. It's, uh. a montage. You fall, I catch. No meaning, just the truth.

Sultan and Sofia approach the pond. The water is black, like the screen before a movie. Sofia throws a stone and the circles disperse.

SULTAN

(picks up rock)

Let's throw together. Let our circles collide.

They throw rocks at the same time. The splashes merge, but quickly fade out.

SOFIA

(looking at the water)

What does that prove?

SULTAN

(quietly)

That even a fleeting touch leaves a mark...even if no one sees it.

She kisses him suddenly, aggressively, almost desperately, as if trying to erase the past.

The camera slowly pulls away, leaving their silhouettes against the dark water.

15. Nat. Residential COMPLEX At the gate - at night

They are standing at the gate of an apartment building, when it opens, a car comes out of it.

SULTAN

Just don't yell at that driver either!

Sofia

Very funny!

Sultan

You know when a crash is considered a fluke?

Sofia

I don't know.

Sultan

When you get hit by an ambulance!

Both of them laughed.

Sofia

We're here now.

Sultan, glancing at the phone, takes Sofia's hands and squeezes them in his palms.

sultan

Two minutes to the end of the day. I can't give you a present, but I wish that the next three hundred and sixty-five days will be yours and each day will be better than the last!

Sultan pulls Sofia to him and hugs her hard.

sofia

Thank you! Your warm and sincere words are more precious than any gift.

They look at each other and clearly don't want to let go of their hands, much less leave.

Sofia

I realize I may regret it, but if your hostel closes metro closes, stay the night at my place

sultan

(smiles discreetly)

Are you sure?

sofia

Well, if you don't want to, call a cab. I don't really care!

They hold hands the whole time.

sultan

I hope you have green tea.

She opens the gate and they enter the apartment complex.

16. Int. Apartment Hallway - night

One-room apartment in loft style. On the wall is a poster from Sofia's first movie "Silence Behind the Scenes". In the corner, a basket of toys for the cat.

There is a large black leather sofa in the kitchen.

Upon entering, there is a bathroom on the left and a walk-in closet on the right.

The kitchen and bedroom are symmetrically located on either side; they are separated by a load-bearing wall. The apartment has bright lighting and eye-pleasing wallpaper

A cat runs up to Sultan feet. He bends down and strokes it.

sofia

(surprised)

She doesn't let everyone pet her.

sultan

(continuing stroking)

It is commonly believed that the character of pets is similar to their owners.

Sofia smiles. She takes off her shoes and walks into the bedroom, closing the door behind her.

sofia

(from the bedroom)

Make yourself at home

Sultan takes off his shoes, puts on his slippers and looks into the bathroom, sees that it is small and combined with a toilet, and closes the door behind him.

17. Int. Apartment Kitchen - night

The kitchen is spacious. Sultan looks at with curiosity the interior

The large windows overlooked the Park. Even though it was dark outside and the lights on the Ferris wheel were off, the scenery was still mesmerizing.

sultan

(whispers)

You weren't lying. about the view

Sultan gaze falls on the magnetic glider hanging on the refrigerator.

Days of the week are marked on the calendar with notes:

-Every Thursday and Saturday from 6:00-7: p.m. 00 session with a counselor.
-Yesterday marked with a heart.

sultan

(whispers)

Going to a counselor...

Sultan opens the refrigerator. Inside are only organic products: fruits, dairy drinks, cheeses, canned goods and snacks.

sultan

(whispers)

Eating right.

Opens the lockers and examines the contents carefully, trying to remember where things are.

The cat walks beside him, sniffing Sultan socks.

Suddenly the sound of the bedroom door opening is heard.

Sultan sits down at the kitchen table.

Sofia

(from the hallway)

Don't close the bathroom door completely so the cat can go to the bathroom.

She's wearing clothes that are a little big for her.

Sultan sits in the room as if he were the master, spreading his legs wide.

sofia

(smiles)

You have to get a certain number of points to get into the bedroom.

SULTAN

Curious... I think I'll score a lot of points.

sofia

Self-confidence is a good quality!

She walks over to the refrigerator and opens it.

sofia

I'm hungry and there's no food ready to eat.

sultan

I'll have to cook it.

Sultan gets up and pulls a package of chicken shanks from the freezer and a package of potatoes and one onion from the refrigerator, from the bottom shelf.

Sofia

Somebody's been busy.

sultan

Let's make a roast. It's quick prepare and to tasty.

sofia

What can I do to help?

sultan

First of all, birthday girl, have a seat. If you need any help, I'll let you know.

Sofia took a seat on the couch.

Sultan washes the vegetables thoroughly and leaves the frozen shanks in cold water. Then he pours oil into a large frying pan and carefully slices the onions....

sultan

Sofia, now I need your help.

Sofia gets up and walks over to him.

sofia

What am I supposed to do?

sultan

First, we need to peel the potatoes.

Sultan carefully places the chicken shanks in the pan. The oil begins to splatter and he reduces the heat slightly.

Sofia dives into her work, and Sultan watches her with interest.

sultan

Intentionally wearing clothes, a size larger?

sofia

(with a smirk, continues peeling potatoes)

Not on purpose...

Sultan approaches her from behind and gently embraces her

sultan

Finished?

sofia

Uh-huh!

sultan

Oh, great! Now we need to slice it up like a country-style potato.

sofia

I've never cut like that.

SULTAN

(whispering in her ear)

Let me show you.

Sofia turns to face him, and their lips are a few millimeters apart. She stares at his lips, and he takes a step back, noticing.

sofia

Are you playing with me?

sultan

You have to hurry up and cut it up so the meat doesn't burn.

Sofia, with obvious displeasure, puts the peeled potatoes on the cutting board and picks up a knife.

sofia

How am I supposed to cut it?

Sultan approaches her from behind, takes her knife hand in one hand and the potato in the other.

sultan

(whispers in her ear)

Relax your hands. Trust me.

Sofia relaxes her hands, and he begins slowly slicing the potatoes, first in half and then into smaller pieces. At the same time, he kisses her neck.

Sofia's breathing becomes ragged and she lifts her head up.

sultan

Look at the cutting board, not the ceiling... Have you figured out how to cut properly?

sofia

(sighs)

I'll try, although it's not easy.

Sultan puts the knife aside and wraps both arms around Sofia, pulling her tightly against him. She begins to cut the potatoes into halves and then into wedges.

sofia

Am I cutting it right?

Sultan kisses her neck gently, then lifts her shirt slightly and wraps his arms around her, touching her waist gently.

sultan

(whispers in ear)

Yeah, just focus on the potatoes.

sofia

You're distracting me a little bit.

Sultan gently kisses her neck and his hand slowly slides down her stomach.

Sofia sighs heavily and continues cutting potatoes.

Sultan hands gently stroke Sofia's body. She slithers less frequently, and her eyes close from the caress.

Sultan slips his left hand inside Sofia's pants, a look of surprise on his face.

SULTAN

You're without

Sofia

(sighs)

Yes.

Sultan caresses her with his fingers.

Sofia can't hold back any longer and the knife falls out of her hands, falling to the floor.

Sofia's head tilts sideways and he kisses her exposed neck.

Sultan can't wait any longer. He pulls down her pants and, bending over, pulls a condom from his pocket. Then, pulling down his jeans, he puts it on and, holding her by the waist with one hand and her hair with the other, enters her. Sofia holds onto the edge of the kitchen table.

Sultan movements are slow and growing more intense, and her moans are growing louder.

Both are gripped by passion and give themselves completely to each other.

They climax at the same time.

sultan

Wow!

Sofia

(deep breaths)

Oh, my God! I didn't feel so, uh.

They are both breathing heavily. Sofia, lifting her pants, turns to Sultan and kisses him passionately.

Then she sits down on the couch and curls up like a baby.

Sultan takes off his jeans and puts them on the kitchen chair.

He opens the lid of the skillet. The chicken shanks are browned on one side and Sultan turns them over. Then he covers the pan with the lid and reduces the heat.

sultan

I'm gonna take a quick shower. Watch the frying pan.

Sultan walks over to Sofia, kisses her gently on the top of her head, strokes her back and lightly slaps her butt.

Sofia

Oh, give me some time...

Sultan, having entered the shower room, closes the door behind him

Sofia

(looking at camera)

What just happened

DARKNESS.

CHAPTER TWO - DIRECTOR.

18. INT. Sofia's apartment - DAY

Online session with a psychologist.

Sofia is in her room, sitting in a chair, nervously fumbling with the edge of her dress

On a laptop screen, a PSYCHOLOGIST (45 years old, calm voice) is taking notes sitting at his desk at home.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Why did you decide to go on a date with Sultan?

Sofia

(looking out the window)

After the Ex. I thought I couldn't trust. But he, uh.

(pause)

During a video call, he doesn't speak, he listens

PSYCHOLOGIST

What if he becomes one?

Sofia

(sharply)

Then I'll smash his face like that vase in Sochi.

(faint smile)

I'm kidding. I hope so.

Psychologist

Don't forget the fish.

19. NAT. NEW YORK Mall - EVENING

Sofia steps out of the cab, adjusting the hem of her green dress. Her heels dig into the asphalt, but she grits her teeth. She glances around, answering the phone at the same time.

Sofia

(on phone)

My witches are worried... Haven't met yet... Good, good, don't worry... Kisses, thanks for a wonderful day

Sofia

(voice in head)

I shouldn't have worn those damn shoes. But what else could I do? Let her see I'm not the kind of person you can ask out on a first date in sneakers. Although. First date? After last night's messages, it's the second.

She catches her reflection in the window: red hair, bright lipstick, nervous smile.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Thirty-six years old. You're a grown woman, Sofia. Stop fidgeting. He's just a boy. a boy. A screenwriter. With pretty eyes.

The phone vibrates in my purse. A season ticket holder named "Dog" calls.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Not now. Today I'm not your Soph. Tonight I'm the director. And I have a date.

She dismisses the call, inhaling deeply. In her pocket is a note from the Psychologist.

Sofia

(reads quietly aloud)

"Don't compare him to others." s easy to say that'.

She dials another number.

Sofia

(on phone)

Hello! Where are you? Exit four? I don't even know where that is. Look on the navigator at the mall. I'll wait for you there.

...She walks up to the entrance of the mall and looks around with interest.

Passersby cannot help but pay attention to her, they literally undress her with their eyes.

She notices Sultan running across the road on red. Sofia rolls her eyes.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Of course he is. Running like he's being chased. Although, uh. His legs. Damn it, Sofia, focus!

...Sultan puts his arm around her, patting her on the back like an old pal. She freezes.

Sofia

(voice in head)

What was that? A brotherly hug? Or is he just, uh. flirting? God, I forgot what it was like to be a pledge.

SULTAN

(smiles, waves)

You look good!

Sultan examines her from head to toe

sofia

(voice in head)

Compliments are in order. Any word on the dress?

Sofia

Thank you! I came straight to your place after the party. It was a birthday party.

SULTAN

(dictation)

And yes, happy birthday! All blessings and good health to you, Sofia! Happy birthday

Sofia

Thank you! Where shall we go?

Sofia

(voice in head)

Didn't buy me flowers

20. Nat. Pedestrian - evening

Green light. The crowd rushes forward, but Sofia freezes, feeling her heels dig into the pavement. Sultan is one step ahead. His hand reaches out to her, his fingers lightly touching her palm as if asking permission.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Why is he so slow? Is he afraid? Or is he giving me time to escape? Like in that movie. Where the hero gives her three seconds before he kisses her. Three. Two. One.

He squeezes his fingers.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Oh, God, it's him again. Oh, come on. This one's not an Ex. This one. smells like wood and ink. Like the pages of old books.

They walk with their shoulders pressed together.

Her gaze clings to a girl in similar scarlet shoes - she laughs.

Sultan stops suddenly, letting a family with a stroller pass.

His hand involuntarily squeezes her tighter. Sofia flinched.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Strongman. I didn't see that coming. He writes screenplays, but he's got the grip of a carpenter. Or a boxer. The ex-boyfriend boxed, too. No! Get him out of your head. Here and now. Just him.

Sultan turns, noticing her strained smile.

Sofia catches herself scrutinizing his profile, the dimple in his cheek that appears when he smiles.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Stop seeing him as a character. You're not behind the camera. You're, uh. in the frame. And the scene is clearly improvised.

21. Nat. Cut through darkness - Evening

They approach the metal fence installed near the new building... There is only one option left to get to the park - to overcome the darkness, mud and puddles left after the rain.

SULTAN

Where to next?

sofia

This way. My shoes are crying.

sultan

Now I realize how NEW YORK differs from NEW JERSEY.

Sofia

(laughs)

Yes, you're absolutely right!

sofia

(voice in head)

The jokes are on.

sultan

I'm right here to hold you, Soph

Sofia

(voice in head)

What did you say!

Sofia pushes Sultan away in anger upon hearing his words. He steps back, but manages to keep his balance.

sofia

(serious tone)

Don't call me "Soph"! I don't like

Sofia

(voice in head)

It's okay! He didn't mean to hurt me. As the psychologist said, it's important to think positively and not compare others to your Ex.

...Sultan takes Sofia under his elbow and steps forward, turning on the flashlight in his phone to light her way.

22. Nat. Park bench - evening

They walk down a dark alley in the park, holding hands.

sofia

(voice in head)

My feet hurt so bad!

Sultan notices a bench, near which a lantern shines dimly.

sultan

Let's sit for a while

sofia

(voice in head)

He can read my mind!

They took a seat on a bench.

Sofia placed her purse on the bench between them.

She got a call, and when she saw the number, she put her phone on silent mode.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Fucking asshole! Stop calling me!

Sultan takes her purse and puts it behind her back.

sofia

(voice in head)

If this keeps up, he's going to try to kiss me!

sultan

It's getting colder!

sofia

A little bit.

Sultan moves closer to her and their shoulders touch. He takes her hand again.

Sofia

(voice in head)

Shit! I got it!

DARKNESS.

Sofia opens her eyes and sees Sultan hand coming up between her legs. She stops him by locking her knees together.

sofia

(voice in head)

What am I doing!

SULTAN

I've never tasted anything tastier.

Sofia groaned after his words.

sofia

(voice in head)

What a he is skillful manipulator

SULTAN

By French

sofia

(sighs)

Uh-huh.

sofia

(voice in head)

I'll kill him! We have to stop!

Sultan kisses her passionately, engaging his tongue in the kiss.

Sofia stops his hand again, preventing him from going any higher, and locks her knees together.

Sofia

(whispers)

Not here!

Sultan kisses her and her words are barely audible. Her body trembles and her knees move apart, and his hand touches her underwear.

sofia

(voice in head)

He touched it! I can't--

An old man and his dog walk by, and they hurriedly pull away from each other, pretending to just sit and chat. As soon as the old man disappears into the darkness, they both laugh as they look at each other

so

On our first date, he got into my underwear

sultan

Come on... We both got carried away.

Sofia

It's never been like this before. We need to keep our distance.

Sofia

(voice over head)

What if this isn't the first time he's done this? Is this his tactic seduction?

sultan

This isn't going to be easy! You the liked correspondence yesterday, didn't

23. flashback/int. s apartment Sofia'bathroom - night

Sofia's view. Sofia sits on the toilet, holding in one hand

She tries to hold back her moans her lips tightly pressed together, drops of sweat dripping down her forehead. She tries to hold back her moans with her lips pressed tightly together, droplets of sweat dripping down her forehead.,

At this time, her friends are laughing in the kitchen.

THE END OF THE FLASHBACK

24. Nat. Park bench - evening

They look at each other and they both have the same thoughts in their heads

(voice in head)

Control your animal instincts! You are the master of your libido.

Sofia

...at My house girlfriends were and I had to go into the bathroom.

sultan

Bathroom

(upset)

You seem to like words more than touching.

sofia

(voice in head)

He's studying me. Analyzing behavior. Cunning bastard!

A notification arrives on Sultan phone. He looks at it and stands up abruptly.

SULTAN

(excitedly)

It's half past one in the morning. I got to go.

sofia

Where to?

sultan

Home. The journey will take almost two hours, and the hostel where I live will close at one in the morning.

sofia

(looking around)

You're gonna leave me here?

sofia

(voice in head)

Is he really going to leave me here alone in the dark

SULTAN

I thought you said you lived nearby.

sofia

You can't leave me alone in the dark!

Sofia

(voice in head)

He's just another asshole!

SULTAN

You're an adult...

Suddenly Sofia's breath catches, and she feels the

the world shrinks around her. She answers Sultan questions on automatic.

...Sultan walks over to her, sits down on the bench and hugs her tightly. Sofia immediately feels better, her breathing becoming even and calm. She hugs him back reluctantly

Sofia

(voice in head)

I'm having another panic attack. I hope he hasn't noticed.

Sofia stands up and begins to adjust her dress. Sultan watches her. She notices his gaze.

sofia

What?

sultan

You're very beautiful!

sofia

Manipulator! You wanted to me few minutes ago leave here alone a!

Sofia

(voice in head)

I have no respect for myself! He's just as manipulative as my Ex.....

Sultan laughs as she does, but her laughter is not sincere.

25. Nat. highway - night

On a road with cars rushing relentlessly, Sofia can't stand it and rushes forward without waiting. One of them nearly hits her

sofia

(thumbs up, to shouts driver)

You blind asshole?! Where did you get your license!

(looking at Sultan)

Hurry up! No brakes!

(commanding tone)

They are crossing the road and a passing car honks its horn.

sofia

What an asshole!

Sofia

(voice in head)

You have to keep your composure. I'm like a with fish 30-second memory. I'm a fish!

Sultan, looking around, crosses the road.

26. Nat. residential complex At the gate - night

They are standing at the gate of the apartment building when it opens and a car comes out. ...Sultan clutches Sofia's hands tightly in his palms.

sofia

(voice in head)

He's so cute!

SULTAN

Two minutes to the end of the day. I can't give you a present, but I wish that the next three hundred and sixty-five days will be yours and each day will be better than the last!

Sultan pulls Sofia to him and hugs her hard.

sofia

(voice in head)

It's buzzing! Damn! This is clearly an emotional swing.

sofia

Thank you! Your warm and sincere words are more precious than any gift.

They look at each other and don't want to let go of each other's hands, much less leave.

Sofia

(voice in head)

He won't let go of my hand. Maybe he doesn't have money for a cab.

(examines Sultan)

He's wearing inexpensive clothes and shoes. Shit!

Sofia

I realize that I may regret it, but if the hostel you live in closes after one o'clock in the morning, then stay with me for the night.

SULTAN

(smiles discreetly)

Are you sure?

Sofia

(voice in head)

I'm not sure anymore! You'd better go. Say you're leaving.

sofia

Well, if you don't want to, call a cab! I don't really care.

They hold hands the whole time.

SULTAN

I hope you have green tea.

Sofia

(voices in head)

Green? He's not drinking yet

She opens the gate and they enter the apartment complex.

It is quite bright inside the grounds. Sultan walks forward and looks around.

sofia

(voice in head)

He's got a nice ass! That's not what I'm thinking about right now.

27. Int. Residential building Elevator - night

The elevator is crowded. Sultan leans against the mirror, Sofia stands close to him. She can feel his breath.

SOFIA

(with a challenge)

You're looking at me like a director looking at a bad take.

Sultan runs his finger slowly over her shoulder.

SULTAN

(whispers)

No. As a screenwriter for the perfect ending.

The elevator door opens. Sofia pulls away sharply, adjusting her dress.

Sofia

(voice in head)

How come it ended up in my house!?

You didn't happen to write the script for, did our date you?

Sultan smiles, but doesn't answer.

28. Int. Apartment vestibule - night

One bedroom apartment with spacious bedroom and kitchen.

A cat runs up to Sultan feet. He bends down and strokes it with a smile.

sofia

She doesn't let everyone pet her.

SULTAN

(continuing stroking)

It is commonly believed that the character of pets is similar to their owners.

sofia

(voice in head)

What a bastard! It's starting to again buzz!

(shoes off)

I'm free!

She walks into the bedroom, closing the door behind her.

29. Int. Apartment bedroom - night

There is a large bed in her bedroom, but the many things make it seem cramped, even though they are all neatly laid out.

sofia

(from the bedroom)

Make yourself at home!

Sofia

(undresses)

What do I do? Only six months ago I separated from my husband of eleven years.

Sofia walks around the room and looks around.

Sofia

Very attractive and charming, but the difference between us is eight years. Should I ask him to leave?

Sofia quickly takes off her dress and is left in her underwear. She looks very feminine.

She opens the closet.

sofia

Shit! I have no left clean underwear, and what I have is dirty.

She puts on a T-shirt, but it's too tight on her figure, and she doesn't like the way her stomach and sides stand out. She touches her body with her hands and gets angry.

sofia

I'm fat! What should I wear!

She feels sick to her stomach and takes a seat on the edge of the bed, looking around silently.

sofia

I am thirty-six years old, divorced, but not yet ready for a new relationship. I'm enjoying my freedom and independence. I feel good...

She looks around, hoping to find clothes, but when she doesn't, she gets even more frustrated.

Sofia

Shit! How come!

Her gaze stopped on the clothes lying on the floor.

sofia

Who is he? This is my home, and I will dress as I like!

She strips off her underwear and puts on her house clothes, which are much looser than her usual outfits.

sofia

(looking at mirror)

You can't see anything! I believe the most important thing is to take care of myself. I choose how I want to live my life and how I feel!

30. int. Apartment Hallway - night

Sofia comes out of the bedroom and finds the bathroom door closed. She opens it.

sofia

(to Sultan)

Please don't close the shower door too tightly so that the cat can get in and out freely.

31. Int. Apartment kitchen - night

Sultan sits, legs wide apart, in the kitchen at the table as if he were the master of the apartment

sofia

(voice in head)

The asshole's sitting there like it's his house!

sofia

(smiles)

To get to the bedroom, you need to score a certain number of points.

SULTAN

Curious... I think I'll score a lot of points.

sofia

(voice in head)

Buzzing... I am strong and can control my desires. for six months for a reason, I’ve been working with a psychologist.

DARKNESS.

...Both are seized with passion and reach orgasm at the same time.

Sofia's body trembles with pleasure and Sultan legs tense.

SULTAN

Wow!

Sofia

Oh, my God! I didn't feel so, uh.

Sofia lifts her pants and turns to Sultan, kissing him passionately.

SULTAN

It was beautiful!

Sofia lies on the couch and hugs her legs. She is shaking and her face is red.

SULTAN

I'm taking a shower... Keep an eye on the skillet.

Sultan enters the shower room and closes the door behind him.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

What just happened!

CHAPTER THREE - THE BEGINNING

32. INT. KITCHEN - night

Sultan emerges from the bathroom, wiping his hair with a towel, standing naked.

Sofia at the table, noticing the naked Sultan, covers her eyes with the palm of her hand.

Sofia

Put something on!

Sultan covers himself up with a towel.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

What a bastard! He used my towel!

The potatoes are frying, you can hear the sizzle from the oil.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

I... didn't want this. Not today. Not like this... I feel awful, like I'm a whore!

Sultan removes the lid from the pan, stirs the potatoes and reduces the heat.

His gaze falls on Sofia's cell phone lying on the kitchen table, and he sees that someone is trying to call. The caller is labeled "Dog."

Sultan

(laughs)

You have a phone call!

Sofia

Let her call! anyway It’ll be just whining.

Sultan sits down on the couch and looks at Sofia.

Sofia

What

Sultan

(smiles)

Just looking at you.

Sofia

(touching hair)

He used my towel.

Sultan

Is everything okay?

Sofia

(looking at camera)

You used my fucking towel! Wiping my dick with what I my use to wipe face!

Sofia

Yeah, if you don't wipe yourself with my towel anymore.

Sultan

(laughs)

Okay. Are you mad?

Sofia

No!

(stands up)

It's my turn to take a shower. You can't go in the bedroom!

sultan

Haven't you scored enough points yet?

Sofia

(looking at camera)

He's an asshole!

Sofia

You're at a disadvantage!

Sofia goes to the bathroom...

Sofia

(from bathroom, screaming)

Oh, my God! You flooded the whole floor! How do you clean your house?

Sultan

(laughs)

I'm sorry!

Sofia

(from the bathroom)

And your hair is all over the floor. You shed so much hair at once!

Sultan can't contain his laughter at her words…

Sofia comes out of the bathroom.

Sofia

That's not funny at all! I'm compulsive about cleanliness. Another minus points!

Sultan can't stop laughing. Sofia comes within arm's length of him.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

He's out of his mind!

Sultan covers his mouth with his hand, but the laughter still doesn't disappear.

Sofia

Just remember to breathe. Not normal! Did you remember the roast?

Sultan stops laughing, stands up and walks over to the pan and starts stirring the potatoes.

Sultan

There's not much left.

Sofia watches as Sultan pulls the food items, he needs from various shelves.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

When did he have time for everything!

Sofia

I haven't finished my business in the shower yet.

Sultan approaches her. She steps back and presses herself against the wall. He puts one arm around her waist and kisses her.

Sultan

Hurry up, I'm starving and I also want you for dessert.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

It's buzzing again. We're not going to sleep tonight?!

Sofia

Bedtime sweets are bad for you, if anything!

Sultan turns her around to face the wall and hugs her from behind.

Sultan

I love sweets! And you are so sweet right now!

Sofia turns to face him.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

Shit! He's a Turk!

Sofia

Are you you’re sure an Arab? Maybe you're a Turk?

She pushes him her hands and away with goes into the shower room.

33. INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sultan and Sofia are enjoying their meal in silence. On the table, in addition to the roast, is a plate of sliced fruits and vegetables

Sultan

Why about children with autism… Why? You showed in an unusual way them.

Sofia

(thoughtfully)

Because they see the world differently. It's as if they live in their own script, where all the rules are theirs.

sultan

(looking at her)

You know, I feel like that sometimes. Like I'm writing a story that no one wants to read.

Sofia

(takes his hand)

Make them read it. I read your script yesterday. I liked the idea and the concept.

SULTAN

(eats in spite of Sofia)

Thank you! What's not to like?

SOFIA

The first series has dialog and explicit scenes that could have been cut in my opinion.

SULTAN

English is very difficult. I always find it difficult to choose and find the right words.

SOFIA

Don't be modest, you speak my language perfectly... Have you sent your work to studios?

SULTAN

Many times! They don't seem to read...

34. FLASHBACK/INT. HOSTEL - NIGHT

A dark room with six bunk beds. There is a crack in the wall and the roar of a streetcar comes from the window. Sultan sits on the bottom bed, covered with a blanket, and writes in his notebook. On the table is a jar of energy, and a book "The Alchemist" with a ragged cover.

NEIGHBOR

(off-camera, drunk)

Hey, writer! Turn off the light, you're disturbing my sleep!

Sultan ignores him.

Close-up on the laptop screen: the file "is open. Without a Soul.docx" Suddenly there is a notification sound - a letter from the movie studio: "Your material does not meet our requirements".

Sultan grits his teeth, closes his laptop and pulls out a photo from under his pillow: him and his mother in an Arab village.

MOTHER'S VOICE

(reminiscence, in Arabic)

Sultan, why do you need this New York? You'll always be a stranger here.

The camera slowly pulls away, leaving him in the dark.

THE END OF THE FLASHBACK.

35. INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

A close-up of Sultan face.

Sultan

I enjoy writing screenplays and I see myself in this field in the future.

(smiles)

SOFIA

Good attitude. By the way, the roast turned out very tasty, but perhaps a bit too much oil.

SULTAN

(laughing)

It's because you sliced the potatoes so well.

Sofia

(fork towards Sultan)

Don't remind me of that!

Sultan

Good. Regarding the butter - I added a little less than usual! I'll try less next time.

SOFIA

(looking at camera)

Next time? Does he have long-range plans for me?

Both eat in silence, occasionally casting glances at each other.

Sofia's phone rings. When she sees who is calling, she immediately becomes irritated.

Sultan

You're not gonna answer that?

Sofia

Uh-uh.

Sultan

Is the dog the Ex? I wonder if he barks when he's angry?

(laughs)

Sofia

Are you trying to be funny or just plain stupid right now? Do you have any idea what this number means to me? It's a, uh. a reminder that I've been someone's shadow for eleven years.

Sultan

I didn't realize it was taboo.

Sofia

You have a talent for getting to the heart of things.

Sultan

It's just that it's half past 2:00 and I'm at your house, we’re.

Sofia

(freezes)

Like, there was sex... Proud you fucked me on the first date?

Sultan

No. It's not about pride.

Sofia lightly punches Sultan in the shoulder with her fist. When he raises his head, she slaps him

Sultan

(light laughter)

For what

Sofia

You're laughing at my Ex and you’re proud to 'fuck me!

sultan

(distracted)

Why did you hit me?

She throws her fork on the table with anger.

Sofia

Look, I'm not just another girl.

Sultan

I don't think you are!

Sultan picks up the last bits of roast from the plate with his fork and eats them

Sofia

You know what the funny thing is? I was just rereading our chat room this. You were, uh. so confident. It's like you had it all mapped out morning.

Sultan

(with irony)

Well, I'm a screenwriter. I should be able to see the twists and turns.

Sofia

(turns sharply)

Did you see this one coming? That I'd feel like a cheap whore in the morning?

sultan

(quietly)

Sofia, I'm not your ex. And I'm not trying to take advantage of you.

Sofia

(snapping)

What are you doing? Writing a screenplay where I'm a miserable fool who falls for the first guy she meets?

Sultan

I'm writing a screenplay where you're the only one who isn't afraid to be alive.

Sofia

You fuck me on the first date and then leave the and don't answer your phone next morning!

Sultan

You have a sick imagination. You accuse me of rape... Why don't you call therapist? your

Sofia

(looking at the magnetic glider)

And you called me sick!

Sofia

I didn't say that!

When he has finished, Sultan stands up silently and puts some more on his plate. Sofia sits at the table and does not move

Sultan

(laughs)

This is the first time I've ever been hit by a girl!

Sultan is pouring food from a frying pan and accidentally drops a piece of potato on the floor. He awkwardly reaches for the fallen potato and touches the edge of the table. The plate shatters with a clang. Shards fly across the floor. Sofia freezes, her fingers digging into the edge of the chair.

Sultan

Shit, I'm sorry, I'll clean it up.

Sofia

(whispers)

I'm a fish! I'm a fish!

Sultan picks at with his hands the, littering not only the floor but also the table. He looks at Sofia and begins to laugh roast.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

I'm a fish! I'm a fish! I'm a goddamn fish! I'm a fish... Freak!

Sofia

(quietly, through gritted teeth)

You-- Did you do that on purpose?

Sultan

(laughing, squatting down, trying to pick up the pieces)

Hey, it's an accident! Don't get mad, I'll clean it up....

Sofia

(stands up abruptly, chair falls over)

Accidentally? How did your tongue "accidentally" get in my mouth?!

Sultan

(jumping up, backing away from the shrapnel)

Sofia, stop it! It's just a plate.

Sofia

(interrupts, laughs hysterically)

Just a plate? You come, you get in, you make a mess.

She grabs a fork from the table and hurls it in his direction. The fork flies a centimeter from his face, smashing into the wall.

Sultan

(huddled against the wall, eyes widened)

Are you crazy?! I said I didn't mean it!

Sofia

(strides toward him, voice shaking with rage)

And I'm going to throw you out the window on purpose! You think I can’t, see? You're like him. You're all the same!

She grabs the mug, but Sultan sharply intercepts her hand. mug falls the. They stand a centimeter apart, breathless., but it doesn't break

Sultan

(quietly, through gritted teeth)

I'm not him 'm and into everyone!

Pause. Sofia's hand twitches, but he doesn't let go. Her eyes fill with tears.

Sofia

(whispers)

Let go.

Sultan

(slowly unclenches fingers)

I'm sorry.

She backs away abruptly, her back hitting the refrigerator. Suddenly her gaze falls on the shards of a plate with a floral pattern. Sofia slowly slides to the floor.

Sofia

(muffled)

It's, uh. my mom gave it to me. It's the only thing left.

Sultan freezes. Sultan sits down across from her and reaches out his hand gingerly, but does not touch her.

Sultan

(quietly)

I'll glue it together. Do we have a deal?

Sofia looks at him, then at the shards. Suddenly she snorts through her tears.

Sofia

(sarcastically)

Superglue?

Sultan smiles uncertainly and picks up the two shards, trying to match the pattern.

Sultan

Well. At least I'll try.

Sofia silently takes the other shard. Their fingers accidentally touch. Her her eyebrows and the corner of mouth twitch. Sultan takes a step back and loses his balance, falling to the floor.

Sofia attacks Sultan, intending to kick him, but he quickly rises to his feet and steps back, and her foot nearly touches his face

Sofia grabs her plate on the table. Sultan covers his face with his hands.

SOFIA

(snapping)

You... you...

(throws plate)

The plate shatters against the wall.

Sultan

What’s with you wrong! Calm down!

Sofia

(screaming)

Disfigured my kitchen!

Sultan

(whispers)

What the hell is going on! There was no such plot in my script twist.

(laughs)

Sofia

(looking around the floor)

Quickly get a mop!

Sultan

(laughs)

Calm down first!

Sofia

You think that's funny? А? Quickly bring a mop!

Sultan

(laughs)

When I get nervous, I start laughing for no reason.

Sofia

Your sick freak! Hurry up with the mop or the oil will spread all over the floor.

Sultan

(laughs)

Are you gonna throw plates?

Sofia

Don't make me angry!

...Sofia picks up the roast floor with napkins. Sultan from the holds a broom in front of him as an object of defense.

Sofia

Careful, there's still splinters on the floor! You asshole, you ruined my first day back from my birthday!

Sultan wipes the floor.

Sultan

I think got it all cleaned up! I'm Mr. Proper!

Sofia

Is laughing and joking you re defense reaction when you ‘nervous?

Sultan

Yes!

Sofia

You didn't see a doctor?

Sultan

Nope. Why?

Sofia

Never mind! So how many girls have you dishonored this way?

Sultan

You're obviously out of your mind! I'd better go!

Sofia

You're not going! Rapist! anywhere

Sofia sits down at the table and begins to cry. The usual tears turn to sobs. A close-up of Sofia's face in tears.

Sultan

Sorry, I didn't mean to... My hands are growing out of my ass.

Sofia smiles for a moment, but then sobs even louder.

Sultan

Should I leave?

Sofia does not react and continues to sob. Without saying a word, Sultan embraces her. She tries to pull away, but he pulls her to him again.

Sofia

(sobbing)

Six months of working with a counselor... I feel like a loser who is always being used. My ex used me for eleven years, and now you. How hard can it be?

Once again, her phone display pops up with alert of an incoming call from a caller named "Dog."

Sofia

(noting)

He won't leave me alone. calls every day He doesn't realize it'! s over between us!

Sultan presses Sofia even tighter.

Sofia

Is it so hard to realize that regular calls and texts are also a form of abuse!

Sultan

He's a total freak

Sofia

Shut up! Don't you know how to behave when a girl cries?!

Sultan

(hesitates)

I know of one...

Sultan goes to the refrigerator, takes out a soda, pours it into a glass, adds a slice of lime and a few ice cubes. Then he hands the glass to Sofia.

Sofia

What's that?

Sultan

Glazed lime water. Drink it, it'll make you feel better!

She drinks it and likes the taste.

Sultan

Why don't you call me back?

Sofia

To whom? Why? ...I don't want to talk to him!

Sultan

Are you afraid of him?

Sofia

Don't be ridiculous! He cried like a baby when I told him we had to break up.

"Dog" appears again on the screen of her phone.

Sultan

You coward!

Sofia wants to touch with his hands but Sultan moves away from her.

Sofia

You're gonna get talking me!

She looks at the phone then, at Sultan.

Sofia

All right!

Sultan

Just put it on volume.

Sofia, clutching the phone so that her knuckles turn white. The phone screen flashes: "DOGS." She takes the call and puts it on speakerphone, her face tense.

Sofia

(sharply)

Again? I told you not to call!

Former

(calmly, with an undertone)

Happy birthday, SoF! You know I always remember dates. Did you get a present?

Sofia

(interrupting)

Don't call me that!

Former

(with a slight chuckle)

You're being dramatic. Who gave you orchids three years in a row? You dried them as heirlooms.

Sofia

(gritting teeth)

Relics? Is that what you call our marriage? You broke everything like that vase in Sochi. Remember? You said it was an accident.

Former

(voice hardens dramatically)

Stop dredging up the past! It's your own fault, always on set, always dissatisfied. What am I? Was I supposed to wait for you to realize I existed?

Sofia

(Explosion)

Notice? You came home drunk, yelling at me about every scene in my movies! You didn't even try to understand that for me.

Former

(interrupts)

Sacred art? Come on! You make snotty documentaries that nobody watches. I, uh. at least I built real things. Houses, careers.

Sofia

(quietly, with icy anger)

The house? You sold our apartment while I was at the festival. Career? You drank my screenplay royalties. Don't you dare talk to me about reality.

(pause. Ex breathing heavily into the phone)

Former

(suddenly softly)

Sofi… Come back. We can fix this. Like that night in St. Petersburg, remember? You were crying, and I was--

Sofia

(interrupts, voice shaking)

You put your arms around me and said: "No one but me can stand you." And I believed you. It was the stupidest mistake of my life.

former

(claps hands)

My money went to your acting class for a reason.

Sofia

The dog is the last one!

Former

Enough SoF-Sofia....

(Sofia breathes deeply to calm herself)

If you can't figure out the gift, I can help

Sofia

(coldly, into the tube)

I I'm busy figured it out. Bye.

Former

(sarcastically)

Are you editing your handicapped movie again? Or is all you can do is sit in an empty apartment?

Sultan

(shrieks, dropping fork)

Shit!

(there's silence, then heavy breathing)

Former

(slowly, with growing rage)

This is... Who's that? Are you with someone? Now?!

Sofia

(pales)

Yeah. And he knows how to hold a fork. Unlike you.

Former

(yelling, phone ringing)

I knew it. That you were a whore.

Sultan

(interrupts, standing up)

Hey, man! She's not a whore. She's free.

Former

(growls)

You! Who are you?!

Sofia

It's none of your business!

Former

I thought we still had a chance

Sofia

(upstands, yells)

You're stupid! It's over between us. It's over... Don't call me again!

Sofia interrupts the conversation. She feels her breath catching again, and to keep from losing her balance from the dizziness, she rests one hand on the table and the other on Sultan shoulder. Her face turns pale, she can't breathe.

Sultan

(noting)

Is everything okay?

Sultan looks perplexed at her and at the glass of water lime on the table

Sultan

Drink some water.

Sofia sits down at the table and takes the glass with both hands. Then she drinks every last drop in one gulp.

Sofia

(deeply inhales)

Did you hear that? Eleven years, convincing myself he'd change.

(starts crying)

Thirty-six. That's the age Audrey Hepburn won her Oscar. What about me? I broke my mom's dishes and I'm sleeping with a kid who 't even can hold a plate

Sultan

At least you're alive. And Hepburn. She died at sixty-three. You've got 27 more years to beat her.

Sofia

(suddenly laughing through tears)

Twenty-seven? Except you're about to crash on the stairs. Or I'm gonna strangle you with this fork.

Sultan

(raises fork like a microphone)

Scene forty-two. The heroine is choosing between killing her lover or giving him scrambled eggs. A close-up shot of her hand... Is it trembling? Or is it the light?

Her face gradually takes on its natural color. As she continues to cry, she takes deep breaths in and out

Sultan

(grabs her arm)

Trust me, you're not a loser. You're doing right now great. And there will be a chance to meet your man, and more than once.

Sofia

What do you know about life? You're twenty-eight

Sultan

(without looking at Sofia)

You know how they write migrant scripts? You live in a room where neighbor's snoring your your thoughts. Every day is like an assembly line: morning on the subway, evening at the grocery store… And then you write and write until your fingers go numb. Sometimes it seems that I dig this damn hole with my bare hands…

Sofia

(in tears, quietly)

And what's left in the finale?

Sultan

Scraps. But sometimes... sometimes something new is glued together out of them. Even if it's held together with duct tape.

Sofia

(in tears)

What about you? Are you, a loser?

Sultan

I have nothing but a mid-paying job and a book I found in the trash

Sofia

(in tears)

What the hell are you talking about?

sultan

I dropped out of university; I have a big loan and bad relations with my parents... I haven't been home for six years. I'm alone in Moscow, I have no friends, I live in hostels with twenty people in a room. I'm about to turn thirty, and it scares me... I don't know what to do but read, write and revise scripts every day... And in my head, I hear all the time: "You'll never make it, go back home, loser!".

Sofia stopped crying.

Sofia

Really? You're a bigger loser than me!

(laughs)

sultan

Are you laughing at my problems?

Sofia

Sorry... Come home... What's keeping you in Moscow?

Sultan

(laughs)

Picture.

Sofia

A painting

Sultan

There is a picture of a man digging in the ground in search of gold. On the left side, he gives up before reaching the treasure a couple of centimeters, but on the right side he continues digging and finds the treasure... If I give up on my goal, I will be a loser who gave up when there was still some left.

Sofia

А? I something like that saw on the Internet.

Sultan

The picture that keeps me from leaving Moscow

Sofia

(light laughter)

Good motivation, but in real life you'll have to dig as they say, «Forrest, don't run, but dig! »

Sultan

Do they say that?

Sofia

(laughs)

No... I just came up with it myself a couple seconds ago.

Both of them are laughing. And this time Sofia hugs Sultan.

Sultan

I don't even know how it happened, so I told you everything. I'm gonna have to kill you

Sofia

You can trust me. Shit!

Sultan

What is it?

Sofia

(looking at the phone display)

The guard is! calling Strange

Sultan

Maybe the Ex is here.

Sofia

Yes! That's him! He lives ten minutes away by car.

Sultan

Shit!

SOFIA

He's definitely the devil!

Sofia picks up the phone.

Sofia

(on phone)

Hello? I'm listening! I'll be right down... Don't let him in... He's not himself! Thank you!

Sofia

That asshole really came through!

Sultan

Seriously?

36. Int. apartment passerby - night

Sofia gets up, walks to the exit and puts on her sneakers.

Sofia

I'll talk to him quickly and be back.

Sultan

I can with you come down.

Sofia

He's a former boxer... He’d on me never raise a hand.

Sultan

I too used to box.

Sofia, taking the keys, examines Sultan.

Sofia

(laughs)

With a reaction like yours... Close the door after me.

Sofia leaves the apartment and Sultan closes the door.

Chapter Four - hope?

37. Int. Apartment kitchen - night

There is a knock on the door. Sultan, who had been dozing on the black sofa, wakes up abruptly.

The knocks are getting louder and more insistent.

38. Int. apartment vestibule - night

Sultan stands at the door, clutching a frying pan in his hand, his eyes filled with fear.

Sultan

Who's that?

No response, but the knocking stops.

Sultan

Sofia, is that you?

Silence outside the door.

He looks through the peephole and sees a black spot. Twirling the pan, he opens the door.

Sofia's at the door.

Sofia

(laughs)

Boo! You didn't shit your pants, did you?

Sultan

(hides the frying pan behind her back)

It's not funny at all!

Sofia pushes him away and walks in.

Sofia

(shoes off)

What have you been up to?

Sofia

(looking at camera)

Does he have a behind his frying pan back?

Sultan

Fell asleep... Have you been gone long?

Sofia

An hour or so. I had to drive him home in my car. He'll be back this afternoon to get his car.

Sultan

(yawns)

Interesting night.

Sofia

Yes, the usual for me!

Sultan

(yawns)

I'm falling asleep! Should I lie down on the couch? My hurts back a lot.

Sofia

(looking at camera)

Sneaky bastard!

Sofia

You can't sleep on the couch, I know from experience. Why don't we try sleeping on my bed? It's big

Sultan

(smiles)

All right. Uh-huh.

Sofia

How do you do it?

Sultan

What are you talking about

Sultan walks into the kitchen and returns the pan to its place, trying not to let Sofia notice

Sofia

(voice-over).

How did he end up in my bed so quickly, and at my request?

sultan

(coming back from the kitchen)

So, what were you saying?

Sofia

I hope you put the frying pan back where it belongs.

SULTAN

Did you see it? I just picked it up when, uh

Sofia grabs Sultan hand and they both enter her bedroom.

39. Int. Apartment bedroom - night

Sultan, out of habit, begins to look around.

Sofia

You like the setting?

Sultan

Cozy.

Sultan notices a smart speaker from Yandex (it's brand new).

Sultan

(shows hand)

Is it working?

(Sofia nods)

Alyssa, plug in the playlist slow dance.

Sofia

(laughs)

Well, his gift came in handy!

sultan

No way! ...Shall we dance?

The music is playing, it's not loud, but it creates the right atmosphere.

They begin to dance to the music. Their movements are synchronized, as if they feel each other at the same time: caressing, touching, touching everywhere and periodically kissing.

Sofia

That's so wrong!

Sultan

(kisses her neck)

You think so?

Sofia

I don't know...

The heat of passion is building.

Sultan

Put your hands above your head?

Sofia is tentative, but raises her hands.

Sultan pulls off her shirt and pants and then pushes her and she falls naked with her back on the bed.

A close-up of Sultan face. He smiles and can't take his eyes off her

Sultan

Let's leave that scene out of it!

Sofia

(laughs)

What?

Sultan

Nothing... I want you!

Sofia

(looking at camera)

It buzzes like hell!

Sofia

I'm ready, my screenwriter!

DARKNESS.

Chapter Five - The End

40. dream/INT. ENDLESS EDITING STUDIO - NIGHT

The space looks like a hybrid of Sofia's apartment and the metro: on the walls are screens with footage of their memories, instead of lamps there are glowing letters from Sultan script. They sit at a table. On it is an old projector, scrolling through their moments together.

SULTAN

(rewinds tape, frames speed up)

You have to cut out the fear here. All that's left. this.

Sofia laughs, fixing his hair.

SOFIA

(draws a marker in the air, lines glow)

And here, add silence. So, the viewer can hear the heart beating.

There is a pause in the tape: their fingers almost touch.

Suddenly the projector starts to go blank. The frames are jumbled together: a hug in the park, an argument in the kitchen, sex, a broken plate. Sultan grabs a pair of scissors and cuts the film.

SULTAN

Not that way! This shouldn't be in the finals!

SOFIA

(taking his hand, scissors melting in her palm)

Don't worry. We'll rewrite the whole thing. From scratch.

She blows on the film - the frames turn into white sheets. They fall from the ceiling, covering the floor.

SOFIA

(whispers)

Now let's show it to everyone.

They walk up to a giant screen. They turn on the projector. A movie starts: they are walking along the water in the park, the circles of their footsteps adding up to the credits. Suddenly a ray of light hits Sultan in the eye - it is the sun coming through an imaginary window.

END OF SLEEP.

41. INT. Apartment Bedroom - morning

A bright ray of sunlight falls on Sultan face. He squirms and covers his face with the blanket. Then he stands up abruptly.

42. Int. Apartment Sofia kitchen - morning

Sofia is cooking scrambled eggs while listening to music on her headphones. She is busy with the process.

Sultan walks in in just his underwear, slightly sleepy, and from the back hugs Sofia.

Sofia

Shit! You scared

Sultan, not reacting, continues to embrace her.

Sofia

You can't approach so discreetly when something is on the stove.

Sultan

Good morning! What are we having for breakfast?

Sofia

Scrambled eggs, granola, bread butter and and coffee.

Sultan

It’s perfect'!

...Sultan and Sofia are sitting at the table in the kitchen, eating breakfast in silence. They are both in a good mood.

Sultan

Do you know why you can't breathe in a cemetery

Sofia

I don't know. I don't like cemeteries and rarely go there....

Sultan

So, the dead won't be jealous

Both of them start laughing.

Sultan wants to take her hand, but she yanks her hand away

Sultan

When's the Ex coming for the car?

Sofia

Already picked up early this morning.

Sultan

Cool... Did you make up?

Sofia

It happens to us so often: today we may wish each other dead, and tomorrow we communicate as if nothing had happened.

Sultan

I see... It's very interesting. Why a dog?

Sofia

Why? It's a cute name. Don't like dogs?

Sultan

I like it, but to many people it sounds like an insult

Sofia

I like it!

Sultan laughs. Sofia looks angrily at him, and he covers his mouth with his hand.

Sofia

Laugh - laugh! Don't you have to go to work?

Sultan

Yeah, no. It's my day off today. I'm working two on two.

Sofia

Okay. I have a friend coming over an hour in and a half.

Sultan

Okay... I'll eat and go. When can I see you again?

Sofia

Why?

Sultan

Let's go for a walk, somewhere. Where do you want to go?

Sofia

Why?

Sultan

Why? Didn't you have a good time with me last night?

Sofia

It was good, but I don't see any reason to continue this relationship. You are young, we have different mentalities, and besides, the age difference is quite noticeable

Sultan

Mentality? I lived in a basement with two years Mexican construction workers for. You think I don't understand wrestling? We're just getting started.

Sultan has eaten and wants to wash the dishes.

Sofia

Don't. I'll do it. You better get ready. myself

Sultan

There's still plenty of time. As for age, for me it's just a number that I have never cared about and will never care about before my friend comes over

Sofia

They're just words. In time, you'll notice it…

Sultan

Let's try to meet, and then everything will be clear. You don't want to stop something that's just started.

Sultan tries to touch her hand again, but she pulls it away and crosses it on her stomach.

Sofia

Did you think everything was gonna go your way?

Sultan

What scenario?

Sofia

No matter... I see no reason to continue this relationship

Sultan

What about my opinion? I want to continue! I'm interested in you.

Sofia

I've about it, but you don't fit my scenario been thinking since this morning. We're different. The only thing we have in common is our love of filmmaking.

Sultan

Not only that...

Sofia

What?

(Sultan hesitates)

We had a memorable night and I would like to end on a good note.

Sultan gets up from his seat and starts pacing around the kitchen, a look of displeasure on his face.

SULTAN

(annoyed)

I'm not your ex. Understand that

Sofia

It's not him, it's me. I've been through a lot and I'm a realist.

Sultan

I understand your fears, too. Not all of them, but I know about relationships and separation.

Sofia

(looking out the window)

You know, I was always afraid the morning would ruin everything. Like in the old movies.

Sultan

(takes her hand)

I'll do the happy ending. You want to do that? I'll write as many endings as you want.

Sofia

(her eyes turned red)

But ... But in that ending, you're not in it. I need one ending

Sofia is crying. Sultan went to her and embraced her. He wanted to comfort her and kissed her face and neck.

Sultan

It's all good... New relationships are always scary!

They embrace, and their hands gently stroke each other's backs.

Both stopped and, after briefly looking into each other's eyes, began kissing.

Sofia's tears won't stop flowing.

They get up and walk to the black couch, engulfed in passion. Sofia starts to take off Sultan T-shirt.

She falls back on the couch and he is on top of her and continues to gently kiss her neck, face and lips.

Sofia

(in tears)

I'm sorry...

Sultan takes off his jeans and enters her.

Sofia lets out a moan and, clasping her eyes, gives herself to the moment. Their bodies and hands move in unified rhythm. Tears still flow from her eyes.

After brief thrusts, both cum at the same time.

DARKNESS.

45. Int. Apartment vestibule - morning

Sultan puts on his sneakers and they both silently look at each other sometimes.

SULTAN

(whispers)

I don't believe this is the end....

SOFIA

(red eyes)

You know, in my movies, I'm always looking for the truth. But sometimes truth theis something you're not ready to accept.

Sultan

What if the truth is we're both afraid? Not the end, but the beginning…

Sultan picks up his things and stops.

SULTAN

So, what now? I just leave and that's it?

SOFIA

(sighs)

I guess so.

Sultan

This is bullshit! I'll call and text you every day!

Sofia

Are you trying to me hurt?

sultan

No... You can't do that!

Sofia

It's gonna be okay!

They stare at each other, and it becomes clear that nothing can be undone. Deep down, they both realize that it's over.

Sultan hesitates, then unlocks the door and leaves the room, leaving Sofia alone.

44. Int. Apartment kitchen - morning

Sofia doing the dishes and drops a pot on the floor, on the spot where Sultan broke a plate of food the night before.

SOFIA

(red eyes)

Why did I do that?

She freezes in place for a while and decides to text Sultan, picking up her phone.

SOFIA

(writing to Sultan)

Maybe...

At that moment, she gets a phone call. She sighs heavily, but when she sees the word "on the screen smiles Dog". She picks up the phone.

SOFIA

(on phone)

What?!

DARKNESS.

45. FLASHBACK/INT. METRO - Evening

Sultan stands on the edge of the platform. He stares into the tunnel, where the lights of the approaching train flicker. Suddenly, the rumble of the metro subsides, replaced by silence.

SULTAN

(voice in head, whispering in Arabic)

Me: "No... You can't do that!". Sofia: "It's going to be okay!".

The rumble of the train grows. The carriage doors open in front of him. The wind from the approaching train ruffles his hair. His grin and pensive face flicker in the reflection of the carriage glass.

THE END OF THE FLASHBACK.

46. HAT/Nat. residential complex entrance - MORNING

Sultan walks out of the entrance of Sofia's house, lingering by the garbage cans. He takes his phone out of his pocket and opens a file Word.

DARKNESS.

The Beatles - Help! music plays for a couple of seconds in the background.

END