

TAPESTRY

By

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FADE IN:

INDIA, 1650, BEACH, DAY

A 1600s trading ship nears a beach. The blue waves crash against the enormous wooden ship. As the boat moves closer to the shore "East India Company" comes into view near the bow. A BRITISH SHIP CREW looks to the horizon while Indians look up from the beach to the ship.

CUT TO:

KANPUR INDIA, 1857, FIELD, DAY

Thunderous sniper fire roar from cannons along a riverbank hitting British homes. The cannon fire is astonishing and frightening. BRITISH WOMEN, MEN AND CHILDREN are running from the roar. They are killed. They are blown back several feet. They are maimed. Survivors who are hurt cry among dead bodies as others scurry to save them. Some survivors ignore the wounded and run for cover.

Silence.

SEPOYS, young, male, Indian soldiers, in brown uniforms and muskets across their shoulders, walk around the homes and fields in search of British survivors. The Sepoys round up any survivors and make them march toward the river.

Only the men are executed as they come to the river. The British women and men scream in horror and clutch each other and any children near them.

120 British children and women are walking towards KANPUR, INDIA in single file. They are met by Indian women in a courtyard who show them into brick homes. The homes are lined with cots on one side and wooden table and chairs on the other side. In the middle, are spider ridden fireplaces, unused. The Indian women try to give the British women bread, but the British women are terrified to accept any assistance. The British women are so scared they grab the children around them and turn away from the Indian women. The Indian women leave.

KANPUR, 1857, INDIAN MILITARY HOME, NIGHT

An INDIAN SOLDIER, 30s, overweight, is sitting at his mahogany desk which is rifled with papers. His musket lies across the desk. He is condescendingly speaking to a SEPOY LEADER, late teens, defiant, and thin. They speak in Hindi.

INDIAN SOLDIER

Ready the Sepoys. Kill the women and children.

SEPOY LEADER

We can't kill women and children. We won't.

INDIAN SOLDIER

When you and your men, your wives and your children will be executed for not doing your duty.

The Sepoy leader swallows hard and looks into the distance, defeated.

KANPUR, INDIA, INDIAN BARRACKS SHACK, NIGHT

Sepoy soldiers are gathered in front of a large cargo box. The Sepoy Soldier stands on the box overshadowing the other soldiers. They speak in Hindi.

SEPOY SOLDIER 1

We either kill the women and children or we are killed?

SEPOY LEADER

Yes.

Chaos erupts. Sepoy Soldiers argue amongst themselves. Some scream to each other that can't think to kill women and children because they are married and have children. Others argue back that their families will be killed if orders are not followed.

CUT TO:

KANPUR, INDIA, BIBI GHAR 1857, COURTYARD, DAY

A group of SEPOY SOLDIERS, 18-24 year olds, malnourished, muskets across their shoulders, and the Sepoy Leader walk towards the courtyard where the British women and children are held in the courtyard. They speak in Hindi.

SEPOY SOLDIER 1

Come out.

Inside the courtyard. The British women and children huddle in fear. Bullets come flying into the courtyard through the windows. The women and children cry. A group of Sepoys walk away from the courtyard yelling, shaking their heads, and

refuse to participate in the massacre any further.

SEPOY SOLDIER 1  
(in Hindi, yelling at the  
defecting Sepoys)  
Go, if you want to die and leave your  
families.

The defecting Sepoys throw their muskets to the ground in disgust as they leave the courtyard and begin defiantly walking on a dusty road by foot. They pass the rickshaws that had carried them to the courtyard.

BUTCHERS, five Indian men, 30s overweight, cleavers in hand, pass the Sepoys and the Sepoys cease fire. The Butchers enter the courtyard.

Cries and screams from the women and children as they are massacred. Blood seeps into the grass and turns the once courtyard green grass to red.

KANPUR, INDIA, 1857, DRY WELL, DAY

Bodies from the massacre are stripped and thrown into a well by SEPOYS and VILLAGERS. A BRITISH CHILD, blood soaked, a DEEP GASH on the right side of his face, five years old, lets out a cough among the dead bodies. A villager throws the child into the well too. A BRITISH WOMAN, alive and hidden under a body tries to stifle her terror. She is heard and thrown into the well. Dead bodies are thrown onto the alive child and woman - burying them alive.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

A large bookstore with two levels. Couches and chairs to sit and read are in an open space. Honks and sirens in the distance. ASHA, S. Asian, mid-20s, is opening the book, "Tapestry: Indians in WW1", to read.

ASHA (V.O)  
The war to end all wars. South Asian  
Indians played key roles in WW1 as  
British soldiers while simultaneously  
fighting British colonization.

Camera fades into book cover and the color goes to a dusty beige like in "The English Patient."

INT. A MIDDLE-CLASS INDIAN HOME LIVING ROOM, MUMBAI, 1914,  
DAY

LAWRENCE, Devi's dad, Anglo-Indian, 50s, and overweight. He sits in his armchair reading a newspaper.

LAWRENCE

Beti, can you bring me some mangoes?

KITCHEN

DEVI, early 20s, Indian, slim, hastily picks up a mango from the table.

DEVI

Yes, papa.

LAWRENCE (O.S)

With some salt.

Devi cuts the mangoes and puts salt on the side.

DEVI

Yes, papa.

LIVING ROOM

Devi enters the living room and puts the mangoes on the table next to Lawrence. The newspaper Lawrence is reading immediately grabs her attention.

DEVI

Mangoes with salt, papa.

(beat)

The troops are leaving for warfronts everyday. What are we doing to help, papa? Milo and his cousin left over a month ago.

LAWRENCE

Beti, the best thing we can do is give where we can. War cannot go on forever. We will have lives after the war.

Devi angrily paces the living room only glancing at Lawrence.

LAWRENCE CONT.

What would you like to do to support the war?

DEVI

Go and fight. Take care of the sick. Make weapons. All of these women are out here selling chapatis, metal, sweets, to raise money. I don't want to be them.

LAWRENCE

OK, beti. But, they are doing their best.

Lawrence's comment sends Devi into a frenzy.

DEVI

I feel helpless cutting mangoes while my friends and classmates fight.

LAWRENCE

We are all trying to do our best to support our Indian soldiers.

DEVI

Pitaji, WHAT AM I DOING? You gave me an education; I speak English. Why would you allow me so many advantages to do nothing?

LAWRENCE

That's not...

DEVI

Stop living in the past. Bibi Ghar happened a long time ago. Today, Indians and British fight alongside each other.

LAWRENCE

You are my one daughter. You know what your stars tell about you.

DEVI

My faulty stars cannot stop me from doing what is important to me. There are other ways to help where I won't be in danger.

Lawrence realizes Devi will not back down from entering the war. His anger creeps into his face. He angrily hits the table where the mangoes sit. The mangoes fall to the ground.

LAWRENCE

As your father, I forbid you from any involvement in this war outside of the home.

Devi is first surprised at Lawrence's anger. She then stomps out of the living room. Lawrence picks up the newspaper in deep thought.

CUT TO:

INT. SEBASTIAN PARENT'S HOME, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

SEBASTIAN, male, brunette, athletic build, 20s, thrusts open the front door to a modest bungalow.

SEBASTIAN

Mom, dad? I'm here. Mom?

SASHA, late 40s, big-boned, heavy Bulgarian accents enters the hallway with her arms wide open.

SASHA

Sebastian!

They hug and Sasha gives Sebastian a kiss on the cheek.

SEBASTIAN

Hi, mama. Where is dad?

SASHA

Out in the garage tinkering. You would know that if you lived here. Wasting your money. Go. I'll call you when dinner is ready.

SEBASTIAN

Blagodarya!

Sebastian walks into the hallway towards the garage. He passes a wooden cabinet filled with Bulgarian wooden toys and felt child toys. He opens the door to the garage.

He sees the Bulgarian flag hanging from the rafters. He spots his dad, NIKOLAY, short, bald, overweight, tinkering with his tools on his workbench.

SEBASTIAN

Bashta!

Nikolay turns around.

NIKOLAY  
Sebastian! My graduate.

Sebastian joins his dad and starts tinkering with the tools.

SEBASTIAN  
One day, dad.

NIKOLAY  
How is grad school?

SEBASTIAN  
Good, good.

NIKOLAY  
You will graduate and then you get married. Have kids. You still talking to Bridgette. Where she go?

SEBASTIAN  
LA.

NIKOLAY  
Right, right. She good girl. You two look nice together.

SEBASTIAN  
Ok, dad.

NIKOLAY  
Let's go eat and talk more.

Nikolay exits into the house.

Buzzzz. Sebastian pulls out his phone and reads a text from BRIDGETTE. The text reads, CLOSE UP, "Did you talk to your parents yet?" Sebastian wipes a tear from his eye and runs his hand down his face. He gains his composure and follows his dad back into the house.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019 DAY

LATE SUMMER

Hearing a buzz, Asha looks up startled from reading and checks her phone. CLOSE UP: Party my place. 8pm. Bring booze.

Begin flashback:

INT. ASHA'S SISTER'S HOME, 2018, NIGHT

LATE SUMMER

Katrina, 30s, thin, Asha's sister, is making dinner. Asha is putting plates on the table and is dressed to go to the bars on an early fall night. She has on a leather jacket, a beige revealing shirt, jeans and heels. Katrina is mixing a curry on the stove. Her daughter, PAVEN, eight years old, Indian, is silently coloring at the table.

KATRINA

Proud of you.

ASHA

Thanks!

KATRINA

Only the creme de la creme go to grad school.

ASHA

(laughing out loud)

You're saying that because you went to grad school.

Katrina stops mixing the curry.

KATRINA

No! Mom, dad, Paven, me, George, we're all proud of you. You won't almost flunk like undergrad. You're making better choices. You'll do your family and NRI parents proud.

ASHA

I will.

Katrina returns to mixing.

KATRINA

Represent the ABCDs.

ASHA

You're hilarious.

KATRINA

Hasan Bhai!

ASHA

You only make yourself laugh.

KATRINA  
 You just laughed.  
 (beat)  
 You going out after dinner?

ASHA  
 Yea, a bunch of us are going to go  
 out.

KATRINA  
 New friends. Drinks. Partying. Oh the  
 life without kids.

ASHA  
 Tell George to baby sit and come out  
 with me.

KATRINA  
 I can't stay up past 9 pm.

ASHA  
 Come on!

KATRINA  
 Next time.

Katrina turns off the stove.

ASHA  
 That means never.

KATRINA  
 Dinner's ready. Call George and Paven.

Paven gets up from the table and puts her coloring book on  
 the kitchen counter. She is wearing a Black Panther t-shirt.

KATRINA  
 Nice shirt, baby. You like him?

PAVEN  
 Yes. He looks like me when he talks  
 off his mask.

INT. COLLEGE BAR, 2018, NIGHT

EARLY FALL

Asha, Sebastian, STEVEN, male blonde, 40s, RACHEL, female,  
 redhead, 20s, tall and ALLISON, 20s, English, are at a bar  
 table taking shots.

RACHEL  
That was disgusting.

SEBASTIAN  
Yup.

STEVEN  
Let's not do that again.

ALLISON  
Another round on me. This time with  
cinnamon and oranges.

Asha and Sebastian look at each other with hesitated looks.

ALLISON  
One shot is not enough! One more and  
then let's go dance.

All cheer. Allison passes out shots as the bartender drops  
off shots to the table.

RACHEL  
The cinnamon is so much better than  
salt.

All take the shots and cheer. College drunk guys come up to  
the table to hit on the women.

DRUNK GUY 1  
(to Asha)  
Hey beautiful, what's your name?

ASHA  
Asha.

DRUNK GUY 1  
Ashley. Pretty.

ASHA  
No. Asha.

DRUNK GUY 1  
Pash.

ASHA  
A-s-h-a.

DRUNK GUY 1  
Can I call you Ash?

Asha turns away annoyed.

ASHA  
 (to Rachel)  
 I'm going to the bathroom.

RACHEL  
 Me too.

BAR BATHROOM

Rachel is in the bathroom and Asha is fixing her make-up in the bathroom mirror.

ASHA  
 I ate too much at family dinner before coming. I can't get drunk and these drunk people are so annoying. This one guy was trying to hit on me and couldn't say my name. Like how hard is Asha?

RACHEL  
 Really? What a douche.

ASHA  
 I'm going to bail. I think Sebastian said he was leaving soon.

RACHEL  
 Ohhh...

ASHA  
 What?

RACHEL  
 He's been checking you out since our first class. I catch him staring at you all the time.

ASHA  
 That's hilarious. I mean he's super cute but I don't think he's into me.

RACHEL  
 I think he's too scared to make a move, but he totally likes you! And, you like him.

ASHA  
 Is it that obvious?

RACHEL  
(exiting bathroom stall)  
Uh...yeah!

COLLEGE BAR

Asha and Rachel approach the bar table.

ALLISON  
You're back! The Poli-Sci guys are here. They got done with their round robin and are ready to drink!

RACHEL  
Let's do it!

ASHA  
I'm out. Sebastian, did you say you were heading home?

SEBASTIAN  
Yes. I'm too drunk.

ASHA  
I'm ready to leave when you are.

SEBASTIAN  
Let's go. I'll walk you home.

EXT. NYC NEIGHBORHOOD, 2018, NIGHT

EARLY FALL

Sebastian is stumbling a little as he and Asha zigzag on the sidewalk not able to walk straight.

ASHA  
Are you OK?

SEBASTIAN  
Yeah, just a little drunk. Give me a sec.

Sebastian steps behind a tree to pee. Asha waits on the sidewalk. Drunk guys, 20s, college frat boys, approach Asha.

DRUNK GUY 2  
Hi, gorgeous.

ASHA  
Hi.

DRUNK GUY 3  
Where you going? Come to a party with  
us.

Asha tenses up.

ASHA  
I'm good.

Drunk guy 2 puts his arm around Asha and starts to make her  
walk with him. Asha stops him.

DRUNK GUY 2  
You don't have an accent and you're  
really pretty. Come chill with me.

ASHA  
(steps away)  
No, I'm good.

Asha hurriedly walks on.

DRUNK GUY 2  
Brownie bitch.

DRUNK GUY 3  
Let's go.

Sebastian comes out of the trees. Asha and Sebastian show a  
knowing look.

SEBASTIAN  
You Ok?

ASHA  
Yeah, thanks.

SEBASTIAN  
Is that normal?

ASHA  
What?

SEBASTIAN  
Getting harassed like that?

ASHA  
Yeah...

SEBASTIAN  
That's terrible.

Asha shrugs.

ASHA  
Pretty standard.

SEBASTIAN  
I'm sorry.

ASHA  
Thanks.  
(beat)  
Are you going to be OK getting home  
after dropping me off? Your place is a  
walk from my place.

SEBASTIAN  
(tripping)  
I'll be good.

ASHA  
(holding in a laugh)  
If you say so...

Asha and Sebastian reach Asha's place.

ASHA  
Hungry?

SEBASTIAN  
Starved.

INT. ASHA'S APARTMENT, 2018, NIGHT

Asha is in the kitchen a pizza in the oven and Sebastian is leaning up against the living room wall looking at his phone in the living room. The wall is supporting Sebastian.

ASHA  
Shit, the tequila that Alison bought  
us is hitting me.

SEBASTIAN  
I can't even feel my face right now.

ASHA  
How much did you have to drink?

Sebastian stumbles over and flops down into the couch.

SEBASTIAN  
Too much. What's on Netflix?

ASHA  
(sits next to Sebastian)  
You want to Netflix and chill?

SEBASTIAN  
Let's chill. The only good thing about  
grad school. Friends and chilling.

ASHA  
That's it?

SEBASTIAN  
This shit's so hard. I drink more now  
than in undergrad.

ASHA  
How else can we survive?

Oven rings. Asha gets up to get the pizza.

SEBASTIAN  
Where's your bathroom?

ASHA  
Down the hallway?

Sebastian stumbles to the bathroom. Asha brings the pizza  
back to the couch, cuts the pizza and takes a bite.

SEBASTIAN  
(drunk happy enters the living  
room)  
Pizza!

ASHA  
It's the alcohol talking but it's so  
good.

Sebastian almost falls over as he reaches for a pizza slice.  
He successfully picks up a slice, goes to take a bite, and  
the pizza, slice drops to the floor.

Both laugh.

SEBASTIAN  
Damn...I need to go (hiccup)... gnome..  
home.

ASHA  
Gnome?

Sebastian giggles.

SEBASTIAN

I'm a mess. I can't even eat pizza. I made a mess. I'm sorry.

Sebastian tries to pick up the slice of pizza on the floor and nearly falls over.

ASHA

Leave it. You're making a bigger mess.

Sebastian drunkenly hugs Asha and stumbles to the door.

SEBASTIAN

Sorry for the mess. I gotta go. Night.

Asha follows Sebastian to the door.

ASHA

Night.

Asha closes the door.

ASHA

(whispers to herself)  
You're so wrong, Rachel.

Asha looks at the messy pizza plates, and shakes her head.

End Flashback.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Asha laughs at the text, slowly shakes her head, and picks up the book and begins reading again. CLOSE UP: Words on the page as we enter 1914.

INT. A MIDDLE-CLASS INDIAN HOME LIVING ROOM, MUMBAI, 1914, DAY

Lawrence and his wife, GEETA, full Indian, 50s, overweight, Devi's mom. Both are sitting have tea in their living room.

GEETA

I'm worried about Devi. She sulks most of her days and is obsessed with the war.

LAWRENCE

Ha, jaan. She wants to help.

GEETA

How? We won't allow her to enter the war.

LAWRENCE

Get her involved in making clothes or getting funds for the war at home. Keep her busy mind occupied.

GEETA

Go and talk her into these things. She's miserable.

Lawrence gets up to find Devi.

LAWRENCE

Ha, jaan.

EXT. MUMBAI, INDIA, FARMERS MARKET, LATE 1914, DAY

Geeta approaches a Farmers Market. Women are selling needles to gain war funds. She passes a booth with beautiful tapestries flying in the wind. The bright greens, blues, yellows, reds and purples are woven into mandalas. Geeta stops and admires a tapestry with a rich red mandala in the middle of the cloth. As Geeta passes the crowded market, she spots a play advertisement, "War and The Indian," on a building wall. Geeta heads to a VENDOR, Indian farmer, skinny, 40s. They speak in Hindi.

GEETA

Morning, bhai.

VENDOR

Good morning! What can I get you?

GEETA

Half pound of apples and mangoes. How is your family?

VENDOR

Good, good. Wife is with the kids. My oldest is acting in a play.

GEETA

What play?

VENDOR

'War and the Indian.'" It's a play about why it's important for us Indians to fight in the war.

GEETA

Really? I had no idea these plays were happening. Who does your son play?

VENDOR

He plays a coward college student who hides in his room instead of volunteering to fight with the British in this war. He gets booed.

GEETA

I wish this war would be over.

VENDOR

We all must do our part. Those women are doing their part.

The Vendor points to INDIAN WOMEN selling needles and clothing on the streets. They are showcasing a tapestry and the needles used to create the cloth.

VENDOR CONT.

Their husbands and fathers are fighting with the British. The money goes to help us Indians.

GEETA

Us Indians are not British. We should be fighting them to get back our land.

VENDOR

For the war, we are British.

The Vendor hands Geeta her mangoes and apples.

GEETA

Thank you.

Geeta turns and stomps towards a brick building with one of the play posters on the wall. She looks at the picture with disgust, drops her purchase, rips the poster from the building, in a frenzy rips the poster into pieces and crumples the remains to the floor. Her eyes are filled with tears and she struggles to breathe.

INT. DEVI'S BEDROOM, MUMBAI, 1914, DAY

Lawrence finds Devi in her room.

LAWRENCE

Beti, what are you looking at?

DEVI

Leaflets for soldiers to join the war.

LAWRENCE

Are you doing research for one of your friends?

DEVI

No, pitaji! I already told you, I need to do my part. Why won't you listen to me?!

LAWRENCE

I won't listen to this nonsense.

DEVI

I know they are recruiting men only but there are other duties. I am trained in medicine. I could provide care to my bhais.

LAWRENCE

You are a jawana? You belong at home.

Devi screams.

LAWRENCE

You are not a Sepoy.

DEVI

(paces angrily)

You are an awful father.

Devi stops pacing and locks eyes with her father. She and Lawrence stare at each other. Both of them with tears in their eyes. Devi stomps off.

EXT. BACKYARD GARDEN, DEVI'S HOME, MUMBAI, 1914, DAY

Devi sits on a bench. Her eyes are bloodshot from crying.

Lawrence comes out of the home and looks at Devi gently. He sits next to Devi and gently pulls her right hand into his left hand. He clasps their hands.

Confused, Devi opens her hand to see a 1914, 25 cent gold coin with the face of a man on the head side in her hand.

LAWRENCE

I was saving this for your wedding day. I may forbid you from leaving but I love you.

Devi looks at the coin in deep melancholy.

DEVI'S BEDROOM

Slam! Devi catches herself as she realizes her own strength. She pauses. She glances at her bedroom door. She runs to the door and presses her ear up against it. No footsteps. No candles in the hallway under the door. She lets out a sigh of relief. No one heard her slam her suitcase shut. Her breath is labored and fast. She tries to stop panting. She holds her breathe but she starts to get dizzy.

She stumbles to her bed and sits on the edge. There is nowhere else to sit. Two suitcases cover one side of the bed. Her clothes are strewn all over the bed. Mixed in with the clothes are documents, and newspapers.

HUH, HUH, HUH. Devi catches her breath and her panting turns into deep but labored breaths.

She slowly rises from the bed. Devi quickly begins folding documents and some clothes into one suitcase. She throws the clothes on the bed into another suitcase.

She picks up the suitcase off the bed. Fatigued she falls face first into the open space once taken up by her suitcase, clothes and documents. She cries into the bedsheets and her hands.

She regains her composure and opens her creaking bedroom door slowly. She wipes tears that are on her cheek. The hallway is dark. Her parent's room is dark. She is careful to cry silently as she lifts one suitcase on top of her head. She creeps out and traces her steps to avoid stepping on creaky floorboards. She pauses in front of her parents' bedroom and sees them sleeping through their cracked bedroom door. She lets out a sigh as the tears fall in haste. She walks with determination and sadness to the side, kitchen door. She steadies her suitcase with her left hand, and opens the door easily. She removes the white cloth in the latch.

EXT. DEVI'S HOME, 1915, NIGHT

One look back. Her childhood home. She drops her heavy suitcase from her head to the ground. She pulls a note from her pocket. She puts the note on the swing by the tree, near the gate. She is sure not to make any loud noises as she puts a rock on top of the note. Another look back. She picks up her suitcase and lugs it under her arm. Her patent leather shoes on the dusty road are the only sound in the dead night. She quickly walks away becoming a faint figure within moments.

EXT. CUSTOMS HARBOUR, 1915, DAY

BRITISH CUSTOMS AGENT

Next.

Devi moves towards the Agent.

DEVI

My orders, sir.

AGENT

(reads her orders)

Heading to Ypres as a nurse.

DEVI

Yes, sir.

AGENT

Alone?

DEVI

Yes.

BRITISH CUSTOMS AGENT

(stamps the orders)

Go on then.

EXT. YPRES, BELGIUM, 1915, BARRACKS, DAY

SPRING

Devi gets out of British truck along with other soldiers into the British barracks. She and the new soldiers, a mix of British and Indian soldiers, wipe the sweat of their brows and faces as they clumsily stand in line in front of the truck. Their armpits are sweaty and seeping through their brown uniforms that are clammy against their skins. The road is dusty and dust covers the soldiers in the truck and Devi as they exit. Their once shiny shoes are now dusty brown.

There are lines of shanty buildings built into a square. The barracks are made of grey and brown buildings layered with dust and mud.

British soldiers are doing their military drills while Sepoys are on the other side talking.

SOLDIER 1

British blokes, your barracks are to the left. Indians, your barracks are to the right. If you can even understand me (under his breath).

DEVI

Any special place for the women?

SOLDIER 1

Fuck, you can speak English? Didn't know any of you could. To the right.

Devi turns to the right and sees an "Indian Only" hand-written sign in front of one building. She heads to the overcrowded, Indian soldier only hospital. She gasps and holds her nose because of the rats, rat shit, human waste, and dried blood on the floor as the smells hits her opening the heavy door to reveal the Indian only hospital. Devi starts to dry heave and catches herself.

Inside, there are cots lined up in almost every inch of the floor. Narrow passages allow one person to go between the cots. Indian soldiers are lying in cots or sitting on the edge. Many Sepoys are bandaged on their heads, arms and legs. The rag bandages are soaked in blood.

With laser focus, Devi she approaches a table near the front of the building.

DEVI

Reporting for duty. Here are my orders.

HEAD NURSE, 60s, overweight Indian woman sits in a rusty chair. The Head Nurse looks Devi up and down.

HEAD NURSE

Your uniform is in the back. Get changed, come back and I will show you to your station.

EXT. BRITISH FARM, 1913, DAY

SUMMER

CHRISTOPHER male, mustache, 20s, thick build, is bucking hay outside a farm. His mother VICKY, 40s, malnourished, British, is walking on a path with wildflowers on each side. A rusty steel plow is butted up against a red barn where the paint has long weathered away. She comes into the barn with a terrified look on her face. She is carrying a brown envelope. CLOSE UP shows the envelope is stamped "British Army."

Christopher stops as he sees his mother. He slowly moves towards her and takes the envelope from her hand.

VICKY

Take care of yourself. Come back to me.

CHRISTOPHER

That's the plan. I hate leaving you.

VICKY

I made my choice 25 years ago and I make the same choice to this day. I want you to go. Don't worry about him...us...

CHRISTOPHER

Mama, I don't have to go to save the farm. I can find another way to save us from the death that surrounds us.

VICKY

But you won't have the patriotism if you stay here.

Christopher looks at the envelope front and hugs his mother.

Vicky grabs Christopher's head and tearfully kisses his forehead.

EXT. YPRES, BATTLEFIELD, 1915, DAY

LATE SPRING

Bsss...bullets fly around and British and Indian soldiers are hit. Rancid smoke surrounds the fighting soldiers. The smoke is so heavy in some areas it is hard to see a foot in front.

British and Indian soldiers are bleeding out, while others

are clumsily shooting back hoping to hit a target. The ditches provide some safety and cover.

Christopher opens fire on advancing Austrian troops. He hits one Austrian soldier who stumbles and then falls to the ground dead.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER POV

He angrily fires at the British and Indian soldiers. He turns his head to see his friend die in front of him while frantically shooting at the advancing British and Indian troops. He spots Christopher among the bullets buzzing by him and aims for Christopher.

BACK TO BATTLEFIELD

Christopher feels a burn in his right leg, then a sharp burn near his left lung. He is hit with a bullets in his right leg and then his stomach.

Christopher falls to the ground.

INT. YPRES CAMP, INDIAN ONLY, OVER-CROWDED HOSPITAL, 1915, DAY

LATE SPRING

SOLDIER 2

(bursts through the door)  
Coming through! Two head injuries,  
three missing limbs, and a bullet  
wound.

DEVI

Soldier, this is the Indian only  
hospital. Leave.

SOLDIER 2

All the hospitals are at capacity.

Devi sees that the soldiers need to be placed at nursing stations immediately.

DEVI

Ok...head injuries at 2, limbs at 4 and  
bullet at 6. Challo!

The nurses and doctors run to their stations to aid the wounded. The wounded howl with pain, one is reading his last rites to himself, and one is carrying his right arm in his

left arm like a baby.

Soldier 3 bursts through the door.

SOLDIER 3

Soldier was hit 20 minutes ago.

Christopher is carried in on a makeshift stretcher made out of two wooden sticks with sown together flour sacks as the base. Two soldiers carry him in.

The open door brings in noise of the shelling happening a few miles out. The hospital ceiling drywall starts to fall. Devi runs to close the door and turns to Soldier 3.

DEVI

Take him to 1.

SOLDIER 3

What the fuck does that mean?

DEVI

To the left.

Devi gestures to her left where there is an empty bed with a #1 above it. The soldiers gently place Christopher on the bed.

DEVI

Let me see him.

Devi pushes past the two soldiers who carried Christopher in, and she sees a bloody and wounded Christopher gasping for air. She lunges past the soldiers to the drawer next to the bed and grabs a small metal pipe. The soldiers are between her and Christopher.

DEVI

Move. He's going to die while you stand here.

Devi grabs the small metal pipe and with force punctures Christopher on his right side. Christopher's breathing relaxes and he breathes normally.

SOLDIER 3

What did you do?

Devi ignores the soldier.

DEVI

Doctor!

INDIAN DOCTOR, 60s, skinny, runs to Devi and Christopher. His white shirt coat is covered in blood and his hands are sticky and red.

DEVI

Can you take the bullets out?

INDIAN DOCTOR

Yes, but there are too many of them.  
I'm the only one here.

NURSE (O.S)

Doctor!

The Indian doctor runs to the other nurse.

Devi looks at Christopher who is bleeding out. The two soldiers are still standing at the bed dazed.

DEVI

Go. I'll take care of him.

The two soldiers wearily leave and turn their heads to look at Christopher as they wander away.

Devi opens the drawer again and pulls out a long tweezer, alcohol, and rags. She steadies her hand with the tweezer, takes a deep breath and moves her other hand into Christopher's wound. She takes a breath and sticks the tweezer into Christopher's stomach. She pulls out the bullet that falls to the floor. Devi ignores the bullet and hurriedly bandages Christopher's leg to stop additional bleeding.

Christopher is hallucinating from the pain and catches Devi in his haze. The light behind her as she pulls out the bullet gives Devi a halo, angelic look.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

RODNEY, African-American, 40s, athletic stands next to Asha's chair.

RODNEY

Excuse me is this seat taken?

Asha  
 (moving her backpack)  
 No, no. Please.

Rodney takes a seat on a couch across from Asha.

RODNEY  
 Thanks. What book are you reading?

ASHA  
 Forgotten stories about the South  
 Asian involvement in a Belgium  
 warfront battle in WW1.

RODNEY  
 Wow...I've never heard of this book. Are  
 you reading for school or pleasure?

ASHA  
 Both. I'm a grad student at NYU.

RODNEY  
 Very cool. Thanks for the book tip.  
 I'll add the book to my reading list.

ASHA  
 (returns to her book)  
 Yea, for sure.

INT. YPRES, BELGIUM, 1915, INDIAN ONLY OVER-CROWDED HOSPITAL,  
 DAY

LATE SPRING

Christopher is bandaged but able to speak; Devi brings water  
 to him.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Thank you.

DEVI  
 Drink slow. You are recovering well.  
 Next week, we will start some walking.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Ok...

DEVI  
 Can I get you anything else?

CHRISTOPHER

No, thank you.

Devi slowly rises to leave.

CHRISTOPHER

Hold on. How, how... did you end up here? You're one in a handful of women in this bloody place.

(beat)

Pardon me.

DEVI

Inquisitive. That's a good sign you are healing.

CHRISTOPHER

Seriously, I'm interested.

Devi pulls up a rusty chair and sits next to Christopher.

DEVI

I wanted to do something during this war. I saw my friends, friend's brothers, fathers and uncles join the British in this fight. I had to do something.

CHRISTOPHER

Why do you feel a need to do anything?

DEVI

I wanted to help in the war effort. Ran away from my parents. Now that I'm here, I'm not so sure.

Devi catches herself in her rant realizing what she has said, and how much she has longed to talk to someone.

DEVI

I'm sorry...I must get back to my rounds.

Devi abruptly jumps up and quickly walks away. Christopher calls out trying to get Devi to stay.

CHRISTOPHER

It's Ok...tell me more.

Christopher tries to get out of bed to catch Devi but falls. Devi rushes to Christopher.

DEVI

Here, let me help you. Walking will begin in one week. Not today.

CHRISTOPHER

I wanted to hear more about you.

Devi helps Christopher into his hospital bed.

DEVI

Another time. Rest.

Devi looks back at Christopher as she moves on to her rounds.

INT. YPRES, INDIAN ONLY OVER-CROWDED HOSPITAL, 1915, DAY.

EARLY SUMMER

Devi is helping Christopher walk with a cane.

DEVI

Nice and easy. One step at a time.

CHRISTOPHER

You're a good teacher.

DEVI

You're a good student.

Christopher starts to lose his balance.

DEVI

(steadying Christopher)

There you go.

Their hands touch.

CHRISTOPHER

Can we go outside?

DEVI

Yes.

They make their way past the hospital door to the barracks and makeshift offices. The sun floods the open and Devi and Christopher shadows as they pass through the door.

EXT. YPRES, BARRACKS, 1915, DAY

EARLY SUMMER

CHRISTOPHER

This way. Let's walk.

DEVI

Are you sure? There's nothing but  
shacks and ammunition back there.

They slowly make their way to the shacks. They pass, OSCAR,  
British soldier, late teens.

OSCAR

Christopher, looking good.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks, bloke. How you been?

OSCAR

Same, same. Not dead. Still living to  
eat the crud they call food at least  
once a day.

CHRISTOPHER

Old assholes make wars, and poor,  
young blokes die in them.

OSCAR

(looks at Devi)

OSCAR

Ma'am.

DEVI

Morning, soldier.

CHRISTOPHER

To the left.

Devi and Christopher move into an aisle of shacks.

DEVI

This smell. It's awful. This entire  
place is filthy, overrun by rats.

CHRISTOPHER

You should smell our living quarters.

DEVI

No, thanks!

(beat)

Where are we going?

CHRISTOPHER

You'll see.

They walk past the shacks into an open field with wildflowers. Devi gasps at the beauty in the field. Sunflowers and wildflowers are in bloom into the horizon.

CHRISTOPHER

I found this field one day when I needed to clear my head. It's the only peaceful place in this god forsaken place.

DEVI

You live in the country?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. An old farmstead that's been in my family for generations. I joined the war for money so my family doesn't lose the farm. What is it like where you live?

Devi looks into the field.

DEVI

Near the city but far enough from the crowds.

CHRISTOPHER

Can we sit and talk here for a while? I promise I'll get my steps in.

DEVI.

Sure, but only for a little bit. People will wonder where we are.

Christopher tries to drop the cane but loses his balance. Devi catches the cane and Christopher at the same time. Christopher steadies himself with the cane. Devi places the cane in Christopher's right hand.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you have any siblings?

DEVI

No, I am an only child. You?

CHRISTOPHER

The youngest of eight. The only boy.

DEVI

What?!

Devi and Christopher continue walking into the field.

CHRISTOPHER

Big families to work the farmstead.  
What did you mean that you chose to  
come here?

DEVI

Steady. One step at a time.

She moves Christopher's hand around her waist.

DEVI

If I was a boy, I could have come over  
here as a Sepoy. My father knew I  
wanted to serve in the war; but he  
forbid me from going outside of  
Mumbai. I came anyway by enlisting.

CHRISTOPHER

How long have you been stationed here?

DEVI

About three months.

CHRISTOPHER

Do you still want to serve?

DEVI

I don't know...it's so hard here. The  
rats, the lack of supplies, the  
deaths. Treated like second class  
citizens. I thought coming here, I  
would find my purpose.

CHRISTOPHER

Purpose?

Devi grazes her hands over the wildflowers avoiding answering  
the question.

DEVI

(changing the subject)  
How often do you hear from your mum?  
Your dad?

CHRISTOPHER

My mum, she sends care packages every

month, with letters about how she can't wait until I'm home. Always filled with my favorite jams, fruit and...clean underwear.

Both laugh.

DEVI

Your dad?

CHRISTOPHER

(beat)

Maybe when this is over, I will show you my farmstead, my home. If you like this field, you will like my home.

DEVI

(quietly)

I would like that.

CHRISTOPHER

Have you ever ridden a horse?

DEVI

No, haha! I would fall off. I'm too scared to try. I don't think I've known anyone who rides a horse.

CHRISTOPHER

You would do great. My mum taught me to ride horses.

DEVI

You can teach me. If I ever end up in Britain. But first, you need to heal and walk. We must get back.

CHRISTOPHER

You found your way into this war. I think you can get anywhere you want to be.

Devi and Christopher turn around to make their way back to the shacks with Devi supporting Christopher.

They walk back in the barracks engrossed in each other oblivious to the stares from the British soldiers and Indian Sepoys.

INT. YPRES, BARRACKS, 1915, NIGHT

EARLY SUMMER

Devi is cleaning her work station by candlelight. She is sterilizing needles, scalpels and blades. Above her, strewn across a wooden cabinet are blood stained rags. A handwritten sign labels the rags, "Clean."

The hospital is lined with makeshift cots with barely any room for the rats to scatter. A narrow passage allows nurses and the injured soldiers who can walk an escape to the door.

"NA, NA, NA," screams an injured, Indian soldier in his sleep. Many men cough in building shattering hacks on the other side of the room. Occasional wails and moans cause Devi to pause and listen.

"AGGGHHHH!" one of the heavily bandaged Indian soldiers screams next to Devi. He is missing his jaw and left eye. He is convulsing and thrashing in his small cot so much that the cot is moving. Devi rushes to him with the Head Nurse behind her. Devi grabs the bed and the Head Nurse goes to aid the soldier. The soldier is now bleeding from his eyes, nose, and mouth. The Head Nurse unsuccessfully tries to calm him by grabbing his soldiers. He lets out a terrifying scream before his eyes roll back into his head. He is dead.

Devi and the Head Nurse share a knowing look. The Head Nurse leaves and calls the doctor. Devi stares at the dead soldier in a daze. She blinks. Returns to her desk and stands over the table. She throws her instruments in one big slap onto the floor. The once clean instruments clamor to the floor. Heavily, Devi sits on her chair, defeated.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Asha carefully bookmarks her page and closes her book. She gets up to use the bathroom. On her way an advertisement for "Hayley Lynn" at HEADLINERS BAR catches her eye.

INT. HEADLINER BAR, 2018, NIGHT

LATE FALL

Begin Flashback:

Sebastian, Rachel and Allison are drinking at the bar. Asha walks in with Steven. Asha gives Rachel a big hug.

ASHA  
Happy birthday! PARTY! I need to buy  
you a shot.

Asha and Rachel walk to the bar. Asha holds up two fingers to  
signal the bartender.

RACHEL  
Stop me from partying so much! Keep me  
disciplined.

Asha grabs the shots off the bar.

ASHA  
Sure! But not tonight.

Rachel and Asha laugh and take their shots. The BARTENDER,  
20s, white, slim struts over to Asha and Rachel.

ASHA  
(to the bartender)  
Another round.

BARTENDER  
(to Rachel)  
What are you having?

RACHEL  
(pointing to Asha)  
She just gave you the order.

The bartender ignores Asha.

BARTENDER  
(to Rachel)  
What are you having?

ASHA  
Two lemon drops.

RACHEL  
What she just said.

The bartender gives Asha a disgusted look and starts making  
shots.

RACHEL  
Ohh..we getting fucked up tonight.  
Don't tip this douche.

ASHA  
YAAASSS!!! This guy isn't ruining our night. White Russians next.

They take their shots and walk back to the table.

RACHEL  
We just took two shots. You need to catch up.

SEBASTIAN  
We've been drinking for the last three hours.

INT. BAR, TWO HOURS LATER

Everyone is on the dance floor and dancing with one another. Sebastian and Asha are dancing with each other, close.

SEBASTIAN  
(loudly)  
Do you want some water?

ASHA  
Yay, I'll come with you.

Sebastian and Asha head to a water station.

SEBASTIAN  
Here you go. You want another drink?

ASHA  
A beer. But hydration first.

Asha and Sebastian drunkily clink their paper cups together.

SEBASTIAN  
Gotta replace all that water gone on the dance floor.

Sebastian winks at Asha. Asha leans in. They kiss and leave the bar.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK, THE LAKE, 2018, MORNING

LATE FALL

Sebastian is waiting by a tree. The trees are turning the brightest colors as fall is in season. The sun is shining on Sebastian and the table. Asha enters with a jacket on and sunglasses. The sun hits both of them. Sebastian waves to

greet Asha as she walks towards him. They awkwardly go to say hi and hug.

SEBASTIAN

(shyly)

How, how, are you?

ASHA

(awkwardly)

Good, good. Uh, you?

SEBASTIAN

Good. So, um, last night.

Asha backs away, turns away from Sebastian to face The Lake. She stares at the lake. Asha takes off her sunglasses and starts fiddling with them.

ASHA

(not looking at Sebastian)

Last night. I don't want anything or last night to get in the way of our friendship.

Sebastian reaches out his hand which Asha stares at for a moment and awkwardly takes. She is still. Sebastian is looking at her face and Asha is avoiding eye contact.

SEBASTIAN

No, not at all. I have no regrets.  
Umm... I've liked you for a long time.  
I wish I was sober when I told you,  
but I am sober now.

ASHA

Ohhh...so...we both like each other.

Asha makes eye contact with Sebastian and turns toward him.

SEBASTIAN

You're beautiful, smart, funny, and super fun to be around with.

Asha turns to Sebastian.

ASHA

I like you too.

SEBASTIAN

I would like to see where you and I can go from here. As more than

friends.

ASHA

Ok, me too. Geez, why is this so hard?

SEBASTIAN

It's just me. You're only talking to me.

ASHA

I know...

SEBASTIAN

Whew, my hangover is finally wearing off. The sun isn't killing my eyes anymore. You want to walk a little.

ASHA

Yes. The fall colors are pretty.

Both smile at each other. Sebastian leans in and they share a passionate kiss. They move out of the kiss and hold hands as they walk down a trail towards The Lake.

INT. ASHA'S APARTMENT, 2018, FIREPLACE FLOOR

WINTER

Snow falls outside as Sebastian and Asha cuddle up on the floor in front of a fire. They are lying on an air mattress in front of the fire sipping wine.

The fire light backlights Asha and Sebastian. Their shadows move in closer to one another, heads touching, enjoy the fire, wine, and each other's company.

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (MET), NEW YORK CITY, 2019, DAY

EARLY SPRING

SEBASTIAN

Hi gorgeous.

Sebastian gives Asha a kiss on the lips as he approaches the stair's entrance. They are wearing light jackets and jeans on a spring day.

ASHA

Hi, baby! Ready.

SEBASTIAN

Always, when I am with you.

Asha and Sebastian enter the MET. The door closes and to the right of the entrance reads a sign, "The Forgotten: WW1 and WW2 Stories."

Asha and Sebastian enter a long corridor of the MET. They are relatively alone. Lining the corridor walls are pictures of WW1 S. Asian Indians, Samoans, Fijians, and Chinese soldiers dressed in soldier uniforms. Above Asha and Sebastian world flags drape from the high balcony, out of touch. Asha is slightly in front of Sebastian as they saunter in awe across the corridor.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, shit! I got a take a picture. My dad and brother are going to lose their shit.

Sebastian takes a picture of a woman in a portrait on the wall.

ASHA

Who is she?

Begin military flight montage:

- Women pilots in WW2.
- Military airplanes over water.
- Military airplanes over sand.
- Military airplanes in a training exercise.
- Military airplanes landing.
- Leaflets written in Bulgarian fall from a plane. A 15 year old girl is throwing them out a plane door.

End Montage.

SEBASTIAN

Rayna Kasabova. She was the first woman in the world to do a military flight. My dad's a prodigy in all things Bulgaria. I've heard about Rayna all my life.

ASHA

Another woman I've never heard up.  
These history apps are bullshit. Was  
she a soldier?

SEBASTIAN

She threw propaganda leaflets over  
Turkey during the Balkan War.

ASHA

Oh.

Sebastian hears his phone go off while in his hand. He reads  
a text as he and Asha continue walking the hall.

SEBASTIAN

My brother just said, "LOL."

ASHA

I would say the same thing. Is your  
brother working?

SEBASTIAN

Yup, living the concrete jungle, Wall  
Street life.

(beat)

Holy shit!

ASHA

You are losing your shit in here.

SEBASTIAN

Look at this!

ASHA

I'm looking.

Sebastian points to a picture of Christo Toprakchiev. CLOSE  
UP on the plaque reads, "Christo Toprakchiev. Bulgarian who  
suggested the use of aircraft to drop "bombs."

ASHA CONT.

You don't orgasm this hard with me.  
Remind me to take you to the MET more  
often.

Sebastian laughs, puts his hand around Asha and kisses her  
forehead as he lovingly pulls her closer to him. They  
continue walking and enter the "Indian Soldier and the  
Forgotten History," section of the gallery. Other patrons  
unbashfully stare at Asha and Sebastian as she kisses her.

One man glares at them and shakes his head, not approving.

ASHA CONT.

My people!

Asha and Sebastian move through a room filled with army paraphernalia and pictures on four walls of South Asian Indian soldiers. The pictures show South Asian soldiers in uniform with turbans, on battlefields, alongside British and European troops, and individual portraits. In the middle of the room there are four large stands with glass cases holding muskets, hats, swords and other military items.

ASHA CONT.

I don't know any of this.

SEBASTIAN

(in awe)

Me either.

SEBASTIAN

Writing about this history would be an amazing thesis topic. You could write them back into history...

ASHA

(whispering)

Right, right. So many people written out of history. It's so fucked up.

Asha is overwhelmed with all the imagery and history. She grabs Sebastian's arm and leans into him.

EXT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART (MET), NEW YORK CITY, 2019,  
DAY

EARLY SPRING

Asha and Sebastian walk down the MET's steps.

SEBASTIAN

...that's a good thesis topic for you.  
I'm thinking about writing my thesis  
on John Atansov.

ASHA

Who's he?

SEBASTIAN

He was a half Bulgarian immigrant who  
invented the first digital electronic

computer.

ASHA  
(slyly)  
I knew that.

Sebastian laughs. Asha and Sebastian walk hand in hand away from the MET. Asha kisses Sebastian playfully on the lips repeatedly.

ASHA  
I mean, would we even have met a hundred years ago? We signed up for classes at NYU. Didn't think about it.

SEBASTIAN  
Yeah, it amazing how a 100 years is a short, long time.

Begin Montage:

- South Asian Indian men arrive on a boat to a US harbour.
- A lone European man gets his papers stamped in New York in the early 1900s. The Statue of Liberty is behind him.
- Irish immigrants leave their fields behind after the potato famine.
- Chinese immigrants brush the sweat and dirt off their faces while working on the United States railroads.
- Mexican immigrants are evaluated by a doctor at Ellis Island before entry to the United States.

End Montage.

End Flashback.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Asha returns from the bathroom and picks up the book and starts reading. Rodney is on his laptop, engrossed in an email.

EXT. YPRES, FIELD, 1915, DAY

SUMMER

Devi and Christopher are laying on a blanket and eating in the field. Christopher's walking cane is beside him. Devi is writing in her book. CLOSE UP: "In the fields there is love."

DEVI

(looks up from writing in a book)  
What are you thinking about?

Christopher strokes Devi's hair. She grabs his hand and clasps his hand with hers.

CHRISTOPHER

How I ended up in a crowded hospital and I met you. How I pretend to walk with a limp so you can continue to nurse me, and we can get these getaways in.

DEVI

Uh-huh...

Christopher unclasps his hand from Devi's to pick up dried peaches from a basket.

CHRISTOPHER

Peaches?

DEVI

I'm glad your mom sent over dried fruit this time. You will need to thank her for me.

CHRISTOPHER

You can thank her when you meet her.

Devi leans in to kiss Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER

Can't wait.

DEVI

You ever wonder what would happen if we get caught sneaking around?

CHRISTOPHER

Sometimes, then I have these moments with you and I can't think of anything but us.

DEVI

I never expected to fall in love  
coming here.

CHRISTOPHER

Me either. You can't outrun a love you  
were born to love.

DEVI

You think you were born to love me.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes.

DEVI

Chris...

CHRISTOPHER

I made a choice coming here. My life  
has changed by being here.

DEVI

Choices, chances and changes. I chose  
to come here to help, I took the  
chance to go on the ship, and here I  
am in the middle of the biggest change  
of my life.

CHRISTOPHER

Our choices led to this love. We love  
who we love.

DEVI

(gazes at the wildflowers)  
Who would have thought?

CHRISTOPHER

I've never felt so connected to  
anyone.

DEVI

Haha, how many women are you meeting  
on a farmstead in the countryside?

Christopher laughs.

DEVI

I feel the same way. An inexplicable  
energy. My Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER  
My beautiful Devi. The one who nursed  
me back to health.

DEVI  
(beat)  
I got you something.

Reaches into the basket and hands Christopher the gold coin  
her father gave her.

DEVI CONT.  
For good luck.

CHRISTOPHER  
I'm the luckiest.

DEVI  
It's my mom's necklace. My father gave  
it to her on their wedding day.

Christopher looks at the coin.

CHRISTOPHER  
I can't take this.

DEVI  
I want you to have it. Something to  
remember me by when we leave this  
place.

CHRISTOPHER  
(startled)  
What do you mean?

DEVI  
We were never supposed to meet. When  
this is over, you will go back to  
Britain and I will go back to India.  
Our paths will never cross again.

CHRISTOPHER  
We'll find a way.

DEVI  
We may transcend our homes, our  
cultures and lives, but this world  
won't. Our love can't transcend  
reality.

CHRISTOPHER

I refuse to accept any of what you are saying. I only care about our world. My world. You are my world.

DEVI

Let's continue enjoying our world in the time we still have. We can't change the world.

CHRISTOPHER

There is more time, choices and chances, and there will be more time for change. For years. I don't want anyone else.

Devi and Christopher kiss.

A montage:

- Showing flashbacks of their secret dates.
- Sneaking out at night to look at the stars in the field.
- Kissing under the stars.
- Sharing meals in the hospital.
- Christopher helps Devi clean up her nursing area.

End Montage.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019 DAY

LATE SUMMER

Two teenagers who are 16 enter the coffee shop and start bantering with each other. One teen is white and the other is Chinese. Asha follows them with her eyes.

WHITE TEEN

Stop it, chink.

CHINESE TEEN

Fuck'in cracker.

Both teens laugh.

INT. SMALL COLLEGE CLASSROOM, 2018, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Begin flashback.

PROFESSOR, 30s, African-American, woman, enters the room.

Asha, Sebastian, Rachel, Steven and Allison are strewn around the room.

PROFESSOR

Welcome to your first class as History graduate students. Please get into groups of three and take turns answering the three questions on the board.

She points to questions written by hand on a chalkboard.

PROFESSOR

1. Why did you choose history as your career path?
2. What is missing in your history education?
3. What would you like to share with the class that relates to your history?

Students break into groups and begin talking. Rachel and Sebastian are in one group who begin talking about where they live. Allison and Asha are in a group and Allison starts talking about bars. The conversations occur for a couple of minutes and disinterested students look at their phones and look out the window.

PROFESSOR

All right. Finish up your conversations. Start by telling us your name and where you have lived when answer question number 1?

RACHEL

Rachel, and I grew up in San Francisco. I was a Business major but changed to History my senior year.

PROFESSOR

What made you change your major?

RACHEL

I read about Chiune Sugihara and I was the only person outside of my history professor who had ever heard of him.

PROFESSOR

Who is familiar with Sugihara?  
(no one responds)  
Rachel, enlighten us further.

BEGIN 1939 FLASHBACK

INT. OFFICE IN LITHUANIA, DAY

LITHUANIA - 1939

CHIUNE SUGIHARA is reading a wire from Japan at his desk.  
CLOSE UP on the wire written in Japanese.

CHIUNE (V.O.)

"CONCERNING TRANSIT VISAS REQUESTED  
PREVIOUSLY STOP ADVISE ABSOLUTELY NOT  
TO BE ISSUED ANY TRAVELER NOT HOLDING  
FIRM END VISA WITH GUARANTEED  
DEPARTURE EX JAPAN STOP NO EXCEPTIONS  
STOP NO FURTHER INQUIRIES EXPECTED  
STOP.

K TANAKA FOREIGN MINISTRY TOKYO"

Chiune rubs his tear stricken eyes. His face is heavy with fatigue and stress. YUKIKO KIKUCH, Sugihara's Japanese wife, 30s, enters the room. They speak in Japanese.

YUKIKO

What's happened?

CHIUNE

They rejected my ask for the transit visas.

YUKIKO

Then we must continue our work.

INT. CHIUNE'S HOME, BASEMENT, NIGHT

Chiune and Kikuch forge visas over weeks in a basement, in secret. They work late into the night often falling asleep but awakening to complete their work. A cross is in their room where they work.

Jewish families come to the basement in secret under the cloak of night dodging curfews, police and Nazis. Some are arrested and put in jail and never reach Chiune.

Those who make it to Chiune's basement pick up their visas and make their way back home by taking alleyways and side streets to avoid being arrested.

Some of the elderly Jewish men and women try to kiss Chiune's feet after receiving their visas. Chiune stops them.

EXT. LITHUANIA TRAIN STATION, 1939, DAY

Chiune and Kikuch lean out of the train windows. Chiune hands the visa stamp to one of the many Jewish refugees who are at the train station for an attempt to get a visa from him. He hands her the visa stamp and compassionately grips her hand with both his hands. The train picks up speed.

INT. TRAIN (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Inside the train coach car, Chiune turns to Kikuch.

CHIUNE

I pray they will make more visas. I don't know what more we can do.

KIKUCH

Let's continue to pray our little work helps their families, and they are provided safe passage through Asia.

End 1939 Flashback.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM, 2018, DAY

Sebastian lets out a long, bewildered breathe. The class is silenced.

PROFESSOR

We all should know Chiune Sugihara's name like we know Oscar Schindler's name. Which leads right into our second question, what has been missing in your history education?

JIM, early 20s, white, blond, smirks.

JIM

Don't you think we should learn about the histories that are relevant?

PROFESSOR

What do you mean by your question?

JIM

I don't see why we would learn about history that isn't relevant to America.

RACHEL

History is passed down by those who have the means to write books and can access resources.

JIM

Right. The strong and smart survive and so do their stories. Learning about other's histories in America is irrelevant.

The class is stunned for a moment. Then, the class erupts in voices and loud voices explaining that all history is important.

HALLWAY

Class is letting out. Rachel and Asha walk out.

RACHEL

Can you believe that guy?

ASHA

Yeah, he is so clueless.

Both look into the classroom at Jim who is gathering his books at his seat.

ASHA CONT.

Going to be an interesting class with that guy around.

RACHEL

(laughing)  
Right?!

ASHA

What other classes are you taking?

RACHEL

Mayan History and this class.

ASHA

Same. Do you want to grab coffee  
before our next class?

RACHEL

Yes, lets' do it.

INT. COLLEGE COFFEE BAR, 2019, DAY

Rachel and Asha enter the school café. They spot Allison and Sebastian and wave.

ASHA

(to Rachel)

Did you get your books?

RACHEL

I'm waiting for my Amazon order.

They approach the barista.

ASHA

I'll grab a small mocha.

RACHEL

A small flat white, please.

Both move to the coffee bar.

ASHA

I think I'm going to grab my books  
from the store. I'm debating if I  
should get another laptop. Mine is  
three years old.

Rachel and Asha get their coffee and sit down. Allison and Sebastian come up to their table.

ALLISON

Hey, do you mind if we join you?

ASHA

Not at all.

Asha and Rachel move their bags out of the way. Allison shakes Rachel and Asha's hands.

ALLISON

I'm Allison.

Sebastian shakes Rachel and Asha's hands and stares at Asha.

ASHA  
Nice to meet you both. Interesting  
class, eh?

ALLISON  
Who is that douche? I hope he drops  
out.

All laugh.

SEBASTIAN  
I wasn't expecting those opinions in a  
grad class.

ASHA  
Maybe he'll stop showing up.

RACHEL  
(laughing)  
Hopefully!

ALLISON  
Are you two in the Mayan history class  
later today?

Asha, Rachel, and Sebastian say yes at the same time.

ALLISON  
Nice! Have you heard about the grad  
party on Saturday?

SEBASTIAN  
No.

ALLISON  
It's at a house on Monroe. It's  
supposed to be a mix of grad students  
but this house has fun parties and not  
lame ones.

RACHEL  
That sounds fun. What's your number?

Rachel and Allison exchange numbers.

ASHA  
I'm going to head out and buy my books  
before our class. Might as well act  
like a grad student.

SEBASTIAN

Nice to meet you.

He checks out Asha as she walks away. Rachel and Allison share a knowing look as they see Sebastian check out Asha.

INT. COLLEGE HOUSE PARTY, 2018, NIGHT

LATE SUMMER

Rachel, Asha, Steven, Allison and Sebastian walking up to the house. Rap music blaring and college party goes. People stop talking and stare at Asha as she enters the house.

Allison approaches, SASHA, 30s, grad student.

ALLISON

Hey!

Sasha and Allison hug.

SASHA

Hey! Glad you made it. The keg is in the back and food is in the kitchen.

ALLISON

These are my friends. We're all first year History students.

SASHA

Cool! There's a whole mix of people here. Kegs out back.

Allison turns to Asha, Sebastian, Rachel and Steven.

ALLISON

Drinks?

All nod and head to the keg. People pause their conversations as Asha walks by and glare at her. Allison waves to people, oblivious, that she knows.

STEVE

(to Allison)

How do you know all these people already?

ALLISON

I got here a month before classes and went to the bars and met all these people.

RACHEL

We know who has the party hook-up on campus!

SEBASTIAN

Allison!

End Flashback.

INT. COFFEE BAR, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

The Chinese and White teen leave the coffee bar trying to slap each other while running into patrons. Asha returns to her book.

EXT. YPRES BARRACKS ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, 1915, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Christopher is hunched over a rusty table in a makeshift tent. The floor is made out of wood and dusty. He is perched at an old desk in a chair, shuffling papers.

SOLDIER 2

How are you liking desk duty? Better than getting shot at?

Christopher ignores Soldier 2 because he is deep in thought comparing two pieces of paper.

CHRISTOPHER

There aren't enough gas masks for all the soldiers.

SOLDIER 2

We save money and the brownies go without.

CHRISTOPHER

(uneasy)

We aren't giving the Sepoys gas masks?

SOLDIER 2

Not all of them.

CHRISTOPHER

Why the hell not?

SOLDIER 2

I don't make the budget. You're looking good for being shot.

CHRISTOPHER

Been taken care of by the best Indian care nurse. Another two months and no one will be able to tell I got shot.

SOLDIER 2

Now you can go home. Nothing for any of us here.

CHRISTOPHER

(angrily)

No one asked you.

SOLDIER 2

Ain't nothing here for you. You are the lucky one to go home.

CHRISTOPHER

What are you really trying to say?

SOLDIER 2

You got dumped into the brown hospital because we run out of spaces for everything. You know why they keep us separated?

Christopher is silent.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT.)

They don't allow English nurses to take care of Indians. You're British. Indian women are illiterate and homely.

CHRISTOPHER

You don't know a damn thing.

SOLDIER 2

Look, what you do is your business. I'm stating a fact. You are a British soldier in the British army. Everyone else is just support.

CHRISTOPHER

If someone next to me takes a bullet, they are not support, they are my brother.

SOLDIER 2

A brother that doesn't eat the same things you do. Can't handle a gun the way you do. Doesn't have the same haircut as you. Shit, doesn't even speak the same language as you.

CHRISTOPHER

You're a real asshole.

SOLDIER 2

Call me what you, and think what you want. Act British. Stay low and out of trouble.

CHRISTOPHER

And what trouble is that?

SOLDIER 2

Nothing from me, mate. I'm a British guy just like you passing along information it appears you've forgotten.

CHRISTOPHER

(sarcastically)

Thanks for looking out. I'll handle myself.

SOLDIER 2

You are blind as a bat. Be careful with your days left in this hell hole.

Christopher pushes his chair back and limps away.

INT. INDIAN ONLY HOSPITAL, YPRES, 1915, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Christopher finds Devi alone praying at the Hindu altar. She is on her knees, barefoot, and has a scarf over her head. Her eyes are closed and she looks beautiful and stunningly Indian as she whispers, "Om Gam Ganapataye Namah," to herself.

A small medicine cabinet is transformed into a shrine that holds the golden deities Vishnu, Ganesh, and Durga. Incense burns in front of the deities along with candles. The altar with red linen lining the shelves where the deities sit shines bright against the dreary hospital and cots.

Christopher gently touches her arm afraid to break Devi's

peace and her beauty.

DEVI  
(opens her eyes)

HELLO.

CHRISTOPHER  
We must talk.

DEVI  
OK.

Christopher and Devi hurriedly make their way out of sight.

MEDICINE ROOM

CHRISTOPHER  
I think people know about us. We must  
be more careful when we are together.

DEVI  
Did someone say something to you?

CHRISTOPHER  
More or less.

DEVI  
Tell me what happened.

CHRISTOPHER  
I love you. I will do everything to  
protect you.

DEVI  
You are scaring me.

CHRISTOPHER  
I'm sorry; I didn't mean to.

DEVI  
What do I need to worry about? Tell  
me.

CHRISTOPHER  
There is nothing to tell.

DEVI  
I don't believe you.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

Asha looks up from her book and blankly stares at the back of Rodney's laptop, spacing out.

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY COMPUTER LAB, 2019, DAY

Begin Flashback.

Asha is typing on a computer.

MALA

Hi, Asha. Is anyone sitting here?

Mala points to an empty computer.

ASHA

Hey Mala, no, sit down.

MALA

How are things? I haven't seen you in a long time.

ASHA

Been so busy with school. Grad school takes up so much more time than undergrad. I thought two classes were going to be cake.

MALA

I'm applying to grad schools now. Is this what I have in store?

ASHA

Yup!

MALA

If you want a break, come over to the Indian Association meeting. I'm the new President. We're a mix of undergrad and grad students. Wednesday nights, 7 pm in Memorial Hall.

ASHA

(taking books out of a backpack)  
Oh, that sounds fun. I'll see if I can make it. What do you do in the meetings?

MALA

A lot of it is around planning our

yearly events.. We are planning our evening at the MET.

ASHA

Wow! That's awesome! How did that happen?

MALA

The MET reached out to NYU and said they wanted to provide event space for a South Asian event.

Mala checks her phone.

ASHA

I'll need to make some time and check out a meeting.

MALA

You are always welcome.

ASHA

That's so nice, thanks!

INT. COLLEGE MEMORIAL UNION HALLWAY, 2019, NIGHT

EARLY SPRING

Asha walks into Memorial Hall room. There are groups from the Indian Association talking to one another across the room. RAJ, S. Asian Indian, early 20s, grew up in the US, stands at the front of the room.

RAJ

Hey everyone, its's 7 pm so let's get started. Mala is at a conference so I'll lead today's meeting.

The crowd takes their seats towards the front of the room.

RAJ

Mala will like us to focus on the MET evening. We want to brainstorm the parts of Indian life we want to represent at the MET.

Elizabeth, S. Asian woman, early 20s, grew up in the US speaks up.

ELIZABETH

How about the immigration challenges

Indians faced? There's plenty of information in the school's South Asian Immigration and Histories collection.

SUNIL, S. Asian man, early 30s, grew up in India, heavy Indian accent, interrupts Elizabeth.

SUNIL

Immigration stories are Indian stories. We should focus on life in India.

KRISH, S. Asian Indian American, 20s, pipes up.

KRISH

Sunil, we can do both.

SUNIL

No, the immigration story isn't about real Indians.

KRISH

Wait, what? My parents immigrated here.

SUNIL

You aren't really Indian Krish and your parents aren't either.

RAJ

Guys...

SITA, 20s, Indian woman from India pipes up.

SITA

Sunil is right. If we are going to represent Indian history at the MET, then the focus should be on India only. US students from India are the authority on the subject.

RAJ

Come on, everyone. We all share a common history and we can represent the Indian immigrant story as well as the Indian perspectives.

SUNIL

No, we are nothing like you.

HODU, 20s, Indian woman from India supports Sunil.

HODU

(waving her hands)

You don't hang out with us or come to our homes to cook dinner. All of you who were born here hang out with your own white friends.

SUNIL

You don't have altars in your homes or do any aarti. You date goris who eat beef.

RAJ

(stunned)

Everybody calm down. Let's get back to why we are here.

KRISH

Bro, I gotta interrupt. What you said is messed up as fuck. What makes you think I want to attend these meetings anymore now that I know how half the people in the room think about me?

SUNIL

We don't need you. How much do you know about Indian history? Child's War? Jallianwal Bagh massacre. You don't know our history.

KRISH

Our history? What the hell man?

An argument ensues between the Indian immigrant students and the Indian students. Krish angrily leaves the room and is followed by two others. Asha is stunned and leaves through a back door.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS, 2019, NIGHT/INT. KATRINA'S, NEW YORK HOME, 2019, NIGHT

Asha walking home and talking to her sister on the phone.

Katrina is feeding Paven.

ASHA

And then this guy goes that all of us who weren't born in India aren't real Indians.

KATRINA

Whoa?!

ASHA

I know! Then he starts talking about all the things we don't do. Like pray in our homes or hang out with them.

KATRINA

Who are these people?

ASHA

I don't know. He even said that we shouldn't date non-Indians because they eat beef. I mean, does he know how small my dating pool would be if I dated people who didn't eat beef?

KATRINA

Right! I'm insulted and I wasn't there.

ASHA

They all started fighting and I snuck out the back.

KATRINA

I would get the fuck out of dodge too.

ASHA

For real. Imagine if they found about goat yoga.

(beat)

Ok, I'm home. I'll talk to you later.  
Bye.

Asha continues to walk after she hangs up the phone and is startled by a text ping. She sees a text from Mala. CLOSE UP, "How was your first meeting? I'm sorry I wasn't there!"

Asha sighs.

End Flashback.

INT. COFFEE SHOP NYC, 2019, DAY

Asha blinks and "wakes up" from her daze. She returns to reading.

INT. ENGLISH ONLY HOSPITAL, YPRES, 1915, DAY

EARLY FALL

Christopher is being reviewed by a DOCTOR, male, British, 40s.

DOCTOR

Breathe in.

Christopher breathes in.

DOCTOR

How many times a day do you still use a cane?

CHRISTOPHER

In the morning to get my footing and when I get tired.

The doctor looks at Christopher's bandages.

DOCTOR

Your wounds are healing nicely. I will get your leave papers ready. You will be home in no time, soldier.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm good here, doctor. I've been doing administrative work here while I've been healing.

DOCTOR

I'll get your orders ready and you can serve your remaining time pushing papers back home.

CHRISTOPHER

What if I want to stay here?

DOCTOR

Soldier, you will receive better care in Britain than these rat infested hospitals. You've already received sub-par care being in the Indian hospital.

CHRISTOPHER

Can't I heal and continue fighting?

DOCTOR  
You really want to stay out here?

CHRISTOPHER  
Yes.

The doctor looks at Christopher suspiciously.

DOCTOR  
You are the first soldier who has  
asked to stay.

CHRISTOPHER  
I'm a loyal person.

DOCTOR  
(scoffs)  
I'll update your chart and have you  
formally transferred to the Britain  
only hospital.

CHRISTOPHER  
It's fine. I'm good where I am.

The doctor looks up from his charts at Christopher in  
disbelief.

DOCTOR  
Be careful staying out here when you  
have chances to leave. Your commanding  
officer will give you your final  
orders.

INT. YPRES, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, 1915, DAY

EARLY FALL

Devi sees Christopher filing papers.

DEVI  
Hi.

CHRISTOPHER  
(lovingly)  
Hi.

DEVI  
What's wrong?

Christopher sighs and looks around to make sure they are  
alone.

CHRISTOPHER CONT.  
I had a doctor's appointment today.

DEVI  
And?

CHRISTOPHER  
He was going to discharge me and send me back to Britain to do paperwork. Finish off my contract.

Devi gets teary-eyed.

CHRISTOPHER  
He got the hint that I want to stay here.

DEVI  
If you can leave, you should.

Christopher reaches and holds Devi.

CHRISTOPHER  
I don't want to.

DEVI  
But...

Christopher moves Devi and himself into a closet and whispers to Devi to assure her.

CHRISTOPHER  
The doctor knows that I want to stay. I'm waiting for my orders.

DEVI  
You should leave.

CHRISTOPHER  
No, I want to be where you are. We will find a way to be together.

DEVI  
Both of us shouldn't be trapped here.

CHRISTOPHER  
Our choices will keep us together.

Christopher kisses Devi's forehead.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT.)

Trust us. Our changes are coming.

Devi sinks into Christopher as they embrace.

DEVI

War and chaos brought us together and now love and healing are tearing us apart.

CHRISTOPHER

We won't allow us to be apart. We're not trapped in any way.

Devi lets go of Christopher and stares at him blankly.

INT. COFFEE SHOP NYC, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Horns and sirens blast from the street. There is an emergency nearby. Asha looks out the window.

INT. NEW YORK HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM, 2019, DAY

EARLY SPRING

Begin Flashback.

Sebastian runs into an exam room, sees Asha, is relieved and hugs Asha.

SEBASTIAN

I was so worried.

Asha smiles.

ASHA

I'm OK. The car took the brunt of it.

SEBASTIAN

What did the doctor say?

ASHA

I'm good. Just need to rest and watch if I get dizzy or nauseous over the next two weeks.

SEBASTIAN

Did you call your parents?

ASHA

I called my sister and parents to let her know what happened, and I'm fine. It could have been much worse.

Sebastian kisses Asha's forehead.

SEBASTIAN

Thank goodness. Are we going car shopping?

ASHA

You would make my accident as an excuse to see cars.

Sebastian smiles slyly. Asha's, NURSE, 40s, white, overweight, walks in.

NURSE

Here is your visit summary. The pharmacy has your order for pain killers. Be sure to finish all of the pills. Do you have any questions before you leave?

ASHA

No. Thank you.

NURSE

Is this your boyfriend?

ASHA

Yes.

Nurse faces Sebastian.

NURSE

Watch for dizziness, forgetfulness, and nausea.

SEBASTIAN

Thank you, I will.

Nurse turns to Asha.

NURSE

Get some rest. No school or homework for the next couple of days.

ASHA

Sounds good to me.

Asha and Sebastian walk out of the exam room holding hands.

INT. ASHA'S APARTMENT, 2019, NIGHT

LATE SPRING

Sebastian is rummaging through papers on a desk in the apartment.

SEBASTIAN

Babe, where are the instructions from your doctor's office?

ASHA (O.S.)

I think by my Mayan history textbook.

CLOSE UP of Sebastian's hands as he picks up a piece of paper. It is a probation letter from the NYU History Department noting Asha is on probation and has to improve her grades to remain in graduate school.

ASHA CONT. (O.S.)

Did you find it?

SEBASTIAN

(scrambling)

Uh..yeah. I mean no.

BEDROOM, CONTINUOUS

Sebastian enters Asha's bedroom.

SEBASTIAN

I'll look for it later.

ASHA

Ok. What movie do you want to watch?

SEBASTIAN

Whatever you want, babe.

ASHA

Popcorn?

Sebastian starts to get up.

ASHA

I'll grab some.

SEBASTIAN

You need to rest. You were just in a

car accident.

ASHA

It's been almost two weeks. I can make popcorn.

Asha leaves the room. Sebastian falls to the pillow worried and rubs his face. Asha comes back with popcorn.

Asha eats popcorn and sits next to Sebastian on the bed who is lying down.

ASHA (CONT.)

What's wrong?

SEBASTIAN

When I was looking for your doctor's handout, I found your probation information. Why didn't you tell me?

ASHA

(stops eating popcorn)  
I don't know. It's pretty embarrassing.

SEBASTIAN

Babe, I could help you. We're a team, remember?

ASHA

I know...it's just...

Sebastian leans in.

ASHA CONT.

Grad school is hard. I'm seriously doubting I can do it...

SEBASTIAN

Of course, you can get through grad school. You're smarter than me, most of the people in grad programs.

ASHA

Thanks, but I'm not feeling very smart right now. It's like what happened in undergrad. I'm fucking up again.

SEBASTIAN

Don't doubt yourself, you got this. What do you need to do to get out of

probation?

ASHA

Pass all my classes for the next two semesters and put together my thesis proposal.

SEBASTIAN

Ok, we are going to study together and work on your proposal. Library date nights!

ASHA

(laughing)

Sexy.

SEBASTIAN

It's a win-win. I need to work on my proposal too. I've been thinking about where I want to teach after graduation.

ASHA

Where you thinking?

SEBASTIAN

USC has an Eastern European Studies program. I was also looking into completing my degree in LA.

ASHA

You're thinking about moving?

SEBASTIAN

Maybe. The LA area. But not this minute.

ASHA

When were you going to tell me about all of this?

SEBASTIAN

They're just thoughts right now. Things I am looking into.

ASHA

(getting angry)

Of course it's a big deal. What about me? Us? You're planning your next steps in a whole different part of the country. Without me. I didn't think

you wanted your own path.

SEBASTIAN

Babe, that's not what's going on at all...

ASHA

Yeah, it is! You're here talking about library dates and who knows how long you will be around at NYU..

SEBASTIAN

Stop!

ASHA

No! You're out here planning a future without me and I'm struggling with mine. How can you walk away from us?

SEBASTIAN

I'm not walking away from you. I'm looking and this is all too early to talk to you about.

ASHA

What happened to being a team? Are we a team when it's convenient for you? How can you say you love me and look to move?

SEBASTIAN

Don't question how much I love you. I'm not going to discuss how a move that isn't reality is me not loving you.

ASHA

(sarcastically)

Yeah, obviously.

SEBASTIAN

(getting angry)

You are being unfair! I'm not planning a future without. I'm thinking about my future...

ASHA

Yup. Your future.

SEBASTIAN

A future for me, us.

ASHA  
(angrily)  
Tell it like it is. Your future. I  
don't plan on moving out of the city  
soon.

SEBASTIAN  
Fuck! Stop!

ASHA  
Don't get mad at me because you're  
selfish.

SEBASTIAN  
Me thinking about our future is not  
selfish. At least I'm not fucking up  
my future flunking out of grad school.

Sebastian realizes what he said.

SEBASTIAN CONT.  
I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that.

ASHA  
Get out.

SEBASTIAN  
Babe, sorr...

Asha throws his cell phone at him.

ASHA  
I said get the fuck out!

End Flashback.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

Asha sees the flashing ambulance lights reflected in her  
mirrors as they pass the coffee shop windows.

RODNEY  
That was loud.

ASHA  
Too loud.

Asha returns to her book after the distractions from the  
street pass.

INT. YPRES BATTLEFIELD, VACANT BUILDING, 1915, NIGHT

LATE SUMMER

Christopher and Devi are "practicing" Christopher walking without a cane inside a food bunker. There are crates of food lined up against the wall. There is little food so the wooden floors are exposed in places throughout the building. The only light is the moonlight coming through the windows.

CHRISTOPHER

Kiss?

DEVI

No...

CHRISTOPHER

No one is around to see us. I'm walking without a cane. That deserves a kiss.

Devi looks around and kisses him on the cheek quickly.

CHRISTOPHER

That's it? What do I need to do to get a kiss on the lips tonight?

DEVI

Dance.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

DEVI

(playfully)

Dance.

CHRISTOPHER

Are you serious?

DEVI

Yes, cane-less boy.

CHRISTOPHER

What else can I do?

DEVI

You want a kiss on the lips. Then dance.

CHRISTOPHER  
Give me other choices.

DEVI  
Nope. Do you know how to dance?

CHRISTOPHER  
(embarrassed)  
No...

DEVI  
Oh, me neither. I was hoping you could teach me.

CHRISTOPHER  
Here we are. Two people who can't dance.

DEVI  
I once I saw a picture of King George and Queen Mary dancing at the Imperial Dunbar in Delhi.

CHRISTOPHER  
Imperial Dunbar?

DEVI  
It's where the new Emperor or Empress of India is celebrated.

CHRISTOPHER  
Oh, like a royal coronation. I didn't know they had a coronation in India also.

DEVI  
There was one a couple of years ago.

CHRISTOPHER  
How were the King and Queen dancing?

Devi grabs Christopher's hands. Puts her right hand and Christopher's left hand together up high. Devi places Christopher's right hand on her left hip and her left hand on Christopher's right shoulder.

DEVI  
King George held Queen Anne's right hand, and their hands were like this. I imagine they twirled around.

CHRISTOPHER

Let's twirl.

Christopher and Devi clumsily try to dance while in a formal dancing position. They try to dance but end up in an embrace slow dancing.

Christopher twirls Devi. Devi stops twirling by an open window. She grabs Christopher's hand and ushers him to an open window facing a clear, moon-light and starry night.

DEVI

You twirled me to the stars.

Devi and Christopher look out a window to see a moonlight, starry night. Devi is shadowed by the windows. Christopher is in the light.

DEVI CONT.

In the Vedas, the stars navigate and guide us in the light and the dark.

CHRISTOPHER

What do your stars tell about you?

DEVI

I was meant to be here. Help people. Find you. Love you.

Christopher smiles and looks lovingly at Devi.

DEVI CONT.

Imagine everything that was put into motion for us to be here at the same time. The bullet. The over-crowding. The stars mis-aligned for all of this to happen.

CHRISTOPHER

The stars *corrected* themselves so we could meet.

DEVI

Stars show us a path. We decide the rest. Me coming here seems so small compared to everything that is happening.

CHRISTOPHER

One decision may seem insignificant, but it could be the biggest decision

of your life. My decision led me to meet the woman I will spend the rest of my life with.

DEVI

(smiles forcefully)

The stars don't seem far away when I am with you. Maybe they will unscramble themselves for us.

CHRISTOPHER

I like where our stars are right now. Positioned perfectly.

DEVI

But for how long?

CHRISTOPHER

Long enough. I'm on another secret date. Pretending I can't walk. I am looking out at the stars with the woman I love.

DEVI

You are always looking for the positive.

CHRISTOPHER

Haha, I am alive. That's a good thing in war.

DEVI

Let's dance.

CHRISTOPHER

Outside? Come on.

DEVI

Someone might see us.

CHRISTOPHER

No we won't. I'll pretend I'm having trouble walking if someone sees us.

They run outside and slow dance under the stars.

INT. INDIAN ONLY HOSPITAL, 1915, DAY

EARLY FALL

HEAD NURSE

Devi, you received a wire.

Devi picks up the wire.

DEVI (V.O.)

CLOSE UP of the telegram. "Your return to India is scheduled for 28 days from now. End of wire."

DEVI CONT.

What is this?

NURSE

Your discharge notice. A new group of nurses is coming to replace you.

DEVI

Why? I signed a year contract.

HEAD NURSE

I don't know. Talk to the commanding officer if you want to know more.

Devi stares at the telegraph.

HEAD NURSE

(whispers)

Beti, time for you to go home. This place has rats running around everywhere, little food, and the smell of cow dung from home.

DEVI

I want to serve out my contract. It's not my time to go.

HEAD NURSE

Beti, war is not a place for a young jawana. The war will not last long. You can leave and live your married life. Your lack of choice in this war is the best thing for you.

Devi slowly backs away sighing.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019, DAY

Asha looks up from her book as a baby cries next to her mom.

Her mom tries to order coffee at the bar. Two toddlers run past her as they chase each other in giggles and their parents run after them.

EXT. PARK, 2019, DAY

EARLY SUMMER

Begin Flashback.

Sebastian is sitting at a park bench. CLOSE UP of a paper bag next to him. Asha approaches him. Sebastian is sitting in the shaded part of the bench. Asha sits down in the sun.

ASHA

Hi.

Sebastian kisses Asha's cheek.

SEBASTIAN

Hi, babe. Thanks for meeting me.

ASHA

Thank Rachel and Allison.

SEBASTIAN

I've missed you. Been miserable not seeing or hearing from you the last couple of weeks.

ASHA

I've missed you too. Hated you too.

SEBASTIAN

I'm sorry. So sorry if I came across that I was making a life change without talking to you or involving you.

ASHA

Thanks. I'm sorry I threw my cell phone at you.

Sebastian laughs.

ASHA CONT.

(beat)

We have so many choices. Get a Ph.D., travel, move to another state to teach.

SEBASTIAN

And, we, can do it all tog..

Asha sharply turns to Sebastian and clenches her jaw. Her eyes are sad.

ASHA

There a lot of unknowns and I want my degree. My focus is on getting my degree on track and finish this program.

SEBASTIAN

What are you saying?

ASHA

You're great, Sebastian. I accept your apology and I love you.

ASHA CONT.

We could end up in completely different parts of the country or the world in less than two years...

SEBASTIAN

Or be together.

ASHA

That is one possibility. These last two weeks have shown me how much hard work and dedication is needed in all parts of our lives. I need to make better choices.

SEBASTIAN

Do we as a couple matter?

Asha tears up.

ASHA

I don't know.

Both look at the children playing silently on swings and playground equipment.

SEBASTIAN

What do I do to make this right? I misstepped.

ASHA

(wiping tears away)

I don't know. What happened wasn't a mis-step. It made me really feel like we aren't in sync to last.

SEBASTIAN

I'm here. I want to be here. With you. For a very long time. It's where I want to be.

ASHA

Thank you.

SEBASTIAN

You're welcome, babe.

Both smile at each other.

ASHA

What's that?

Asha points to a paper bag next to Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Oh, almost forgot. I got you something.

Sebastian hands Asha the bag.

ASHA

What is it?

SEBASTIAN

Open it.

Asha opens bag and takes out an Indian tapestry. It is the tapestry with red mandala in the middle that Geeta saw in the market. Long faded, the ends are fraying.

ASHA

It's beautiful.

SEBASTIAN

I saw it at the MET when we saw the "Forgotten Heroes" exhibit. I thought it might give you inspiration.

ASHA

The stitching on this is incredible. My favorite colors too. Thank you.

SEBASTIAN

I'm glad you like it.

ASHA

I don't think I've seen this type of pattern before.

SEBASTIAN

It was made around WW1 in India. One of the few artifacts from that time that's survived.

ASHA

I can't believe the MET carries these. Very cool.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, the pattern reminds me of connection.

ASHA

Are you trying to make me cry again?

SEBASTIAN

No, no, no. I never want to see you cry, hurt, because of me. The pattern. So connected. Reminds me of our connection, all of our connections, and how all our stories are connected.

ASHA

(softly)

Yeah..

SEBASTIAN

Where do we go from here?

ASHA

Rebuild our friendship and see where we can go from there.

SEBASTIAN

Are we broken up?

ASHA

Yes.

Sebastian runs his hands through his hair with a devastated look on his face.

SEBASTIAN

Ok.

ASHA

Thank you for the gift. I will see you later.

SEBASTIAN

(heartbroken)

See you.

Asha slowly gets up, and puts the tapestry on the bench and walks away.

ASHA

(under her breathe)

I made the right choice. I made the right choice. I made the right choice.

Sebastian looks at the kids playing.

MOM, 30s, in the distance yelling to her daughter trying to kick a soccer ball.

MOM

Good try. Get better the second time.

Sebastian, in the shadow, slowly gets up from the bench and walks to his car. He steadies himself by grabbing the bench as he holds back tears. As he reaches for his car keys in his pocket. He struggles to walk to his car.

Bzzz, his phone goes off in his pocket. He grabs his phone and reads a text from Bridgette. The text reads, CLOSE UP, "We'll be in LA by next month. Our daughter deserves us both. It's time to tell your parents." Sebastian smiles briefly and enters his car.

End Flashback.

INT. COFFEE SHOP IN NYC, 2019 DAY

Asha smiles as she watches the toddlers run out an open door with their parents hastily trying to catch them. She returns to her book.

INT. YPRES, BELGIUM FIELD, 1915, EVENING

EARLY FALL

DEVI

(yelling)

Why don't you let us go?

CHRISTOPHER

How can you ask me to do that? How can you let us go? When you love someone...sometimes you have to make the choice and jump.

DEVI

I don't want this either but you are getting stationed back to Britain and I am heading back to India.

Frustrated, Devi turns away from Christopher.

DEVI CONT.

(softly)

Our time has been beautiful. I wouldn't change a day.

CHRISTOPHER

Please, we can figure this out. You have a choice. You can walk away or choose us.

DEVI

I want to choose us, but how? We are from different countries and our lives intertwined here. Our lives will never intertwine again. It's best to let each other go now.

CHRISTOPHER

Choose us.

DEVI

That isn't a choice we have.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, there is.

DEVI

I need to go. This is too hard.

CHRISTOPHER

Where are you going?

DEVI  
Take a walk.

CHRISTOPHER  
It's not safe.

DEVI  
I won't go far.

CHRISTOPHER  
I love you.

Devi turns to face Christopher and strokes his face.

DEVI  
I love you.

Devi walks further into the field and Christopher looks on.

INT. YPRES, BELGIUM FIELD, 1915, NIGHT

EARLY FALL

Devi is sitting in the field crying. Fog surrounds her but she is oblivious to it. She at the stars through tear stricken eyes. AUSTRIAN SOLDIERS approach Devi. She doesn't notice them. The Austrian soldiers speak in German.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 1  
Hands up!

Devi looks at the soldiers startled. Austrian Soldier 2 grabs Devi and shoves her to her feet.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 1  
Stand up!

DEVI  
I'm a nurse. I don't have anything.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 1  
She is harmless.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 2  
You don't know that.

DEVI  
Please, this is a mistake.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 2  
Shut up!

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 1  
What should we do with her?

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 2  
This.

Flashback:

Devi's head is covered with a white scarf. There is a slight breeze as her scarf whistles in the wind. She is wearing gold earrings and the coin she gave Christopher hangs from a necklace on her neck.

Devi is in the field, alone, watching the sunset and the wildflowers sway in the wind.

End flashback.

Austrian Soldier 2 shoots Devi in the head. Austrian Soldier 1 gasps in disbelief.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER 2  
(in German)  
Let's go.

Austrian Soldier 2 stomps away. Austrian Soldier 1 looks at Devi's body and fumbles away backwards still in disbelief.

EXT. YPRES BARRACKS ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, 1915, DAY

EARLY FALL

Christopher is packing boxes at a desk. Paul, teens, skinny, British, is in the hallway talking to another soldier.

PAUL  
They found her in the fields past the perimeter. Some Indian nurse.

Christopher jumps up and runs into the hallway.

CHRISTOPHER  
Hey, what did you just say?

PAUL  
We found an Indian nurse out in the fields. Shot. Probably by an Austrian or German.

Christopher runs to the Indian hospital. He sees the head nurse weeping on a cot. He kneels in front of her.

Christopher begins to weep.

CHRISTOPHER

No, no, no.

Head Nurse and Christopher sob. Christopher falls to the ground inconsolable.

A montage.

- Lawrence and Geeta are crying in their home with a picture of Devi in Geeta's lap.

- Fighting continues in Ypres with Indian and British soldiers dying.

- Christopher is melancholy and boards a ship with a British flag on it.

End montage.

INT. INDIAN HOME, MUMBAI, INDIA, 1900, DAY

INDIAN ELDER

Her birth chart is right.

A young Lawrence and a young Geeta are sitting on the floor with an Indian Elder. Geeta weeps and Lawrence comforts her. There is an astrological chart with Indian markings between the young couple and the Indian Elder. The Indian Elder speaks in Hindi.

INDIAN ELDER

Let her live her life. Protect her and keep her near at all times. Only home, school and poojas.

Geeta starts to sob uncontrollably, inconsolable.

GEETA

Why would God let her die so young?

Thump! A seven year old Devi has fallen to the ground while playing five feet from where her parents sit.

DEVI

Papa, am I going to die?

EXT. YPRES, BELGIUM, TRAIN STATION, 1915, DAY

## LATE FALL

Christopher finds a seat on a train with British flags on the mirrors and on the doors leading into seating compartments. The fall colors whizz by on trees as the train passes the countryside. Christopher opens up Devi's journal where on the first page she has written, "You can't outrun the love you were born to find." He turns the page and finds a poem.

DEVI (V.O.)

In the fields there is love,

In the barracks there is fear.

What truths do they sell to the  
papers, my dear?

If I am to leave this earth because of  
my stars, will I fall into the lotus?  
Or into one of the hells for  
disobeying my parents.

I did not fear death until I saw flesh  
burnt to the bone, jaws blown off once  
beautiful men, or the wretched smell  
that engulfs a burned body. Each one  
gone before their time. Or did they?  
Maybe their stars were as faulty as  
mine.

In this death, fear, false truths and  
no care, I found you. Shadowy nights  
lead our path. The shadows do not give  
way to light. Only its many raths.

Now, I will be far away from my heart,  
that beats in another. Where our days  
are someone else's yesterday. Never  
will others know our sorrows, only the  
joys of their secure tomorrows.

If I could choice a life in union with  
my cherished, then my tomorrows would  
be a happy ending in this short life.  
I am still in the moments.

When I see my heart walk towards me.  
Always in secret because our love is  
cloaked behind the stories of others.  
Even if our love binds us, love binds

us all. In all of its sloppiness and  
its falls.

My life is a series of limited choices  
with a heart that yearns for limitless  
choices.

CHRISTOPHER

(whispers to himself in tremendous  
grief)

If only you had more choices. More  
chances, choices, and changes.

EXT. CHRISTOPHER'S FARMHOUSE IN BRITAIN, 1915, EVENING

LATE FALL

Christopher walks up to his farmhouse steps. The white  
farmhouse with a porch that runs the house length. The roof  
is caved in and the steps are broken. The exterior of the  
house is in disarray and falling apart. Rusty tools line the  
house.

Christopher lets his heavy military sack fall to the ground  
as he falls onto the last step in front of the farmhouse. He  
blankly stares at the wildflowers in front of him swaying in  
the wind. Christopher picks up his sack and turns to climb  
the stairs. He hesitates to climb up and turns to go down the  
path into the barn. He enters the barn through the open door  
and lies into a bale of hay.

INT. BARN, 1915, DAY

LATE FALL

The sun peers into the barn's unkempt and broken rafters.  
Christopher opens his eyes as the sun hits his face. He yawns  
and turns his head to the door to see his mom.

VICKY

Christopher! What..

CHRISTOPHER

Hi, mama.

Vicky lunges to Christopher and hugs him. She lets him go and  
notices his sack.

VICKY

When did you get back? Your back has  
hay all over it. Did you sleep here

last night?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes, mama.

VICKY

You've been back and didn't let me know.

CHRISTOPHER

I needed some time alone.

VICKY

I don't under...

CHRISTOPHER

It's OK, mama. I'm fine and here now.

VICKY

Let's get you some breakfast.

Vicky grabs Christopher's waist and pushes him towards the barn door.

INT. CHRISTOPHER'S FARMHOUSE HOME, KITCHEN, 1915, DAY

LATE FALL

Vicky is busy making eggs as Christopher sits at a rundown table and on an unsteady chair in the kitchen. The cabinets are falling off and many of them do not have knobs on them. The floor is dirty with dry rot throughout the boards, and the wooden island where Vicky is mixing eggs in an old wooden bowl is falling apart.

VICKY

Your room is all made up. Ready for you. You can...

CHRISTOPHER

Where is he?

Vicky stops mixing the eggs and looks at Christopher.

VICKY

In the back. More frail than when you left. He wasn't like this when he was your age. He was just like you. Kind, handsome, giv...

CHRISTOPHER

Is there enough money to save the farm?

VICKY

Yes, baby.

CHRISTOPHER

Ok, mama.

Christopher rises from his chair and makes his way down the farmhouse hallway. The hallway is dark with only wooden panels as the wall. The floor creaks as Christopher slowly wanders to the back door. The back door creaks as he pushes it open. He steps onto an old back patio and turns his head to the right.

Sitting in an old wooden rocking chair is HENRY, Christopher's father, 60s, frail, all white hair, with a dirty blanket on his lap. The left side of Henry's face is visible to Christopher.

HENRY

Back from the fucking dead.

Christopher shakes his head.

HENRY

You want my thank you for saving the farm. You're not getting it.

CHRISTOPHER

How did you get this way?

HENRY

When you reach my age, you'll understand how deep scars run. How they change you in time.

Henry runs his hand down the deep gash on the right side of his face.

HENRY

Kill any of those fucking brownies out there?

Christopher strokes the gold coin from Devi that dangles on a chain around his neck.

CHRISTOPHER

No, I loved one. I chose different

than you.

INT. SEBASTIAN PARENT'S HOME, 2019, NIGHT

LATE SUMMER

Sebastian and his parents are sitting in the kitchen eating dinner. The kitchen is soft with a cream color with matching appliances. The dinner table has six seats with Sasha at the head of the table and Nikolay and Sebastian face each other next to Sasha. There is pot roast, vegetables and lemonade for dinner.

Sasha and Nikolay are almost done eating. Sebastian's plate is still full and he is playing with his food with a fork.

SASHA

(to Sebastian)

Your brother always busy. Work this.  
Work that. Broadway show this.  
Broadway show that.

NIKOLAY

He is busy. Sebastian, I need your  
help with the tools from earlier.

Sasha looks at Sebastian who is distracted.

SASHA

Eat, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

I'm not hungry.

SASHA

Eat.

Sebastian puts his fork down.

SEBASTIAN

I need to tell you something.

Sasha and Nikolay put down their forks and look at Sebastian with concern.

SEBASTIAN CONT.

Do you remember Bridgette?

Sasha and Nikolay nod their heads.

SEBASTIAN CONT.

Umm...before she moved back home to LA  
after undergrad...

SASHA

Sebastian?

NIKOLAY

What's wrong?

SEBASTIAN

I have a daughter.

Sasha and Nikolay look at each other and then at Sebastian.

NIKOLAY

Just born?

SEBASTIAN

She is almost eight months.

SASHA

Why didn't you tell us?

SEBASTIAN

Bridgette wanted to think about things  
back home in LA. She left after our  
Bachelors ceremony. I've been trying  
see our daughter since December. When  
she was born.

SASHA

We have a grand-daughter?

SEBASTIAN

Yes. Will you accept her if she's half-  
Bulgarian?

A pause from Sasha and Nikolay.

SASHA

Yes.

PORCH

Sebastian lets out a sigh and scrolls through his phone  
contacts. CLOSE UP: He pauses at Asha and calls the number.  
He bites his lip in anticipation as the ringing continues.  
The calls goes to voicemail. Sebastian speaks into the phone.  
"Hi Asha. I wanted to see if we could grab coffee. I got some  
things to tell you about the fight...ummm...about me going to

LA."

INT. COFFEE SHOP, 2019, DAY

LATE SUMMER

Asha closes her book, "Tapestry: Indians in WW1."

SEBASTIAN

(smiling)

Hi, gorgeous.

Asha looks up. Sebastian is holding SOL, his daughter, 8 months, who lunges for Asha. Asha gently grabs Sol and gives her a kiss on the head. Sebastian leans down and gives Asha a kiss on the lips.

FADE OUT.