

HI, LIBIDO

Written by

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BLACK SCREEN

(Sounds of)

CHURCH BELLS

A beat.

EXT. BUDDHIST TEMPLE - DAY

SYNAGOGUE MUSIC

A burst of dusty orange. MONKS walk quietly.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Stained glass windows depicting light and color.

Crucifixes everywhere. Rows of pews. Glorious candles.

INT. MOSQUE, MAIN HALL - DAY

MEN walk into the hall. Some greet one another.

The ATHAAN (Islamic call to prayer) booms from the speakers.

Men align shoulder to shoulder ready to pray.

Silence.

The IMAM prays. The people follow. All men.

SAMARA (V.O.)

When I was little, of all the
religions, mine was the one that
was dismissive of women.

Men pray.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Men got to go to the Mosque. Men
got to go to work. Macho
breadwinners. Women were breeders.
Simpletons. We weren't welcome at a
Mosque. We weren't even allowed to
attend funerals.

Prayer continues.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Samara's MOTHER MEMSIM (late 30s, wearing traditional South Asian attire) sweats by the stove.

BABY SAMARA cries in her baby chair by the dining table.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Mom was the home-maker. The
caretaker. The slave.

Memsim turns to her but a pan inflames on the stove. She retreats to turn down the heat. Baby Samara continues crying.

Memsim is finally able to go to her. She lifts her child and cradles her to her chest. A forlorn expression.

SAMARA (V.O.)
A life she never chose.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

A radio controlled race car WHIRLS as it accelerates toward the kitchen.

Kitchen door opens. Memsim is startled.

MOM
Samara, how many times? I'll step
on it. You want me to fall?

YOUNG SAMARA (8 years old. Crinkled curly hair. Bright eyes) climbs down the stairs, radio control in hand.

YOUNG SAMARA
Mom. You have to see the range on
this. I drove it down the hall all
the way from upstairs.

Memsim picks up the car and passes it to her.

MOM
That's nice honey. Go wash up.

YOUNG SAMARA
Where's dad?

MOM
Mosque. Or garage. I'm not sure, I
think he'll --

The sound becomes inaudible as Samara is sent up the stairs.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 As I grew though, it seemed like my
 generation was one that was
 gradually bringing change.

INT. MOSQUE, LADIES' HALL - DAY

WOMEN sit with prayer books in their hands. Some pray. Some talk quietly.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 We were accepted into Mosques.

INT. MOSQUE, CLASSROOM - DAY

CHILDREN sit in a circle. Their desks pushed toward the walls. A FEMALE TEACHER instructs them while holding the Qur'an. Young Samara is attentive.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 In fact we were welcomed. Though
 that might be because we are better
 teachers than men.

A KNOCK at the classroom door. A MAN opens it, but doesn't enter. His gaze low. He speaks, but doesn't look at the Woman.

They converse.

The Man shakes his head dismissively as he closes the door.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 But it seemed, no matter how many
 inches we earned; a grumpy old man
 would always miss the days when we
 were insignificant.

The Woman gives an 'I set you straight' look before confidently tending to her pupils. She nods to Samara.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 Days where we didn't have a voice.

Samara begins reciting aloud.

A beat.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 Fact is, our voice mattered.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

TWEEN SAMARA (12) creaks open her bedroom door. She peeks through the gap. A movie on the TV screen.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Samara's sister YOUNG RIA (14) is with cousin YOUNG AFSHA (14) on the bed. They're engrossed in the movie -- where a man has lifted the skirt of a woman and his face is between her legs on the hood of a car (Body Of Evidence).

Tween Samara watches intently from the doorway.

SAMARA (V.O.)
It was like nothing I'd ever seen.

Samara stares, eyes brighter than ever.

SAMARA (V.O.)
This part of a woman, taken for
granted by men. This woman,
controlling the man with --

YOUNG RIA
-- Hey!

Ria pauses the movie.

YOUNG RIA (CONT'D)
Go away. I have the room tonight.

TWEEN SAMARA
Not all night.

They bicker.

SAMARA (V.O.)
My sister. I love her...

Ria throws a pillow toward the door.

TWEEN SAMARA
Mom said dinner.

YOUNG RIA
Alright!

SAMARA (V.O.)
... eventually.

Ria and Afsha get off the bed and exit the room. Samara's eyes are still glued to the screen. Afsha notices.

Ria calls to her Mother as she trots downstairs.

YOUNG RIA (O.C.)
Mom! You said we had the room?

Afsha approaches Samara. She puts an arm over her shoulder.

YOUNG AFSHA
It's what people do. For fun.

TWEEN SAMARA
Fun?

Afsha nods and starts toward the stairs.

YOUNG AFSHA
Come on.

Samara closes the door and follows.

TWEEN SAMARA
Will you tell me about it?

YOUNG AFSHA
No. I'm a kid just like you. What do I know?

TWEEN SAMARA
You said it's fun.

A beat.

YOUNG AFSHA
Seems like fun, don't you think?

They walk down the stairs.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Afsha. One of my good friends now.
She never tells me everything. Only
enough to spark my curiosity.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Mother and FATHER; PAREK (early 40s. Dad bod), are getting set for the day ahead. They seem heated in argument. Tween Samara and Young Ria have breakfast at the table.

Samara studies her parents.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Something I didn't understand was
how did it happen.
(MORE)

SAMARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What leads to the point where a man
had his head between a woman's
legs?

Parek marches off with a piece of toast in his hand. Memsim
is dejected by the sink.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I never thought it ever went down
that way between my mom and dad.
They have probably been that
clueless their entire lives, as I
was in those early years.

Samara eats her cereal, deep in thought.

EXT. SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND - DAY

Hectic playground. KIDS at play.

Some play with a soccer ball. Others talk. Tween Samara
watches some of the older kids.

Girls chasing boys.

Boys chasing girls.

A girl grabs a boy and kisses his cheek.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Kiss-chase. Like *tag*, with kisses.

Samara watches the kids play kiss-chase in awe.

She spies a specific boy; YOUNG RICK (15).

SAMARA (V.O.)

I became interested. More intent to
study -- whatever this was -- than
I ever studied anything my entire
life.

INT. SCHOOL, CLASSROOM - DAY

Tween Samara watches the clock tick down to 3:15PM.

SCHOOL BELL RINGS

The kids gather their books and belongings. Samara bolts
toward the door.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tween Samara makes a mess of the bedroom. She's in search of something.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I looked and I looked.

Samara inadvertently wrecks the room as she searches through Young Ria's things. Namely through a stack of DVDs.

Ria storms in.

YOUNG RIA
Brat, what the hell are you doing?

Ria pushes Samara away from her stuff and begins to tidy up.

YOUNG RIA (CONT'D)
This is my side of the room. When will you stop bothering me? When will you leave me alone? I'm so gonna tell mom about this.

SAMARA (V.O.)
She's never been the understanding type, my sister. It took me a minute to realize I couldn't find the DVD 'cause it wasn't hers. Wasn't Afsha's either, before you ask. But in any case, they had returned it.

INT. FAMILY SUV - DAY

Memsim and Parek argue in the front seats.

Tween Samara and Young Ria mind their own business in the back. Samara glances at her parents.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Still, I couldn't imagine them being the way I saw on the movie. Eventually I did realize it was pretty gross to even try imagine your parents like that. But I was a kid, what did I know, right?

INT. SCHOOL, CLASSROOM - DAY

TEEN SAMARA (14) in class. Fellow STUDENTS are taking a test. She looks around, specifically at the boys.

A GINGER KID with patches in his hair.

A BOY chewing on his pencil, lead first.

SWEATY BOY.

TYPICAL JOCK.

She turns her head toward a window and sees a MAINTENANCE GUY (20) sweeping leaves. His back is to her. He turns and they make eye contact --

TAPPING ON TEEN SAMARA'S DESK

The TEACHER gives her a look, then looks at her paper. Samara readjusts in her seat and tries to concentrate.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I wanted to know what it felt like.
That's what I wanted.

A glimpse toward the window; nobody there.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Teen Samara storms in and slams the door shut. She's agitated, but clear minded as to what she was going to do. She strips off her sweater and near tears off her shirt.

She grabs her biggest pillow, opens her bed cover. Climbs in.

She slides off her pants and kicks them to the floor.

She pulls the bed cover over herself. She's fidgety as she mounts her pillow -- she freezes -- TEEN RIA (16) has entered the room.

A beat as Samara watches her sister.

Ria has ear-buds in. She's talking on the phone. Samara lays still atop her pillow. Luckily for her Ria is oblivious and she leaves the room.

TEEN SAMARA

Ugh.

She exhales.

She fidgets...

MOM (O.S.)

(yells)
Girls. Mosque!

TEEN RIA (O.S.)

Coming mom.

Samara tries to climax --

Ria re-enters the bedroom. Eye contact with Samara and an inquisitive look as she removes her ear-buds. Samara is mostly off the pillow. She lays adjacent to it.

TEEN SAMARA

What?

A 'what are you doing' look from Ria.

TEEN RIA

Come on. Mosque. Get ready.

Ria gets changed.

TEEN SAMARA

I don't feel well.

TEEN RIA

Shut up. You were fine at school.
Get dressed.

TEEN SAMARA

But, I'm not clean.

A look from Ria.

TEEN RIA

Are you gonna get the sheets red?

TEEN SAMARA

No. It's not that. I'm just --

MOM (O.S.)

(yells)
Girls?!

TEEN RIA

Coming!

SAMARA (V.O.)

No, I wasn't.

Ria is dressed.

TEEN RIA

I got bathroom. Bet I can do Wudhu
before you're ready.

Ria marches off.

Samara exhales and gets off her bed. She's exasperated.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Ria was as excited for Mosque as I
was excited for --

Samara looks out her window. TEEN RICK (17) walks past her house, down her street.

SAMARA (V.O.)
... the older boy. From the
playground. Rick.

EXT. KHAN STREET - DAY

Teen Rick walks along, smoking. He catches Teen Samara in his peripheral. She stands in the window frame in only her bra and panties.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Most people's instinctive reaction
would have been to draw the
curtains, and fast.

A beat.

Rick slows his walk to a stop as he turns to get a proper look at her.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I didn't mind that he saw me. I
liked that he wanted to look.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Teen Samara jumps as her mom enters and quickly pulls her away from the window frame.

MOM
What are you doing? You have time
to stare at the sky? Get a move on.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Party pooper. Though I was never
sure if Rick saw my mom yank me
away. Maybe he thought I was being
elusive and mysterious.

Memsim collects Samara's clothes off the floor and puts them in a laundry bag.

MOM

You know your sister's downstairs already?

SAMARA (V.O.)

How long was I staring?

MOM

Class starts in less than ten minutes. We have to drive because I'm picking up your father and you know what roads are like right now.

TEEN SAMARA

We could walk. Just Ria and me.

MOM

Nope. Nice try. I know you two have skipped Madrasa before. You think the mothers don't talk? Oh we talk.

Memsim hangs Samara's Mosque attire from the door.

TEEN SAMARA

Well it's not like the Mosque takes a register.

MOM

What?

TEEN SAMARA

Nothing.

Memsim near enough drags Samara to the clothes.

MOM

Come on, get on with it.

TEEN SAMARA

Mom I'm not clean. Please?

Memsim begins to read the riot act.

SAMARA (V.O.)

She didn't seem to understand. No one did.

EXT. KHAN HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

Teen Samara and her Mother exit the house and get in the SUV. Teen Ria is already in the vehicle.

INT. FAMILY SUV - DAY

Memsim drives. Out the window Teen Samara sees Teen Rick walking. He's with a BLONDE GIRL (17). They seem to be getting along. Teen Samara sits back dejected.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I wasn't clean. Couldn't tell ya how often I would go to Mosque wet between my legs. My intention was always there -- I washed before leaving the house. Did Wudhu too. But my mind and body raced to pleasure. I just wanted it. My body craved it.

Teen Ria begins yapping to a friend on a call through her earbuds. Samara stares out the window, unsatisfied.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

11:32PM on the clock. Teen Ria is asleep.

SAMARA (V.O.)

In my early teens, nearly every night was the same. I'd wait for Ria to fall asleep. And then --

Teen Samara unlocks her cellphone. She opens her *private browser* with a pin code. Hundreds of porn sites open.

EXT. SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND - DAY

Teen Samara is running around. The atmosphere is busy and loud. She seems happy hanging with her friends.

Every so often, she looks across the playground.

Every so often, Teen Rick looks back at her.

INT. SCHOOL, RESTROOM - DAY

Teen Samara hurriedly enters and goes into a cubicle. Slams the door closed.

She breathes heavily.

A few minor moans.

A beat...

SAMARA (V.O.)
My left hand became my best friend.

The cubicle door opens and Samara exits, at ease and smiling.

INT. SCHOOL, LIBRARY - DAY

Teen Samara is at a desk. Notepad and books open in front of her, but she's lost in thought.

She moves from her seat and goes to the bookshelves. She reaches for a book on Egypt's Cleopatra.

(Sound of) KISSING.

Samara looks between the books. A couple is on the other side making out. She tries not to stare.

She turns away and begins to walk.

TEEN SAMARA
Watch my stuff.

Her friends nod.

She heads toward the signs pointing toward the restroom.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I'm right handed, but using my left
was my way of asking God
forgiveness for my dark and dirty
side. Everything turned me on.

MONTAGE

- a ball bouncing on a ping-pong racket.
- Men grunting as they played tennis.
- a glimpse of the school Maintenance Guy pouring water over his head.
- Teen Samara in her class. She sees her Teacher bend over.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Everything.

END MONTAGE

INT. KHAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Teen Samara has a blanket over her as she's on a single seater sofa. Teen Ria is sat by their Mom. Their father is on the other single seater. They watch an old Bollywood movie.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Sometimes I challenged myself to
see if I could come in the presence
of others.

Samara's left hand fidgets under her blanket.

Parek drifts off and begins to snore. Memsim turns up the volume on the movie.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Sometimes I'd do it out of straight
boredom.

Samara's arm movement coincides with the beat of the music on the film. Eyeing the hunk on screen, she smiles, climaxing. A look of satisfaction as she knows she'd gotten away with it.

INT. HOUSE PARTY, BEDROOM - NIGHT

LOUD MUSIC. TEENAGERS everywhere. They all seem to have to shout to be able to hear one another.

Teen Samara enters a closet. She's followed in by the GINGER PATCHY KID from earlier.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I honestly don't remember his name.

The closet door closes and stifles the sound of the music.

A beat. It's a little awkward. Both Samara and Ginger Patch Kid keep their eyes away from each other.

SAMARA (V.O.)
This went on a while. Seven minutes
kids got locked in that closet. We
knew what we were supposed to do.

Finally some eye contact. A nod from the Ginger Patch Kid.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Most kids didn't know where to
start, but I was becoming a legend.

Samara steps toward the kid and reaches for his face --

INT. SCHOOL, CAFETERIA - DAY

GROUP OF TEENS

Whoa!

Teen Samara is centre of attention with friends gathered around her.

GIRL

Him? You kissed --

SAMARA (V.O.)

-- Ginger Patch Kid --

Samara nods, somewhat proudly.

TEEN SAMARA

And John. And Derek. Lyle.

TEEN LYLE (14) at that moment walks by with his friends.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Lyle was the jock.

TEEN LYLE

Hey.

Eye contact. A smile from Samara.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Lyle's was actually the first dick I touched. Yeah, it was at a party, in a closet.

INT. HOUSE PARTY, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

TEENS everywhere. LOUD MUSIC. Teen Samara passes Teen Ria as she walks down the stairs. Teen Afsha follows.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Problem was that my world was small. Ria and Afsha were at most of the parties I was at.

Afsha pulls on Samara's arm.

TEEN AFSHA

Hey? You OK?

Samara keeps walking. Afsha follows.

Ria looks down the hall. Lyle casually exits the bathroom.

INT. HOUSE PARTY, DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

More TEENS. Teen Afsha follows Teen Samara out of the house.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY, FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Teen Afsha halts Teen Samara.

TEEN AFSHA
Hey. What happened?

Samara holds back tears as she explains.

SAMARA (V.O.)
He tried touching me. I didn't want
him to. I only liked what I did.
For myself or to a guy. I wasn't
ready to be pleased by someone
else. Not by just anyone anyway.

Teen Ria comes out of the house and consoles Samara. The girls talk and there are nods of acknowledgement between them. Ria and Afsha head back into the house.

Samara loiters for a beat. She wipes a tear.

A hand touches her shoulder -- she jumps -- it's Teen Rick.

She looks at him. She looks away from him to wipe her eyes.

A beat.

TEEN RICK
Didn't mean to scare you.

A put-on smile from Samara.

Rick looks toward the house.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)
Is the party any good?

Samara doesn't respond.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I was star struck. The guy I had a
crush on was talking to me.

Samara looks behind Rick and sees his car, a Sedan.

TEEN SAMARA
That yours?

SAMARA (V.O.)
The car was nice enough, but
clearly wasn't his.

At the door of the house Ria and Afsha exit. They have their coats on and Afsha carries Samara's. Afsha notices Samara with Rick.

TEEN AFSHA
Wait.

Ria stops.

TEEN RIA
What?

Afsha points toward the car subtly.

TEEN RIA (CONT'D)
So?

Ria sets to move, but Afsha holds her back.

TEEN AFSHA
No, wait.

They pause to watch. Samara and Rick sit on the hood.

TEEN AFSHA (CONT'D)
She likes him.

A look of bewilderment from Ria.

TEEN RIA
Well are we leaving or not?

Samara looks toward them by the door. Afsha signals a thumbs up. Samara nods.

Afsha pushes Ria back in the house.

TEEN AFSHA
We're staying.

Afsha steps into the house.

Samara and Rick become comfortable in their chat on the hood of the car.

TEEN SAMARA
My dad's family car is --

TEEN RICK
 -- the SUV right? Yeah I seen it.
 You into cars?

Samara nods, but holds back on revealing any more.

TEEN SAMARA
 You always fashionably late to
 these things?

Rick shakes his head.

TEEN RICK
 No. I wasn't gonna come, but my
 friends told me my ex wasn't here --

TEEN SAMARA
 -- the blonde?

TEEN RICK
 Yeah. But she wasn't serious and
 she wasn't on my level you know?

A beat.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)
 Well maybe I shouldn't say.

Rick slides off the hood.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)
 You wanna go back in to the party?

Samara instinctively reaches for his wrist. She doesn't move from the hood.

TEEN SAMARA
 No, tell me.

Rick looks at her. She removes her hand from his wrist. He eyeballs her.

TEEN SAMARA (CONT'D)
 What?

TEEN RICK
 Girls are different from guys.

TEEN SAMARA
 Can't put anything by you.

They share smiles.

TEEN RICK
I mean, why does it have to be so
tough, you know?

A beat.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)
You don't know.

Rick leans on the hood of the car. He's uneasy.

TEEN SAMARA
You can elaborate?

A look from Samara. Rick had permission...

INT. TEEN RICK'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Teen Rick and Teen Samara lip-locked and heated, all over
each other.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY, FRONT YARD - NIGHT

The party is still loud and active.

The Sedan somewhat rocks.

SAMARA (V.O.)
We didn't go all the way. I'm not
that type of girl.

MONTAGE

- Rick and Samara exchange glances at school.
- Rick carries Samara on his back.
- Rick chases Samara and she lets him catch her easily.
- Rick and Samara kiss in the playground.

SAMARA (V.O.)
But we became exclusive. My first
real boyfriend.

- Samara mixes with Rick's crew. She's smiley, but didn't
approve of Rick's smoking.
- Rick and Samara hold hands at a car show.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He did eventually take my
virginity.

- Rick surprises Samara with the fact that his parents' Sedan
now had tinted windows.

- The Sedan rocks at night in an empty parking lot.

SAMARA (V.O.)

It wasn't always in his car. After
a while I met his mom. As much as I
wanted life with him, I couldn't
introduce him to my parents. The M-
word would have to be in play for
that to happen.

- Samara at home helping her mother in the kitchen.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I did well at home. Stayed clean,
went to Mosque, did things like
chores and homework. Building that
reliability and responsibility made
it so that I was allowed out late.
So long as I was home by eleven,
unless it was a weekend.

- Samara with her family in their SUV. Lively and chatty.

- Rick carries Samara atop his shoulders at a concert. It
seems they are happy and in love.

SAMARA (V.O.)

But I was naive. While our year-and-
a-bit was good, it all came
crashing down.

END MONTAGE

EXT. WHOLE FOODS' PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The store is closed but cars are present, driving circles
around one another. A teenage gathering atmosphere, but these
YOUTHS were older.

Rick's family Sedan is there. Teen Rick (now 19) stands by
the back window, which is slightly open. Teen Samara (16) is
inside.

TEEN RICK

Wait here. I'll be back.

Concerned eyes from Samara. Rick walks off.

He talks to some older guys. They discreetly show him a packet of something.

INT. TEEN RICK'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Teen Rick gets in the back seat beside Teen Samara.

TEEN SAMARA
Hey.

TEEN RICK
Babe.

Rick is fidgety.

TEEN SAMARA
You alright?

TEEN RICK
I er, I need, you know?

Samara casually reaches for his crotch.

TEEN SAMARA
Lets go somewhere.

TEEN RICK
No, like; now.

Samara looks out the windows.

TEEN SAMARA
Here?

TEEN RICK
Can you? Just 'cause I need it
babe. This kinda crowd has me all
amped up and -- promise -- I'll do
you too.

Samara smiles and shifts in her seat.

TEEN SAMARA
Do me in a private place, or when
they're all gone.

TEEN RICK
Yeah --

Rick stops her from moving into position.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)

-- Wait.

He pulls a bandana from his neck.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)

Put this on.

He ties the bandana over her head and pulls it over her eyes to blindfold her. She smiles, excited.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)

It's kinda like they can't see us,
and you can't see my dick. Sexy
right?

Samara is fine with it. She shifts in her seat again.

TEEN SAMARA

Guide me.

TEEN RICK

Hold on. A sec' OK? One sec' I'll
be back.

Rick exits the car.

A beat.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The guy that showed Teen Rick the packet, hands it to him and gets into the car.

Rick stands by the slightly open window.

ZIPPER.

TEEN RICK

All right, go on.

Teen Samara doesn't say anything. She lowers her head into what she thinks is her boyfriend's lap.

Teen Rick doesn't watch through the gap in the window. He instead plays with the packet of drugs in his hand.

The drug dealer gasps in his seat.

(Sounds of) SUCKING.

INT. TEEN RICK'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Teen Rick drives. Teen Samara is beside him. All is quiet.

EXT. KHAN STREET - NIGHT

The Sedan pulls up at the corner of the street. Teen Rick and Teen Samara exit the car.

Rick still fiddles with the drug packet.

Samara goes to him and links his arm as they walk slowly toward her house.

TEEN SAMARA
You forget something?

A look from Teen Rick.

TEEN SAMARA (CONT'D)
My (she mouths pu-ssy).

Rick's expression is indifferent. Samara leans in to kiss him, he jolts away.

All of a sudden he's four feet away.

TEEN SAMARA (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Rick looks at her with a scowl.

TEEN RICK
You can't kiss me. You ain't clean.

Samara is stunned.

TEEN SAMARA
I'm sorry?

TEEN RICK
What did you do with it?

Samara has no idea what he's talking about.

TEEN RICK (CONT'D)
What did you do?

TEEN SAMARA
With what?

Rick becomes angry.

TEEN RICK
 With what? What are you a moron?
 The come Samara. The goods in your
 mouth, what did you do?

Samara's body language inverts.

TEEN SAMARA
 Well --

TEEN RICK
 -- well what?

TEEN SAMARA I swa -- SAMARA (V.O.) I swallowed.

Rick marches toward her and swings an angry fist.

BLACK SCREEN --

THUMP...

THUMP. THUMP.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 Naive little girl.

A beat.

INT. TEEN AFSHA'S CAR - NIGHT

Teen Afsha (18) is driving. She looks over to Teen Samara,
 bruised on her face.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 That night I got Afsha to come and
 get me. I stayed at hers for over a
 week. Luckily the timing was in my
 favour; it was midterm.

Afsha drives.

INT. DORM, AFSHA'S ROOM - DAY

The room is narrow and not at all spacious.

Teen Afsha is sat on her bed. Teen Samara is on the floor in
 a makeshift cot.

TEEN AFSHA
 Love isn't a thing. Not for us.

TEEN SAMARA
What do you mean?

SAMARA (V.O.)
Naive.

TEEN AFSHA
He said he loved you? Then treated
you like this?...

Samara pauses to ponder.

TEEN AFSHA (CONT'D)
We're protected in our religion.

TEEN SAMARA
Protected?

TEEN AFSHA
Yeah. Think about how your parents
met, how mine met. How the majority
of our people marry.

TEEN SAMARA
There's, I mean surely there's more
to it than that.

TEEN AFSHA
In a fairy-tale. Or for like two
weeks when you first meet a guy.

TEEN SAMARA
It's been nearly two years for us.

A look from Afsha.

TEEN AFSHA
And it's turned out as you hoped?

SAMARA (V.O.)
It turned out that Rick was a drug
addict. Whether he became one with
me by his side is a question I
don't tend to ask myself. I'd end
up blaming myself. But he hit me
and he lost me in an instant.

TEEN SAMARA
You knew this before. Why didn't
you stop me?

Afsha pulls Samara up onto the bed.

TEEN AFSHA

Because I've been there. It's something you have to learn the hard way. Now it's out of your system. I'm just sorry you got physically hurt.

TEEN SAMARA

But, I don't want a guy chosen for me. I...

A beat.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I was thinking about sex.

TEEN AFSHA

Look our lives aren't about us. They're about procreating and putting on a show. My mom brags about me, her mom bragged about her. Between women it's all about bragging rights. For the men it's about making money and building their little empires.

TEEN SAMARA

So I can find a guy to build a life with.

TEEN AFSHA

Save yourself the trouble honey. Trust me; life is a series of bad situations. You gotta get good at reading it and overcoming it.

Samara lays in Afsha's lap and looks forlorn. A tear rolls down her cheek.

SAMARA (V.O.)

That afternoon I cried more than when I got hit.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Teen Samara removes makeup by a mirror. She reveals remnants of bruising.

SAMARA (V.O.)

It took a while for my face to heal. Had to ghost it all out on a daily basis.

(MORE)

SAMARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My dad would have had a heart
attack if he had known what
happened to his little girl.

Teen Ria enters the room and sees her sister's face.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I never told Ria about it either.
But she knew. We both knew she
knew. But we were never close
enough to talk about it.

Samara grabs her phone and deletes photos of her and Rick.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I understood that Rick didn't love
me. I feared that no one would take
my love again. My left hand became
my best friend. Again.

INT. MOSQUE, LADIES' HALL - DAY

Teen Samara has a Kitab in hand. Seems like she's reading,
but her eyes wander the room.

WOMEN everywhere. Some of their faces covered by niqab.
Others have their hair loose. Most of them wear incredibly
tight clothing.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Everything turned me on. Even in
the most inappropriate of places.

A girl meets Samara's eyes and smiles at her. Samara quickly
looks down at her Kitab.

EXT. SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND - DAY

The playground is busy with KIDS. Teen Samara notices the
guys playing basketball, some of them topless.

Samara sees the younger kids playing kiss-chase.

SAMARA (V.O.)

It wasn't necessarily the case that
I wanted to find a boyfriend. Or
love for that matter.

A beat as Samara looks at guys and girls in the playground.
Pretty girls with prominent arching cleavages. Teachers too;
big butts to tight butts...

INT. NIGHTCLUB, DANCEFLOOR - NIGHT

The atmosphere is dark and busy. Silhouettes between strobe lights and INCREDIBLY LOUD MUSIC.

Samara (adult, 18) dances, seemingly in her own world.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I just wanted to explode.

Samara bounces on the dancefloor along with a crowd of others, including Afsha. They're all having a great time.

There's some dirty dancing.

Afsha kisses a random guy. Then another.

INT. NIGHTCLUB, BAR - NIGHT

Samara approaches the bar and asks for water. A BUSSER (24, we've seen him before) clears the glasses on the bar. He looks at Samara -- eye contact -- but she drinks her water.

The Busser looks back at her as he walks off.

The Ginger Patch Kid (all grown up, 18) from earlier approaches the bar, big smile on his face as Samara recognizes him.

(They shout over the music).

GINGER PATCH KID
Heyyy!

SAMARA
Hi!

(Music drowns him out)

GINGER PATCH KID
You know --

Samara motions to suggest she can't hear. She pulls him close to her ear.

GINGER PATCH KID (CONT'D)
You must know this place well?

Samara nods.

SAMARA
Yeah, you been here?

GINGER PATCH KID

(nods)

Yeah, in the Green Room.

SAMARA

What?

They can't hear properly. Samara pulls Ginger Patch Kid by the arm and drags him to the dance floor.

They dance. Samara grinds on him and pulls his hands around, guiding him to grope her breasts. She forces his hands, but then he pulls away. He steps away from her and walks off.

Samara is confused. She rushes after him.

Ginger Patch Kid heads toward a hallway. Signs point toward the Green Room.

Samara catches up to him. Music is dampened in the hallway.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

Hey, hey --

Samara turns him. A look; he's not happy.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

What? What'd I do wrong?

Ginger Patch Kid looks at her. He believes that she's clueless. His expression changes, sympathetic.

GINGER PATCH KID

You don't know?

SAMARA

What?

Ginger Patch Kid eases up. People pass them in the hall, dressed extravagantly. Ginger Patch Kid looks at them as if he knows them.

GINGER PATCH KID

I hang out in the Green Room.

Samara nods, oblivious.

A beat.

GINGER PATCH KID (CONT'D)

Because I'm gay.

Samara looks shocked.

SAMARA

You're...

Ginger Patch Kid nods.

They both laugh.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Seriously, I didn't know.

Samara glances toward his crotch.

SAMARA

But.

GINGER PATCH KID

What?

SAMARA

I felt you.

Ginger Patch Kid laughs.

GINGER PATCH KID

Well you got a nice ass I guess.
 Seriously though, that's my place
 right there.

He signals toward the Green Room.

GINGER PATCH KID (CONT'D)

You wanna come?

Another batch of people pass them in the hall. The last person a girl that looks back and smiles at Samara.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I thought about it. Women are hot.

Samara shakes her head.

SAMARA

Nah. I only swing one way.

GINGER PATCH KID

All right.

More people pass. Samara and Ginger Patch Kid talk.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I learned that he came out a year
 prior. Shame. If he was straight he
 probably coulda had me that night.

Ginger Patch Kid heads toward the Green Room.

Samara sets to exit the hall, but she's caught up in thought.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I questioned myself. Was it because
of me as we grew up that he turned
gay?

Samara walks through the dancefloor absentmindedly.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Was he put off women because of me?
Was I simply undesirable?
Unlovable?

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Samara enters and hits her bed.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I was confused. Yet, horny. I
thought at least if I curl up and
cuddle myself, at least that way no
one could hurt me. It was me and my
left hand.

Samara begins to masturbate.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Again.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room is packed full of FAMILY, (indistinct chatter).
People seem to be joyful. Emphasis is on Afsha. She has a
beaming smile on her face as people applaud.

LATER...

The merriment has distilled. Samara and Afsha (20) sit side
by side.

SAMARA
Big announcement.

AFSHA
Somewhat.

A beat.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

Are you doing OK? You seem quiet.

Samara fakes a smile.

SAMARA

I'm alright.

A look from Afsha.

AFSHA

But?

Samara looks anywhere but at her.

SAMARA

I dunno.

AFSHA

What, tell me?

Another pause.

SAMARA

I don't want you to get me wrong.
And I don't want you to think I'm
judging or anything.

AFSHA

Spit it out.

SAMARA

Well. Is this what you want?

Afsha's expression turns less friendly.

AFSHA

What I want?

SAMARA

Yeah. I mean. Fashion? Didn't you
have dreams?

Afsha eases.

AFSHA

I did.

SAMARA

So?

A RELATIVE comes by.

AUNTY

Oh Afsha, we're so happy for you.
If you need anything --

Afsha nods and smiles. The Relative walks on.

AFSHA

So?

Silence from Samara.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

What's there to judge or be concerned about? I told you about all this. It's the way we go.

SAMARA

But, why? You dropped out of College for this?

A look from Afsha, sympathetic.

AFSHA

Come on, you need this explaining again?

SAMARA

I just don't --

AFSHA

-- it's how it is for us. We grow, we get married, we buy a house, we spurt out some kids. Rinse and repeat. What's the big deal?

SAMARA

But I thought you wanted more than that?

AFSHA

Do you? I mean maybe it's not about me here, maybe you're trying to figure out if the life we were bred for is what you want.

Samara is quiet.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

Look if it is about me, you don't have to worry. I'm fine. My guy's an Accountant, filthy rich already. I'll be fine.

A look from Samara. Afsha is called from across the room. She stands up.

SAMARA
Will you, be fine? Or are you?

Afsha smiles and walks off. Samara's dad quickly takes Afsha's place. Samara leans her head on his shoulder.

A beat.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
Is this the route you expect me to take?

He doesn't answer.

Samara looks up at him.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
What?

A beat.

DAD
Such a loaded question, with such a sad face. Is this life so bad?

Samara absorbs the atmosphere in the room.

SAMARA
It's how you and mom met?

He nods.

CHILDREN run by. Samara watches them.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
I don't think --

DAD
-- Samara, this is Muslim life. We belong to Allah and as His beings we have to do as He wishes. To bring life. To grow a family.

SAMARA (V.O.)
His words seemed so decisive.

Children play and Parek nods at a waving Relative.

Samara tries to speak --

DAD

Look, I want this for you. Your mother happy, everyone celebrating like this, we'd be happy.

He looks at Samara directly and puts his hand up to her chin and squeezes it.

DAD (CONT'D)

But this face; if I am seeing this face, I won't be happy.

SAMARA (V.O.)

As if I wasn't confused and conflicted enough.

SAMARA

What are you saying?

DAD

Samara, I want to be proud of you. I don't want you to lose connection with Allah. I don't want you to conform or fall as a victim to western ways.

SAMARA

Is that what you think of me? That I'm so easily influenced?

DAD

No. That's why I speak openly to you. If you were weak, I would forbid you making your own path.

A beat.

A look between dad and daughter. Samara eyes the room.

SAMARA

Isn't this conforming too? To Islamic ways.

DAD

This conformity is safe. A father wants his child to be safe, no matter her age. But this face, I don't want my daughter to have *this* face. I'll do a deal with you.

SAMARA

A deal?

He nods.

DAD

Same deal I offered your sister. You go to University and you study something substantial. Something that will get you a solid job. Nothing that helps people. Doctor, Dentist, Lawyer -- none of those.

SAMARA

None of those?

DAD

They're all thankless jobs. You do something that keeps your brain active, that doesn't rely on human interaction. You finish your studies. During this time you find a man and you marry by twenty-five.

SAMARA

Twenty-five?

DAD

Yes. That gives you time to study, to work and even travel if you wish. Insha'Allah you find a man that matches your intellect and you then settle. If by twenty-five you haven't settled, we find you a man. Then you have all this.

Samara ponders for a beat.

SAMARA

What if this face is still here then?

Parek looks at her.

DAD

You will have lived on your own terms for years. Studying, working. Maybe by twenty-five you will see that this life isn't so bad. Life isn't easy. It will hit you. There's a reason generations of women have chosen the other option.

SAMARA

Which is?

DAD

You don't go to University. You help around the house and you marry as soon as possible. The husband is the bread-winner and together you raise a family.

They watch Afsha across the room. She seems happy.

DAD (CONT'D)

Being an adult is all about choices. You have to make yours, then own them.

Samara sighs and reaches around Parek to hug him. She kisses his cheek and her sad face seems to be gone.

SAMARA

You know I'm choosing the twenty-five option don't you?

He nods. Samara hugs him tighter.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

So, tell me about Accounting.

They talk as celebrations go on.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Samara reads at her desk.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Thereafter I studied relentlessly. I wasn't a natural at math, so I had to focus. The deal from dad gave me purpose.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, SAMARA/RIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Samara is in bed watching porn on her phone, masturbating.

SAMARA (V.O.)

But it didn't halt my urges in any way. I still couldn't sleep without coming.

Samara climaxes. A small YELP.

INT. DORM, HALLWAY - DAY

Samara carries a couple of bags and a pulls along a suitcase.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - DAY

Samara moves in.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I got accepted into College.

Samara unpacks her stuff. Her parents and Ria (20) are present.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I never asked my Dad why he won.
Either way; I would end up married
and settled. I suppose this was his
way of letting me have some freedom
in my life.

Group hug as Samara's parents and sister set to leave.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Still, I didn't question it. I
thought it was a fair deal to get
me the life I was working toward.

EXT. UNIVERSITY GROUNDS - DAY

Tons of STUDENTS make their way to classes.

Some students lay around on grass.

Other students stop and chat.

Samara walks by many of them, every so often she glances at a guy.

SAMARA (V.O.)
And who knew who I'd meet along the
way.

Random guys smile at Samara as she passes.

MONTAGE

- Samara studying in her dorm.
- Samara paying attention in class.
- Samara at a party.

- Samara mingling and making friends.
- Samara at a bar.

SAMARA (V.O.)

There was an art to it; balancing studying and partying. I didn't care for the latter. Drink and drugs weren't my thing. But that first year was cool.

- Samara at another party, surrounded by tipsy students.

END MONTAGE

INT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY - DAY

Samara (19) sits studying. She has a small novel within her Accountancy encyclopedia.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Sometimes I'd sit there with an open book, but I'd be reading something erotic instead. See how wet I'd become before I'd have to go back to my dorm for a come. Then...

CLEMENT (early 20s, tall, dark and handsome) walks by. A lingering look from Samara. She's in awe.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Sorry, where was I?... Right --

Clement browses books on the shelf opposite Samara's table. He chooses one and turns to lean on the shelf.

She looks his way over her book.

He looks her way over his book.

EXT. UNIVERSITY GROUNDS - DAY

Samara and Clement walk and talk. They're smiley and chatty.

MONTAGE

- Samara and Clement sip milkshakes together.
- Samara and Clement study together in her dorm.
- Samara and Clement study together at the library.

- Samara and Clement hold hands as they walk at night.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Finding a guy like this was like a
dream. A genuine stud, a Muslim one
at that. I hit jackpot.

- Samara and Clement kiss.

- In Samara's dorm, Samara and Clement make love. They
cuddle. They seem happy.

- Samara and Clement are watching a movie in her dorm.
Clement turns over and goes to sleep. She seems frustrated.

END MONTAGE

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - DAY

SAMARA (V.O.)
Until of course, I woke up.

Clement slides out of bed. Samara is already half awake.

SAMARA
Where are you going?

Clement begins putting on his clothes.

CLEMENT
Gym.

Samara lets the duvet drop from her shoulder revealing a
breast.

SAMARA
You don't wanna --

Clement is dressed. He rushes to her and kisses her forehead.

CLEMENT
-- I'll catch you later. How about
we meet for lunch?

Samara is quiet. A little agitated as Clement starts toward
the door and looks back.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)
Lunch?

Samara smiles and nods.

Clement leaves. Samara pulls the duvet over her shoulder and curls herself up in bed.

EXT. UNIVERSITY GROUNDS - DAY

Samara approaches Clement and links his arm as they walk.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Samara and Clement are at the counter. Clement orders and Samara reaches for his hand. She places it on her butt. He removes it. Samara smiles feigning shyness.

SAMARA

You OK?

Clement nods and reaches for the drinks. He lifts his eyebrows in the direction of seats and a table.

CLEMENT

Go sit?

They walk to a table and sit. Clement is a little off.

SAMARA

What's wrong?

A beat.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Nothing. No response. All of a sudden he was furious at me.

SAMARA

Clem?

He looks at her.

CLEMENT

Can we talk about it later?

SAMARA

Well what's there to talk about?

CLEMENT

Later?

Clement sips his drink.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

Tell me about your day.

Samara sits back, dejected.

They talk.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I didn't know what the issue was. I
got it out of him eventually.

The scene fast forwards until --

CLEMENT
This just isn't the time or place.
We don't do that.

SAMARA (V.O.)
By we he meant Muslims.

SAMARA
OK, I didn't mean --

CLEMENT
-- it's private, this kind of
thing.

SAMARA
OK.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I thought a little flirting was
fun. I thought a little grope would
get him going. It frankly did the
opposite.

A beat.

SAMARA
Did you want to come over tonight?

CLEMENT
I don't know. No. Don't think so.

SAMARA
Why?

SAMARA (V.O.)
OK that sounded desperate.

CLEMENT
Just. I found it difficult to get
to the gym this morning. It threw
me off my schedule.

SAMARA

But you still got there. And you
can miss some days can't you?

Clement shakes his head.

CLEMENT

It's my routine.

He finishes his drink.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

Working out makes me feel good.

Samara reaches for his hand.

SAMARA

I can make you feel g --

CLEMENT

-- look, stop. Don't put so much
pressure on it, OK?

Clement pulls his hand away and makes to leave. Samara looks
at him apologetically.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)

I'll text you later. Maybe see you
at the weekend.

Clement walks by her and kisses the top of her head.

EXT. UNIVERSITY GROUNDS - DAY

Samara marches through a crowd of students.

INT. DORM, HALLWAY - DAY

Samara marches down the hall and enters her room.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - DAY

Samara enters, shuts the door and strips on the way to the
window. She closes the curtain and slides into bed.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Hey Lefty Laura, how ya doing.

She finds porn on her phone and begins to masturbate.

SAMARA (V.O.)
No sex the night before. No sex
that morning. No sex at lunch. It
was shit. I liked Clem, a lot. But
this... this was shit.

Samara pulls the duvet over herself, angry in masturbation.

EXT. SHOPPING COMPLEX - NIGHT

Samara and Clement walk out from a theatre exit. They seem in
decent spirits.

CLEMENT
And then the guy's on a train, for
like ten minutes? The wind would
have blown him away, the train was
going so fast.

Samara laughs.

SAMARA
Just a movie. It's just a movie.

They smile and hug, then keep walking. Clement reaches for
her hand.

A beat.

CLEMENT
You good?

Samara nods. Fakes a smile.

SAMARA
Yeah.

CLEMENT
You're not. I know when you're
holding back. What's up?

Samara fake smiles again. She shrugs and shakes her head.

SAMARA
It's fine. I just, suppose I'm a
little confused.

CLEMENT
About?

She looks down at their hands.

CLEMENT (CONT'D)
You don't want me to hold your
hand? Is that it?

She holds his hand tighter.

SAMARA
No.

CLEMENT
Then what?

They walk and talk.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I told him that I thought he wasn't
that attracted to me.

Clement looks at Samara as if to suggest she's silly. He
smiles at her, kisses her...

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clement ravages Samara under the sheets.

They have a great time.

SAMARA (V.O.)
And we talked about his routine. He
told me he didn't mean to make me
feel rejected.

Samara on top, she rides him.

Time passes.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Sex with Clem' was fantastic. But
as awesome as it was, it became a
part of his routine.

Clement climaxes.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I took what I got and I was content
at the time.

Clement grabs his clothes and leaves.

SAMARA (V.O.)
But I was left wanting.

Samara sits in bed. She sighs deeply and lays back.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Some Friday nights he could only go once. Other Friday nights he wouldn't even stay over because of the gym. I was routine, not priority. There was rarely sex on a weekday or middle of a day. I had to deal with that myself.

Samara begins to masturbate.

EXT. UNIVERSITY GROUNDS - DAY

Samara walks and Clement is close by. They talk but they're not in their usual spirits.

SAMARA (V.O.)

There was a lack of attention. Lack of affection.

They walk and talk, noticeably not holding hands.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He seemed to be fine with it. But I wasn't happy.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clement on top of Samara as they make love. He climaxes and she holds him close. She looks at the clock: 9:23PM.

Clement rolls off her and she smiles.

SAMARA

More?

Clement breathes heavily and relaxes.

CLEMENT

Maybe.

Samara looks absently at the ceiling.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I mean, what was the point of the gym if it did your stamina no good?

Door closes.

Samara is left alone.

SAMARA

Ugh!

She lays back frustrated.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Afsha (22) sits at a table. Samara (20) walks over, hot drinks in hand.

AFSHA

God, thank you.

She takes her drink. Samara sits.

SAMARA

It's so good to see you.

AFSHA

I know, it's been a while.

Samara looks at Afsha's bag. It's near exploding with kids things; a coat, toys, medication.

SAMARA

You certainly look busy. And tired.

AFSHA

You don't know the half of it.
Terrible twos, tantrums, teething,
late night screams that I swear
would make you think the kid's in
need of a poltergeist.

Samara laughs. Afsha's surprised.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

What?

Samara tries to prevent coffee coming from her nose.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

My life amuses you that much huh?

SAMARA

No.

(Laughing)

It's just... you chose this.

AFSHA

Chose the sleep depriving kid? I
chose this?

SAMARA

Well yeah. It came as a package deal with a husband and that wedding band no?

AFSHA

Ah OK OK, so I deserve what I get.

SAMARA

It's not that. I couldn't imagine being in your shoes. Didn't you want some time to enjoy your hubby first, before kids?

AFSHA

What do you mean?

SAMARA

You know; travel. Companionship. Doing husband and wife things.

A look between the two.

AFSHA

Things? Oh you mean *things*!

Samara nods in agreement.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

Honey, no. I don't know where your happily ever after mind wanders to, but it's like I told you before; we're built and meant for one thing.

SAMARA

Procreating.

Afsha nods sipping her coffee.

AFSHA

Tell me about you. I know you, you didn't go down the study route just to study what's in a book.

SAMARA

What do you mean?

An eyebrow raising look from Afsha.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

All right. Well, I am involved.

AFSHA

Involved?

SAMARA

Yeah. With a guy named Clement.

AFSHA

Alright.

SAMARA

He's...

Samara shrugs her shoulders.

AFSHA

He's what?

Samara shrugs again.

SAMARA

I don't know. I, he and I have a great chemistry you know?

A sarcastic nod from Afsha.

AFSHA

Oh chemistry, yeah sure.

SAMARA

What?

AFSHA

I don't know what chemistry is. Juicy details, tell me --

SAMARA

-- but you're married. Don't you have supposed details to tell me?

AFSHA

Do you want me to talk more about my kid?

SAMARA

Not that, I mean your husband. Life with a man. Is it not *great*?

Afsha shrugs.

AFSHA

What are you really asking me?

Samara looks around wary of listening ears. She leans in.

SAMARA
Your sex life.

Afsha eyes indifferent.

AFSHA
What about it?

Samara looks around again. They talk quietly.

SAMARA
Isn't it something that makes it
all worth it?

Afsha makes eye contact with Samara.

AFSHA
You think I have the energy?

A beat. Samara seems dejected.

AFSHA (CONT'D)
You have this Clement guy. Isn't he
keeping you... happy?

Samara's gaze is down.

AFSHA (CONT'D)
What is it?

SAMARA
It's not great. The relationship
is, overall, I think. But --

She quietens.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
-- sex is... sparse.

AFSHA
Sparse?

Samara nods.

Afsha takes a fake tone;

AFSHA (CONT'D)
So you're not a virgin?

Samara's eyes widen --

SAMARA
Seriously? Wanna say that louder?

Afsha laughs.

AFSHA

OK OK, sorry. So what, he has a problem in the bedroom?

SAMARA

No. It's not that there's a *mechanical problem*, it's that his engine just isn't as warm as mine.

AFSHA

So he doesn't last long?

SAMARA

It varies, but it's not that.

A look from Afsha.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

He just --

(whispers)

-- doesn't want to, as much as I do.

Afsha sips her coffee.

AFSHA

How long you guys been together?

SAMARA

Over a year now. I was actually thinking of bringing him to your little one's birthday.

AFSHA

No shit, so you're serious about this guy.

Samara nods.

SAMARA

I wanna be.

AFSHA

And the bedroom stuff, does he ever complain about it?

Samara shakes her head.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

So he's getting what he wants?

Samara makes a face.

AFSHA (CONT'D)
He's not getting what he wants?

SAMARA
No, he does.

AFSHA
But?

SAMARA
But I guess, it's me that is left
unsatisfied.

AFSHA
Alright, from where I am it sounds
like you two are married already.
But you're the horny guy --

-- Samara leans in --

SAMARA
Could you shhhh.

Afsha laughs and grabs her bag.

AFSHA
Come on. I know where to take you.

Samara follows.

SAMARA
Where are we going?

INT. SEX SHOP - DAY

Afsha leads Samara in.

AFSHA
Alright, now we can talk as loud as
we want.

Samara looks around intrigued.

AFSHA (CONT'D)
Isn't marriage factored in to your
happily ever after?

SAMARA
It is, but are you telling me that
a relationship is only hot in the
beginning? Life afterward is just
routine and boring?

Afsha refrains from answering.

A beat.

AFSHA

No.

SAMARA

No?

Afsha shakes her head.

AFSHA

No.

SAMARA

Then what?

AFSHA

Honey you have to tame what is the animal of a man.

Samara looks at Afsha intently.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

No matter where you are, what you're doing and especially when you are out with your man; you have to make yourself irresistible -- to other men. So much so that other guys flirt with you.

Samara instinctively shakes her head.

SAMARA

I don't want that.

AFSHA

It's not for the other guys. It's for your man.

Afsha feels the material of some lingerie.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

Listen babe men are oafs. They're *basic*. So incredibly stupid --

SAMARA

-- speak for your own husband here.

AFSHA

What I'm saying is; he'll get jealous.

(MORE)

AFSHA (CONT'D)

He'll be mad about the attention you get and he'll either cause a scene or argue with you about it.

SAMARA

Again, kinda don't want any of that.

AFSHA

But then you'll make up and he'll fuck you senseless.

Samara looks around as it seems that Afsha blurted that out a little too loud. The sex store is pretty empty.

A beat.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

He will make sure that he knows, to keep you; he has to satisfy you, you understand?

Samara nods.

Another beat.

SAMARA

So, you're too tired to have sex?

AFSHA

Not always, but when it happens I just let him get on with it.

SAMARA

Happen often?

Afsha shakes her head.

AFSHA

No. But we're pretty much the same in that sense. If it happens it happens, if not it's no big deal.

Afsha sees that Samara is dejected.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

For you it's a big deal?

Samara nods, almost ashamed.

AFSHA (CONT'D)

Try make him jealous. You'll see.

A beat as Samara ponders.

SAMARA

And if that doesn't work?

Afsha holds up a vibrator and hands it to Samara.

AFSHA

If that doesn't work; do it
yourself.

Afsha smiles and goes to browse another section.

Samara stares at the vibrator in her hand.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

DOOR SLAMS SHUT

Samara removes her coat and sits on her bed.

Clement's arms are expressive.

CLEMENT

What the hell was that?

He barks at her (inaudible), yelling --

SAMARA (V.O.)

I didn't do anything awfully
terrible. But I did link a random
guy's arm.

Clement marches back and forth, barking his disappointment.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I had pretended I was drunk, when
really the whole time I was getting
my kicks off guys looking down my
blouse. Clem didn't like it.

Clement continues saying his piece. Samara sits and waits to
get a word in.

SAMARA (V.O.)

This was supposed to be where we'd
make up like Afsha said. But...

SAMARA

I only did that to get a reaction.

CLEMENT

Reaction? Reaction to what?

SAMARA

My clothes, my hair. Guys come up to me and compliment me, do you know how captivating that is?

SAMARA (V.O.)

Like an idiot I was perhaps too honest. Maybe that was the continued naivety in me.

CLEMENT

Captivating? Isn't it enough that you have me?

SAMARA

When did you last even graze my arm in public?

CLEMENT

I'm not going to put on a show Samara.

SAMARA

It's not about a show. It's about being connected. Don't you want that?

CLEMENT

I thought we had that? Our conversations, our texts and through the *private* time that we have in the bedroom.

SAMARA

What private time?

Clement is shocked. Samara gets off the bed and approaches him confidently.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

Come on, tell me. I quite purposely had my hand playing when you came over the other night and you were there, by the door. I saw you, you saw me and you left. Me. You. Private --

CLEMENT

I --

SAMARA

What? --

CLEMENT

-- I didn't find you sexy.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I had to ask.

Samara backs off. All confidence gone. She slumps on her bed.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Naive little idiot.

Clement approaches her.

SAMARA

You don't find me sexy?

CLEMENT

No. I didn't mean it like that. If you weren't sexy, I wouldn't react this way to all the attention you got right?

Samara looks up at him. Her face screams anger and shock.

SAMARA

Then what? What is it? You've had me so as a man you have conquered your quest is that it?

Clement shakes his head.

Samara keeps talking at him. Tears flow on and off.

SAMARA (V.O.)

This wasn't my finest moment.

Clement sits beside her as they talk.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Fact was that I was with someone that didn't have as high a sex drive as me. And we both knew that it had become a problem.

The inaudible conversation goes quiet.

Clement puts an arm around Samara's shoulder for a half-hug. He then leaves.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He wasn't my person.

She cries.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The Khan family is gathered. Barbie pink birthday banners everywhere. A lot of fuss around Afsha and her daughter.

A familiar face is one of the WAITERS; FARIS (South Asian, thin, 26). He is busy working, topping up the buffet tables.

The merriment is ongoing. It seems like the family has hired out the restaurant, but they're just a big family.

Faris sees Samara. His eyes raise to her again while he is busy. Then again.

Samara stands by the buffet mindlessly looking at the food. Memsim approaches.

MOM

You can't eat with your eyes.

A half smile from Samara. She lingers.

MOM (CONT'D)

What is it? Too much to choose from?

SAMARA

Maybe not enough.

MOM

Weren't you going to bring a friend today?

Samara doesn't respond.

MOM (CONT'D)

Is that what you're upset about?

SAMARA

I'm not upset.

Samara reaches for anything and puts it on her plate.

A look from her Mother.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

I'm...

A beat as Samara looks around the restaurant. Family members talking to one another. Children play. Afsha content enough with her husband.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 I wasn't upset. It was just that I
 knew I had a deadline approaching
 and that I may never have true joy
 in my life at all.

Samara looks back at the food as she walks. A metaphor for
 all the choices she could make.

Her Mom catches up with her.

MOM
 You can talk to me you know.

Samara looks away, down at her plate.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 OK, so maybe I was a little upset.

SAMARA
 You wouldn't understand.

Samara walks faster to evade her Mom.

She approaches the drinks table and eventually bumps into Ria
 (22).

RIA
 Hey.

SAMARA
 Salaam.

RIA
 Salaam.

SAMARA
Salaam.

Some children rush by mocking them.

CHILDREN
 Salaam! Salaam!

They all laugh.

Ria looks at Samara.

RIA
 Mom?

A look from Samara.

RIA (CONT'D)
She's just being Mom.

SAMARA
I know.

RIA
Worried you'll make the wrong
choice.

SAMARA
I know.

Faris walks toward the sisters and purposely leans the other side of Ria to collect empty bottles. He looks at Samara, but she doesn't see him. He walks away.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
You seen Dad?

RIA
Out front I think. But don't go out
there yet.

Samara takes a drink.

SAMARA
Why not?

RIA
I have a guy. He's a plant.

Samara side-eyes her sister.

SAMARA
Is that a sex toy?

Ria nudges her --

RIA
Shhhh! Shut up. I mean I brought a
guy here, but Dad doesn't know
that. He's charming Dad, so that
Dad suggests him to *me*.

Samara nods as she sips her drink.

SAMARA
So you're manipulating Dad?

A look from Ria.

RIA
Didn't I say shut up?

Samara shakes her head.

SAMARA

What does it matter anyway? Dad gave you the same deal he gave me.

RIA

Yeah, but you study close by. I left to go to the next state -- meaning I have less for my wedding in terms of money honey.

SAMARA

So?

RIA

So that means I need to give Mom and Dad a win. If Dad thinks he set me up with this guy it means I have that in my back pocket if things go wrong.

SAMARA

You're so messed up.

Samara begins walking. Ria walks with her.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

And the guy --

RIA

Wassim.

SAMARA

Wassim. He's in on this scam?

Ria nudges her.

RIA

It's not a scam.

A sly look from Ria.

SAMARA

But?

They stop. A look from Samara. Ria smiles.

RIA

But it means that if he is doing this for me now, he'll always do anything for me.

Samara shakes her head.

SAMARA

So he's wrapped around your little
finger.

Ria brings her little finger to her mouth and makes a GUN
RELOAD SOUND then blows her little finger. Big smile on her
face.

Samara shakes her head and walks off. Ria is distracted,
offered food by another family member.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Samara steps out the front door and sees her Dad talking to
WASSIM (late 20s). Parek's back is to her, but Wassim nods in
her direction.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He had a nice smile, but my taste
didn't match my sister's. This guy
oozed "creepy car salesman" the way
he was talking to my Dad.

Her Dad turns.

DAD

Samara!

Samara smiles and walks to her Dad. Wassim puts a hand to her
Dad's arm.

WASSIM

Talk inside Insha'Allah?

DAD

Yes, of course.

Wassim walks past Samara and into the restaurant. Her Dad
seems pleased.

DAD (CONT'D)

Good no?

Samara seems confused.

DAD (CONT'D)

For your sister? This is a man with
his head screwed on.

Samara looks at him in judgment.

SAMARA

You're shopping for Ria?

DAD
Not shopping.

SAMARA
Don't you think she'll make her own
mind up?

SAMARA (V.O.)
I played along as best I could. Ria
and I didn't always see eye to eye,
but we did always cover for each
other, as sisters should.

DAD
I'm doing my due diligence as her
Father, as I will for you. Anyway,
you were looking for me?

SAMARA (V.O.)
I was looking for Dad to tell him I
had enough of searching for a life
of my own. My studies were fine,
but he could find me a significant
other if he wanted. I was done
looking --

Parek begins to walk with his phone in his hand.

SAMARA
Dad?

DAD
Your Mother is calling me.

He walks off.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Ugh.

Samara loiters and puts her cup on a table. Other restaurant
goers pass her to head inside. She picks at her food.

Faris exits the restaurant and sees her. He approaches her
table. Samara still doesn't see him. He points to her cup.

FARIS
This yours?

Samara looks at her cup. She nods while chewing some food.

Faris wipes the table and Samara notices a food stain on his
shirt. She finally looks at him.

Side-eye from him. A slight smile.

SAMARA

Sorry.

She chomps her food.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

Must think I'm an animal.

A more direct look from Faris.

FARIS

You're alright.

He smiles, finding it tough not to watch her eat. He walks to the next table, trying to keep it cool.

FARIS (CONT'D)

That your family in there?

Samara nods again.

SAMARA

Yeah.

Faris "cleans" some other tables close by. His expression searches for what to say next.

He looks toward Samara. She's busy eating. He looks again.

Samara looks as if she's about to sit down, but Faris rushes over and puts a hand on her hip --

FARIS

-- not there.

Faris guides her to remain standing as he then wipes the bench where there may or may not have been something that would stain her dress.

Samara looks at him properly now, as they're so close.

A beat.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I knew I recognized him. But couldn't place him.

FARIS

Food.

Faris wipes at Samara's hip and almost instantly takes a look over his shoulder to make sure no one had caught him.

FARIS (CONT'D)
Wouldn't want this getting dirty.

He stands upright.

Samara locks eyes with him. She smiles.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Maybe I wouldn't need to talk to
Dad after all.

Samara finally sits down. Faris leaves her in peace, pleased with himself.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The family gather, taking photos and singing "Happy Birthday" to Afsha's daughter.

Samara spots Wassim and Ria giving each other flirty looks across the crowd. Everyone is smiling.

Samara looks across the restaurant and catches Faris' eye. He smiles back at her.

The family clap as Afsha helps her daughter blow the candles.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Family members are leaving and Samara notices Ria linking her arm to Wassim's. Samara raises her eyebrows. Memsim and Parek pass her, talking.

DAD
She listened to me, I can't believe
it. Wassim will be so good for her.

MOM
And who is he? Was he invited to
the party?

DAD
No, a restaurant goer by chance.
It's fate, alhamdulillah!

Samara shakes her head.

Faris loiters in the restaurant doorway behind her, checking her out. Samara turns and spots him. Faris smiles at her, clearly not taking his eyes off her.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I panicked.

Samara puts a hand to her face.

SAMARA
What? Something on my face?

Faris shakes his head.

FARIS
No, you dropped something there.

Samara turns around and looks at the ground. Looks toward the front door, turns back round to face Faris.

SAMARA (V.O.)
He basically wanted to see me twirl.

SAMARA
No I didn't.

Faris is smiling.

FARIS
I guess you didn't.

Samara looks confused.

FARIS (CONT'D)
Are you coming inside?

SAMARA (V.O.)
Euphemism.

Samara nods and walks toward him. He steps aside to allow her past. He then follows her in, checking her out. Samara opens the door but Faris' hand continues to --

SAMARA (V.O.)
He squeezed my ass.

A look of shock on Samara's face.

Faris' hand gradually leaves her backside as he squeezes past her to walk into the restaurant.

Samara loiters in the door frame as other restaurant goers and family members pass her.

SAMARA (V.O.)
And I liked it.

Samara walks further into the restaurant. She looks over to Faris, who's legitimately working. He catches her glance and raises his eyebrows toward Samara's table.

Samara walks to her table where she finds her handbag. Underneath it she finds a napkin; Faris' name and his number. She looks up, but he's gone.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Not only because it felt good. But
because he had the guts to do it.

Family members pass Samara and guide her to leave the restaurant. She looks over her shoulder in search of Faris.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Samara masturbates in bed.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I liked this guy.

FLASHBACK

- Faris touching Samara's hip.

END FLASHBACK

Samara's continues masturbating.

SAMARA (V.O.)
His demeanor.

FLASHBACK

- Faris' hand on Samara's rear end in slow motion.

END FLASHBACK

SAMARA (V.O.)
It just felt so...

Samara climaxes.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Exciting.

A beat.

FLASHBACK

The Maintenance Guy at Samara's old school -- Faris.

--

The Busser in a Nightclub -- Faris.

END FLASHBACK

Samara breathes heavily and reaches to check her phone.

A reply to a message -- from Faris.

Samara lays back and purposely leaves her phone on the floor. Drops her vibrator there too. She curls up and goes to sleep.

MONTAGE

- Samara and Faris on a date. They're talkative albeit a little nervous. Faris touches her face; wiping her mouth. She acts the ditz claiming to be clumsy with food.

- Samara and Faris on another date. They laugh more and become at ease. Faris shows her something in the distance; his hands on her hips as he stands behind her.

- Samara and Faris on another date. They're not saying much, simply walking and enjoying the time together. Hands touch. Fingers entwine.

END MONTAGE

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Samara is getting ready for a date.

SAMARA (V.O.)

For a long time while seeing Faris
I chose to hold back from --

A vibrator under her pillow. She moves it and tidies her bed.

SAMARA (V.O.)

-- my friend Laura. It was a way
for me to enjoy his subtleties --
the foreplay when we had time
together. Would he touch me,
wouldn't he. Would he grope me,
wouldn't he, would he have the
nerve to grab me and have his
way?...

Samara continues getting dressed.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I kept hoping. And part of it was to stay clean. But really I was training myself to have a life of a wife. To only be touched when he wanted. To only have intimacy when he wanted. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that it was going to be a life of service. To a man. To my kids.

Samara finishes getting ready, then takes a seat at her desk. There's a piece of paper on it with what looks like a list. She studies it.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Unless I did something about it. Something radical. Something incredibly forward for what was the fourth or fifth date.

Samara neatly folds the list and puts it into her handbag. She gets up, turns off the lights and leaves.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Samara is at a table with Faris. They're quiet. A Waiter comes to place a jug of water on their table.

Samara hands Faris a piece of paper. He takes it.

FARIS

What's this?

He unfolds the paper and takes a look.

SAMARA

A list.

FARIS

List of what?

Samara watches him as he begins to read.

SAMARA

A list of no bull. It's about what's important to me.

Faris reads and looks up at her in between the lines.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Up until this point, Faris and I hadn't made love.

(MORE)

SAMARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We hadn't even kissed. It was just
touches here and there.

Faris smiles.

FARIS
Some sort of wish list?

SAMARA
More than that. Look I know I'm
risking scaring you off, but the
last guy I was with I wasted my
time on. I was heartbroken, but I
was angry, 'cause I went with
whatever he gave me. I want control
in my life and I want to be loved.

Faris looks up sharply.

FARIS
Loved?

Samara blinks hard.

SAMARA (V.O.)
L-word. Shit. I still can't believe
I said the L-word.

SAMARA
I know, I know. Too soon for that,
but look I don't date a guy without
the outlook of a future.

Samara's expression suggests the F-word may be scarier than
the L-word.

A beat.

Faris reads the list.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
I'm just trying to be honest from
the beginning. Then there are no
surprises, and maybe we can accept
each other for our true selves.

A Waiter comes along and places Menus on the table.

FARIS
And you're OK with this?

Samara looks at him confused.

SAMARA

This?

FARIS

With me? My life?

SAMARA (V.O.)

I was shocked. Him. His life. I was so focussed on what I wanted -- and all I thought that he wanted, was me.

Faris leans in to talk to Samara intimately.

FARIS

I'm not on your level. You're a smart girl.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I had no idea what he was getting at.

FARIS

What if life gets to a point where you want nicer things. What if I can't provide what you deserve.

Samara looks deeply into his eyes.

A beat.

SAMARA

You're afraid of losing me?

Faris gradually touches her hands and looks at them.

FARIS

I'm afraid I won't be enough for you. For me to be happy, all I'll need is you. But will you be happy with all that I am? Because all I will ever be is a restaurant worker.

Samara looks at Faris' hands touching hers.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I was right. He only wanted me.

A beat of worried looks between them.

SAMARA (V.O.)

This was where I realized where we hadn't quite met before.

FLASHBACK

Samara in class back in High School. The Maintenance Guy she spies out the window --

Samara in a Nightclub. The Busser --

END FLASHBACK

SAMARA (V.O.)
He'd been there all along.

Faris opens up.

FARIS
I didn't know I'd like you as much as I do. You are respectful, albeit silly. You are focussed on your studies, you're already smarter than me.

SAMARA (V.O.)
I wasn't listening. I had to do something. I couldn't lose him.

Samara leans over the table -- their first kiss...

-- We enter their bubble. Their kiss lingers for a long time. The passion between them grows with a burst of almost illuminous red. It's beautiful --

They unwillingly break the kiss and Faris sits back. He looks at her as she smiles ear to ear.

FARIS
You won't be disappointed in me? If I never make money?

Samara's unmoved.

FARIS (CONT'D)
The family gatherings you have; you won't be able to brag about your husband as most wives do.

Samara's eyes widen.

SAMARA (V.O.)
He said *husband*.

Faris keeps talking.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He was telling me about all his insecurities. Telling me to be prepared, that people may not like him or accept him.

Faris continues talking. Samara remains unmoved from the smile after their kiss.

SAMARA (V.O.)

But what I heard was that we were both looking to a future together. And we may well be two people that would fall in love and become husband and wife.

FARIS

So if you want to go, our kiss be it, you can go. I understand, really.

Samara remains unmoved. Faris looks worried.

A beat.

SAMARA

Are you gonna kiss me again or what?

Faris leans in this time.

They kiss -- a burst of illuminous red.

They unlock and Faris sits back. He smiles and refolds the list. He puts it in his back pocket.

FARIS

I can keep this?

Samara nods.

SAMARA

Yeah.

Faris smiles and pours them glasses of water.

A beat.

FARIS

What?

Samara gestures with both hands signalling she wanted more or a response. Faris sips his water.

SAMARA

You -- what --

FARIS

The list is absolutely fine. Don't worry about it.

SAMARA (V.O.)

It wasn't fine. I thought I had put him off. Maybe I had scared him. Out of one relationship, potential for another, but I blew it. I fucked up with the guy that may have been meant for me and now he was going to finish dinner with me just to be polite --

FARIS

-- think I might give you one.

Samara's eyes widen.

FARIS (CONT'D)

A list.

Faris passes Samara a glass of water.

FARIS (CONT'D)

Drink?

Samara takes the glass and has a sip. A comfortable silence as they look at one another.

SAMARA (V.O.)

That night was great, but the list didn't come up again for a while.

Samara and Faris' date continues. They enjoy their dinner. Their hands touch over the table, a lot.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Samara is in bed rolling back and forth, unable to sleep.

SAMARA (V.O.)

This was at a time when I was refraining from my left hand or my vibe. I hadn't come for almost a month. I've tried to do that in Ramadan by the way; not play. It's near impossible. Be holy as you want, if you gotta come, you gotta come.

Samara reaches for her vibrator. Then she leaves it.

SAMARA

Ugh!

She rolls over in bed and tries to sleep.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - DAY

Samara is at her desk studying.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Days went by, until --

Her phone pings. A message reads: **Meet me by the river opposite our first date. Wear a dress. No panties.**

Samara watches as Faris completes typing... **7PM.**

She eagerly leaves her desk and goes to her closet.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He had my attention.

Samara flicks through her clothes and wonders which dress is best to wear.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He hadn't really spoken to me like that before. His hands had previously done any talking.

Samara picks out a few dresses and hangs them to study.

SAMARA (V.O.)

This was a guy I had become close to. A guy I had an intense attraction to. He was different from men in my past. They weren't the ones for me.

Samara touches her dresses and considers them one by one.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Faris was older than me. Wiser. His resume wasn't my concern. The way he treated me. The way we clicked... could it be that he was right for me? Is he the one?

Samara stares at a black dress.

A beat.

SAMARA (V.O.)
No panties. He had me wet in my
 thong there and then.

Samara unhooks her dress and removes it from the hangar.

SAMARA (V.O.)
 He could have me.

EXT. ACROSS FROM RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sporadic sprinkles of rain. A lot of wind. Faris sits on a bench holding an umbrella.

Samara approaches and she's in a long puffer coat. Faris stays seated. Samara slightly raises her voice under the wind.

SAMARA
 You wanna get outta here?

Faris doesn't move. He stays seated and lifts the umbrella.

FARIS
 Wanna get in?

Samara looks at him, then looks around. Cars on the road. Strangers across the street.

SAMARA
 In?

She points to his lap.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
 Here?

Faris nods and holds out a hand. Samara takes it and Faris pulls her onto his lap --

-- In their bubble; the rain drops slowly. The wind eases. Their attention on one another and their connectivity is enhanced --

Samara smiles as Faris hands her the umbrella. He has an arm cradling her on his lap. His other hand is free.

FARIS
 I took another look at your list.

Samara smiles nervously.

FARIS (CONT'D)

I decided that it's something I'll sign, if in turn you sign mine.

Samara smiles eagerly.

SAMARA

Sign? You have a list too?

Faris nods and smiles.

FARIS

Yeah. It's pretty much exactly the same as your list with X2 written by everything you said.

Samara smiles, at ease.

SAMARA

It doesn't faze you?

Faris shakes his head. His hand goes to the bottom zipper of Samara's coat. He unzips it to her knees.

FARIS

I wasn't sure if what you were telling me was a joke. I wasn't sure if I had pushed too hard or behaved wrongly when we first met or when we went out.

Faris puts his forearm between Samara's legs and reaches between them. She sits comfortably and doesn't take her eyes off him.

FARIS (CONT'D)

And I wasn't sure if you would accept me, simply as I am.

Faris looks out toward the passing traffic. The passing strangers. No one has a clue what he's doing.

Samara gasps -- the bubble's red vibrantly enhances.

FARIS (CONT'D)

But your list helped me. Because it gave me something I never had. Something I didn't know existed.

Samara lets out heavy breaths in between talking. Faris is fingering her within her coat.

SAMARA

And what's that?

She trembles.

FARIS
Compatibility.

They look one another in the eyes. Faris continues playing with her. Samara's grip on the umbrella intensifies.

SAMARA
This is why you asked me here? To
finger me in the rain? Am I a
conquest?

Faris shakes his head. He pecks her lips quickly.

FARIS
No. You know you're not, or else
you wouldn't have obeyed my
request.

Intense look from Samara.

SAMARA
Obeyed.

Samara's expression oozes pleasure. Her eyes don't leave Faris'. He nods.

They kiss as she climaxes.

-- Their bubble enhanced with that passionate illuminous red. No passer by knew what they were feeling. No traffic nor rainfall could ruin their connection --

Samara's free hand holds Faris' face. Smiles between them. Smiles between their kisses.

She rests her head on his shoulder.

A beat.

FARIS
You OK?

Short slow breaths from Samara.

They kiss again. They lock eyes.

Samara smiles.

SAMARA
You always do things in a funny
order?

FARIS
Sometimes.

They kiss.

MONTAGE

- In Samara's dorm, Samara and Faris kiss and mount her bed.
- In Faris' car, Samara jerks Faris off.
- In a store, Samara and Faris sneak into a changing room.
- In a museum, Faris stands behind Samara and dry-humps her, unbeknownst to anyone else.
- In a theatre, Samara sits on Faris' lap and they laugh at the movie they're watching.

SAMARA (V.O.)
We spent the rest of my time at
college together.

-- faster clips --

- sexy text messages between them both.
- selfies exchanged.
- kisses sneaked in public.
- cuddles in the dark.
- Faris helps Samara with her studies.
- smiles/happiness and joy from both of them.

SAMARA (V.O.)
It was amazing.

- Samara drops her vibrator in a bin.
- smiles and laughter as Samara and Faris lay naked in each other's embrace. Her dorm a sexy mess.

END MONTAGE

INT. KHAN HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Samara (22) cooks with her mom.

SAMARA (V.O.)
Until a harsh dose of reality hit.

MOM

Your father doesn't know? His age?

Samara continues food prep.

SAMARA

Well I just told you.

Memsim stops and turns to Samara.

MOM

You are playing with fire. This isn't the way the deal is supposed to go.

SAMARA

He said to meet a guy at college Mom. I did didn't I?

Memsim shakes her head.

MOM

You are setting him up. Does the boy know your father doesn't know his age?

Samara considers.

SAMARA

Well --

MOM

Well?

SAMARA

I didn't really mention it. He knows he's coming for dinner to meet my family. Age doesn't come into it for me.

Her Mom mutters under her breath.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

And he did warn me actually.

MOM

Warn you?

SAMARA

Yeah. He said he may not be accepted down the road. That's why we kept our relationship quiet for so long.

MOM
 Until you graduated. And with your
 sister's wedding coming you thought
 you could get away with this?

SAMARA
 I'm not getting away with anything.

Her Mom continues cooking.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
 And you're still here, helping --

MOM
 I'm doing all of it.

SAMARA
 All of it.

Samara looks around the kitchen and at her station.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
 OK. Point is, you will welcome him
 right?

A beat.

SAMARA (CONT'D)
 Mom?

INT. KHAN HOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Samara, Memsim and Parek approach the front door. They open
 it. Faris (28) stands sharply dressed. He smiles at Samara's
 presence and is quickly met with her Dad's gaze.

SAMARA
 Salaamalaikum.

FARIS
 Wallaikumsalaam. Mrs Khan. Mr Kh --

DAD
 Come in.

Dad walks from the doorway toward the kitchen. Mom smiles
 politely and Faris steps in. He subtly squeezes Samara on the
 hip.

Mom turns her back to walk down the hall.

Quick kiss on the lips between Faris and Samara.

FARIS

You good?

Samara nods.

SAMARA (V.O.)

I wasn't. I was nervous as shit.

Faris removes his shoes and follows Memsim to the kitchen. Samara shuts the door.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The parents, Samara and Faris sit and eat.

CLINKING CUTLERY echoes as the loudest sound in the room.

Parek gives an unapproving look toward Faris every so often.

SAMARA (V.O.)

Safe to say the first meet wasn't great. Dad predictably didn't approve.

Another look from Parek. Almost a scowl.

SAMARA (V.O.)

He didn't approve at all.

EXT. KHAN STREET - NIGHT

Samara waves Faris off as he drives away.

She steps back toward the house. Her Dad stands in the doorway; a vision of disapproval.

INT. KHAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Parek sits staring at the TV. Samara storms in.

SAMARA (V.O.)

But I fought.

SAMARA

Not a chance? You couldn't give him a chance.

DAD

Watch your tone with me.

SAMARA

Dad, we had a deal.

DAD

You twisted the deal. Luckily there's still time on your side. Bring a boy more substantial next time will you?

SAMARA

No.

Huge eyes from Parek.

DAD

No?

SAMARA

No -- Dad I met him while at college. He is a wonderful, fantastic man.

DAD

A Waiter?

Samara holds her tongue.

DAD (CONT'D)

A Waiter?!

Memsim enters.

MOM

Parek, be calm.

DAD

My daughter is telling me that she will be an Accountant and she will marry a Waiter.

He laughs. Samara looks at her mother.

MOM

Maybe he will work his way to --

DAD

To what? Barista?

He laughs more.

DAD (CONT'D)

You know, this was a good example of what not to do.

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

Good show, Samara, well done for showing us how not to be. A good joke, funny, I like it.

Samara looks at her mother again. Her Dad flicks through the TV channels, chuckling to himself. Samara stands defeated.

INT. DORM, SAMARA'S ROOM - DAY

Samara lays on her bed. She's upset. Faris kneels at her bedside. He strokes her hair.

FARIS

How much longer do you have this room?

SAMARA

Couple weeks.

FARIS

Wanna make the most of it?

Samara half smiles and pecks his lips.

SAMARA

Yes.

She shakes her head.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

I just can't believe my Dad. He treated you like you weren't even there. I'm so sorry.

Faris smiles as if he expected it.

FARIS

It's alright.

SAMARA

It's not. I want to be with you, they're gonna have to accept that. Things were so different when Ria showed them Wass'.

FARIS

I remember that story. First night we met right?

Samara nods.

FARIS (CONT'D)

But she was smart with it.

Samara looks sad.

FARIS (CONT'D)
I mean. I don't think we should
manipulate your Dad, but maybe he
needs some kinda reassurance.

Samara looks at him.

FARIS (CONT'D)
That I'm not an asshole.

SAMARA
I can tell him that. My word should
be enough.

Faris kisses Samara's nose. Then her cheek. Then nose, eyes,
cheek -- she smiles and begins to laugh.

SAMARA (V.O.)
The next part; my dad and Faris
told me about later.

EXT. KHAN HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

Parek is raking the grass in the front lawn.

Faris approaches.

SAMARA (V.O.)
He fought for us.

FARIS
Salaamalaikum. I can help you with
that.

Parek sees Faris, but immediately refocuses on raking.

DAD
Wallaikumsalaam.

Faris approaches.

FARIS
I'm sorry dinner didn't go as we
all might have hoped last week. I
didn't mean to cause you any angst.

Parek stops raking.

DAD
Apologizing is a sign of weakness.
Anyone ever told you that?

Parek rakes.

FARIS

It could be seen as a strength. For one to admit a mistake in order to rectify a matter. Shows great character I think.

Parek stops raking.

DAD

Is that what you're here for? To build character off your argument to the father of a girl you like? You think your character will serve you to a good life?

FARIS

Mr Khan I don't have a bad life. Samara attests to that.

DAD

You have no shame. Within weeks she will get an Entry Level Accountancy job, earning more than you right away.

FARIS

Yeah.

DAD

So? You're not ashamed?

FARIS

No. I'm real proud of her.

DAD

(Angrily)

I'm talking about you. How can you be a man, nearly thirty and you live a life of minimalism. No career, no aspiration. What kind of life is that? A waste.

Parek returns to raking.

DAD (CONT'D)

Please, leave here. Don't make me call the police.

Faris stands, almost waiting.

Parek rakes.

DAD (CONT'D)
What are you doing? Go!

Faris shakes his head.

FARIS
I do have an aspiration.

Parek continues raking, shaking his head.

FARIS (CONT'D)
If you're willing to listen to me I
can promise you that it's something
that may change your mind about me.

DAD
I doubt that.

FARIS
Can you, listen, Mr Khan?

Parek looks at Faris.

FARIS (CONT'D)
Please?

Parek points to a bag. Faris grabs it and brings it over.
Faris begins putting the leaves in the bag.

DAD
You have until those leaves are put
away. Then you can get out of here.

Faris gathers and bags the leaves, slowly but assertively.

FARIS
OK. Well my aspiration Mr Khan is
to become part of your family.

Parek's eyes almost fall from his head.

FARIS (CONT'D)
I know you don't trust in anything
you see of me, my age nor my job.
But what I am willing to do is be
the best I can be for your
daughter.

DAD
Your best is a Waiter?

FARIS
No. It's not.

DAD

What you don't understand is that my daughter deserves the best. She needs someone to look after her.

FARIS

And I do. I am her best friend.

DAD

Friend? That's not going to pay the bills. Bring up children. Make a good long and happy life --

FARIS

So help me.

DAD

Help, you?

Faris is getting to the end of the leaves. He stands and talks to Parek face to face.

FARIS

Help me learn. I will work at your garage. You can teach me all about cars. I will study it all.

Parek scoffs.

DAD

You are not my son.

FARIS

I want to be. That's my aspiration.

Stern looks from both men.

FARIS (CONT'D)

I know it's not an easy life. But it's one that I truly respect -- look at the family you have. The amazing person that Samara is, because of you. She's told me about her love of cars and I want to give her the greatest gift insha'Allah.

DAD

Yeah? What's that?

FARIS

A car. Put together by her father and by her husband.

A look from Parek.

Faris ties the bag and holds it toward Parek.

FARIS (CONT'D)
We love her.

A beat.

INT. HOTEL, HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Hands are choosing which jewelry to wear. It's Ria (25). She's in a magnificent wedding dress.

The suite is quiet.

Ria looks ponderous. Memsim enters dressed to the nines. She greets her daughter and other family members walk in and out of the suite.

Ria's phone pings. It's Samara; **Ready for this?**

Ria responds, smiling.

MOM
You sisters. Why are you texting?
She's in the next room.

Ria smiles, excited.

INT. HOTEL, EVENT HALL - DAY

Seemingly hundreds of family and friends are gathered. Noticeable Waiters from restaurants earlier. Afsha (25) is in the crowd with her husband and daughter.

On the main stage there's a table with Registry papers and a REGISTRAR.

A groom, Wassim (now early 30s). Parek greets him and shakes his hand.

People stand and look toward the opening doors.

MUSIC PLAYS.

A bride emerges in the doorframe. Then another bride steps to stand in the doorframe.

On the stage another groom steps up -- it's Faris (29).

Both brides' veils are down as they walk together. Their Dad holds back tears. Their Mom cries.

The audience are in awe as Ria and Samara walk each other down the aisle.

A beat as they reach the stage.

They lift one another's veils and then step past each other to step toward their husbands to be.

An Imam is at the Registry desk along with the Registrar. The Imam begins to pray.

In the front row Ria and Samara's parents squeeze one another's hands.

DAD

So different to our day.

MOM

They look so happy.

She wipes a tear as wedding procedures continue.

Ria and Wassim sign their papers first. Then Samara and Faris sign theirs.

Faris moves the bottom sheet to reveal a familiar list to Samara. He signs it. So does she.

The Imam continues traditions with the presence of the girls' Father as everyone sits quietly, listening in.

Eventually the Registrar announces the two newlywed couples as husbands and wives. Faris and Samara hold hands tightly. Her ring being the focus.

INT. BOOK SHOP - NIGHT

Samara's ring the focus. Reveal Samara sat before a small audience. She has a headscarf and niqab on (her face covered aside from her eyes).

SAMARA

And I can honestly say that our
happily ever after; is every day.

People in the audience applaud and close their books. Books are titled "Hi, Libido."

There's some minor chatter within the audience.

Someone raises their hand.

AUDIENCE 1

Faris, he's really a mechanic now?
With your Dad?

Samara nods proudly.

AUDIENCE 2

And you gave up Accountancy?

SAMARA

No. That's my day job. I write on
the side.

AUDIENCE 3

What about your identity? Your
religion? You were explicit about
many things in this book.

AUDIENCE 1

Well isn't that the point?

Samara nods.

SAMARA

That is the point. No one in this
book is named by their real name,
not even me. And you can look for a
father and son-in-law working on
cars together, but I promise you in
my culture that's hard to find. But
the people in the story are very
real. My urges; very real. You have
to make sure you are open with your
partner.

AUDIENCE 3

Why did you write a book about it?

SAMARA

'cause I wanted to show women that
they have a choice. And that they
can be themselves, without having
to have the daunting ball and chain
of a typical marriage that you
would see in our culture. I mean, I
don't know what would be on other
womens lists. Some may have
Ferraris. Some may need flowers
once a week or diamonds every
birthday. Some may have ice cream
on Sundays. It could be anything.
But I think every woman and man
should have a list of what they
want and be honest about it.

(MORE)

SAMARA (CONT'D)

And welcome a person's bravery to
be that honest. I got lucky that
Faris is my person. I trusted him
enough to open up. Someone else may
have thrown that list in my face.
Someone else may have taken
advantage.

Samara looks toward an aisle in the book store. Faris stands
leaning against a shelf. He winks at her.

SAMARA (CONT'D)

But he loved me. We belong
together.

A beat.

Audience members raise their hands and some talk over each
other.

THE END