

The Sky Man

Written by

Summer Nicks
&
Jet Tattersall

Copyright 2022

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, SONIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUPERS: ISTANBUL, TURKEY.

A DARK ROOM:

The deliberately controlled shallow breaths of a woman and child break an eerie silence of a room.

ALARA (TURKISH) (O.C.)
(under breath)
Shhh, baby...

FROM UNDER the BED:

ALARA (TURKISH) (cont'd)
(under breath/urgent)
Please, pick up, pick up, pick up.

NO ANSWER! AGAIN:

The clutter of someone banging about outside the room - a threat prowls in the darkness. Footstep approach the door.

- SOMEONE IS THERE.

- STILLNESS.

- Their shaky breaths echo, reverberating throughout the room.

- The door slowly creaks open -

Finally, from under the bed, the light is cast upon their faces from their hallway. Alara, 30's and her six-year-old daughter, Sonia, hide for their lives. Alara covers Sonia's mouth as she whimpers and gasps for air.

- FOOTSTEP APPROACHING.

INT. ISTANBUL AIRPORT, COUNTER - NIGHT

Michael, 30's, sadness etched on his face, steps towards the airline check-in counter holding a ticket and his passport. He has a small backpack with him. He hands them to the TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF. She looks at them, keys his details into her computer, and looks at the screen.

TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF
Kathmandu.

Michael nods.

TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF (cont'd)
Then onto Lhasa in a chartered
flight. Climber, huh?

MICHAEL
Uhh. Yeah.

TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF

Everest?

Michael doesn't respond. The Airline Staff gets the idea.

She flips through his passport.

TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF (cont'd)

Visas are in order.

She looks at his bag.

TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF (cont'd)

No check-in?

MICHAEL

This is all I have.

TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF

Okay.

She hands the documents back to him.

TURKISH AIRLINES STAFF (cont'd)

Gate 17.

INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Michael sits, awaiting his flight. He pulls out his wallet and opens it to a photograph of Alara and Sonia, his wife and daughter. He then takes a book from his bag, James Hilton's 'The Lost Horizon'. He opens it and looks at an old photograph, bookmarking it.

INSERT PHOTOGRAPH: A Tibetan family: a baby held by its mother, a young girl and a father. Standing next to them is another father and daughter, both foreign.

EXT. YILHUN LHA TSO, LAKESIDE (PAST) - DAY

The beautiful Yilhun Lha Tso lake is amidst the mountains. Turquoise blue waters reflect the sky with its sun's rays sparkling from the surface.

THE YOUNG GIRL from the photograph. (ALARA, 10)

Her toes tap the water first. It isn't that cold, so she slowly enters. When she is waist high, she turns to her father, TURKISH MAN OKAN, also from the photograph. He sits on a rock and reads the book - 'The Lost Horizon' by James Hilton.

Okan looks up to his daughter and reassures her everything is okay; he nods before she throws herself entirely in the water and begins swimming. He looks at her fondly, and she paddles out. She glows with happiness.

INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael places the photograph back into the book and closes it before standing to board his plane.

EXT. MOUNTAIN'S PEAKS - DAY

The jagged Himalaya's snow-covered peaks scratch the sky. Wafting clouds, brewing storms and the echoing blustery weather howl eerily throughout.

The constant rolling of the coil steals everything in its way.

EXT. VALLEY, RIVER'S EDGE - DAY

A valley amidst the mountains.

As we travel down from the moonscape-like terrain of the massifs past the tree line, a river cuts through the dell, feeding its banks with life.

SUPERS: Tibetan Plateau.

Flowers in bloom, dandelion abundantly wafting, natural orchards of an assortment of fruit plentiful, traditional stone and clay-built homes are scattered about with the VILLAGE DWELLERS amid, tending to their farms.

As we move away from the village encapsulated by the mountainous giants, the landscape sizzles away and leaves paradise behind for the barren landscapes of the mystical Tibetan Plateau.

MICHAEL (VO.)

My love for you appears in no short sentence; it is rooted deep in the soul, a forte thrust beyond the blue yonder, the four quarters of the earth, it's you I wait for at the end of the world, don't give up on me, wait for me.

EXT. BARREN PLATEAU - DAY

The panorama is barren, forlorn. A high-altitude tableland resting amidst the Himalayan Mountain Ranges pathetically parades arid dregs of forgotten flora and fauna.

INT. BATANG TEMPLE MONESTARY, COURTYARD - DAY

A beautiful monastery with a turquoise roof and white-washed golden pagoda built against the terraced hills that circle the Batang grasslands.

A huge golden head of a Buddha is etched into the mountain face behind the temple.

We see row after row of young novice monks in the temple courtyard, reciting a mantra.

MONKS (TIBETAN)

May I be the doctor and the medicine, and may I be the nurse for all sick beings in the world until everyone is healed.

A stern-looking lama carries a thick, flat board menacingly behind his back; he walks among the students ensuring they're on point.

EXT. BATANG GRASSLANDS, FESTIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

A treeless valley with rich grasslands bordered by impenetrable rolling mountain ranges that host the annual Yushi Festival.

The Batang Temple Monastery sits above the grasslands etched into the hillside.

- A small makeshift city - clusters of exquisite Tibetan white cotton tents with sharp corners, peaked ceilings and elaborate, appliqué designs - housing hundreds of LOCALS gathering together on the prairie. They perform in horse racing and acrobat competitions, rejoice in the reunion of loved ones and celebrate the festivities.
- Decorated yaks and horses are prided about by their owners. Donning traditional clothing, dressed in heavy brocade coats and large woollen hats, black braids trailing down their backs, men, women and children enjoy the festivities.
- Monks and lamas, wearing maroon and yellow robes, gather about. Prayer wheels are turned, hand drums are played, and colourful prayer flags are tied.
- Dashing Kham Tibetan men display their expert marksmanship while their steeds gallop nimbly about alongside beautiful girls who sing songs in Tibetan.
- The swashbuckling Khambas from eastern Tibet (prominent people with heavy braids wrapped in red cloth on top of their heads) attract their crowd while other dancers - dressed in wild, colourful outfits - spin and leap in time to the eerie Tibetan music, all presenting their synchronised and well-choreographed dancing to crowds of spectators.
- There are performances by Tibetan singers as well as actors, indeed a joyous occasion; officials and their wives are dressed in their finest and sit before beautifully laid picnics. Children run here and there amidst the monks and nomads. There are even some Westerners, Indian and Chinese.
- The grasslands are alive with a brilliant display of Tibetan cultural sports and activities.
- The ceremony's highlights, though, are the daring stunts performed by the 150 or so riders, all with their horses galloping at full speed.

Kaldan (23), handsome, brawny and solid and his elder brother, Yeshe(30), sturdy and burly, watch the men performing on their horses.

Two PRETTY YOUNG LADIES walk past the boys and giggle coyly.

Kaldan catches the eye of one but then dismisses her to get back to the festivities. Yeshe notices it.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
The girls are here for the taking
today, brother.

Kaldan glares at Yeshi.

YESHI (TIBETAN) (cont'd)
A bride awaits... Or maybe two?

Kaldan looks across the field to LHAMU (20's) and her little brother TASHI, 18, standing by the sideline eating corn, watching the riders get ready.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
I'm not interested in any girls,
Yeshi. None compares to my Lhamu.

Lhamu and Kaldan catch eyes. He smiles at her and politely responds, but she is distracted by a strong man showing off on his horse to her.

Yeshi slaps him on the shoulder.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
Get your head in the game.

Kaldan looks at the competitors in the race anxiously.

YESHI (TIBETAN) (cont'd)
Win or lose, Kaldan; the glory is
in your efforts today.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
You know father will not see it
like that.

Kaldan and Yeshi's father, Tenzin, a robust, kind man in his early 50's, and graceful mother, Sonam (40's), approach them. Their sister Diki, 18, and Yeshi's wife, Chen, 20's, also nursing a BABY GIRL, are with him. Everyone looks very elegant in their traditional garb.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
Tashi Delek (greetings) mother and
father.

TENZIN
Tashi Delek.
(Tibetan)

KALDAN
Diki, you look great.
(Tibetan)

SONAM
And still, a husband escapes her.

DIKI
Thank you for the reminder, mother.
(gestures to Lhamu)
(MORE)

Kaldan's fellow TEAM MEMBERS congratulate him, claiming Kaldan- as their victor, the local hero.

The REFEREE trots to the middle of the field towards Kaldan, takes his hand, and raises his arm, exalting him. The CROWD cheers on.

Kaldan is overwhelmed by the attention, proud as a lion.

Kaldan looks to Lhamu, but she and her brother are lost in a sea of cheering faces approaching him.

Tenzin looks on with a warm heart as his friends congratulate him.

EXT. BATANG GRASSLANDS, FESTIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Standing by a cloth store, Lhamu considers a material whilst Tashi sits on a stool waiting for her, bored, kicking his feet into the dirt.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
We should go soon, Lhamu, before
the it gets dark.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Leaving soon won't shorten the
distance, Tashi.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
There's three days between us and
home.
We have animals to get back to.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
And they are well stocked.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
I'll wait by the horse.

Tashi stands and trots away in haste.

At that moment, Kaldan appears from the side of the store and surprises Lhamu with a gracious smile.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
Lhamu, my joy.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Hello Kaldan.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
Did you come all this way just to
see me win?

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I came for the markets.

Lhamu places the material down and wanders off. Kaldan follows her.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
You saw me ride?

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I did.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
And?

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
And you won. Well done.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
Only because you were in the crowd.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Please.

Lhamu stops in her tracks and looks at him. She then notices a group of young STARRY-EYED FANS slowly passing Kaldan, admiring him. Kaldan likes it.

LHAMU (cont'd)
You're the champion of the valley now.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
All of the regions, Lhamu.

Lhamu stifles her giggle, turns, and continues walking towards Tashi, who stands by a horse tied to a pole.

KALDAN (cont'd)
Will you not celebrate with us tonight? My sisters would love to see you.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I have to get back to the animals.

Kaldan stops in his tracks and watches her meet with Tashi, readying the horse.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
(calls to her)
It won't be the same without you there.

Lhamu mounts the horse.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
You'll survive.

Tashi looks at Kaldan and waves admiringly before he gets on the horse behind Lhamu.

Kaldan watches as they ride off... In lust!

EXT. BARREN PLATEAU - DAY (SOMETIME LATER)

A slight breeze resonates throughout:

The blazing afternoon sun bleaches the land apricot.

Lhamu and Tashi ride to the top of a ridge and stop, measuring the journey ahead of them.

Tashi retrieves a canister of water hidden under his legui (traditional clothing), removes the lid and sparingly swigs a drink. It is soothing. He then passes it to Lhamu, who takes a swig.

EXT. BARREN PLATEAU - NIGHT

The crackling of fire hums along with the evening's melodies.

An amazingly lit night sky, brilliant with stars.

Lhamu and Tashi have already made their beds for the night - Fabrics, canvas and heavy clothing.

A small, potent fire illuminates the patch of dirt next to their makeshift beds. Just a few twigs and a small branch are all that is needed to give Tashi the light and warmth he requires to read his POCKET SIZED PRAYER RECITATION BOOK, which he recites in a half-hearted audible delivery -

- *'om-mani-padme-hum'*

Lhamu stares into the distant night sky. She turns and watches her brother read.

Unnoticed by Tashi, Lhamu takes a little stick and flicks it at his hair. Annoyed, he looks at her, but she pretends she is asleep. He looks around for the 'bug'; it could be. 'Nothing!'

Tashi yawns. He is tired. He closes the prayer recitation book and tucks it into his shawl. He then lays down, his arms stretched behind his head as support and stares into the night sky.

Lhamu's eyes open, and she looks at him. Sneakily, she takes the stick, flicks it at his head, and, again, quickly closes her eyes. Tashi, now annoyed, sits up and checks the ground around him.

Lhamu giggles to herself, and Tashi notices it.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Lhamu!

Her eyes open, and she smiles.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Tashi?

TASHI (TIBETAN)

You're annoying.

He lays back, and both turn towards the night sky.

TASHI (cont'd)
The mighty Kaldan has eyes on you.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Kaldan has eyes on every girl.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
But he wants to marry you.

Lhamu groans.

TASHI (cont'd)
I hope you don't. You're annoying
but he's unbearable.

Lhamu is about to respond when they both notice a shooting star darts into being and just as quickly disintegrates into our atmosphere... Tashi sits up.

TASHI (cont'd)
An omen!

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Just a shooting star, Tashi.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Hail to the jewel in the lotus.
- **"Om Mani Padme Hum"**

He lays back down when suddenly another small light appears, only it is blinking and moving slowly. Both look at it oddly.

Within moments the blinking light, though at a great distance, has a visible flame, like an explosion, spit out and disrupting its course.

A split second later, the evening's silence is shattered, and the echoing of its blast travels to their ears and stuns them with its sudden intensity.

They both sit up and watch it intently it begins to critically escalates towards the earth until the object falls behind a hill and out of sight.

They look at each other anxiously, waiting for something to happen, when the echoing of a thunderous crash suddenly reverberates throughout the valley.

EXT. BARREN PLATEAU - NIGHT

Tashi kicks dirt onto the smouldering fire and smothers it, then with their camp packed away and Lhamu already sitting on the horse, he mounts it behind her. Lhamu then taps the horse's flank with her stirrup and guides it upward the hill.

EXT. SMALL HILLTOP - NIGHT (PRE-DAWN)

Lhamu and Tashi arrive at the top of the hill to apricot dusk burning the horizon.

They look towards the hazy smoke rising from the forest about a kilometre away.

Tashi dismounts the horse and walks a little ahead, seeing the dense forest before him.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

It could be dangerous. You should stay here.

Lhamu agrees.

Tashi enters the forest.

EXT. FOREST, CRASH SITE - DAY (DAWN)

Tashi pushes through the dense forest, inching closer to the smoke. He can see debris has fallen around him, cindering embers wafting about.

He sees a break in the trees and notices smouldering debris scattered over a considerable distance, evidently the impact zone.

EXT. SMALL HILLTOP - DAY (SUNRISE)

Lhamu stands next to the horse as the sun peaks over the horizon, giving the scape its first rays of the new morn' and bringing clarity to the land.

She can now see the smoke rising across different parts of the forest in daylight.

EXT. FOREST, CRASH SITE - DAY (SUNRISE)

Even closer to the smouldering wreck, it is apparent that a PASSENGER-CARGO AIRCRAFT has crashed.

EXT. FOREST, CRASH SITE - DAY (SUNRISE)

It seems as if the craft had not crashed head-first into the ground but had an almost controlled landing that had subsequently lost control.

A good portion of the aircraft's fuselage, though severely damaged, remains intact. The tail-end lay approximately one hundred meters away with vestiges of the plane strewn far.

EXT/INT. FOREST, CRASH SITE, FUSELAGE - DAY (MORNING)

A scene of chaos:

Tashi combats his way through the obstacle of the wreckage to the cockpit of the plane.

As he draws nearer and the smoke clears, he faces the PILOT hanging from the cockpit window. He is dead.

Suddenly his eyes widen with fear. He turns around and notices another BODY lying almost by his feet. It is severely mangled. The sight shocks him, and he jumps from it.

Another BODY, this time burnt and almost unrecognisable as ever once being human.

In shock, Tashi cannot help but contort and spill the contents of his stomach immediately in front of him.

He falls to the ground, spluttering and coughing. The carnage is too much for his innocent eyes to bear.

A few moments pass. Tashi composes himself, wipes the tears from his eyes and stands again, braving the site.

Cut to:

Tashi moves down the side of the fuselage to where the rear has broken away and looks inside at the complicated obstruction of the aisle's passage into the craft.

He contemplates the mangled interior and twisted debris.

Smoke billows from one of the wings. He looks at it, but the clear danger does not prevent him from entering the fuselage.

His legs tremble as he looks around at the garbled contents while deciding on his manoeuvre.

Unexpectedly he hears a clank and sees a slight movement a little into the plane's body. It could be the jostle of the aircraft settling, but then a muffled, pained 'sigh' sound.

THERE IS SOMEONE ALIVE.

Tashi urgently pulls debris from his passage and makes it almost halfway through the aisle - thwarted - when he sees a MAN strapped into a chair. It is MICHAEL. Severely lacerated and broken he lays trapped, unconscious, but HE IS ALIVE!

ANOTHER PAINED 'SIGH'.

Tashi frantically starts to clear the debris from around Michael with incredible challenge and involvement, and after some time, manages to craft a path. He comes in close to Michael and looks at his unrecognisable face.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

I'm here!

Tashi reaches over him and easily unbuckles the belt, but he is still trapped. He looks behind him and sees the obstructed passage. He must clear it if he is to pull Michael free, and so he does.

Box after box, crate after crate, he eventually makes a safe passage towards the exit of the craft.

He moves back towards Michael. As he reaches toward him, Tashi notices the ruptured wing trickling gasoline. It spills at a prolonged rate, but smaller embers still blow around it and risk ignition. He realises the inevitable and panics.

He takes Michael by his shoulders and attempts to pull him from the seat but fails; his leg is broken, the shin bone protruding just under his right knee.

This could be harder than expected. He moves to the seat before him and begins tearing it from its hinges.

With great difficulty, he accomplishes it while keeping an attentive eye on the leaking gasoline.

He moves behind the man, places his arms beneath his shoulders and begins to drag him from the wreck. But Tashi's shirt catches and yanks him back, preventing him from getting out. He's stuck.

At this moment, the wind picks up and blows about embers and debris, which catch ablaze.

Tashi notices the wing catch light. He dreads the unavoidable.

Tashi yanks at his shirt, but it is stuck; Michael's dead weight is too heavy.

The fire is advancing, closer to combustion. A definite conflagration is pending, and Tashi realises the urgency.

Tashi thrusts all of his might into saving the man from certain death. Although he handles the task with great complexity and convolution, he eventually accomplishes his goal.

The wing begins to smoulder ferociously; it is not over yet. As soon as he is in a safe area just meters from the exit, he trips; consequently, Michael's limp body slumps where he yields.

Tashi gets up and begins to drag Michael further and further away. He is around 20 meters when all of a sudden, the wing combusts and, within moments, explodes into a hellish inferno.

Again, the blast wave knocks Tashi to the ground. He covers his face not without watching the PILOT'S BODY consumed by the blaze first.

Tashi winces in fright as debris skyrockets and comes to land everywhere indiscriminately.

EXT. SMALL HILLTOP - DAY (MORNING)

The horse jolts and neighs and Lhamu stands concerned as she sees the explosions dissipate amidst thick black smoke rising above the treetops and hears the echo of the discharge finally fade.

LHAMU

Tashi!

She settles the horse.

INT. FOREST, CRASH SITE - DAY (MORNING)

The debris finally settles, and the wreckage steadily burns away, but Tashi is safe.

The aircraft's body is guttered, the screeching of the raging fire deafening.

Tashi cautiously sits up. Scanning the area, he sees Michael still lying where he fell.

EXT. SMALL HILLTOP - NIGHT (MORNING)

With the horse settled, Lhamu paces against the edge of the forest. She stops and looks towards the sky.

LHAMU

TASHI!!!

EXT. FOREST, CRASH SITE - DAY

Tashi wanders around the impact zone, looking for retrievable items of use. He finds some metal siding from the fuselage; it could be the base of a stretcher. He then sees some tarp and mangled wires.

Cut to:

EXT. FOREST, CRASH SITE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Tashi has created a framework of two poles from the craft with a long piece of canvas slung between them. He's fixed it together with the wiring. A stretcher comes to life.

He carefully lays Michael onto it and then covers him with his heavy shawl.

He rests a moment, takes out his water canister from his shawl, and is about to sip the remaining few drops when he stops and moves to Michael.

He presses the bottle to Michael's lips and pours it. Michael does not respond; the water trickles down his cheek and is absorbed by the earth.

EXT. FOREST - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The tail end of the craft.

Tashi has wound more of the wiring into ropes and pulls the stretcher with Michael's dead weight behind him.

He passes the plane's tail end, gently puts the stretcher down, and moves to it, looking for practical items.

He comes across a canister and cracks it open, only to find it empty. He sees another one and opens it; it has nothing on the inside, either.

Disappointed, he moves back to the stretcher and is about to continue his journey when he lays his eyes on a full 1.5 litre Coke-a-Cola bottle.

He runs to it and opens it, sculling as much as possible. His thirst quenched, his energy restored; Tashi looks at the wreck behind him and then towards Michael. He pats his chest where his PRAYER RECITATION BOOK is held under his garment, then up to the sky.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Give me strength.

EXT. SMALL HILLTOP - DAY

Waiting anxiously, Lhamu shades herself under a tree from the blistering sun. She looks into the forest for any sign of life, but nothing, stillness.

Suddenly a sound. She stands, but it is only a pair of wild cashmere goats grazing across the field near the forest edge. They stop upon seeing her, and when she moves they pelt away.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dragging the stretcher across the rugged terrain, Tashi struggles to make it through the dense forest. He lowers the stretcher and sits on a rock to rest. He looks down at Michael and sees the depth of his breath rising in his chest.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Just hold on a little longer.

EXT. SMALL HILLTOP - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Evening shadows are cast across the plateau as the sun falls behind the highest mountains.

Lhamu stands unwavering by the forest's edge and listens into it, waiting for something.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT (EVENING)

The sun disappears, and darkness surrounds Tashi as he struggles to drag the stretcher behind him.

He is completely exhausted, almost collapsing with every step.

EXT. SMALL HILLTOP - DAY (EVENING)

Lhamu looks into the forest, but nothing. She turns and walks back up the horse and pats him, then:

With the rustling of leaves and branches cracking and Tashi's exhausted 'sigh', she turns back to see him standing at the edge of the forest with the stretcher behind him.

LHAMU

Tashi!

He barely makes it another step out of the forest when he collapses from exhaustion, he and the stretcher hitting the ground.

TASHI'S POV: Tashi's vision comes in and out of focus as he sees his sister running toward him.

THEN BLACK.

(MEMORY) INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, BEDROOM (MEMORY) - DAY

The pitter-patter of little feet running around on a wooden floor alerts Michael's eyes to open.

MICHAEL'S POV: Against the bright morning sun shining through the large windows, the silhouette of a woman against the glowing curtains picks up a child SONIA, now only 3, from the wooden floorboards. Sonia points to Michael, her father. The woman is ALARA, younger than before, in her mid 20's.

SONIA

Dadda!

ALARA

(lovingly)

Wake up, Daddy.

As Alara brings the baby closer to Michael's face, they barely come into focus for the rosy light.

ALARA (cont'd)

Honey. Wakey, wakey.

Again, Michael's eyes close to darkness -

INT. HOMESTEAD, BEDROOM - DAY

Michael's eyes open again to:

MICHAEL'S POV: Lhamu's silhouette against the light protruding through the front door. Still a little blurry, he strains to focus.

Lhamu sits next to him with a bowl of steaming hot water.

Michael has now been cleaned, his wounds somewhat healed, his facial hair proof of time passing.

In his peripheral, he notices he is in a large bedroom with doors leading off to the side of a modest clay brick home.

Only able to move his eyes, Michael becomes instantly perplexed. His breath deepens, and anxiety hits him.

He realises something is wrong. He is frightened.

LHAMU

Tashi Delek.

Lhamu sees he is confused and acts immediately. She soaks the cloth in hot water and squeezes it out before wiping down Michael's face.

It calms him, and then he focuses on her.

MICHAEL'S SPOV: He notices her craggy mountain hands as he searches for her face, but first, he sees her long braid hanging over her shoulder, falling from her khata (head-scarf), then across to her rose-coloured lips, then up to her shining eyes.

MICHAEL'S POV: Lhamu's khata slips down, and she timidly covers her head again and lowers her eyes away from him. Her attentiveness soothes him.

MICHAEL'S POV: Suddenly, felt boots enter the room, across the floor, and up behind Lhamu. Michael looks up, and it is Tashi, another stranger to him.

Tashi looks into his eyes, studies them for a moment and realises their colour. They are blue.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

His eyes are blue. Like the white man's lama. The one from the pictures in their holy book.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

What are you talking about, Tashi?

TASHI (TIBETAN)

He went up to the sky three days after being dead—the sky man.

BEAT

TASHI (TIBETAN) (cont'd)

In any case, he doesn't look like an angel to me.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

You're a strange one.

Suddenly a furry mountain DOG, Tashi's dog, 'CEBA', appears. Ceba pushes through Tashi's legs and licks Michael's face.

Michael winces as Lhamu pushes the dog away.

LHAMU (cont'd)

Get him out of here, Tashi.

Tashi pulls a face at his sister, takes Ceba by the collar then walks off out of the house.

Lhamu watches him leave, then continues wiping down Michael's face. She begins to hum a tune softly. Slowly his eyes close.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY (AFTERNOON)

The house has a flat, clay-tiled roof and large windows. The garden is adorned with Tibetan prayer flags, buffalo and horses that graze, goats that bleat, and chickens that 'brawk'. The fields have corn, fruits, lentils and herbs.

Tashi throws his dog a stick in the garden, and the Ceba goes and takes the stick and doesn't return it.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Ceba. Bring me the stick.

Ceba sits and chews into the stick, ignoring Tashi.

TASHI (cont'd)
Stupid dog.
(Tibetan)

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY (DUSK)

The sun falls behind the mountains and blankets the atmosphere with the night.

INT. HOMESTEAD, TASHI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tashi sits on his bed reading a vintage NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC magazine, or more so, looking at the pictures. It's a '1989 Edition' He stares at the advertising pages - Girls, Western Girls. Nothing unusual, but their presence excites him as he slowly turns from one page to the next.

Suddenly Lhamu appears at the door holding a towel and a cake of soap. Tashi quickly throws the magazines under the pillow.

Lhamu sees what he is up to, but she dares not embarrass him by mentioning it.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
He's messed himself.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Again?

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I've warmed the tub. He's beginning to smell like Ceba.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
He fouls himself like a baby. I've cleaned him every day since he fell out of the sky.

Lhamu looks at him pointedly.

TASHI (cont'd)
It's your turn.

Lhamu stares at him.

TASHI (cont'd)
He's filthy! I'm not cut out for this shit.

Lhamu laughs at his melodrama.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
You are so spoilt! One day you'll get married and have children of your own.

(MORE)

LHAMU (TIBETAN) (cont'd)
 You know you will have to help your
 wife with such things, so why not
 consider this perfect practice? You
 will be an ideal husband.
 (Tibetan)

TASHI (TIBETAN)
 I'll be a laughing stock.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
 Who?-

TASHI (TIBETAN)
 -Human muck is a women's job.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
 You did not just say that?!
 These mountains divide no such
 responsibility except when it comes
 to a stranger's eyes. Young modern
 man, indeed.

Lhamu hands him the towel and soap.

LHAMU (cont'd)
 Now get in there and clean him.
 Like a man.

Tashi takes it begrudgingly, gets up from his bed and leaves
 the room.

Lhamu waits for him to be out of sight. She moves to retrieve
 the magazine from under his pillow. She skims over the pages
 and stares at the women models, bewildered by their
 audaciousness.

Turning the page, she looks at the 'provocative' swimsuit
 catalogue. Embarrassed by what she sees, she places the
 magazine back under the pillow and composes herself.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, BATHROOM - NIGHT

An awkward situation. Tashi attempts to place Michael over an
 alternative arrangement steadied over the hot bathtub, where
 his broken and bandaged leg is propped in an upright
 position. He is not too happy about it.

Michael, still in a state of shock, stares at Tashi's
 efforts, bewildered by this stranger and interaction.

Finally, Tashi gets him into the tub, his leg propped up on
 the harness. Michael slides under the water without response.
 Tashi acts hastily and pulls him above water so he doesn't
 drown.

In awe of his impassive behaviour, Tashi takes the cake of
 soap, then Michael's hand, and begins to scrub him.

Suddenly flatulent bubbles rise to the surface of the water
 and pop. The smell irks and repulses Tashi.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Disgusting.

Tashi feels slightly uncomfortable.

TASHI (cont'd)
(flustered)
What are you looking at me like
that for?

Tashi pokes his tongue at him.

Confused, Michael turns his head away.

INT. HOMESTEAD, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Tashi has sat Michael in the chair. He finishes wrapping a shawl around his genitalia, mimicking a 'nappy'.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
(pleased)
There!

Michael looks at him, stupefied, confused, numb.

TASHI (cont'd)
That should contain some of the
mess.

Tashi looks at his leg. He moves to the chest and retrieves more gauze to redress his wound. He begins to unwrap a piece of cloth already fixed and sees a horrendous sight; some of the fabric is stuck to the injury. He looks up at Michael, sorry for him. He has to do it.

TASHI (cont'd)
I'm sorry, brother.

Tashi tears the cloth from the wound. Michael's only reaction is a slight squint.

INT. HOMESTEAD, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lhamu sits by the tandoori mud oven, making tsampa (bread) and stirring a boiling pot of lentil soup.

Tashi walks in and sits next to her.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
He's clean.
(whiffing the aroma)
That smells good.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
It's the same smell as yesterday,
brother--most days, actually.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Exactly how I like it. Normal!

Lhamu adds more salt to the soup and stirs it through.

TASHI (cont'd)
Where do you think the Sky Man
comes from?

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I don't know.

Lhamu kneads the flour and water to make Tsampa, ever-present in her moment.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Where do you think he was going?

Lhamu doesn't respond. She's too present in her moment to leave it. Tashi watches the precision of how delicately Lhamu makes the tsampa.

TASHI (cont'd)
What language do you think he
speaks?

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I don't know, Tashi. I don't know
anything about him.

She continues to make the tsampa. Hurt, Tashi sits back and stares into the fire's depth.

LHAMU (cont'd)
(an offering)
We should call him by a name,
though. It's been ten days now.

Tashi smiles now that she's engaged him in a conversation. He contemplates for a moment. Then it comes to him.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Pho-Nya? Messenger.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I like Pho-Nya.

Tashi takes the spoon and stirs the contents of the pot, then sneaks in a small taste. It's good.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
He could be from Russia.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Or America?

TASHI (TIBETAN)
No. He's a Russian soldier.

She places the balep (Tibetan bread) on a silver plate, scoops out some rice from the pot and then smothers it in lentil soup.

Lhamu places the bowl in front of Tashi.

He immediately begins to devour the food, but before he gets a second mouthful, Lhamu prevents him by placing the wooden spoon across his hand.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Ah, ah - I want you to feed Pho-Nya first. Also, he will eat before us until he can eat with us.

(sternly/ sardonically)

Don't be fooled by those magazines you read, Tashi. There's nobody here to impress but me.

(Tibetan)

Tashi bows his head respectfully, concurring. He takes the food and leaves the room.

INT. HOMESTEAD, MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Tashi has sat Michael up in his chair. Sitting beside him, he feeds him.

He carefully scoops some rice and lentils onto a spoon and lifts it to Michael's mouth. He has to push it through his lips, where Michael takes over and slightly chews, before swallowing. It is complicated for him to eat, but he manages.

Tashi and Michael's eyes are locked.

INTERJECTION: FLASHES.

POV: For a brief second, it is as though Michael sees a 4-year-old Sonia feeding him.

Michael snaps out of it.

Tashi scoops another spoonful and lifts it to Michael's lips, but this time Michael lifts his hand and grabs Tashi's wrist in a tightened grip. Tashi screams, frightened as Michael also jumps back afraid, spilling the spoon of food on himself.

MICHAEL

(stuttering)

Who? Who, who you are? Who are you?

Tashi is startled by the words coming from his mouth.

Lhamu comes to the door.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

What happened?

TASHI (TIBETAN)

He spoke. He said words. I think.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

What did he say?

TASHI (TIBETAN)
I don't speak Russian.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
The stew is hot. You're probably
burning him.

Lhamu goes back into the kitchen.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
At ease, soldier.
I'm just here to help.

Tashi sits back up and takes another spoonful of food, but Michael takes the spoon from his hands, not without startling Tashi again.

Michael puts the food in his mouth, chews and swallows it.

They hold their stares undisturbed while Michael attempts to speak.

MICHAEL
(frustrated)
I'm..hun..hun...hungry!

They don't understand each other.

Michael lays back, exhausted by the attempt.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Soon!

Tashi picks up the spoon and begins to feed him again,

INT. HOMESTEAD, MICHAEL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tashi puts Michael into bed - he props his leg up and assists him under the sheets before pulling the blankets over him. He pats him on the head (like a dog) and leaves the room.

Trapped in his silent world, Michael lies there, confused. He looks around the room and then notices Tashi standing at the door, looking at him from the crack. Tashi moves away.

INT/EXT. MICHAEL'S CAR, (TRAVELLING) STREET, DRIVEWAY - DAY

Listening to a song on the radio, Michael and Sonia sing along playfully whilst he drives as Alara flicks through travel itineraries on her phone.

ALARA
So we can fly into Kathmandu, and
stay a few days, see the monkey
temple and the ghats, do some
shopping or fly into Beijing for a
two hour layover before onto Lhasa.
Then take the epic bus journey.

SONIA
 Monkey temple, monkey temple,
 monkey temple.

MICHAEL
 Epic bus journey. Why can't
 we just hire a car?

ALARA
 Navigating mountain roads is not
 your strong suit, darling.

MICHAEL
 Noted.

Michael turns the car into their street. *

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (cont'd)
 Kathmandu could be a nice stopover.

ALARA
 And we'd never hear the end of it
 if we didn't take her to the monkey
 temple.

MICHAEL
 We'd never hear the end of it if we
 did too.

ALARA
 True.

Upon approaching their home they see AZAM BUZAK 30's standing
 by their front gate, staring up at their house.

MICHAEL
 Oh shit.

ALARA
 Michael. *

Sonia puts her face to the window and looks at Azam. Michael
 sees it through the rear vision mirror. *

Michael pulls the car into his driveway and parks it near the
 garage.

Alara exits and helps Sonia out of the car while Michael
 begins to take groceries bags from the boot.

As he does he sees Azam walk up their driveway.

MICHAEL
 Babe?

Alara glares at Michael then to Sonia.

ALARA (TURKISH)
 Go wait at the door, sweetheart.

Sonia walks to the front door.

Michael watches Alara walk over to the greet Azam.

ALARA (TURKISH) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Hi Azam. How is your mum settling
in?

AZAM (TURKISH)
She's good. I get her walking. Even
a bit of time in the garden.

ALARA (TURKISH)
She's lucky to have you.

Azam beams.

ALARA (TURKISH) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Was there something I can help you
with?

AZAM (TURKISH)
No, no. I was just admiring your
jasmine.

ALARA (TURKISH)
That's all Michael. I'm better at
digging than growing.

Michael finishes unloading the car and follows Sonia into the house.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

Sonia sits on the sofa engrossed with cartoons as Michael place the groceries away.

Alara sits at the kitchen bench with her computer opened.

ALARA
He's alright. Just a bit lonely, I
imagine.

MICHAEL
What about his mum?

ALARA
All day? I remember when Glenda
came to stay you couldn't get out
of the house fast enough.

MICHAEL
Yeah, but that's my mum.

*

ALARA
Be nice.

Michael kisses Alara's shoulder and gets back to unpacking.

MICHAEL

Ok. Just try and keep him out of our driveway. Or I may have to turn the hose on him.

Alara tosses a tea-towel at him.

INT. PUJA ROOM - DAY (MORNING)

This is a simple room decorated with statues, deity scrolls and mandalas, and an altar to Buddha. Behind a glass case are Buddhist artefacts: prayer wheels, rosary beads and pictures of lamas.

Lhamu lights the butter lamps as Tashi pours water from a tiny copper bowl into six others, seven in all, placed on an altar before a statue of Buddha. It is Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion. He has eleven heads and four outstretched arms.

Both kneel in front of the statue, clasp their hands together in prayer and recite:

LHAMU/TASHI

Om Mani Padme Hum. Om Mani Padme Hum.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, GARDEN, SKY - DAY

The afternoon is beautiful.

Michael has been propped up on a bed outside in the garden.

Lhamu feeds the poultry.

Tashi chops wood.

Though almost oblivious to his existence, Michael sits on a recliner chair, propped up by pillows, watching Ceba run around, chasing the breeze.

The WHISTLING OF A HAWK catches Michael's attention. He notices it circling above him. He watches it.

Lhamu notices him, stops what she is doing, and walks over to him. He says nothing as she bends down and adjusts him to sit a little more upright, giving him a better view.

MICHAEL

(confused)

Where am I?

Lhamu is surprised by this.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

The sky man speaks.

MICHAEL

Who are you?

Lhamu detects his pestered mind as he looks about erratically. Michael tries to move, sit, and stand but can't.

Lhamu turns to her brother.

LHAMU

Tashi!!!

Tashi is already on his way over.

MICHAEL

Who are you? Where am I?

Tashi tries to calm him down, but his perplexity mounts.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Pho-Nya, please, relax.

Michael has fully awakened to the reality of his situation. He attempts to stand, forgetting his broken leg.

MICHAEL

What are you saying?
Who are you?

Michael's leg gives way, and he falls to the ground. He screeches in pain.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Please, Tashi, help him back into
the chair.

Tashi immediately tries to bring him back to the chair.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Take it easy, boss. We are friends.

Michael doesn't budge; he remains on the ground, rejecting their help, dealing with the pain of his throbbing leg and tortured mind.

Tashi and Lhamu look at each other -- useless.

TASHI (cont'd)

What do we do?

Through the pain, Michael forces calm upon himself. He stares at Lhamu; the sun directly behind them silhouettes them. He focuses on Lhamu's face.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, BEDROOM (MEMORY) - DAY

OVEREXPOSED; DREAMY SILHOUETTES, BRIGHT LIGHT.

Lhamu's face has metamorphosed into that of Alara's, Michael's wife. Dark hair, brown eyes and a soft, kind smile hangs over Michael, aroused from sleep.

ALARA

Come on, baby, wake up.

MICHAEL
Can't we stay in bed all day?

Michael sits up. He and Alara kiss on the lips.

ALARA
Good morning.

MICHAEL
Good morning to you.

He looks around for her.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Where's the little beast?

ALARA
Mum's taken her to the park.

Michael raises an eyebrow.

MICHAEL
(playfully)
So we're alone?

Alara gets his hint and lustfully teases him with little kisses on his neck but retracts her offer jokingly.

This taunt arouses him even more, and he throws her to the sheets and wrestles her kind-heartedly.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, GARDEN - NIGHT

The moon illuminates the vale with silver.

The mountains are as prominent by this night as they are by day.

The homestead sits silent.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, BEDROOM, LIVING AREA TO KITCHEN - DAY (DAWN)

Michael is already awake, staring at nothing as the morning light illuminates the room.

He takes in his first deep breath of the day and sits up.

He looks at his leg. He wriggles his toes and decides to free his leg of the makeshift cast.

He slowly unwraps the bandage until it has come off, then realises the severity of his wound when he sees the makeshift brace holding his shin bone together. His leg is still badly bruised, and the lacerations have yet to heal. He sighs with relief and rubs his leg to get the perennial circulation flowing again.

He waits a few moments, relishing the soothing he brings his leg by scratching, kneading and massaging it but has to stop for ultimately, it is too painful.

MICHAEL

Fuck!

Michael looks through his doorway into Tashi's room adjacent to him. He can see Tashi sleeping. He looks towards the door of Lhamu's room, which is locked. He scopes around his room, looking for something. He then notices the Ceba staring at him from the living room.

Against the front door, Michael notices a large-sized umbrella leaning. With difficulty, he gets onto the floor and drags himself across into the living room. He takes a great deal of time moving towards the umbrella, trying his best to be quiet but managing to bang a few things around. He uses pieces of furniture to support him.

Tashi has, by this time, awoken and is standing by his door looking at him; he notices his leg is free of the cast. Michael looks at him.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Someone is missing me.

Tashi says nothing; he looks on as Michael goes for the umbrella.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

(confused)

I have to leave.

At last, he takes the umbrella and attempts to use it as support; even though it causes him great pain, he manages to take an awkward stance. Michael takes back his breath.

Befuddled by this stranger's reactions, Tashi tries to prevent him from hurting himself further and gestures for him to sit in the chair, but Michael is determined.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Someone is waiting for me.

Michael gestures to the front door, and beyond that, he must go.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

I need a phone - or something.

He gestures again. Tashi looks to where he is pointing, towards the mountains.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

(pleading)

Can you help me?

Michael realises Tashi hasn't a clue what he is saying.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

(resigned)

I need to go home! PLEASE!

He gives in as Tashi forces Michael to sit back down. He puts him on the chair while reinforcing the bandage around his leg brace. Blood trickles from it.

Tashi then gestures to Michael for something to eat.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Breakfast?

Michael sees he is only trying to help - he calms.

MICHAEL
Food? I don't want food. I want to
get out of here.

Tashi gestures for Michael to stay put. He moves the umbrella at a distance to the other side of the room and leaves into the kitchen.

Michael is irritated but can do nothing about it.

CUT TO:

Tashi is fumbling through the kitchen, looking for something to eat. He goes into a cabinet and retrieves a cloth with tsampa wrapped. He takes one. He then sees a silver bowl, inside of it, curd.

CUT TO:

Tashi enters the room with a bowl of curd and a tsampa.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Food! You must eat! Good for your
strength.

He hands the food to Michael, who has already resigned himself from his plight. He politely accepts it.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

He takes a piece of the tsampa and dips it in the curd.

The first bite settles him. Tashi recognises the language.

TASHI
(hesitantly)
Thank you... well....welcome.

Michael is almost surprised that Tashi responds in English.

MICHAEL
Welcome. Yes! Welcome. Thank you.
English words. English? Can you
speak it? I speak English.

Tashi attempts his best.

TASHI
 My school. English teacher! Job,
 papa. French-man. Englishman.
 Turkish man. You?

Michael is excited.

MICHAEL
 Englishman? Yes! Well, I don't
 know. However, yes, I speak
 English.

Tashi is excited for himself. He then tries to teach Michael something.

TASHI
 Ngai ming Tashi yin Tashi. Me -
 Tashi.
 (My name is Tashi)

He gestures by referring to himself.

TASHI (cont'd)
 Me - Tashi.
 (spelling it out)
 TASHI! NAME. TASHI.

Michael understands what he is doing.

MICHAEL
 Tashi?

TASHI
 (excited)
 Tashi. Khedrand ming Gangyin?
 (Your name is?)
 Name?

He refers to Michael by now patting his chest.

MICHAEL
 (softly/lost)
 Me? I, I don't know.
 I don't know my name. I don't
 remember.

TASHI
 Name? You?

MICHAEL
 I don't know.
 I don't know who I am.

Silence falls between them as the realisation hits him.

Tashi gestures to the food again.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
 Eat food. Soon you'll be better.

Michael surrenders and takes a mouthful.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, GARDEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Lhamu sleepily walks across the garden with an empty bucket of animal feed.

She raises her eyes to Tashi who stands in the doorway.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Everything ok?

TASHI (TIBETAN)
He's not Russian.

Enjoying the win, Lhamu pushes Tashi aside with her hip as she walks into the house.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOME, DRIVEWAY (MEMORY) - DAY (MORNING) *

A police car is parked out front of their neighbour's house as Michael and Alara walk from the front door to their car. *

Michael holds his briefcase. *

MICHAEL
I'll just be a few hours. *

Alara can't take her eyes from the police car. *

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (cont'd) *

Babe? *

ALARA
What do you think happened? *

Michael looks to the neighbours house. *

MICHAEL
I don't know. *

Alara narrows her eyes; trying to better see into the neighbours window. *

MICHAEL (CONT'D) (cont'd) *

Aright, I gotta' go. *

ALARA
Bye. *

Michael kisses her cheek and quick steps it to his car. *

EXT/INT. DRIVEWAY, MICHAEL'S CAR - DAY (CONTINUOUS) *

Michael pulls on his seat belt and reverses out of the driveway just as the neighbours front door opens and Azam exits with a POLICE OFFICER. *

They appear friendly with each other. *

Michael waves to Alara. *

But she's already turned and gone back inside the house. *

EXT. TENZIN & KALDAN'S HOUSE - DAY (MORNING)

Kaldan is far from the house, cleaning some goatskins stretched across dried-out branches.

Yeshi, with a rifle in his hands, opens the gate where the goats are corralled and begins to herd them out. He spots his brother and calls out to him.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
Kaldan, Kaldan. Let's go.

EXT. FIELD NEAR STREAM - DAY (MORNING)

Bored and hot, Kaldan stands by the stream, tossing stones to skim across the water as Yeshi sits under a tree, eating tsampa and drinking po cha (butter tea) from a flask.

Their horses, tied to a tree, graze the nearby field like their herd of goats. Yeshi guards them with his rifle on his lap.

Kaldan, bored, stops and looks around spotting a large rock. He waits a moment before he goes to sit behind it. He makes sure his brother isn't watching, then pulls his pants down. He closes his eyes and begins to knead his crotch, arousing himself.

When he is at his most concentrated moment, a shot bursts out and jolts him; alarmed, he briskly pulls his pants up as another shot blasts out, its scream echoing through the mountains.

Kaldan swiftly gets up to see what his brother is doing. He emerges from his haven to see Yeshi aiming the rifle towards the mountains. He sees the goats scattered.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
Are you crazy, Yeshi? What are you doing?

YESHI (TIBETAN)
I saw a Mountain lion. It got away.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
You know it's forbidden to kill them.

Yeshi gives him a flinty stare.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
As you know it's forbidden to do what you were doing just now behind that rock.

Embarrassed, Kaldan walks to the horse.

Kaldan walks to his horse. He looks back at his brother.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)

You bring the herd back, today!

Kaldan moves to his horse and unties it. He climbs and digs his heels into its ribs—the horse neighs and knickers before cantering off.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, COURTYARD - DAY (MORNING)

Michael sits on his chair in the courtyard staring at Lhamu's work as she separates the lentils from harvest debris.

She has kilos laid out on grass mats and picks bits and pieces of inedible fragments from them.

He then spots Tashi in the alter room as he feeds cedar and yak chips into the incense burner - sending silver, twirling smoke up and around the prayer flags. Tashi halfheartedly prays for a second, then hurriedly leaves the courtyard back to the fields.

Michael then notices the chickens plucking about, picking at the ground, and Ceba lazing around.

He seems healthy and alive but deeply lost. His eyes speak all emotions - uncertainty, confusion, chaos.

He then focuses on Lhamu's precision in separating the good lentils from the bad, unconcerned with her beauty.

Lhamu looks up at him, and she politely acknowledges him. He raises a few lazy fingers and indicates a wave. She smiles and gets back to what she is doing.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, FIELD - MORNING

Lhamu and Tashi hoe the field, turning the ground, and sowing the wheat seeds.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

We need to help him leave.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

He can hardly walk.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

He belongs somewhere. He belongs to someone. Maybe I should go to Lhasa instead of waiting for him to get well.

Lhamu is quick to respond. She is very emphatic and insistent in her approach.

LHAMU

You can't leave me alone here with him.

TASHI

Why not?

He's a stranger!

TASHI (cont'd)

Hardly.

LHAMU

We know nothing about him. Or where he comes from.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Somewhere English?

Lhamu throws him a disparaging look.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

We'll wait for father to return. He may know something.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Father won't be back till the winter. It'll be too late to travel. He'll be trapped here until the spring.

Lhamu doesn't let up.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

It's the best we can do. Now stop bickering with me over every little detail.

Tashi keeps his eyes down and continues working, annoyed but again respectful.

LHAMU (cont'd)

One month is sufficient for him to regain his health and strength for the journey.

Tashi isn't hiding his contempt. He takes the dirt and covers the seed.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

I'm done for today.

He rushes to the house, leaving Lhamu to continue the work.

INT. HOMESTEAD, TASHI'S ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Tashi enters his bedroom.

He moves over to his chested drawers and pulls open the top drawer. A bunch of neatly stacked books lay inside, mostly Tibetan Buddhist readings and paraphernalia, and other Tibetan TEXTS, A BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH BOOK.

He finds what he is looking for. A novel. He smiles, closes the drawer and leaves the room.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, COURTYARD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael watches Lhamu working as Tashi exits the house and approaches him from behind.

Tashi is holding 'The Lost Horizon' novel by James Hilton novel.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

You have to be helpful to me if
you're in my home.

Tashi hands Michael the book. He is surprised at the sight of it.

TASHI (ENGLISH) (cont'd)

This father book. Turkish Man Okan
gift me! Friend, father.

Michael skims through it quickly, amazed at Tashi's zest. Michael takes it and opens a page; it has been bookmarked with an old photograph.

It is the same photograph we saw him looking at in the airport. Tashi as a baby, Lhamu as a child, his father and mother, a foreigner, and his daughter. It is Turkish Man Okan (Alara's father) and Alara as a 10-year-old - the same girl we saw in the lake with her father.

The photograph means nothing to Michael.

TASHI (cont'd)

This Turkish man Okan, gift me. Me,
baby. Sister. Mother. Father.
Family. Foreigners people. Friend.
My teacher. We English speak.
A.B.C.D.E.F.G.H.I.
J.K.L.M.N.O.P.Q.R.S.T.U.V.W.X.Y.Z.
One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten. Me,
English.

Michael stares blankly at him.

TASHI (cont'd)

English people, European people,
Chinese people, mountain climbing.
My father friend book, gift to me.
I'm learning book me, you. English
I want. Me speaking. Your teacher
me.

MICHAEL

Yes, English. English people,
European people, Chinese people.
You, what people? What country is
this? What is this place called?

Tashi tries to understand him.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
 Country? England, France, America?
 Where Am I? Where is here?

Tashi finally gets it.

TASHI
 Country?

MICHAEL
 Yes! Land?

TASHI
 Land? This Tibet land. China.
 Himalayas. I - Tibet people.

Michael is in shock.

MICHAEL
 I'm in Tibet?

At that moment, Lhamu appears in front of them.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
 You will not walk off on me again.
 Why is it I am always expected to
 do your work too?

TASHI (TIBETAN)
 You're not.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
 The field still needs sowing, and
 someone still needs to prepare
 lunch.

Michael senses something wrong.

LHAMU (cont'd)
 Am I to do everything?

Tashi places his book on the table.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
 Sorry.

She holds the hoe out, and Tashi quickly moves to take it
 before moving back towards the fields.

LHAMU
 Duty, work, garden.

MICHAEL
 Do you also speak English?

LHAMU
 Little.

Lhamu diffidently leaves towards the kitchen.

INT. TENZIN AND KALDAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A single fire illuminates the room where Tenzin and Sonam sit, arm in arm. They glance through the window at a pensive Kaldan, who sits by the fire sharpening a stick with his pocket knife.

SONAM (TIBETAN)

He's frustrated, Tenzin. All the boys in the village are already married, and he is the Yushi Champion. He can't hold his head high. We must at least see if Lhamu is still an option. He is of age now, and so should she be.

Tenzin contemplates it for a moment to decide.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)

We will go and see.

Tenzin takes Sonam's hand and exchanges a comforting smile with her.

INT. HOMESTEAD, BEDROOM - NIGHT

The full moon's gleam poking through the windows gives the room enough light to see that Michael is asleep.

Ceba is sleeping at the end of the bed.

Michael wakes to the moonlight directly in his eyes; he senses he has heard something but isn't quite sure.

He lays and stares silently into the mystic until he decides to move. He sits upright, seeing the light flicking through the living room.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LIVING ROOM, BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael enters the living room, using furniture to steady him. He sees nothing.

He then notices that the light is coming from the bathroom; it is a bright candle.

Michael moves across the room a little as silently as he can. He sees through the slightly ajar door that Lhamu has taken a bath and is now sitting on the side of the tub in front of the mirror, dressed in just a wrap. She combs her hair and sings softly as she beautifies herself.

CUT TO:

Lhamu is looking at her reflection in the mirror. She places the hairbrush down and conscientiously lifts her wrap to look at her long legs.

She lifts it even further to reveal her thigh and erogenous zones. She takes her hand and caresses her inner thigh. She lowers her wrap and reveals her breasts.

Letting her wrap fall to the floor, she locks herself in her reflection's eyes as if it is another person.

LHAMU
(to herself in English)
Do you love me, Pho-Nya? Will you
fly me from these lands?

She caresses her body sensually, pleasing herself.

CUT TO:

Michael watches her. He is captivated by her beauty, taunted by what he can't have. Enough! He leaves back towards the room.

CUT TO:

Lhamu senses something; she looks over her shoulder, but nothing.

CUT TO:

Suddenly, Tashi is standing in his bedroom doorway, looking at Michael and his line of sight. He moves to the bathroom door with his eyes cast down.

CUT TO:

Lhamu takes her wrap and covers herself. If he weren't discomfited, he'd be angry. Lhamu notices this; she is embarrassed.

CUT TO:

Tashi hastily closes the bathroom door and moves back to his room, catching Michael's uncomfortable poise on the way through. He stares at him for a second before closing his door behind him.

INT. HOMESTEAD, BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Michael moves to his bed and sits. He looks to the Buddhist paraphernalia Tashi has left on the side table, and the Lost Horizon book catches his eye. He then takes a sip of water from the cup sitting on a tiny colourful ceramic plate. When he puts the cup back down he considers the plate, picks it up, studies it. It has his attention. *

He lays back onto the bed with it and looks at it a few moments more before placing it back. *

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAND BAZAAR, ISTANBUL - DAY

The Grand Bazaar's numerous kiosks sell everything from kilim rugs, Turkish teas, Turkish delights and spices to colourful crafts in all shapes and sizes, lamp shades, coffee sets, nargile pipes, ceramics, you name; it's here.

TOURISTS haggle with SHOP OWNERS to get the best bang for their buck whilst others sit at the multitude of coffee shops and patisseries, sipping and eating away.

Michael walks down one of the market streets with a briefcase; he knows precisely where he is going.

INT. GRAND BAZAAR, CERAMICS SHOP - DAY

WORKERS are boxing Iznik bowls and other Turkish ceramics at the back of this relatively small and cramped shop.

AHMET, 60s, sits behind a desk with his daughter FATIMA, 30s filling out paperwork.

Fatima stands when she sees Michael enter the shop and walk directly to the desk.

MICHAEL

Fatima, how are you?

FATIMA

Great. Busy. We're just getting everything packed to ship to the storage facility.

MICHAEL

It's three days late. Orders are stocking up.
It would help if you answered my calls.

AHMET doesn't bother to look up from his papers.

AHMET

She didn't answer your calls because I told her not to.

MICHAEL

Why?

AHMET

Our original arrangement was that the inventory wasn't to be shipped out until August. It's still July.

MICHAEL

Today is July 31st.

*

AHMET

But still not August. Besides, you've not paid your June invoice.

MICHAEL

Invoices are Net thirty. That's the deal.

AHMET

Meaning it's a day late.

Michael places the briefcase on the table in front of Ahmet and opens it. Thousands of EURO.

Ahmet looks at it and gestures for Fatima to count it, so she does.

MICHAEL

How long have we worked together, Ahmet?

AHMET

Calm down. We always count. It's a cultural thing.

Michael reaches into his pocket, pulls out a small leather pouch, and retrieves an ancient gold coin from it. He hands it to Ahmet.

AHMET (cont'd)

Another one of your wife's antiquities?

MICHAEL

You have a buyer.

AHMET

Greek?

Ahmet holds the coin to the light and studies it.

MICHAEL

Achaemenid. That Persian daric there is the gold standard. Two and half thousand years ago, that would have had me a nice herd of cows.

AHMET

This belongs to the state.

MICHAEL

No. It belongs to me. And I want to sell it.

Ahmet considers.

AHMET

Sixty/forty.

MICHAEL

Seventy/thirty.

AHMET

Deal.

Fatima finishes counting the cash. She hands Michael back a hundred Euro note.

FATIMA
You're a hundred over.

MICHAEL
Old honesty test. It's a cultural thing.

Michael winks and hands her back the note.

Fatima smiles at him, and Ahmet grunts.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
So we're done here?

AHMET
I'll let you know about the coin.

EXT. STREET NEAR GRAN BAZAAR, ISTANBUL (MEMORY) - DAY

Michael walks down the road towards his car. He sees a parking ticket under the windscreen wiper as he reaches it. He takes it and looks at it.

MICHAEL
Fuck.

Suddenly Fatima comes into the same street, evidently chasing after him.

FATIMA
Eight years in Turkey, and you still haven't learnt how to park our streets properly?

MICHAEL
I'm collecting them.

Michael screws the fine up and pockets it

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Did I leave something behind?

FATIMA
I know my dad can be difficult, but he doesn't care anymore. He's on his way out. This is probably going to be the last shipment. He's out of the game. He wants to return to his ancestral village, grow olives, and drink raki.

MICHAEL
Jesus. Thanks for the notice.

FATIMA
Maybe I can help.

MICHAEL
Help?

FATIMA
You got time for a coffee?

EXT. COFFEE SHOP, HARBOURSIDE (MEMORY) - DAY

Fatima and Michael sip coffee and discuss business.

MICHAEL
Christmas is coming, and everyone is pre-ordering. We just got a retail corner in a department store chain. It's a big deal.

FATIMA
A retail corner? Amazing.

MICHAEL
Yeah, so I need a reliable supply chain with SKU dependability.

FATIMA
Well, there's no dearth of Turkish item suppliers in Turkey.

Michael laughs.

MICHAEL
You're funny.
Ones I can trust?

Fatima coyly smiles.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
You're taking over from him?

FATIMA
I am. But I'm also going retail.

It dawns upon him.

MICHAEL
You're going to be my competition, aren't you?

FATIMA
Join me. You got the international thing going on, online, retail stores. I want in on that. In exchange, I give you national retailers and goods at cost price.

Fatima takes Michael's hand affectionately.

FATIMA (cont'd)
We've known each other a long time.
You're shrewd and I like that. We
make the buck together.

Michael is taken aback. He considers her hand and the proposal.

MICHAEL
I'll have to think about it. Alara
and I worked hard at building our
customer base.

Fatima gently pulls her hand away.

FATIMA
Of course.

Fatima doesn't falter in her poise. She lights a cigarette and smokes like a gun.

FATIMA (cont'd)
It could be good for you both. For
all of us.

MICHAEL
I should get going.

Michael stands.

FATIMA
Remember, if we're not planning,
we're not moving, and if we're not
moving, we're dead. I'll email you
the business plans, mull over them,
discuss them with Alara and get
back to me. You've got a week.

MICHAEL
A week?

FATIMA
You're not the only person I've
spoken to.

MICHAEL
Right. Okay. Well, thanks for the
coffee. I'll...

FATIMA
We'll talk.

MICHAEL
Yes. Let's. See you Fatima.

Fatima watches Michael walk away.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alara lies in bed reading a book, 'THE LOST HORIZON' by James Hilton.

Michael enters and approaches the bed with a hot cup of tea.

Alara graciously accepts, 'thanks,' and sips it first before resting it on the bedside table. The tea is soothing.

Michael takes off his clothes, tidily folding them and resting them over the chair's arm. He looks at the bedside table and sees an inscription of his and Alara's wedding poem framed and displayed. Then looks at a family photo of him, Alara and Sonia.

ALARA

Is Sonia asleep?

MICHAEL

Like a log.

Michael down to his underwear. He has to say something.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Four weeks to go. How are you feeling?

He enters the bed and cuddles Alara. He kisses her on the shoulder.

Alara puts down her book.

ALARA

Tibet was the last dig with Dad. Before. While he could still work on-site. It means the world to share it with you and Sonia.

Alara warms into him as he kisses her shoulder.

ALARA (cont'd)

And if the little beast takes to excavating archaic Tibetan Tupperware in the process -

MICHAEL

- God help me.

Alara playfully shoves Michael with her foot.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Thousands of years ago, people still had useless clutter which they rightfully buried or tossed, and you guys come along and dig it all up again.

ALARA

No secret ever stays buried
forever.

MICHAEL

(reads from her
book/jokingly)

Even this mythical one, as claimed
in your Lost Horizon?

She hits him with the book playfully and pushes him away.

ALARA

My dad took plenty of inspiration
from this book.

Alara places her bookmark on the page she reads - the
photograph of her as a child, Turkish Man Okan, her father
and Tashi, Lhamu and their father and mother - all much
younger. Michael takes the book and looks at the picture.

MICHAEL

Who is this with your father?

ALARA

His trekking guide, his Sherpa, and
that was his family. He was on
Everest with him when he slipped.
He risked his life to bring dad's
body off that mountain. He used to
tell me these people were the key
to finding Shangri-la. Utopia. Just
like in the book.

Michael turns.

MICHAEL

I met with Fatima and Ahmet today
from the bazaar.

ALARA

And?

MICHAEL

Fatima is taking over her dad's
business.

ALARA

Oh yeah?

MICHAEL

She made me an attractive
proposition. It could allow a lot
of opportunity for us.

Alara's interests are sparked, and she places the book down
to listen intently to him.

ALARA

I'm listening.

MICHAEL

We partner.

ALARA

Partner?

MICHAEL

She has all the inventory we could need. They manufacture. We keep our SKUs high, we take a cut of what's on shelves here in Turkey, and she takes a cut of what we have online and in retail abroad.

ALARA

How is that better than what we have?

MICHAEL

She manufactures and brands the product and gives us the inventory at cost. She becomes our partner instead of a middleman, which diminishes our profit.

ALARA

I get it. Why us?

MICHAEL

She knows we got a corner in one of the biggest retail stores in Oceana. And that's going to grow. It'd be massive for her.

ALARA

Well.

I mean, this is your thing. If you feel it's right for us, then why not?

MICHAEL

She wants to move fast. I looked over her proposal, and it's good.

ALARA

What does your gut say?

MICHAEL

I think it could be good for us.

ALARA

Then go with your gut. Trust yourself.

Alara snuggles into his arm as they stare at the rain trickling down the windowpane.

MICHAEL

I love you.

ALARA

Yeah, you're all right.

Michael tosses her book to the floor and showers her with wild kisses.

EXT. HIMALAYAN MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

Lightning darts through the sky, splitting the sphere into two, and upon reuniting, A CLAP OF THUNDER echoes throughout the heavens. Drops of rain begin to splatter across the ground.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, GARDEN - DAY

The storm is reaching the farm.

Tashi and Lhamu run around, gathering their livestock.

Cebu helps Lhamu shooing the chickens back into their cage while Tashi herds the goats into the small barn at the same time, taking the horse undercover.

The storm begins to pelt down more heavily by the second.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LIVING ROOM, KITCHEN - DAY

The storm's darkness keeps everything dim.

Michael sits at the table, the umbrella beside him and a studious Tashi in front of him. Tashi and Michael have a language lesson. Tashi is excited.

Lhamu watches discretely from the door, wanting to be part of the learning too, but she cultures herself from a distance, inconspicuously.

MICHAEL

Any and 'some.

Tashi repeats after him.

TASHI

Any and some.

MICHAEL

Any and some are used in negative and positive sentences. Usually to offer or ask for something.

Tashi does not understand, and Michael realises he is talking nonsense to him. He tries a different approach.

Michael takes his empty po cha cup and demonstrates with the empty cup.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Do you want SOME tea? Is there ANY
tea? No, there isn't ANY tea.

Lhamu sees the teacup is empty. She leaves back into the kitchen and pours more tea.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Is there ANY tea? No, there is not
ANY tea.

Lhamu appears with two more cups of po cha, clearing the empty ones away. Though Michael needs the empty cup to demonstrate, he is charmed by the distraction. He sips the po cha and then returns to the lesson while Tashi waits excitedly.

TASHI
Is there any tea? No, there isn't
any tea.

Lhamu moves back to the kitchen, half waits a moment, leans close to the half-cracked door, and peers at Michael sip the po cha. She smiles to herself.

LHAMU
(discretely)
Is there some tea? No, there isn't
any tea.

TASHI
(refers to tea)
Po cha?

MICHAEL
Yes, that's right, po cha. But the
English word is TEA! English word.
Tea!

TASHI
Some po cha. Tea? Yes! You some
tea?

Michael is excited for him, and he gets the gist of it.

MICHAEL
Could you repeat after me? Same-
same speaking. Okay?

Tashi understands what it is he has to do.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
(demonstrating with cup
again)
Some and any, okay? Is there SOME
tea? No, there isn't ANY tea. Some
is positive, and any is negative.
It's easy.

TASHI
There is SOME tea? ANY tea is no
any!

He is pretty proud of his achievement, but Michael is not happy. He is taking this very seriously.

MICHAEL
No, no, no! Is there some tea?
(A BEAT)
Repeat!

TASHI
Is there SOME tea?

Michael is pleased.

MICHAEL
No, there is not any tea. Fuck me,
Tashi.

TASHI
Fuck me?

MICHAEL
No, I didn't mean.
(beat)
No, there is not any tea.

LHAMU
(softly)
No, there is not any tea.

TASHI
No, there is not any tea! Is there
SOME tea? No, there isn't any tea.

Michael claps happily, which also encourages Tashi.

Lhamu smiles at them.

MICHAEL
Brilliant Tashi! Fantastic. Maybe
this isn't so hopeless.

Tashi does not understand the latter, but he still giggles along.

TASHI
Brilliant!

Michael looks back down at the book, eager to continue.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, FIELD - DAY (ONE WEEK LATER)

A NEW DAY. The sun is shining outside, and the fauna hums away.

Lhamu is turning the garden soil alone. She works hard and diligently. She takes a moment to wipe the sweat from her brow and looks toward the house. She peers inside to see Michael and Tashi wandering about. She gets back to digging.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LIVING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Michael is up and about, manoeuvring around the room with the aid of the umbrella while Tashi follows him, writing the name of the objects that Michael is pointing out on small pieces of paper. He then uses some old glue adhesive to stick the paper/name tag onto the object. Michael points to a chair.

MICHAEL
Chair. CHAIR.

Tashi writes it down.

TASHI
(writing aloud)
C.H.A.I.R.

He rubs the glue stick behind the piece of paper and then sticks it to the back of the chair. He reads it aloud.

TASHI (cont'd)
C.H.A.I.R, chair!

He looks at Michael and smiles. He then looks around the room at the other name tags. He sees a mirror.

TASHI (cont'd)
Mirror. M.I.R.R.O.R I have any
mirror?

Michael looks at him sternly.

TASHI (cont'd)
I have some. No, I want some
mirrors.

MICHAEL
I want to use the mirror.

Tashi is quick to remember.

TASHI
I want to use the mirror. Heh.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, FIELD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Lhamu has had enough; she looks back into the house at Tashi and Michael. She grabs the hoe and stamps her way to the front door.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LIVING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Lhamu pushes the door open, holding a hoe, looking very annoyed. Both men stop in their tracks and look at her.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Tashi, did you not see me working
the fields again?
(MORE)

LHAMU (TIBETAN) (cont'd)

We have weeks to bring in the crops
before winter, and you're sitting
here learning to be a man you'll
never get to live out.

Ashamed, Tashi realises he has neglected his
responsibilities.

Michael takes a rest in his seat.

Tashi places his writing paper and pen on the table.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Sorry, Lhamu.

She holds the hoe out, and he quickly moves to take it before
leaving outside. Lhamu stops him in the doorway as he is
about to pass her.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Don't forget to thank your teacher.

Tashi turns to Michael and shows gratitude with a slight
naughty lip-curl.

TASHI

Thank you, Pho-Nya. I go to work
now.

MICHAEL

You're welcome, Tashi.

Tashi leaves through the front door towards the fields.

Michael watches as they turn the garden soil again,
particularly Lhamu, as she separates the stones from the
dirt.

EXT. YILHUN LHA TSO, LAKESIDE (PAST) - DAY

The beautiful Yilhun Lha Tso lake is amidst the mountains.
Turquoise blue waters reflect the sky with its sun's rays
sparkling from the surface.

Alara at age 10.

Her toes tap the water first. It isn't that cold, so she
slowly enters. When she is waist high, she turns to her
father, Turkish Man Okan, who sits behind her on a rock.

Turkish Man Okan reads the book - 'The Lost Horizon' by James
Hilton. He looks up to her and reassures her everything is
okay; he nods before she throws herself entirely in the water
and begins swimming. He looks at her fondly, and she paddles
out. She glows with happiness.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, COURTYARD - DAY

Another day: Fresh, cleaned by the rain.

The usual courtyard is kept active by the animals fluttering around.

A mirror, a bowl of water, a switchblade and a foam stick resting on the bench as Michael, propped on a chair, is about to be shaved by Tashi.

Tashi lathers up some foam in a bowl and then applies ample foam to Michael's face.

TASHI
(referring to his fluffy
face)
Me no long shave time. Me man!
(flexes his muscles)
Strong man!

Michael enjoys Tashi's charisma.

MICHAEL
Mountain man!

Tashi likes this. He beats his chest in jest, then flexes his muscles.

Lhamu notices him and rolls her eyes.

TASHI
Mountain man! Yes. Very strong!
Action hero!

Michael admires his zest. Tashi adjusts Michael's head to lean back while applying the foam to his face.

TASHI (cont'd)
Michael? Buddhist?

Michael doesn't know.

MICHAEL
I don't know what I am.

Tashi completes applying the foam.

TASHI
Buddhist, good for you.

Tashi begins to shave his face, and both fall silent.

Michael observes the precision and delicate nature of Tashi.

Michael begins to feel apprehensive as the blade takes its first strand of facial hair.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, SONIA'S ROOM (MEMORY) - NIGHT

Sonia laughs in bed as Michael tickles her feet.

Alara folds Sonia's discarded costumes back into her dress-up box by the window.

MICHAEL
I'm going to eat you all up.
Ragghrrr!!!

SONIA
It tickles, Daddy.

MICHAEL
I didn't hear you.

SONIA
(monster voice)
Roarrrrrrr! Stop. At once!

Michael stops, then pulls the blankets over her and tucks her in.

MICHAEL
That's more like it.

Something catches Alara's eye at the window. Michael glances over as she waves, unsure.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Alara?

Alara pulls the curtain closes and smiles reassuringly.

ALARA
Just the neighbour.

She and Michael sit on Sonia's bed to tuck her in.

MICHAEL
Now, who's the best beast?

SONIA
I am.

MICHAEL
That's right. You are.

SONIA
Bedtime poem. Yours and mummy's.

Michael smiles; how can he refuse?

MICHAEL
My love for you appears in no short
sentence. It is rooted deep in the
soul, a forte thrust beyond the
blue yonder, the four-quarters of
the earth.

Michael wells the poem with drama, his voice breaking into a monstrous growl. Sonia copies.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
 ... it's you I wait for at
 the end of the world, don't
 give up on me, wait for me.

SONIA
 ... it's you I wait for at
 the end of the world, don't
 give up on me, wait for me.

SONIA (cont'd)
 I love you, Daddy.

Michael kisses her forehead.

MICHAEL
 Yeah, you're alright.

Sonia bursts into a fit of giggles.

Michael turns to Alara to join the joke.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
 What do you reckon'?

Distracted, Alara didn't hear him.

ALARA
 Hmm?

Michael squeezes her hand.

MICHAEL
 We keep her?

ALARA
 Ahh... yeah, for now.

SONIA
 Mummy!!

Alara showers Sonia in kisses. She then stands and pulls Michael to his feet.

SONIA (cont'd)
 Roaaarrrr!!

MICHAEL
 I love you, too. Go to sleep,
 beast.

Michael kisses her one last time before moving to the door and turns out the light. *

EXT. HOMESTEAD, COURTYARD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Using a steaming hot towel, Tashi wipes Michael's face and reveals a clean, fresh look. On the other hand, Michael is motionless, distant - a sunken heart from his daughter's memory.

TASHI
 Smooth and fresh.

Tashi notices this change in mood.

TASHI (cont'd) (cont'd)
Pho-Nya? Problem?

Michael snaps out of it.

MICHAEL
No, nothing!

TASHI
I go work now.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Glum and perplexed, Michael sits on his chair, looking through the kitchen door at Lhamu pouring the hot water into a pot of tea leaves.

Lhamu joins him with the brew. Michael watches Lhamu pour the tea from the pot into the cup for him when suddenly:

MICHAEL
I can't remember who I am.

Lhamu looks up at him and detects his state of confusion.

She places the tea on the table beside him, smiling courteously and standing back up ready to leave.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Didn't you hear me?
I can't remember who I am.

She turns to him. The stillness between them hurts him.

As he peers outside at Tashi gardening, tears well in Michael's eyes.

Lhamu senses his dejection. She looks at a photograph of her and her family hanging on the wall in a silver-laced frame.

Michael notices what she is looking at. She turns to him.

LHAMU
Family?

Michael looks up at her.

MICHAEL
I think so.

LHAMU
We, me, my brother, family. We
family for you.

Michael is touched. Lhamu goes back into the kitchen.

INT. WAREHOUSE, OFFICE - DAY (AFTERNOON)

A warehouse, boxes being packed, crates stacked - the warehouse is abuzz with life.

Michael walks with his inventory checklist board, looking over a box's contents before it's sealed.

He then walks to his office and sits behind his desk.

The second he sits, Fatima appears at the door.

FATIMA

You are a champion.

Michael looks up, surprised.

MICHAEL

Fatima. Hi.

FATIMA

Two weeks.

MICHAEL

Two weeks?

FATIMA

Fourteen days is all it took you.
Let's go. I'm taking you to dinner.
We're celebrating.

MICHAEL

Are we?

FATIMA

You're looking at the new vendees
for HnL London, for crying out
loud.

Michael stands, surprised.

MICHAEL

What?

FATIMA

We're singing National exclusivity
with them tomorrow, and they're
paying big. Two weeks. We got our
first milestone months early,
thanks to you.

MICHAEL

Well, this is awesome.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

It's loud, obnoxious, and packed to the rim with after-work professionals letting off steam.

Michael and Fatima sit at a bar drinking scotch, a little tipsy.

FATIMA

He held back, he could have had everything he wanted, but he was scared.

MICHAEL

I don't know. Your dad just strikes me as someone not scared of anything, happy with what he had.

FATIMA

He was scared. When mum left it really shook him. I have no brothers, no sisters; his focus was on sheltering, protecting, and smothering me, incase I followed her lead. My life has been a representation of his fears. Hence my ambition to break free of the fetters he's kept on me.

*

MICHAEL

What are you talking about? He just gave you a business. You're killing it.

Fatima takes a moment.

FATIMA

Dad's dying.

MICHAEL

What?

FATIMA

The old asshole's on his way out.

MICHAEL

Fuck. Fatima, I'm sorry.

FATIMA

It's all good. That's why he gave it to me. I'm not complaining, but I deserved more than I got. I wanted someone once, maybe children, you know, 'the dream', but all I got was a sack of self-doubt and abandonment guilt because of how he raised me.

MICHAEL

Shit!

FATIMA

Don't do that. It's all good. I got it under control.

MICHAEL

But look at you. You're still young. You can still get that **dream**.

FATIMA

I drink too much and smoke like a chimney; my face is frozen into permanent surprise.

Fatima points to her botox-filled face.

Michael laughs.

FATIMA (cont'd)

I've exhausted the long string of assholes in Istanbul's morose dating pool. And any biological clock has stopped ticking. 'Young' I am not.

She slugs down the remainder of her whiskey and signals to the BARMAN for two more.

MICHAEL

Nah, I think I'm done.

FATIMA

You're not going to leave me hanging, especially after that pathetic life summary.

The BARMAN delivers two drinks.

MICHAEL

One more, and that's it.

FATIMA

Great! You're turn. Tell me why you're such a loser.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE BAR (MEMORY) - NIGHT

Michael and Fatima stumble out of the bar, Fatima is far drunker than Michael, and she knows it.

MICHAEL

Well, congratulations again.

FATIMA

Here's to the success dad never had.

Fatima scrummages around in her handbag and pulls out her car keys.

MICHAEL
Let me get you a taxi.

FATIMA
I'm driving.

Michael pulls her keys out of her hand.

MICHAEL
You're not driving.

Fatima playfully goes to grab them, and Michael hides them behind his back. Fatima sees this as a challenge. She goes to reach for them, reaching around to his back to retrieve them, and then suddenly, she kisses him on the lips. They hold it a moment, and Michael kisses her back, then retracts when he realises what he is doing.

Fatima wants more.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
I'm sorry.

FATIMA
I'm not.

Michael hands her the keys.

MICHAEL
Fatima. I'm flattered; I am, but...

FATIMA
Could you not make a fool of me?

An awkward moment.

FATIMA (cont'd)
I think I need to walk a bit.

Michael says nothing as she disappears around a corner.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR (TRAVELLING), STREET, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Focused on the road with his mind somewhere else, Michael turns onto his street. Suddenly he breaks just in time as a MAN appears in front of his car.

MICHAEL
Jesus!

He then recognises him. It's Azam. Walking a dog on a leash, stood still, blinded by the headlights.

Michael doesn't know how to respond. He winds down his window.

MICHAEL (cont'd) (cont'd)
 Hey. You alright?

Azam says nothing and walks off the street back towards his house.

Michael waits for him to be inside before he pulls into his driveway. He sits in the car, still shaken a few minutes.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The keys rattle, and the door opens to Michael.

He slips out of his shoes and hangs his coat on the hanger.

He switches the light off.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, BEDROOM (MEMORY) - NIGHT

Michael stands in the doorway looking at his wife and daughter sleeping next to each other.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY (DUSK)

A small caravan journeys the constricting mountain trail.

CLOSER IN:

Tenzin and Kaldan, guns slung over their shoulders, are on horseback, and Sonam, and Diki, sitting in the cart.

The caravan arrives at the top of the pass. They stop and look down to where patches of shrubbery morph into a dale, farmlands and meadows.

They continue onwards.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, FRONT GARDEN - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

Tashi is in the garden digging out potatoes whilst Lhamu stands to the side of the house where multiple ropes are strung between three trees. She pegs fresh washing on them to dry.

With Ceba by his side, Michael sits in his chair on the front patio, sipping po cha and looking between the brother and sister.

He looks at Lhamu almost adoringly as she hangs the wet cloths and clothes out to dry.

Then all of a sudden, something in the distance steals his attention. He looks past Tashi and notices the CARAVAN in the distance. They are approaching the homestead.

He indicates to Lhamu.

MICHAEL
 Lhamu!

He gets her attention. Lhamu looks to where he is pointing.

Michael hastily takes the umbrella and brings himself to a stand.

They both look towards the CARAVAN, and then Tashi sees them.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Who is it?

She takes a moment before answering carefully.

LHAMU

(unenthusiastic)

Friend.

Tashi completes his Puja and looks towards the CARAVAN. He stands and walks to Michael and his sister.

TASHI

Friend come Pho-Nya, me, hello to them.

Tashi runs back towards the side of the house where the HORSE is tied to a stump. He is swift, sharp and shrewd when untying it. He mounts it bareback and kicks the HORSE in the flank, promptly it to take off.

CUT TO:

Tashi canters past Michael and Lhamu and begins to dart off towards the CARAVAN, a trail of dust bursting up behind him.

LHAMU

I food making. Friend hungry.

Lhamu quickly moves to the washing basket, takes it and moves inside the house.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Lhamu and Tashi host a dinner party.

The simplicity of candles, local cuisine and the company of friends is an ambience unfamiliar to Michael.

Tenzin, unperturbed by the chitchat and laughter, sits between Lhamu and Tashi, and Kaldan sits between his mother and sister, his feelings for Lhamu are evident by his silence. Michael has the head of the cramped table where his linguistic alienation amongst them discomforts him.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)

Does he remember anything?

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Nothing at all, even his name. We need you to tell father to send this news to someone in the city. He must have a family somewhere.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)
 Why didn't you go for help sooner,
 Tashi?

TASHI (TIBETAN)
 I couldn't leave Lhamu alone with
 him.

SONAM (TIBETAN)
 No, of course not.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)
 Very well. We'll send the news to
 your father. He can alert the
 authorities from Lhasa.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
 Thank you!

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
 It's a long journey. He'll have to
 be strong to make it, even with
 help.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
 He can barely walk five meters
 without falling. His leg is just
 not healing. The infection won't go
 away.

The first exchange between Kaldan and Lhamu - he smiles at
 her, she turns away, avoiding eye contact.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)
 He needs to recover properly. We
 will send a doctor.

Tashi turns to Michael.

TASHI
 Tenzin Uncle, take help for you.

Michael smiles, calmed.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)
 We should turn in. It's been a long
 day.

All except Michael stand. Tenzin smiles at him reassuringly.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LHAMU'S ROOM - NIGHT

The house sits still amidst the silence of the night.

Lhamu lays in her bed, sleeping. The amber of an outside fire
 flickers into the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOMESTEAD, BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Kaldan stokes a small fire. He occasionally peers up to Lhamu's window.

Tashi beside him, tucked into a camp-bed near the horse cart.

Tashi watches Kaldan as he stokes the kindling. He sits up.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
It's a blessing you came down from
the mountain Kaldan.

Kaldan turns to him.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
A blessing?

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Yes, a gift. For the sky, man.
Father doesn't come back for
another month.

Kaldan takes a moment before answering.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
We didn't know the white man was
here. We came for Lhamu.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Why Lhamu?

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
I've come to marry her.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
She would go to live with you?

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
Naturally so.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
But... I'd be alone here.

Tashi lays back down and falls into a deep sullen silence. Kaldan notices this.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
We will visit often enough. And
soon, you, too, will have a wife.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
I never imagined this place without
her.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
This is part of life. You're a man
now, Tashi. It's about time you
stopped playing the boy.

Tashi closes his eyes, content. Kaldan peers across to Lhamu's window one last time before laying down beside Tashi - he stares up into the stars.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, FRONT GARDEN - DAY

Cloud coverage surrounds the mountain's tips indicating impending bad weather, however sunny and pleasant it is in the dale.

Lhamu and Diki are collecting the washing from the line.

Kaldan is by the side of the house, chopping wood for the stack. Shirt off, he is casually showing off to Lhamu.

Michael, Tashi and Tenzin sit in the garden. Tenzin is having his diagnosis of Michael's leg, which has been set crooked, still baring the swollen scares and swelling of the break. The palpable flesh wound doesn't seem to be healing.

Tenzin touches a tender part of the leg, and Michael winces in pain.

Tenzin then looks toward the clouds over the mountains.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)

The snow will be here soon.

Michael interjects.

MICHAEL

Tashi, can they take me?

TASHI

Leg is no good. Three days with Tenzin-Uncle on the horse, two days walking there, five days.

MICHAEL

I can manage on the horse.

Much to Michael's surprise, Tenzin responds in reasonably good English.

TENZIN

The horses cannot climb, as you will have to do. You already have an infection, and it will get worse. First, we need medicine to treat this.

MICHAEL

You speak English.

TENZIN

My job for many years was as a guide to foreign people. We were climbers. Sherpas. Through them, we learn your words.

MICHAEL

I need to get to a city or at least
a phone.

TENZIN

Yes. I will go to Lhasa and get
help for you. Don't worry, you will
be home soon.

This soothes Michael, and he relaxes back into the chair.

INT. HOMESTEAD, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lhamu, Sonam and Diki are preparing food, chatting, and
having a grand old time.

Kaldan comes to the kitchen door from the courtyard and peers
at Lhamu for some time unnoticed before he enters and
delivers empty cups to the sink. He is shy and bows his head
in there and just as quickly, out of there.

SONAM (TIBETAN)

Your destinies were written in the
stars, Lhamu. The Astrologist
charted it before you were born.
So now, Tenzin and I feel the time
is right.

Lhamu shies away.

DIKI (TIBETAN)

You will say yes, won't you?

Lhamu looks down, nervous about her timely response.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

I can't answer that now. Marriage
is the last thing on my mind. I
didn't expect your visit. This
visit, so soon.

SONAM (TIBETAN)

Marriage is something that should
always be on your mind. You're of
age, Lhamu.
Kaldan is a good boy, works hard,
and most of all has a loving heart.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

I don't doubt that. Kaldan is a -
very good man, but-

SONAM (TIBETAN)

-but what? We've come all this way.

Awkward as it is, Lhamu gracefully stands her ground.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Meanwhile, two winters have passed since Tenzin Uncle and my father spoke. The passing days drown me.

Sonam laughs at her.

SONAM (TIBETAN)

Two winters? My dear girl, I sat alone for four once as Tenzin trotted off to the interiors of China in search of gold, of which he never found. Diki's husband is still yet to return this season.

DIKI (TIBETAN)

Thank you again, mother.

Lhamu contemplates.

SONAM (TIBETAN)

We are women of the mountains. This is our land. They are our men. Outsiders should always be kept outside. They've only ever brought trouble.

Sonam studies Lhamu's evident reaction at the mention of Michael.

SONAM (cont'd)

Perhaps you have been left alone too long.

Lhamu is taken aback by the bold comment.

DIKI (TIBETAN)

I'm sure the Englishman belongs to the heart of someone else anyway.

Lhamu rejects the insinuation.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

How can you think the foreigner has swayed my decision regarding Kaldan? I speak from my heart, not some fleeting alien influence. I am a grown woman, not some silly little girl you imagined. I have taken charge of my father, this farm and my brother for seven years. Alone.

DIKI (TIBETAN)

(light)

I guess it's destiny then my brother's heart comes to break.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

It's not my intention to break his heart Diki. I just wish to secure mine.

Quietly to Lhamu.

SONAM (TIBETAN)

Just be careful whose heart you tread upon, dear. It may very well be made of glass and broken glass. It can cut deep.

Lhamu then notices Kaldan standing by the door, listening to the conversation. He walks off. Lhamu follows him.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, BACK - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Pursued by Lhamu, Kaldan comes to a standstill by the paddock.

LHAMU

Kaldan.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)

Why?

Lhamu takes a moment.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

My mother died here, and my father didn't know until he returned five months later. It broke her heart that he wasn't with her. I don't want it to be like that.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)

This is our way, Lhamu.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

It's not my way; it doesn't have to be yours, either.

Kaldan can't believe what he is hearing.

LHAMU (cont'd)

Traditions are just ideas. And ideas change all the time-

KALDAN (TIBETAN)

-We are wanderers. We follow the seasons. We've always done it like that. We are of the mountains. We cannot survive on love alone.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

First, you need love to begin thinking about surviving without it.

This comment hurts Kaldan. His eyes well with tears, maybe even anger. He can't even look at her.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
I would do anything for you out of love.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
You can't love me.
You don't even know me.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
When have you ever given me the chance?

Lhamu sees she has hurt him.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
I'm sorry.

With that, Kaldan storms away into the darkness. Lhamu watches him until she can see him no more.

INT/EXT. HOMESTEAD, BEDROOM TO VERANDA - NIGHT

Tenzin is sitting alone on the veranda, puffing a cigarette, lost in deep contemplation.

Michael goes to the door and steps outside, using the walls and pillars to steady him.

Tenzin notices him and eagerly gets up and helps him sit down.

TENZIN
Please, allow me.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

They both stare into the night, calmed by the evening's tranquillity.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
I remember how to speak. I can count, read, and write, and my brain functions. But anything about who I am - nothing.

PAUSE

MICHAEL (cont'd)
Maybe I haven't done much worth remembering.

TENZIN
You are the one survivor of a plane crash. Life wants you to be here

MICHAEL

Who ever misses me must think I'm
dead.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, FRONT GARDEN - DAY

The CARAVAN has been packed, Sonam and Diki sitting on the
cart, ready to leave.

Kaldan sits on his horse, his head bowed, ignoring Lhamu.

Though Lhamu feels awkward, she stands with Tashi as they say
goodbye to Tenzin.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)

It should only be a matter of time.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

Be fast, Tenzin.

Tenzin places his hand on Tashi's shoulder.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)

Buddha said that saving one man is
the same as saving all humankind.
You are the fulfiller of His word
Tashi. Be proud!

Tenzin looks towards Kaldan, then moves to Lhamu and places
his hand upon her head reverentially. Her head bowed,
ashamed.

TENZIN (cont'd)

You take care now, Lhamu. And,
don't worry about Kaldan. The hot
head that he is, he is still a
mountain boy.

Tenzin lifts her head with a finger under her chin, so she
looks him in the eyes.

TENZIN (cont'd)

As you are a mountain woman. What
are mountains made out of?

Lhamu looks up to him, unashamed.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Stone.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)

Stone! Hard as stone.

Tenzin pats her head customarily, then moves and gets onto
his horse. Lhamu smiles.

A shake of the reigns and the caravan begin to move. Kaldan
raises his head without looking back, galloping ahead of the
others.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

A windstorm brews outside—the crackle of trees sound.
It is the dead of the night, and the house is asleep.
Michael tosses and turns, dreaming:

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael stands in front of his mirror, fixing his tie. He is dressed to kill.

Alara comes from the bathroom, adjusting an earring.

ALARA

Can you get this for me?

She walks to Michael, and he fixes it for her. She turns, and both look at each other in the mirror.

Michael then notices a bunch of roses in a vase by the bed.

MICHAEL

These are nice.

ALARA

Fatima sent them to me. Nice of her.

Michael is surprised.

MICHAEL

Did she?

ALARA

Yeah, they arrived today. A congratulation's card in their on our success. Said behind every successful man is an amazing woman.

*

MICHAEL

That's kind of her.

ALARA

Us girls stick together.

MICHAEL

Right.

Alara looks at herself one last time in the mirror.

ALARA

Ready?

MICHAEL

Let's go.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

The AMPHITHEATER flaunts traditional and intricate Roman and Greek architecture.

Spectacular lights have brought this jewel of the ancient world back alive again.

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

The first pick of the OUD and the first blow of the ZURNA and the show, a modern embracement of a classic Greek tragedy told through a contemporary routine, begins.

The MUSIC commences; it's classical, soft - heartfelt.

The HEAD PERFORMER of the echelon of DANCERS, all wearing togas and masks, looks up. Another performer un.masks her, and her beauty is unveiled to the audience.

SHE BEGINS TO SING AND SLOWLY LEAD the ECHELON INTO A SYNCHRONISED SLOW MOVING DANCE. Her voice is divine, unmatched; it reverberates throughout the amphitheatre, captivating the entire audience.

Michael and Alara sit centre stage, mesmerised by the performance.

Not taking her eyes off the stage, Alara takes Michael's hand as she translates for him:

ALARA

The lead is a tragedy. Her love has forgotten her. He has fallen for another woman. Aphrodite visits him on command from Zeus...

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Fatima enters the amphitheatre and looks around before spotting Michael and Alara. She walks towards their aisle and finds a seat almost directly behind them, a few rows back.

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

Michael was still entranced. Alara continues to translate for him.

ALARA

It is an auspicious day for the dove to take her first flight. Even though her wings abandoned her when her blood ran black, the curse is now lifted, and she soars ever so high.

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT (SIMULTANEOUS)

Fatima keeps an eye on them.

INT. AMPHITHEATER - NIGHT

The play continues; it is reaching a climactic moment.

Alara and Michael watch intently.

ALARA

This is where she decides to live beyond a shattered heart. However, then she learns that her love has died, and the only way she can meet him again is in the afterlife, but Aphrodite forbade her self-sacrifice -- so she must live this life alone in solitude until nature consumes and joins her with him again. But she lives a hundred years.

Michael looks adoringly at Alara.

The play concludes, and the audience erupts with stunning applause.

Michael and Alara stand. As they turn to leave, Michael sees Fatima over by the exit. She suddenly turns, and they catch eyes for a moment. Fatima nods, 'hello'. It makes Michael very uncomfortable. Alara notices it.

ALARA (cont'd)

Fatima?

Fatima, wounded again, hurries out of the theatre.

ALARA (cont'd)

Is she okay? We should say hello.

MICHAEL

Leave her, she's probably with friends.

ALARA

Rubbish. I want to thank her for the roses anyway.

Alara follows her.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER, FRONT ENTRANCE, FOOTPATH - NIGHT

Michael and Alara exit out onto the footpath. Alara looks around, expecting to see Fatima, but she is not in sight.

MICHAEL

Come on, let's go home.

- Flustered, Fatima watches from the shadows as Michael lovingly kisses Alara before taking her arm and walking down the street.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LHAMU'S ROOM - NIGHT

Michael lies awake, staring at her ceiling and listening to the wild mountain sounds outside.

The wind above him grows more intense.

INT. WAREHOUSE, OFFICE - DAY (AFTERNOON)

It's raining hard.

Michael stands outside of his office, looking at his STAFF work.

He then takes out his phone.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, KITCHEN - DAY (AFTERNOON)

The rain ferociously splatters the windows.

Alara is baking in the kitchen, reading from a Cook Book - attempting a Shepherd's Pie.

Sonia plumped on the sofa in front of the television, quiet as a mouse watching cartoons.

The phone rings, and she quickly cleans her hands and answers it.

INTERCUT -- PHONE CONVERSATION

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)

Hello.

ALARA (INTO PHONE)

I am attempting to bake a Shepherd's Pie from your motherland.

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)

And you brought the weather with it, too. Attention to detail noted.

They giggle.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Listen, I'm going to be a little late tonight.

ALARA (INTO PHONE)

Late?

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)
Yeah, I got a bit of work to catch
up on. Seem to be here on my own.

ALARA (INTO PHONE)
(considering)
Ok.

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)
Alara?

ALARA (INTO PHONE)
(recovering)
So, are you going to eat out, or
should I leave something for you?

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)
It's Shepherd's Pie. Are you crazy?

ALARA (INTO PHONE)
Don't be too late. You still
haven't packed.

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)
We've got a week left.

ALARA (INTO PHONE)
Sure, sure. Love you. See you
later.

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)
If you're lucky.

ALARA (INTO PHONE)
Dickhead.

INT. WAREHOUSE, OFFICE - DAY (AFTERNOON) (CONTINUOUS)

Michael smiles and disconnects the call. Looks at his phone.
Opens a new message to FATIMA.

INSERT MESSAGE: "WE SHOULD TALK!"

INT. HOMESTEAD, LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

*

The windstorm rages on. Outside, the barn door bangs against
its frame.

Michael sits up, unable to rest.

INT. WAREHOUSE, OFFICE - NIGHT

Michael sitting behind his desk on the computer in an empty
office.

The door opens and Fatima walks in.

Michael stands.

FATIMA
What's up?

MICHAEL
You sent my wife flowers?

FATIMA
Hello.

MICHAEL
Flowers.

FATIMA
Yeah, so?

MICHAEL
What's going on?

FATIMA
I've known Alara as long as I've known you. It was a gesture. She's part of the business, too.

MICHAEL
Ok...

FATIMA
Ok, what?

MICHAEL
Just seemed strange.

FATIMA
You're married to a Turkish woman and kindness and politeness feels strange?

Fatima walks in close to him.

FATIMA (cont'd)
Look, if this is about the other night, I'm sorry, I was drunk and feeling like shit. My dad's dying.

Michael settles.

MICHAEL
I get it. I just... I don't know.

FATIMA
It's okay.

A MOMENT

MICHAEL
I mean... Another time, another place, perhaps.

FATIMA

Michael. You could have said all that in a message, but you brought me all the way down here.

MICHAEL

I, um... When you're around me, I...

Fatima kisses him. Michael doesn't hold back. She pushes him to the table and passionately kisses him. He responds. She begins to undress his shirt and allows her in complete ecstasy.

Suddenly his phone rings.

INSERT HONE SCREEN: 'ALARA' CALLING.

Michael continues to indulge in the ecstasy forgetting the phone.

Fatima is about to unbuckle his trousers when:

Michael stops her - he controls himself and pushes her away.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

I'm not this person.

Fatima glares at him unbelieving.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

I love my wife.

FATIMA

Michael, you brought me down here, I didn't-

MICHAEL

-More than anything.

Fatima composes herself.

FATIMA

You know what.

(composing herself)

I don't want you to be **that guy** at all. Not because of me. This business and our friendship is more important than any of - whatever.

Michael begin to button up his shirt, guilt written on his face.

FATIMA (cont'd)

Let's not fuck it up.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

INT. WAREHOUSE, CARPARK - NIGHT

Battling the rain, Michael darts across the carpark to his car. He unlocks it and gets in.

EXT/INT. MICHAEL'S CAR (TRAVELLING) - NIGHT

Driving cautiously in the rain. A message alert beeps on his phone simultaneously as an AMBULANCE SIRENS SOUND from behind his vehicle.

Michael looks in his rear-vision mirror and sees the flickering red lights burst from behind as they turn into the street. He pulls to the side to allow them to pass and forgets about the message. He then continues down the road.

EXT/INT. MICHAEL'S CAR (TRAVELLING) - NIGHT

Michael turns into a street and sees flickering lights from police cars and an ambulance bouncing off the house's walls.

It's his street. He takes his phone to make a call but sees a message notification from ALARA. "MISSED CALL"

He hits call as he turns into his street to rescue service traffic. The call goes straight to the message bank:

MICHAEL (INTO PHONE)

Hey, it's me. I missed your call.
What's going on? There are cops
everywhere on our street.

He then looks ahead and sees what house they are at. He panics.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOME, FRONT GARDEN - NIGHT

POLICE CARS, LIGHTS FLASHING, the AMBULANCE, NEIGHBOURS.

Michael's CAR pulls up to the side of the road.

He hurriedly gets out and runs to his gate, but a POLICE OFFICER prevents him from entering.

MICHAEL

What's going on?

POLICE OFFICER (TURKISH)

Excuse me, sir!

MICHAEL

I - sorry - I don't speak Turkish.
English. This is my house. What's
happening here?!

A DETECTIVE approaches him.

MICHAEL (cont'd)
My wife and my daughter. Where are they?

DETECTIVE
We have a situation, sir.

Michael panics.

MICHAEL
This is my house.

DETECTIVE
How well do you know the family next door?

MICHAEL
Please. Where are my wife and daughter?

*
*

*
*
*

*

Michael tries to run into the house, but the detective holds him back.

INT. TASHI'S ROOM, LOUNGE, GARDEN - NIGHT

An INAUDIBLE BANG pulls Tashi from his sleep, and he wakes up in fright. He looks around his room but feels that even though the rustle of wind and trees is loud, it is not what made him wake up. He must get up out of bed.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LOUNGE, GARDEN - NIGHT

Tashi enters the lounge room and realises Michael is nowhere to be seen. The front door is open, and the cold wind rushes throughout the house, giving Tashi the chills.

This alerts him. He quickly moves to the front door and looks out. He hears Michael coughing from the outside.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, GARDEN - NIGHT

Michael leans against a tree, holding onto it with his life. He can't cry; he is hyperventilating, almost hysterical.

MICHAEL
Oh god!
Alara!

Tashi runs over to him, clearly concerned, but Michael cannot feel the cold, just the pain of loss.

TASHI
Pho-Nya, come inside. Very cold, no good for you.

MICHAEL
I need to leave here.

He is overcome. Distraught. Sick. Tashi tries to pull him inside, but Michael refuses and pulls away. Overcome, Michael spills his stomach and vomits onto the ground.

Tashi holds him up.

TASHI

Pho-Nya, you be ill, please come.

Lhamu runs to them. She sees Michael crying, almost hysterically. She wraps her arms around him.

LHAMU

Pho-Nya, what is wrong?

It takes a moment for him to calm himself. He locks eyes with Lhamu and pleads.

MICHAEL

I need to leave. Please. Now. Help me!

TASHI

Pho-Nya, your broken leg cannot. Please sit!

MICHAEL

I have a wife and daughter. You don't understand!

They are both considerate and empathetic to his plea and revelation.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

They need me.

They do not know what to say or how to console him.

Lhamu shifts her embrace and takes his hand to guide him inside.

LHAMU

You come into home, sitting. Please, Pho-Nya!

He rejects it; frustrated, he breaks down on her shoulder finally.

Lhamu looks at Tashi, not knowing how to console him.

EXT/INT. KALDAN & TENZIN'S HOME, FRONT - NIGHT

Sonam, Kaldan and Diki dismount the horses and cart. Diki begins to take some items into the house.

Yeshe comes to the front door; he stops Diki as she passes him.

YESHI (TIBETAN)

Diki, where's father?

DIKI (TIBETAN)
He left for Lhasa.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
Lhasa?

CUT TO:

Yeshi moves to his mother and brother.

SONAM (TIBETAN)
She'll change her mind, Kaldan.
He's an innocent man thrust upon
them by destiny. We'll return to
her once he's gone and they have
settled again. She'll see reason.

Kaldan simmers in his bruised ego.

Sonam turns to Yeshi.

SONAM (cont'd)
Yeshi, please speak to your
brother.

Sonam walks away.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
Why? What happened?

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
Lhamu refused me.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
Uh...

Yeshi tries to quote his mother.

YESHI (cont'd)
Not a single thing happens that
isn't meant to be.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
No, life is what we make it. You
take what you want.

YESHI (TIBETAN)
Sorry. I know you really liked her.

Yeshi takes his mothers bags to the house.

Kaldan waits for him to be out of site then immediately gets
back onto his horse and rides away.

INT. HOMESTEAD, LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Michael sits with Tashi and Lhamu. All are silent as Michael
uncontrollably weeps.

MICHAEL

I don't know why I am here.
Something is wrong. I need to be
with them. Help them. I can't stay
here. I have to go. Please help me.

How can they ignore his plea? They concur with each other.

TASHI

Okay. Tomorrow, we go. Me and my
sister, we take you.

He looks through his tears at them endearingly.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, BARN - DAY

Tashi saddles the two horses that are to take them on their
journey.

He then notices a fresh coat of snow on the mountaintops. He
stares at it for a moment, shakes it off and continues what
he is doing.

EXT. HOMESTEAD, VERANDA - DAY

Michael sits in his chair as Lhamu re-bandages his splint,
this time with a firm homemade brace. She notices an infected
abrasion on his leg, a small one, but it is potentially
dangerous.

Michael realises what she notices; he coughs, his throat
irritated.

LHAMU

You are sick.

MICHAEL

It's okay.

Lhamu gently tightens the bandage around his leg.

INT. PUJA ROOM - DAY

The usual ritual. Lhamu lights the butter lamps as Tashi
pours water from a tiny copper bowl into six others, seven in
all.

Both kneel in front of the statue, clasp their hands together
in prayer and recite:

LHAMU/TASHI

Om Mani Padme Hum. Om Mani Padme
Hum.

Lhamu is finished and is about to stand, but Tashi continues -
she sits back down until he completes his prayer:

TASHI

May the many sentient beings who
are sick quickly be freed from
sickness. And may all the diseases
of beings never arise again.

(MORE)

TASHI (cont'd)
Tayata, Om Bekandze Bekandze
Maha Bekandze, Radza Samudgate Soha

Tashi's gesture moves Lhamu.

EXT. PATH TO HOMESTEAD - DAY

Lhamu takes one horse herself, packed with stocks and rations for the trip.

Tashi steadies Michael on the back of the other horse. It is much colder, and all are well prepared and rugged with shawls.

The house is far behind them and getting further away with every step the horses make.

EXT. MUDDY FIELD TOWARDS HILL - DAY

It is tough going. The ground is like quicksand; the horses make every step with great effort.

The traveller's journey through the emptiness towards what seems colder, brisker weather at a higher altitude.

Michael coughs as he sleeps, resting against the back of Tashi's shoulder.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOME, BACK YARD GARDEN (MEMORY) - DAY

The wedding of Alara and Michael.

Alara and Michael sit on a chair at the front of a stage with their WEDDING GUESTS fluttering around them, taking pictures of the happy newly-wed couple.

Alara and Michael stare into each other's eyes.

Michael reaches to her.

All raise their glasses as Michael and Alara kiss.

EXT. YILHUN LHA TSO, LAKESIDE - DAY

The Yilhun Lha Tso lake, unbelievably cerulean and turquoise waters resting between snow-dusted mountains, shimmering in the sunlight, the rays reflect on the faces of Tashi, Lhamu and Michael as they pass by.

Michael seems to be in a state of distant contemplation as he slowly begins to remember his life behind him. His cough is becoming more and more persistent.

By the lake is the grave of a Buddhist Llama. It is abandoned, remnants of old refuge paid, adorned with coloured material and tassels tied around it.

Tashi alerts Michael and gestures that he will pray.

Lhamu halts her horse, and Tashi follows suit. They both stare at the grave while Michael stares into the lake's depths.

CUT TO:

EXT. YILHUN LHA TSO, LAKESIDE (PAST) - DAY

Again, a young Alara, at age 10, swimming in the lake. Swimming out far.

Her father, Turkish Man Okan, is sitting by the edge watching her.

A YOUNG ALARA glows with happiness. She giggles as she swims.

Alara emerges from under the water, now aged 30 - the Alara we know. She swims blissfully. SUDDENLY she becomes tired, breathless, limp and slips underwater.

The flashing of red lights drowns out the atmosphere.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOME, FRONT GARDEN (MEMORY) - NIGHT

The flashing lights of the ambulance and police vehicles.

Michael is in disbelief.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Kaldan is greeted at the empty homestead by the Ceba and his fickle bark. He jumps off his horse and burst through the front doors - in one door and out of the other only to realise there is no one. He comes back outside, anxious, angry, persistent.

KALDAN

Lhamu!

His call echoes across the landscape - there's no one there to hear him.

He jumps back onto the horse, kicks it in the ribs and begins to canter off in the same direction as Lhamu, Michael and Tashi left in.

EXT. YILHUN LHA TSO, LAKESIDE - DAY

Tashi stands by a BUDDHIST STUPOR, praying.

Lhamu is off the horse. She has Michael propped against the Stupor and attempts to feed him with some water, but Michael is not interested; he is more captivated by the profound beauty surrounding him.

MICHAEL

Where are we?

LHAMU

This place we call Shangri-La.

Michael peers around, realising where he is.

A light wind blows, the breeze whistling.

Michael tunes in to it, listening intently for something. For the 'secrets'.

MICHAEL

This is what he was looking for.

EXT. RIDGE - DAY

It is white with snow. The PARTY comes up to a ridge, battling through the sleet.

Michael's cough has grown severe; he is feverish. He shrieks in pain from his legs with every step the horse takes.

Finally, they skilfully manage the horses around the ridge and into another freshly fallen snow atmosphere.

EXT. RIDGE - NIGHT

The wind chill has picked up a little, and the evening brings a rapid drop in temperature.

A small fire battles against the conditions, but the three sitting so close protect it.

They eat bread and a paste and sip hot po cha from a canister.

TASHI

Now we are sleeping. Tomorrow is long.

Michael chews his food and sips his water, barely able to confront the cold. He stares into the fire; he sees the past.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOME, FRONT GARDEN (MEMORY) - NIGHT

The detective has Michael's full attention.

Michael can't believe what he is listening to.

DETECTIVE

When we arrived, the mother said she heard two shots.

*
*

Michael contemplates in disbelief at what he is being told.

DETECTIVE (cont'd)

She didn't know he had a gun. We're not sure how many people he has inside.

*
*

MICHAEL

Are you saying they're all still in there?

*

At that moment, Michael sees AZAM'S MOTHER talking to the police. *

Michael then sees SNIPER POLICE moving around the house.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Let me talk to him, please. He knows me.

DETECTIVE *

We can't allow that, sir. *
He has a history. Violence. That's *
why he was here under his mum's *
care. His ex-wife, she... We've *
been monitoring him. *

AT THAT MOMENT, another gunshot. Everyone jumps, a few screams, Police alerted, running towards the house. Michael frets.

EXT. RIDGE - DAY (DAWN)

The evening snow has become an early morning frost, the atmosphere masked with a flicker from the sun.

Michael, coughing and weak, is already on the horse's back, Lhamu getting onto hers.

Michael pulls the pants up and looks at his exposed skin above the splint and bandage. He sees that his leg is more swollen than before and purplish, evidently infected. Neither of the other two notices what he sees.

Tashi kicks the dirt over the smouldering fire and looks up to Michael, concerned.

EXT. PATH THROUGH MOUNTAINS, CLIFF EDGE - DAY

They continue along the trail, which is growing narrower by the meter.

Lhamu and Tashi look at each other apprehensively.

Michael lies, fever-riddled, cuddling the neck of the horse as Tashi guides it, walking beside it.

They reach an underpass of a ledge. They pass under it, and then a wall blocking the way - a landslide. This is the end of the trail for them.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

A landslide, we will not be able to pass it.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

We can't turn back. It's already too late.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Then what, he'll die? Look at him,
Tashi. We should never have agreed
to this.

Tashi stops the horse and looks at her sternly. His attention is broken as Michael slips from the horse and onto the ground into the mud.

Barely conscious, he winces in great pain.

Lhamu quickly gets off her horse to assist him, but Tashi has already brought him sitting up.

TASHI

Pho-Nya!

Lhamu notices blood trickling down to his heel. She lifts the pants and sees the amount of blood coming from the wound. She quickly unwraps the bandages and observes the infected wound's severity. It is almost gangrenous.

MICHAEL

I'm okay.

Lhamu looks at Tashi anxiously.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

I will carry him.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

It's still another two days.

TASHI (TIBETAN)

I did it before.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

No!

I'll wait with him while you go.
It's the only way. We're already
more than halfway.

Tashi agrees.

EXT. TOP OF CLIFF, PLATEAU - DAY

The cold, blistering sun illuminates the vista in one bright glare.

Tashi drags himself to the summit wall and staggers over the edge to come and encapsulate his vista's grandeur. The plateau opens up and spreads out as wide as an ocean but as rough and rugged as the moon's surface, surely impassable by nothing other than foot. , He contemplates the journey ahead of him. He has a small pack of rations with him.

He looks down at Michael and Lhamu, who are resting. He continues on his way down the other side of the cliff's edge, climbing steadily so as not to fall.

EXT. PATH THROUGH MOUNTAINS - DAY

The horses are tied, and the campsite, as pathetic as it is, has all the accoutrements required to keep them sheltered and alive.

Lhamu is making a fire. Michael leans against the cliff's wall. He is barely conscious but enough to see what Lhamu is doing.

EXT. NEPAL LUKLA AIRPORT, TARMAC - AFTERNOON

The aeroplane before it crashed. A full-figured chartered cargo transporter awaits its crew and passengers to board and sits on the tarmac.

The CREW, three other MEN, and one WOMAN, all CLIMBERS, wait on the tarmac to board.

Michael stands alone, checking his backpack's contents.

The CREW walk towards the craft, followed by the PASSENGERS. Michael picks up his backpack, and they both move towards the plane.

INT. AEROPLANE, CABIN - DAY (DUSK)

The engine is roaring, ready for taking off.

The PASSENGERS are seated. The STEWARD walks along the aisle, checking everyone has on their seat- belt.

He reaches Michael, who is seated, belted up. Then he looks at the MAN seated next to him.

STEWARD

All ready?

Michael smiles, ready! The MAN also prepared. The steward continues. Michael turns to stare at the sunset through the window.

EXT. TARMAC - NIGHT

The aeroplane lifts from the tarmac smoothly and ascends, setting off on its fatal journey.

EXT. PATH TO MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

A fire is crackling away, a pot of water boiling over it.

Lhamu tends to Michael, who is only now semi-conscious. She tries to feed him soup, but he is not responding.

She puts it down and notices the water in the pot is boiling, removing it. She then takes a small cloth from her coat pocket and drops it into the boiling water.

Lhamu lifts his pants' bottom and begins to remove the bandage from his leg. The gaping, infected and swollen wound reveals the death of Michael if something is not done.

She squeezes the hot cloth she put in the water and presses it on the injury. He cries.

MICHAEL
Lhamu!

LHAMU
Shh!

Michael is persistent.

MICHAEL
Listen to me.
My name is Michael.

Lhamu listens attentively.

LHAMU
Michael?

MICHAEL
I came to find my wife and
daughter. They're waiting for me.
Here. In Shangri-la.

Lhamu dismisses it.

LHAMU
See you, family, soon.

He grabs her by the hand, tight enough for her to listen intently to what he is to say and never forget it.

MICHAEL
You don't understand. They're here!

He closes his eyes, exhausted.

Lhamu looks around, wary of the pending night. She continues to dampen the cloth onto his wound.

EXT. PLATEAU - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Tashi runs across the plateau, up and down over the rough surface, dodging holes and rocks. He doesn't even feel the ground beneath his feet anymore or the cold slapping his face.

After some time, a light comes into focus along the horizon. He can't believe what he is seeing.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLATEAU - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A few minutes later and Tashi is closer to the light.

A group of people is making their way in his direction.

He suddenly stops to focus on them. They are not too far away, close enough to hear them speaking.

He screams at the top of his voice.

TASHI (TIBETAN)
Hello. Helloooooooooo.

EXT. PLATEAU - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The group of MEN, Lhamu's father, a mountain man in his 40's who is robust and well worked; Tenzin and ONE OTHER MAN holding a torch.

They hear Tashi's plea echo through the night; all stop to listen carefully.

TASHI (O.S.)
Hello!

They are alerted.

TENZIN (TIBETAN)
Your boy!

FATHER (TIBETAN)
Tashi?

They urgently take off.

EXT. PATH TO MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Lhamu sits alone by the fire, and Michael sleeps.

Suddenly she hears the crackling of noise behind them. She turns to see Kaldan standing there. It frightens her. She stands, wary of him.

He seems delighted at first to see her, but then he notices Michael disturbed sleep.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)
Kaldan, you scared me.

She peers around him, noticing he is alone.

LHAMU (cont'd)
Where are the others?

Kaldan says nothing, he moves closer to her, and she suspiciously backs away.

Kaldan settles for a moment.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)
I do know you. I've loved you since I was a child, Lhamu. My father promised me you'd be my wife. Our families agreed. You agreed.

(A BEAT)
So I waited for you, waited for you to be ready.

Lhamu looks around for something to protect her; nothing is in reach.

EXT. PLATEAU - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Tashi, his father, Tenzin and the other man trot anxiously across the plateau.

EXT. PATH TO MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Michael's eyes flicker open to Lhamu, pulling away from Kaldan as he attempts to drag her away.

LHAMU (TIBETAN)

Help me, please!

ALL OF A SUDDEN Kaldan is knocked from Lhamu with a clump of burning firewood by Michael. He rolls to the side rubbing his head. Lhamu moves to the wall, horrified, grappling with covering herself with her torn shirt.

Kaldan immediately gets to his feet, his head bleeding and disorientated. He lunges toward Michael, who, against all the odds, struggles against him. They scuffle about the ground, punching, slapping, and beating each other as they move slowly to the cliff's edge.

Lhamu looks around for something to hit him off with, but Kaldan kicks Michael in the leg. Michael shrinks in extreme pain.

He lays helpless, screaming.

Kaldan stands and turns to Lhamu; he grabs her and slaps her face. Lhamu whimpers.

KALDAN (TIBETAN)

Look what you've done to me. This is not me. This is not our way.

(A BEAT)

I won't let this world destroy you. You're coming back with me. You're going to be my wife!

Kaldan takes a knife from his side pocket. Michael sees this.

Lhamu looks at it petrified.

Michael stands and moves to Kaldan; he grabs him from behind.

Kaldan immediately turns and pushes the knife into Michael's stomach.

Lhamu screams.

LHAMU

Pho-Nya!

Michael pulls Kaldan closer and clutches him, not letting go. Locked in his grasp, Michael pulls them both backwards as Kaldan pushes the knife in deeper.

Michael and Lhamu lock eyes. He then forcefully pulls himself and Kaldan over the cliff's edge.

EXT. MID-AIR (FALLING) - NIGHT

Michael falls alongside Kaldan. As he falls, he notices the stars of this crystal clear night.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOME, FRONT GARDEN - NIGHT

Michael scopes the parameter of the house and watches the POLICE SNIPERS in place - the AMBULANCE OFFICERS ready; the detective takes a call on his phone.

Michael sees the opportunity and rushes to the house. No one can stop him.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Michael walks through the front entrance of his house. It's a mess, an obvious struggle has taken place.

We see family portraits adorning the walls as we rise to the top of the stairs with Michael, who walks precariously.

Walking down the hallway a little, he comes to the bedroom door.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, SONIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Inside, Azam's faces him, a gun in his hand, distraught, unpredictable, waiting.

Michael then lays his eyes on his dead daughter, her little feet protruding from the bottom of the bed where Alara tried to hide her. He then sees his wife. His heart breaks apart.

Alara lays on the floor, a gunshot wound to her stomach; she is barely conscious, bleeding profusely. She lies motionless, staring at the ceiling, unaware of what is happening, unaware that Michael has entered the room.

Azam and Michael lock eyes.

Azam lurches back with the weight of his reality.

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOME, FRONT GARDEN - NIGHT

The GUNSHOT HEARD!

The POLICE SNIPERS, detective, and AMBULANCE OFFICERS all run towards the house.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, SONIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael by Alara's side, holding her.

Azam lays dead behind them, the gun still clasped in his hand.

The chaos is heard behind him, ensuing its way into the home.

Michael takes Alara by her hand, upset, crying, and in complete disbelief.

Alara, on the other hand, is calm.

ALARA
I waited for you.

MICHAEL
I should have been here.

ALARA
Where's our little beast?

Michael cringes and holds back the tears as he looks toward the bed and sees his daughter's feet. He breaks down.

MICHAEL
Oh, my God. I'm so sorry!

The Police enter, their guns raised, not knowing what to expect. They gauge the room and understand the hopeless situation around them.

EXT/INT. MICHAEL'S HOME, FRONT GARDEN, AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Alara is wheeled on a stretcher to the ambulance. Michael hangs by her side.

A PARAMEDIC tries to move Michael away as they place her inside the back of the ambulance. Alara doesn't let go of his hand.

PARAMEDIC (TURKISH)
Sir, we need to get her inside.

Michael climbs inside as they clamp her stretcher on the slider and push her in.

The bleeding is not stopping. He takes more fabric to cover it and puts pressure on it, but they are losing Alara.

The Ambulance Officer also gets in and tends to Alara, attaching her to a drip.

MICHAEL
Alara. Please. I love you. Please.
I love you. Please.

Alara turns to look Michael in the eyes for the first time.

She sees him and smiles.

ALARA
Yeah, you're alright.

Michael chokes out a laugh.

MICHAEL
I'm here, baby. I'm right here.

Michael tightens his grip on her fingers.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Stay with me. Tell me a
story...Tell me the story of Tibet.
Tell me about the lake.

ALARA

I was ten.

Alara pales. She battles for words.

ALARA (cont'd)

I swam in the lake, Yilhun Lha Tso.
The most beautiful lake I ever saw.
I swam far. I thought I was going
to drown. But you know what, I
didn't care.
Cause it was where I was happiest.
It's beautiful. We should go.

MICHAEL

We will. Soon. We'll all go
together. Me you and ... and the
little beast. You get better and
we'll all go together.

Alara smiles as her final breath leaves her body.

She is dead.

The Ambulance Officer pushes Michael away to begin CPR.

INT. AEROPLANE, CABIN - NIGHT

A while into the flight. A MIDDLE-AGED MAN sitting next to Michael, who is wide-eyed. He reaches into his pocket and retrieves his wallet. As he opens it, the a photograph of him, Alara and Sonia. This picture mesmerises him. He then reaches into the sleeve and retrieves that paper of his wedding vows which was framed in his bedroom. He unfolds it and reads to himself.

The Middle-Aged Man notices what he is looking at. He tries to make light conversation politely.

MAN ON PLANE

Business or travel?

Michael is about to respond when: A LOUD THUD and a shudder of the aeroplane. The craft begins to shake intensely without warning. He looks out the window and sees the plane's wings on fire.

Michael clenches the armrests as the craft shakes violently.

The cabin TWISTS and TILTS.

Smoke suddenly bellows through the cabin as Michael tries to steady himself against the wall in this hellish nightmare.

He still clenches the wallet and letter, but the violent vibration of these unmanageable conditions has them fly from his grasp. There is no retrieving them ever again.

FLASHES:

- *Alara is kissing him.*
- *Watching Alara work.*
- *Sonia a few days old.*
- *Alara nursing Sonia and reading a book.*
- *The homestead and Lhamu's smile.*
- *A sunset.*
- *Yilhun Lha Tso lake.*
- *Tashi praying.*
- *Sonia, Alara and Michael eating breakfast together.*
- *Sonia chasing Michael and Alara around the house as a monster.*
- *A BRIGHT LIGHT, INDISTINCT, LOVING, CELESTIAL, INVITING.*

EXT. YILHUN LHA TSO, LAKESIDE - AFTERNOON

Tashi and his father have buried Michael by the Buddhist Stupor.

Yeshe and Tenzin stand nearby, Kaldan's body wrapped in his shroud, ready to be transported by horseback to his family.

Lhamu sits on a rock a little away; she looks on.

Tenzin and Yeshe look over at them as they climb upon their horses; there is no blame. They begin to ride off back towards their village.

Father walks to Lhamu and sits next to her.

Lhamu snuggles into her father's shoulder as he comforts her.

Tashi can't leave the grave yet. He remembers Michael.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

My love for you appears in no short sentence; it is rooted deep in the soul-

He then notices a flower protruding from a rock near Michael's grave. The only one around.

EXT. RIVERSIDE - AFTERNOON

Father and Lhamu ride the horse. Tashi trails behind on foot.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
- a forte thrust beyond the blue
yonder, the four-quarters of the
earth -

Tashi looks into the river, its cascades bouncing the sun's reflection.

He notices something by the river's shore. He walks to it. It's a wallet. Michael's wallet he lost on the flight.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
- it's you I wait for at the end of
the world, don't give up on me,
wait for me.

Tashi picks it up and opens it, and the first thing he sees is the photograph of Michael, Alara and Sonia. Behind it is the photograph of Alara as a child in Tibet with Turkish Man Okan.

Staring at the photograph, he beams with recognition and marvels at the entwining of lives.

He looks up and sees his father and sister at a distance.

One last look at the picture before closing the wallet and hiding it in his shawl.

He looks around where he is, the most beautiful place on earth. Shangri-la.

He continues to follow his family home.

FIN!