

# City of Joy

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Early Draft

**FOR EDUCATIONAL  
PURPOSES ONLY**

CITY OF JOY

FADE IN:

TITLE SEQUENCE.

EXT. BIHAR - DAY (DAWN, SUMMER, MID-1980)

Heat that has mass. That rises off the parched earth in shimmering waves. After a moment, we see what appear to be figures coming out of the haze, one by one. A family with their few belongings: HASARI PAL, 33, his wife, ALOKA, 28, and their children, daughter, AMRITA, 13, sons MANOOJ and SHAMBU, 11 and 9; HASARI'S MOTHER and FATHER. They embark toward the night, the rising sun behind them.

EXT. ROADSIDE - BUS STOP - DAY (DAWN)

Hasari's Father passes a gourd of precious water. Hasari serves the children first. Shambu gulps entirely too much, the others forcing him to stop by a unified force of will. Embarrassed, he passes the cup to his brother, who sips, as does his sister. Aloka barely wets her lips, insisting on leaving the last drops for Hasari.

And now, a rooster tail of dust rises up behind the approaching bus and the old parents bid farewell to their son's family. There is an intense sadness at leaving the land and Hasari's Mother clings to him...

HASARI

I'll send money soon.

His Mother nods, as Hasari erupts in a small cough which, by habit, he suppresses. His Mother crushes Aloka to her.

HASARI'S MOTHER

Don't let the children out of your sight. Not for a moment.

Now the children. She wants to keep them here even as the old man touches her, reminding her she must let them go.

HASARI'S MOTHER

Help your parents. Don't fight with each other. And, Manooj, stay away from the cinema, do you hear?

Shambu, his eyes big as saucers, whispers to his grandma...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHAMBU

I don't want to go. There are bad men with long knives who steal children.

That does it: Hasari's Mother dissolves in tears, but the old man nevertheless unlooses her insistently from the children. Aloka and the children get on the bus as the old man embraces his son.

HASARI'S FATHER

A man's journey to the end of his obligations is a very long road. Yours begins here.

EXT. ROADSIDE/INT. BUS - DAY

There's not an empty inch inside the little vehicle or on top. The passengers are silent. A woman breast feeds a baby. Several passengers fan themselves. Many sleep. The Pals squeeze wearily into the rear seat.

MANOOJ

(to his neighbor)

Our farm has died, so we are moving to Calcutta to become rich!

Hasari and Aloka look at each other: If only it were the pursuit of wealth and not survival. The woman understands. And now the BUS GRINDS forward and the Pals look back. Hasari coughs, suppresses it... as silence falls.

The elder Pals stand huddled together in the dust and we see, nestled behind a boulder at the roadside, a tiny, blue flower -- beautiful and fragile, but like all things alive, determined to live... and we hear the sound of a DOZEN VOICES CHANTING a quiet mantra in unison as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ASHRAM - ANOTHER FLOWER - DAY

This flower floats gently in a bowl of water. The TITLES END as we PULL BACK SLOWLY to reveal a dozen Anglos, several Indians, and one Kenyan seated cross-legged before an aging Yogi, who's quietly urging the supplicants to find "their light, allow your white light to fill your spirit's eye." Above, ceiling fans move the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As we PAN the group, we see that everyone has his/her eyes closed in earnest meditation... until we COME TO an American, MAX LOEB, 29, who pops open first his right eye -- looks to his right and left -- closes his right eye and opens his left eye -- looks left and right... and then, instead of continuing the mantra and the search for his white light, expels a stream of air through his pursed lips, making a vibrating, flatulent sound, one indicative of sizeable frustration and dismissal.

MAX

Get serious.

Around him, other single eyes pop open, searching for the source of this unmeditative sound. Max nods and smiles a wry smile as if to say: This just ain't doin' it for me, folks.

INT. SPARTAN ROOM - TRUMPET - DAY

Max closes the trumpet case and starts chucking his clothes and books in a knapsack and a small valise. We notice the Hebrew letter chai on a gold chain around his neck. His girl friend, BETSY KAHN, overdressed somewhat in an Indian style, endeavors to exercise the inner peace she's been pursuing...

BETSY

I swear to God, you never give anything enough time! What did you expect in five days, Max?

MAX

Only what they promise in the brochure: Inner peace, serenity, and a nice chant that gets rid of this rock in my gut. E.S.T., they do you in a weekend.

BETSY

I would really appreciate it if you wouldn't be terribly glib just now, Max.

That's okay with Max, who's willing to eschew communication of all kinds and just finish heaving his stuff in the valise.

BETSY

Am I to assume you'll be at the airport in Calcutta a week from tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Impossible to predict, Betsy Ilene Kahn. Maybe you better give me my ticket.

BETSY

Screw you, Max -- I paid for it! How many times am I going to let you walk out on me and come back?

MAX

I think only you can answer that, Betsy Ilene Kahn.

She slaps him.

MAX

Do you really think that's an appropriate way to get rid of your Western rage, Bets?

She swings at him again. He catches her hand hard in his fist.

MAX

One slap is romantic. Two would call for retaliation... Lend me a hundred dollars.

She yanks free, begins to chant her mantra as he grabs his knapsack and valise and goes out the door. Now, she's silent and, in the simplest sense, deeply hurt. She can't help herself; she cares. We STAY WITH her a moment as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY AIRPORT (ASSAM) - WINDING ROAD - DAY

Cool, lush hills. A little pack of single-engine two- and four-seaters. Max, in shorts and University of Miami T-shirt, hot, sweaty, appears around a bend in the approach road.

INT. AIRPORT - WAITING ROOM

A small service desk. A CLERK, who doubles as Ground Control on the microphone, passing on the prevailing wind and the active runway. We hear the STATIC-BACKED VOICE of a PILOT, giving his call numbers, then announcing he's clear for immediate takeoff on the active runway. The Clerk CLICKS off and finds Max.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

How you doin'?

The Clerk gives Max a warm smile.

CLERK

Hello.

MAX

I've always wanted to walk into a little airport just about like this one and ask the guy at the counter the following question. Ready?

The Clerk nods; he's at Max's service.

MAX

When's the next flight to anywhere?

CLERK

To Bombay. Tomorrow, at one o'clock in the afternoon.

A beat --- the Clerk with his smile, Max with his, one simply warm, the other giving off simmering heat.

EXT. AIRPORT - LOW ANGLE - DAY

Max sits on the ground, up against the building, playing a jazz line quietly and rather well on his trumpet. A pair of well-shod feet ENTER the FRAME. Max looks up.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The rubicund face of VEEJAY CHATTERGEE, 50, and more British than Churchill. Behind him, his cherubic wife, RAVI... and making her way toward the enclave of small planes, their daughter, MANUBAI, 26.

VEEJAY

I say, are you looking for a way out of here? We have an extra seat. Where are you wanting to go?

Max's eyes flick from Veejay to the back view of Manubai as she continues on and back to Veejay.

MAX

I'm wanting to go wherever you're wanting to take me.

INT. 180 FOUR-SEATER - DAY

Max is crammed into the back seat with the plump Ravi.

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see now that, contrary to our assumption that Veejay would be in the left seat, it's Manubai who's flying the plane. The NOISE of the ENGINE forces them to speak somewhat loudly.

VEEJAY

We were among the fortunate back in '48. We got out of East Bengal before partition destroyed so many. We make mattresses. The Rajah Double Spring.

Veejay has an old flask out.

VEEJAY

We don't have a flight attendant on this flight...

(passing the flask)

Are you a musician, Mr. Loeb?

MAX

Unattached trumpet player and recently-certified associate guru.

As he takes a hit on the flask, Max's eye focuses on the little mirror on the dash. In it he can see Manubai's eyes. If we were to judge by what he sees in them, she doesn't find him the least bit amusing. He smiles his smile at her.

EXT. HOWRAH STATION (CALCUTTA) - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

A huge bridge dominates the skyline. The train trundles to a stop, its WHISTLE clearing the way. People hang on its sides, sit on the roof... and now flood the platform, flowing into the station, clearing a view for us of the Pals, clinging to their baggage in the middle of this human anthill.

CLOSE ON THEM (MOVING)

Hands reach out with sweets to sell, with tea, asking for money.

MANOOJ

Daddy, I'm scared.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

Scared? No -- why? This is very exciting. As soon as we get to our friend's house, everything will be fine.

But, despite Hasari's charade of confidence, they (and we) are overwhelmed by the size of the station and the desperate energy of the humanity around them. As they press on, a small beggar woman huddled on the platform turns her eyes eerily on Manooj... as a deformed hand stretches INTO the FRAME. Aloka senses someone: A beggar, face half-hidden and eaten away by leprosy. This terrifying image presses the boys tightly to their mother and moves Hasari to encircle Armita with one hand and attempt to wrap the other three inside the embrace of his other hand. It does not seem possible that he can protect all of them against the predatory eyes watching them. He moves them quickly to a wall...

HASARI

Wait right here. Don't move.

WITH HASARI

He moves to a line of VENDORS, shows a piece of paper to one, as he digs out his precious screw of money to make a purchase of sweets from the Vendor.

HASARI

Please, can you direct me to my friend at this address? We are to stay with him.

The Vendor gives the address a look, shows it to the Vendor next to him. Both look at Hasari.

VENDOR #1

There's no such address as this in Calcutta.

HASARI

But that's not possible.

VENDOR #1

Of course it is possible! I have lived here all my life. You are new. Who would know if a place exists or does not?

VENDOR #2

Bombay, perhaps. Delhi. Look there.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Dear God, what now? Stunned, Hasari hands Vendor #1 a rupee and, with the sweets, turns back to his family, his face going through a magical transformation as he prepares to suggest to the family that all is well.

EXT. CHOWRINGHEE LANE - DAY (MIDDAY SUN)

A few clean and cared-for Ambassador cars sweep into the gateway of the Grand Hotel, past a gateman.

RACK FOCUS TO:

FEET - MAIDAN

Feet tramping the pulsating tarmac, sending up dust.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The Pals, scared, dispirited, weary, consumed by the crowd. They've been walking a long time. Shambu cries; Aloka tries to ease his fear. They stop numbly at the edge of the park, put their bundles down against a long wall.

Across the way, a thin policeman shares a cigarette with a group of traders. There is a deeply fearful look in Hasari's eyes, a look he is having difficulty controlling now. He needs to revive the family's confidence. He takes out his precious bundle of rupees and gives one to Manooj. Manooj, though, is fixed on the cinema across the street. Hasari indicates a stall just across the main road.

HASARI

Manooj, go and get some fruit.  
Come straight back.

Delighted with his task, Manooj sets off, his eyes on the marquee of the theater with its huge cardboard cutout of Kumar Kapur, starring in Hot Gun. Hasari calls out to him to watch where he's going; the mere crossing of the street is a potential parental nightmare. A hand ruffles Manooj's head and a TALL MAN with dark eyes and a sweet smile comes at the boy's anxious parents.

GANGOOLY (TALL MAN)

Yes, hello, brother. Bihar, am I correct?

HASARI

Yes, how did you know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari is torn between speaking to the man and watching his son's incredible journey across the street.

GANGOOLY

Let me say only that the terrible malevolence that has visited your part of the country affects us all.

HASARI

Three years without rain. Nothing came out of the earth but debts.

GANGOOLY

Terrible. And now, the family on the street. It is not acceptable.

(smile widens)

And if I can't help, my name is not Mr. Gangooly... Which, blessedly, it is.

And now a smile as full as the sky above.

EXT. SMALL BUILDING IN BACK STREET - DAY

A brick slides out of the wall.

We're BEHIND the brick and see Gangooly's soft face as he reaches in and pulls out a key.

The street is small and empty. Though the houses are nothing much, to the Pals, they look like palaces. Manooj and Shambu run about in delight. Gangooly motions for quiet. With a flourish, he opens the door.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

Gangooly enters, glances around, waves the Pals in. They're amazed. There's a cage occupied by two parrots. In one corner, a small altar dedicated to the goddess Lakshmi is decorated with some flowers and, behind a torn, plastic curtain in a corner, part kitchen, part wash place, containing a tap with running water.

GANGOOLY

Be free -- look around.

On the faces of the family is one thought: Is it possible? Amrita goes right to the parrots.

GANGOOLY

They'll need feeding. Give them seed. But don't spoil them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He bows briefly before the altar as he moves to the washing area.

GANGOOLY

And now, one of the miracles of  
life in the city. One and two...

He turns on the tap and a stream of brown WATER GURGLES out. The Pals are hypnotized, the fists around their hearts begin to ease.

GANGOOLY

Holy water from the Ganges! Flows  
out forever. Come -- touch it.

Manooj and Shambu put their hands under the tap.

GANGOOLY

Drink! It's as pure as the dew on  
Shiva's lips.

They drink. Gangooly claps in delight... and beckons Hasari aside.

FAVORING GANGOOLY AND HASARI

GANGOOLY

Now, this place is yours for two  
weeks. My cousin, Moti, is away,  
traveling. Normally, the rent  
takes fifty rupees for a week, but  
for a brother, forty. No, don't  
thank me.

Hasari pulls out his little screw of money.

HASARI

I have only seventy-five, but as  
soon as I have work...

GANGOOLY

Give me the fifty, pay the rest  
next week. You'll find work, I  
trust you. Aren't I from Bihar,  
too? Yes.

And the money is in his hand. He joins his hands together.

GANGOOLY

You are pleased? Then Mr. Gangooly  
is pleased. It's how I am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns on his heel and he's gone. For a moment, the Pals are still, swept from the brink of catastrophe to salvation... and now, as one, they release their sheer and utter joy.

INT. CHATTERGEE STAIRCASE - DAY

Ravi and Veejay leading Max up the grand staircase, Manubai in the foyer, looking after them.

INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

Ravi leads the way into a lovely guest bedroom.

RAVI

I hope this is all right. The room hasn't been aired or the bed turned, but --

VEEJAY

Oh, he doesn't care about that, do you, Max? Here, look here.

Veejay opens a little cupboard, stocked with liquor.

VEEJAY

Help yourself. Be comfortable. Ravi, come on, go, go, let's leave the young man to himself.

Obediently, Ravi goes. Veejay follows. Max goes to the window.

HIS POV

The beautiful Manubai in the garden.

MAX

He lies down on the bed. He's found Nirvana.

INT. MAIN ROOM - DAY

It's Hasari who watches now. There's LAUGHTER from Aloka and Amrita. Joyful SHOUTS from the boys. Hasari is alone in the main room, on his knees, in front of the pile of their baggage and bundles. He turns his attention from the laughter to a just-opened, old suitcase. He takes out a small tea box. Opens it delicately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's full of something brown. He pushes his fingers in and feels this bit of earth with a tenderness that's almost religious, puts a pinch to his nose and breathes it in. The LAUGHTER and SHOUTING from the bathing area is GROWING.

INT. BATHING AREA

Shambu is paddling near the tap. Aloka is bending over the drain and Amrita is rinsing her heavy, dark hair with a pot. Manooj is nearby, rubbing himself with an old towel. Hasari enters unnoticed and looks at the group with tenderness... and with gratitude for their good fortune.

A MAN, red with anger, yanks the curtain aside, stares. The family freezes. Aloka's hair drips unnoticed on her sari.

MAN

What are you doing here? Who are you?

HASARI

My name is Pal, Hasari. Mr. Gangooly rented this space to --

MAN

Mr. Who?

HASARI

Gangooly. You must be his cousin, Mr. Moti.

MAN

I don't know any Gangooly and my name is Binal and this is my home -- get out!

The furious Binal, followed by the Pals, goes into the main part of the room. A small crowd has been attracted by the noise.

HASARI

But this is true. We paid him a deposit of fifty --

BINAL

A man goes out because he has to work, and some beggar tries to move in while his back is turned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

This while Binal has begun to throw things out onto the street, though this cleansing of his home doesn't stop him from picking up a stick. The odd sympathizer meets with...

BINAL

So, should I suffer if they are so stupid to jump into the first mouth that wants to eat them?

He turns with the stick on Hasari.

BINAL

You're lucky I don't kill you!

Hasari looks at Manooj, who drops his eyes. They collect the remainder of their possessions and hurry out the door.

EXT. SMALL STREET - DAY

Full of neighbors. There's a suppressed violence in the air. A man pushes Aloka. Sweat streaming down his face, Hasari confronts the man. A WOMAN pushes the men apart.

WOMAN

Go to the river. Try to squeeze in there.

EXT. VICTORIA MONUMENT - STREET - NIGHT (DUSK)

Calcutta broiling: Buses, vendors, carts, rickshaws, children beg at car windows. The Pals stand, uncertain, and for the first time a rickshaw fills Hasari's eye, carrying two passengers. But now he shoulders his burden and leads the family toward the river. We HOLD until they grow small against the setting sun, gleaming red against the white domes of the Victoria Monument.

INT. CHATTERGEE'S LIBRARY - TORSO - NIGHT

Moving through the dark, a figure, touching things, looking at photographs of the Chattergees. We hear a MUFFLED DIALOGUE mixed with the SINGING a la Dean Martin of "Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime":  
 "Goddamn it, boy, what's the matter with you? --  
 "Everybody loves somebody sometime" -- "Go for it, son!" -- "Sure, Dad, whatever you say, Dad." --  
 "Everybody falls in love somehow" -- "You're the dad, Dad." Now, a humidor. Max opens it, takes out a cigar, takes two. Takes five. Senses someone. Turns.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ravi in her bathrobe.

MAX

I'm starving.

He gives her his best saint's smile.

RAVI

Well, you don't want to eat those awful cigars. Come with me, we'll wake up the cook, she'll fix you something proper.

EXT. KITCHEN - WINDOW - NIGHT

THROUGH the window, we see the bleary-eyed cook laying out food as Ravi chatters away at Max, he with a beatific grin on his face as he feeds himself.

EXT. RIVER BANK - HOWRAH BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge etched against the dawn sky. The corpse of an indigent is collected and put on a cart.

MANOOJ

With his eyes open, watching the dead man being removed.

FAMILY

After their humiliating flight, they found refuge here. Tiny figures huddled together with their baggage and bundles, near a tree, not far from the steps that dip down to the smooth water. Hasari's eyes, too, are on the dead man, that warning. He kneels beside Manooj, strokes him. The boy's eyes turns to the man's, wondering if the man can provide for them.

HASARI

Don't let it frighten you. You have to be brave. I know we'll find work today.

Fear and doubt fill Manooj's eyes. He nods.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

Hasari at the gates, the family huddled together in the b.g. The man behind the gate shakes his head, points.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

A line of a hundred men stretches from a door. Hasari is on the edge of panic, but when he turns to the family, he's wearing his confident smile. As before, he gathers the family into the protectorate of his arms and guides them onward. As he pushes off into the sea of humanity, we PULL BACK AND UP, FILLING the FRAME WITH street upon street, disappearing Hasari.

## FROM STREET - INTO WORKSHOP - HASARI AND OWNER

Two plump men in shirt sleeves look coolly at Hasari. The elder shakes his head. The younger shows Hasari the door.

Outside, an increasingly desperate Hasari finds Aloka before a small shrine, saying a prayer.

## EXT. BARA BAZAR - DAY

Aloka huddled with Manooj and Amrita. Hasari talking to the owner of a small market stall. Shambu is peering into a shop with male mannequins in the window.

## INT. MEN'S SHOP - MOVING MIRROR

In the moving mirror we see counters and shelves of men's clothing.

The mirror stops at Max slipping into a kurta before an audience of Ravi, Manubai, and a salesman.

RAVI

It's not extravagant at all. You can't go around all week in your tribal garb.

Max sees a boy's face pressed to the glass: he indicates the shirt, for the boy's approval. The boy smiles a wonderful smile.

RAVI

Now he looks civilized, doesn't he, Manubai?

MANUBAI

Almost.

Max looks at her. She at him.



EXT. MEN'S SHOP - DAY

Man leans down, whispers to the smiling boy...

MAX

You sure I look all right?

The little boy nods. Max slips him several rupees... and he, Manubai, and Ravi fold themselves into her tiny car as --

ANOTHER ANGLE

Shambu runs to his dejected family.

SHAMBU

Look! A man gave me these many moneys!

HASARI

What man? Why -- did you ask him for money?

SHAMBU

He just gave it to me.

HASARI

Where is he?

Shambu looks, but the car's gone.

HASARI

Don't do that. We're not beggars.

Shambu is devastated. Out of his own desperation, Hasari feels he's been a little rough on the boy. He holds him close.

HASARI

Go back to the river. Wait for me by the tree. Don't go anywhere. Do you understand?

Aloka, the boys nod. We WATCH them as Hasari heads off, quickly becoming a small figure disappearing into the sea.

EXT. JUTE MILL DAY - LATE AFTERNOON SUN

Starting to sink. We PAN DOWN TO Hasari stepping to a grilled window as the man ahead moves out.

INT. JUTE MILL - DAY

A flaking gray wall, half-obscurd with moldering files. The grilled window lets in a little light and the quiet supplications of those outside.

An old CLERK at a desk. A voice calls out. The Clerk looks up, crosses to the grill.

Hasari's tense face through the bars. A TRUCK RUMBLES past, drowning out the words... except these: "...trade union." The Clerk shakes his head sadly. On the verge of panic, Hasari hangs onto the window...

CLERK

Do you have family?

HASARI

Yes, yes of course. But I'm three days without work. I'll take anything.

The Clerk digs in his pocket, presses two rupees on Hasari.

CLERK

Here, now go away.

HASARI

No, I don't want you to give me --

The next man in line forcibly moves Hasari out of the way.

CLERK

In this city, a man with a family can't be proud. Take it!

The Clerk waves him away, turns his attention to the next man.

INT. CHATTERGEE RECEPTION ROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Manubai's face. Then Max's. Then hers. Then his.

Looking at each other. Five days. Kiss. Ravi.

MAX

I said you have three days to get me into bed, and I'm betting you can't do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANUBAI

It's all right for you to use my mother as your tour guide and meal ticket, because she'll get something nice out of it. But what would I get?

He stares at her a moment, then gets up, goes around the table.

MAX

Well, gee, I don't know. Maybe I could say something so amusing that you'd laugh so hard it would break that hot poker you have up your ass.

She stares at him. He bends to kiss her. She doesn't pull away... but after a moment he realizes she isn't responding. He continues the kiss, but he opens his eyes... to find her staring at him. He pulls back. They stare at each other another moment, then Max senses someone in the doorway.

RAVI

Staring at them, disappointment filling her eyes.

MAX

The same sound of frustration and ennui he made in the ashram.

EXT. CHATTERGEE HOME - DAY

His arm around Max, Veejay guides the young man toward a waiting taxi.

VEEJAY

Believe me, I understand, but you know how women are. Do you have enough money?

Max gives him a non-committal shrug. Veejay winks, stuffs the money into Max's pocket.

EXT. GREEN ACRES COURTYARD - COW - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Bare feet... and then sneakered feet step over the sleeping bovine, who turns a disinterested eye up.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Max is guided by a grumpy hall PORTER wearing an off-white shirt and bellbottoms through the walled and well planted courtyard of an inexpensive hotel. Max gives the cow a bemused eye...

## INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The room is utterly utilitarian. The Porter turns on a ceiling fan, sending an army of cockroaches scurrying for calmer terrain. Max clearly doesn't care for cockroaches.

PORTER

It pleases you?

MAX

No fruit basket? No mini bar?

Max hands the Porter several rupees.

PORTER

Bar? Of course -- many, many. But make care, Sahib. Please, for me. If it is lady you like to know -- yes? -- you let me. Huh? Very sweet girl, good nature, very sweet. Or boy, very good...

Max puts a finger on the Porter's head, turns him for the door.

PORTER

No like boy? Something then for smoke -- mmmh, very good for smoke!

## AT DOOR

Max eases the Porter out. As the door is closing...

PORTER

Maybe you like two girls -- look a little Chinese, but very great pleasure.

Max smiles his smile and disappears the Porter behind the closed door. The smile disappears and the FAN gets his attention; it has an annoying rhythm and sound. He flicks the switch, but the fan continues to snap around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stares at it... and startles us by suddenly flicking out a hand and grabbing the blade, stopping the fan. He lets go. The fan is still. He carries his knapsack to the tub; it has brown stains along the middle and the water has a brown tinge as it flows out of the tap. He sits on the edge of the tub, dumps his knapsack on the floor, picks up a half-dozen pamphlets from the ashram.

CLOSE ON PAMPHLETS

Guides to inner peace.

RESUME

He wings the pamphlets at the trashcan.

EXT. RIVERBANK - HOWRAH BRIDGE - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

Hasari comes around the corner of a warehouse, a smile on his face, clutching some bananas and dried grain. His relief -- and ours -- is short-lived.

TREE AND BANK

The space where he left the family has been cleared and taken over by trucks. He's lost his family.

HOWRAH BRIDGE ROAD

A group of Hindus are celebrating a puja, the women singing canticles at the top of their lungs; the men tossing a little boy happily back and forth... as the panic-stricken Hasari rushes up.

HASARI

My wife, my children...

Hasari rushes on. Suddenly we --

CUT TO:

UNDER BRIDGE - DAY

His head turns and his eyes look this way, that way... until out of the near silence, we hear a distant, extraordinary word...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHILD (O.S.)  
Daaaaaadddddyyy!

The word catches Hasari's ear. He looks into the sea of people along the river bank under the bridge.

CHILD (O.S.)  
Daaaaaadddddyyy!

As in a dream, Shambu rises up out of the sea of bodies ... and runs to his father.

SHAMBU  
Daaaaaadddddyyy!

Now, Aloka, Amrita, Manooj appear, rising up out of the sea, ending Hasari's nightmare.

A warrior returning from battle, Hasari engulfs the little boy.

HASARI  
I told you to remain where I left you! I told you to stay there!

MANOOJ  
The police came!

SHAMBU  
We said we had to meet you, but they didn't care! They were mean!

As before, Hasari tries to engulf the rest of his family in the protectorate of his arms. In the b.g., Arun and his family.

ALOKA  
These friends have found space.  
They will share with us.

Hasari looks at the tiny space. The roof is cardboard and cloth and half an old movie poster featuring the actor Kumar Kapur. Hasari looks at his tiny bit of food, debates a moment... then puts his hands together, addresses these generous people.

HASARI  
I would be proud if you would share our food with us.

Everyone looks at the food; there is no disguising their hunger.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Distant transistor MUSIC as we PAN DOWN: The Pal children sleep despite the QUIET MOANS and nightmare CRIES around them, the two boys huddled together, Amrita close to her mother.

Hasari comes out of the dark. Aloka looks at him. He shakes his head. He slumps beside her. Aloka strokes Hasari, looking lovingly at him.

ALOKA

I remember the first time I saw you, on the day of our marriage. Wearing a bright yellow turban. You asked me my name and you said, 'You are a very beautiful girl and I am wondering whether you will find me appealing.'

He strokes her tenderly in return... but now, overwhelmed with despair, she begins to weep.

HASARI

What?

She doesn't want to say it, doesn't want to wake the children.

HASARI

It's all right -- what?

ALOKA

I miss the village. There I could help.

Hasari pulls Aloka close, strokes her.

EXT. GREEN ACRES - NIGHT

The sky turns red. The Porter looks up, shakes his head: Poor young man, stuck with only a trumpet for company.

INT. MAX'S ROOM

Max sits on the floor in a corner and plays as we hear the sound of a fierce WHISTLE and a SCREAMING ENGINE.

EXT. SETTLEMENT - CLOSE ON BULLDOZER - DAWN

A gigantic earthmover lurches into position.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Swarming police.

PALS

Awaken -- startled, disoriented. Aloka gentles the children as Hasari moves instinctively toward the threat.

SCENE

A black ambassadorial car pulls up, out of which steps a BABU. A microphone and speaker has been set up. Another car unloads several politicians with party banners. A minion hands the Babu the mike; he wants to get on with it before this turns into a political rally. Hasari is close to him, as is Arun.

BABU

The municipality has directed us to carry out the destruction of this settlement. All of you must go -- now!

For a moment there is a babble of fear and frustration. Then from Hasari's side, Arun confronts the Babu.

ARUN

For what reason?

The Babue appears disconcerted. He's not accustomed to the poor asking questions.

BABU

Because this settlement is impeding construction work.

ARUN

We're not moving! Why should we move? Who is the municipality? We are! This is our home!

BABU

I have my orders.

ARUN

If we're driven from here, where should we go?

BABU

I'll give you five minutes to gather your things. Then, the settlement comes down.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

ARUN

Why should you alone be burdened  
with such a task? Let me help!

Arun begins to tear his shelter apart, and to heave the pieces at the Babu, who retreats. Others soon take up the call to vent their frustration, hurling things at the police and at the driver of the tractor. Quickly we've got a full-scale riot. The police wade into the crowd, pounding people with their sticks, Arun one of the first to get hit. He staggers into Hasari's arms.

FAVORING PALS/ARUN AND HIS FAMILY

Unbelievable! Panic-stricken, Hasari and Aloka gather the children and their few belongings... as beside them a woman goes down from a stick to the head; Aloka stops instinctively to help the woman, but Hasari grabs her, trying to shelter her and the children as well as Arun's wife and children, clutching Arun to him as in the chaos they manage to escape.

EXT. CHURCH - CLOSE ON BILLBOARD - DAY

On the billboard: A maharajah sleeping snugly on a thick mattress. From his dreamland he inquires solicitously: "Have you ever thought of a Rajah Double Spring as a present?" We PAN DOWN and FIND the Pals and Arun and his family, panting, terrified, beneath the sign.

SHAMBU

Daddy, are we going to die here?

Hasari can see on everyone's face this question.

HASARI

No! Today, I'm just a mangy dog  
on the street, but soon, I swear,  
I'll look other men in the eye!

(a beat)

I swear.

Yet on his face we see the extraordinary pressure to make this promise reality.

EXT. SIDE OF RESTAURANT

Hasari reaches the head of a line and receives a small handout. Turning away, he studies the morsel of food. His head aches, his belly screams with hunger... but he takes only a single bite, then carefully wraps the rest in a cloth and knots it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He feels a tug at his elbow. It's a 15-year-old BOY with thick, scholarly spectacles.

RAFIK (BOY)  
 Why live like a beggar when you  
 can live like a maharajah?

Hasari stares at the boy.

INT. BLOOD DISPENSARY - CLOSE ON HASARI'S ARM - DAY

A needle injected, blood flowing into a bottle.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hasari seated on a stool, watching his blood leave his body, his face broken out in perspiration.

HASARI  
 I thought you were only taking a  
 little.

ATTENDANT  
 We pay more, we take more.

HASARI  
 I'm feeling a little dizzy.

ATTENDANT  
 It'll pass.

HIS POV

Rafik and a thin man chatting easily and exchanging cigarettes with another attendant. His vision BLURS.

HASARI AND NURSE

With his free hand, he begins to grapple for the Attendant to keep his balance, starts to fall... and the SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. DISPENSARY - DAY

A woozy Hasari gives Rafik his share; Rafik in turn gives the thin man his share. The thin man bows his farewell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAFIK

Blood is the oil well of the poor,  
brother. Now, give me another  
three and I'll give you these.

He opens his hand with its dirty nails. In it lie a  
little group of pills, like highly-colored sweets.

HASARI

What are those?

RAFIK

Vitamins. Take these and you can  
give again in a week.

While Hasari considers, Rafik pours the pills into  
Hasari's hand, takes the three rupees. Hasari downs the  
pills.

RAFIK

One week. Here. The same time.

And he's gone, leaving Hasari, woozy but at least, for  
the moment, blessed to count his money.

INT. MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Max lies on his messed bed, contorted, with his feet up  
over his head against the wall. A book lies open beside  
him. A half-eaten room service meal, many hours old,  
moulders on the bedside table. Max is babbling a mock  
sports case into his fist...

MAX

They're in the shotgun. There's  
the snap from center, the clock is  
running -- five, four, three -- he  
has an open man at the Notre Dame  
twenty for the victory... and he  
freezes. He freezes! Mr. Choke  
chokes. The fans go --

A KNOCK at the door. Max shuts up, falls off the wall.  
He crosses to the door. Opens it. POOMINA is 16,  
beautiful and exotic-looking behind her excessive makeup.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING MAX

The porter pushes the girl gently into the room, smiling  
at Max, nodding. The door is closed.

MAX AND POOMINA

He may have been receptive to a "sweet, young girl," but not a kid in her teens.

MAX  
Got an I.D. on you?  
(she doesn't get it)  
How old are you?

POOMINA  
Twenty, sahib.

MAX  
I buy that.

She approaches him seductively.

POOMINA  
I can do anything you want, sahib.

She fingers the Hebrew letter at Max's throat, on its gold chain. For a moment, Max is mesmerized by this child; but then, as she begins more serious ministrations, he pulls back.

MAX  
Hold it, time out. Time, there's  
time out on the field.

POOMINA  
Is problems, sahib?

MAX  
Is problems, yeah, just a couple.

POOMINA  
No, please, yes, I can --

There's something desperate in her that makes him put a finger to her lips and say...

MAX  
How 'bout some chow?  
(she doesn't get it)  
I was just about to order some room  
service. Food. I call, they come,  
we eat.

She stares at him.

INT. MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT (HALF HOUR LATER)

Max smokes a Monte Cristo and watches Poomina, like a frightened little animal, devour the last of a Green Acres room service meal and then wrap a small piece of fish in the paper napkin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks up at him, delivers a small burp. Covers her mouth in charming embarrassment.

POOMINA

Now, you are ready for great pleasure, yes?

MAX

Watching you eat was my great pleasure. Now you go home.

As he escorts her toward the door, Poomina is distressed. Max realizes she can't leave empty-handed. He pulls out some notes.

MAX

For you.

She hasn't given up, though, and as he takes the money, she stands on tiptoe and kisses him. Torn, Max begins to respond. He stops himself, his grip on her causing her discomfort. His breath comes in little bursts.

MAX

You're a very wet kisser. Work on it, get in touch in five years.

He leads her toward the door. Like some lunatic comedy, she resists. He pushes. She locks her knees. He opens the door.

MAX

Goddamn it, cut it out! Now, good night.

He muscles her out the door, closes it, wipes his lips. He stares at a parade of cockroaches gliding along the wall as he listens to her CRYING quietly on the other side of the door. He debates... and he loses. Opens the door. Poomina stands there; the tears stop and a lip-twitching smile lights her face.

MAX

Five years already? Gee, time really flies when you have no moral conviction.

She slides into his arms, pressing against him. With his shoulder, he closes the door, leaving us outside.

INT. BACK ALLEY - BAR - FLAMING LIGHT - NIGHT

A bare light bulb; a SCRATCHY vinyl RECORD on a turntable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Poomina watches Max do a sleight-of-hand trick with a coin. He tosses it up, brings his hands past each other, then holds out his fists; she picks on... but the other holds the penny. Fooled, she laughs. He does it again; she points to one fist -- empty -- then other -- also empty. Max reaches behind her ear and... produces the coin. She loves it, her laughter escalating. But then she seems to read something in the b.g. where we see four thugs, two of whom will become known to us as THE GOONDA, a capo to the local "mafia" chieftan, and ASHOKA, son of the local Godfather. Ashoka works on a pimple on his chin. The Goonda meticulously cleans a spot of mud with spit from one of his expensive new running shoes. Max eyes the thugs eyeing him.

MAX

Short guys! Quit lookin' at us!

This remark goes over big with the thugs. Max doesn't care. He knocks off the last of the beer in his bottle. The bartender brings them two shots of something in two unmatched glasses.

POOMINA

Special drink for you, sahib.  
Only the most man can drink it.  
You make try. For me.

MAX

For you, I would drink battery acid.

POOMINA

Who that finish first. I bet!

She puts her glass to her lips and, in a childish, exaggerated way, mimes waiting for him to commence a drinking race with her. The two of them toss off what's in their glasses. The bangla in Max's glass is stronger than battery acid. He does an elaborate routine involving the pain, the surprise, the sheer awfulness of the drink. But puts it down with mock machismo.

POOMINA

I beat!

MAX

I really don't think so -- oh no, nay, nay! I never lose the truly irrelevant contest.

POOMINA

We have fun some more. I bet again!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She turns to the bartender, calls for two more. All the while, in the b.g., The Goonda and his two thugs watch emotionlessly and Ashoka works on his acne.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Max sings "Take It to the Limit" with enormous inebriated sincerity as Poomina helps him out of the bar. There's a big black motorcycle parked outside. Max glances at it as they start down the alley. As he looks back to the road ahead, he finds The Goonda in front of him. Max isn't so drunk that he doesn't sense what this is about. He looks behind him. Indeed, the other two goons are there. Ashoka straddles the big cycle.

MAX

Well well. Seek punishment and ye shall find.

Knowing what's coming, Max nevertheless unleashes a beautiful howl and tries to trample The Goonda off-tackle. From behind, he's hit with a length of stick. He goes down, looks up through blasted eyes at Ashoka as two sticks now land against his shoulder and his head...

EXT. MAHARAJAH SIGN - NIGHT

The Pals sleep beneath the sign. Hasari awakens from restive sleep to the sound of a FIGHT. He gets up. The others awaken.

ARUN

Don't go -- what are you doing?

HASARI

It sounds like someone needs help.

Hasari bolts for the corner.

ALLEYWAY

As Hasari turns into the head of the alley, he can see three men beating someone, a fourth man standing off to the side, watching.

HASARI

What are you doing?

(calling back)

A man's being beaten here!

As Hasari runs down the alley, the MOTORCYCLE FIRES UP and SCREAMS OFF and the three goons take flight.

## HASARI AND MAX

Hasari runs up, reaches out to Max, who's barely on his feet. As Hasari touches Max, Max turns and belts Hasari in the nose, nailing Hasari to the wall as Max collapses at Hasari's feet. Hasari grabs his nose with one hand and kneels beside the fallen Max... as a shadow moves and startles Hasari. He peers into the dark... and Poomina steps into the light.

INT. CLINIC/SCHOOL (CITY OF JOY) - MAX'S POV - CRUCIFIX  
- DAY

The crucifix sways. Now Max's eyes RACK FOCUS TO the cherubic face of JOAN BETHAL, peering AT the CAMERA without sympathy.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Max on a cot in a tiny, spare room, a butterfly bandage under one eye. Joan, Irish, short, stout, hovers over him. Behind her, Hasari Pal.

JOAN

Good morning, junior, welcome to our country.

Max manages to sit up. Wishes he hadn't.

MAX

Oh, I like the way the room moves in circles.

(checking out his accommodations)

I suppose I should inquire where I am.

JOAN

You're in the City of Joy.

MAX

Is that geographic or spiritual?

JOAN

Oh, now we require that each visitor decide that for himself. This gentleman and a young lady brought you here.

MAX

Did I do that to your nose?

(as Hasari nods)

I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Hasari shrugs, smiles... and a gigantic rat drops in Max's lap. He leaps to his feet and against the wall. The rat scurries away.

MAX

What was that -- a Shetland pony?

JOAN

I would have to inspect it more closely, but I believe that was one of our economy-size rats.

Max clambers for the door. Too late, Joan thinks to say...

JOAN

Watch your --

Max cracks his head on the door frame.

MAX

Thanks -- got it.

He ducks outside for some air.

EXT. CLINIC/SCHOOL - NIZAMUDHIN LANE - MAX'S FACE

Stunned.

SQUARE

In the dawn light, he finds himself in a small square in a slum, an open sewer running before him. He's repulsed.

MAX

Pardon the expression, but Jesus H. Christ.

From the tea shop, SURYA, a stout old Hindu man dressed in Western clothes, raises a hand in greeting to Joan. On the door Max and Joan have come through: "City of Joy Self Help School & Clinic." Across the way, a young man is dandling a baby on his knee, rubbing its back and sniffing at its neck. Small group of children around a blackboard with a teacher, MARGARETA, doing numbers. RAM CHANDAR, the rickshaw puller, readies to go out to work. Trying to orient himself, Max turns...

ANOTHER ANGLE

... to find perhaps fifty people, largely women and children, staring at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He knows them by type: patients. He looks at the sign on the door.

MAX

You a doctor?

JOAN

Oh no, I'm a corporate executive. Doctor arrives at half seven, but only three days a week.

MAX

This is obviously one of those three days.

JOAN

Indeed. What brings you to our country?

MAX

I came to find my white light.

JOAN

Ah, yes. I take it you didn't find it.

MAX

Kept opening the doors and windows of my spirit, but couldn't see a goddamn thing.

JOAN

What do you do in America?

Max is slow to answer. Discreetly, Hasari hangs back, listens.

JOAN

Oh, how exciting. Must be something illegal. Are you a criminal of some sort?

MAX

I suppose that depends how you define the word: I'm a doctor.

JOAN

I see. How long are you here? Perhaps I could recruit you for --

MAX

Forget it. You've got your non-practicing Catholics. I'm a non-practicing doctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

How very distressing. Why's that?

MAX

Found out I just really don't like sick people. Well, I'm outta here. I owe you one.

JOAN

I can't imagine ever divining how to collect, but there are a few of us Indians, you know, who believe the tourist trade ought to be encouraged.

Max turns to Hasari. Hasari is incredibly shy, can barely meet Max's eyes.

MAX

Thank you very much. Let me...

He goes for his money.

HASARI

No, please.

Max finds his pockets empty. Then reaches for his wrist -- his watch is gone -- and then his throat -- his chai is gone, too.

JOAN

I'm afraid they cleaned you out.

Ram, here's your first rider.

(to Max)

Take this.

She holds out several rupees toward him. All eyes on them.

JOAN

Go on, it's all right. You'll owe me two.

EXT. STREET - FLYING FEET - DAY

Max in the rickshaw, Hasari running alongside Ram, an exuberant smile slashed across his face.

HASARI

You see, I can keep up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

Keep up, of course. Anyone can run at this pace. But you think it's easy to run and to pull?

HASARI

I can do it. I could pull it.

MAX

Come on, give him a shot. He's as fast as you and looks twice as strong.

RAM

Will you still pay me when he runs you into a ditch?

MAX

Absolutely. I trust the man.

Suddenly, Ram comes to a stop.

RAM

All right, you, come, step in here.

Hasari looks on Max with enormous gratitude. Ram puts the shafts down, has a short coughing fit, spits some phlegm, looks at Max.

MAX

I hope you're taking something for that.

Ram waves him off as Hasari lifts the shafts to his hips.

RAM

Now, fine, pull, go.

Hasari tries to pull, but the center of gravity isn't easy to find. This is enormously difficult and Hasari's very clumsy at it. The street is crowded. The traffic is beginning to back up behind them. The driver and conductor of the tram let fly a tirade of insults.

RAM

See, mister! What did I tell you? Come on! What do you think this is -- some village street? You've got to move quickly.

He turns to Max.

RAM

You see, it takes a gift.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

I say he can do it. I'll bet you  
the fare he can do it.

(play by play)

What do you think, rickshaw fans,  
can he do it?

The crowd isn't in for fun. Hasari strains forward. The rickshaw moves with him. Ram moves alongside, shouting instructions and oaths. A cop comes on the run, screaming at Hasari... which makes Ram importune more strongly and Max joke more vociferously.

Even under this incredible pressure, Hasari gains confidence and begins to move quicker, earning shouts of approval from Max and Ram, who now has trouble keeping up as they make their way through the maelstrom, an avalanche of oaths following them.

INT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

At first all we see are feet on a marble floor. The Goonda's in his running shoes, then Ram and Hasari's bare feet.

This is the partitioned splendor of an old house sprinkled with the relics of a grand colonial past. Everything is baroque, rotting and somehow impressive. Hasari has never been anywhere like this, and is caught between curiosity and fear of breathing.

INT. "THRONE ROOM"

The three men enter a large room shuttered from the sunlight -- dusty and packed with a ramshackle assortment of furniture. Two fat blue titmice perch in a cage next to ambitious plaster portrait of Napoleon.

Sitting behind a desk is Ashoka, leaning over a mirror, squeezing a balky pimple.

Near a large window, his 60-year-old father, GHATAK, in a European jacket and dhoti, works with intense concentration at repairing a pair of broken glasses with a twist of fine wire.

The three new arrivals stand silent and respectful before the desk. At last, without raising his head...

ASHOKA

Not a tongue between you then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

Yes, yes, I am wondering, sir,  
we are, is it possible you might  
have something for my friend?

Ram indicates Hasari, as if there might be some question  
to whom he's referring. Ashoka attacks the pimple.

RAM

Let me explain it for your ears,  
sir. My cousin from Bihar has  
just arrived in our city --

GOONDA

They've brought a small present  
-- of respect.

The Goonda places a small bundle of rupees on the desk.  
Ashoka allows himself a disinterested glance at  
Hasari.

ASHOKA

So, you want to be a human horse?

RAM

Oh yes! I have personally witnessed  
his excellence -- yes.

ASHOKA

He doesn't talk? Can he neigh at  
least?

(to Hasari)

You -- do your ears function?

HASARI

Oh yes, Babu. Can I... uhm...?

ASHOKA

Neigh! Like a horse.

Ashoka pulls back his lips, shows his teeth and imitates  
a neigh: "Ne-igh! Ne-igh!"

HASARI

Well, yes, Babu, I can do that.  
Would you like me to imitate a  
horse?

Finished with the pimple, Ashoka wipes a finger on his  
shirt and takes a helping off a plate of sweetcakes  
as...

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Behind him, The Godfather walks up to the desk, putting his glasses on. He barely glances at his son, but waves him out of the chair.

Ashoka doesn't like it, but he steps aside. As he does, he turns a look of hatred on Hasari. Through no fault of his own, Hasari has made an enemy. Ghatak chews on a pan and casts a benevolent eye on Hasari.

GHATAK

Lift your longhi.

Hasari does. The Godfather looks at his legs and thighs.

GHATAK

The wise men of our nation say that nirvana is the attainment of a state of supreme detachment. For me, nirvana is counting each evening, one by one, the rupees earned by my two thousand and forty-six rickshaws.

Hasari doesn't know whether to respond. A glance at Ram tells him not to. Ghatak gestures for Hasari to lower his longhi.

GHATAK

You are with family?

HASARI

I have a wife and three children, Babu.

GHATAK

And they must eat, heh. The world is full of open mouths.

He chews on this a moment, then opens a drawer... and holds a small, tinkling rickshaw bell toward Hasari. Hasari understands that, incredibly, he has a job. His breath is so shallow, he can barely utter his gratitude. He takes the bell.

HASARI

I shall be eternally grateful to you. From now on, I shall be as the youngest of your brothers.

GHATAK

Stay loyal. These days, it's a crop nobody plants.

The Godfather turns his beatific and Godlike smile on Hasari Pal.

(CONTINUED)

EXT. MATTRESS SIGN - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

Transitor MUSIC. The Pals load the rickshaw that stands at the road with Ram in it. There are embraces with the bruised Arun and his family.

EXT. SQUARE - NIGHT (EARLY EVENING)

We hear the BELL TINKLING as the rickshaw, pulled by Hasari, carrying Ram and Aloka (holding Shambu) arrives (Amrita and Manooj trotting beside their father). Surya, Selima, other neighbors greet them as they come. The Pals glance into the school at Joan, who's teaching an evening class.

WITH PALS

Reverentially, they follow Ram inside as Joan watches.

INT. RAM'S HUT - NIGHT

A door opens. Moonlight. Faces peer through the door. Ram lights an oil lamp. In the glow, the family looks around their tiny space. Hardly able to suppress smiles.

HASARI

Someone has blessed us. A job, a roof, a school. Soon I'll be able to send money home...

(looking at Amrita)

... and put away a little bit for your dowry.

In their excitement, the boys run.

OUTSIDE

and up to the roof, under the stars. We LOOK UP WITH them and:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GREEN ACRES - ON SKY - NIGHT

PAN DOWN TO Max on his balcony playing his trumpet as we continue to

DISSOLVE TO BLACK.



FADE IN:

EXT. SQUARE AND STREET (CITY OF JOY) - DAY

About twenty tattered street kids faces shining with enjoyment. They run and shout as they pursue something just out of frame.

WIDE SHOT

The cause of the excitement is Hasari running TOWARD us, feet flying, as he pulls the rickshaw, loaded with a huge sack. Manooj and Shambu are clinging to the sides of the machine.

Ram stands in the center of the square. He shouts a command and Hasari struggles to bring the rickshaw to a stop. It's not easy and Sunil -- who's arriving -- has to jump out of the way to the accompaniment of apologies from Hasari and Ram and hoots of laughter from the children.

Outside the clinic, a line of perhaps seventy-five wait patiently, watching as Hasari takes off again. The wheels of the rickshaw hit a rut. Hasari loses control, the sack tips back and Hasari is lifted into the air, feet kicking as he tries to regain his balance. Aloka and Amrita, sitting near the bawling Ram, can't hold back their laughter.

EXT. SQUARE - HIGH ANGLE - DAY

The square is set with obstacles. As Ram shouts instruction, we see Hasari negotiate them with much increased skill. He stops in front of a small group. It's his family, plus Joan and Surya. With an exhausted smile, he signs to Aloka and Amrita to get in. They do, and Hasari takes them triumphantly around the circuit.

HIGH ANGLE

Hasari's triumphant ride continues and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK STREET - DAY

Hasari rubs the moonstone in his ring on the shafts, then touches his heart and his forehead. A SCHOOL GIRL in uniform, approaches the rickshaw stand. We also see several other pullers, Rassoul, Chomotkar, Ramatullah.

SCHOOL GIRL

Rickshaw wallah!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

Let Hasari go!

The line of rickshaw pullers turns to Hasari. The other pullers wish him well as he comes forward. His heart pounds; ever so politely, he helps the School Girl into his carriage. She gives him the address of the St. Pius School.

HASARI

I'm sorry, I don't know where that is. You're my very first passenger.

SCHOOL GIRL

Really. Well, I hope I bring you luck.

She gives him a sweet smile.

SCHOOL GIRL

That way, and then to the right.

His moment has arrived. He looks at Ram... and thrusts his hips forward, setting off into the insanity of the traffic, eyes flicking left and right. A HORN RAILS at him and a taxi tries to run him down, calling and laughing as Hasari jumps in terror.

RAM

(calling)

Feed the police!

Other pullers laugh, call after Hasari... and as he approaches the first corner, he manages to pull out a rupee and deposit it into the hand of the impassive traffic policeman and then turn right.

EXT. ST. PIUS - DAY

The School Girl hands him a slip of paper.

SCHOOL GIRL

This is my home address. Pick me up promptly at seven each morning.

HASARI

Yes, thank you, you can depend on me.

The girl runs into the school yard, met immediately by friends. Hasari looks around at the clean, bustling school, at all the children in their crisp uniforms and a look of great yearning comes over his face.

INT. SMALL RESTAURANT - DAY

Max is trying to explain to the waiter what he wants.

MAX

Beef. You know -- cow? Minced,  
little salt, pepper, slap it flat  
like this, throw it on the grill,  
flip it.

Now, though, he just glimpses the shiny gas tank and engine of a motorcycle around the hip of the waiter. He leans out.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ashoka, astride his motorcycle, GUNNING the ENGINE as a boy runs out of a store with an armload of cassettes.

WITH MAX AND WAITER

MAX

Put it on the grill, I'll be right  
back.

WITH ASHOKA

He pulls the boy's ear, REVS the ENGINE to go... and senses someone close. He turns to find an American hovering at his shoulder.

MAX

You know, I have to say you  
really don't look Jewish. I  
believe that's mine.

He reaches for the necklace with the Hebrew letter. Ashoka recognizes Max. Looks around for help. There is none.

ASHOKA

Don't touch me. No one touches me.

MAX

Really?

Max grabs Ashoka... who breaks free, and GUNS the CYCLE down a side street. Max gives chase, his aching ribs slowing him a bit.

## SEVERAL CUTS

Ashoka, glancing back, begins to open up some distance. Yet, Max hangs tough, weaving like a broken field runner through the mass of bodies and vehicles. Now, suddenly, he loses Ashoka. He has to make a choice about this corner or that one. He chooses.

## EXT. CITY OF JOY - AROUND CORNER - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

A COP steps into his path. He sees Ashoka up ahead. He's hopelessly out of breath.

MAX

Oh... great... good...good timing  
...him!

He can't talk and breathe. He points desperately. The Cop glances where Max points, but he makes no move to give chase.

COP

May I see your passport?

MAX

Passport? I'm in the middle of a  
high speed chase. That guy --

COP

Passport please.

A crowd has begun to form. In the distance, we see a group of girls carrying cricket equipment COMING AT us.

MAX

It's in my hotel room.

COP

Passport, please, now.

MAX

Ready my lips: I do not have my  
passport with me at this...

(he gets it)

Ah, I see, said the blind man.

The Cop obviously is doing this at Ashoka's behest. Max starts around the Cop. The Cop, however, sticks his club in Max's face; there's fire in Max's eyes... but a hand takes the Cop's stick before Max can make a big mistake.

## ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING OWNER OF HAND

The girls with the cricket equipment (and Margareta, the teacher). The hand belongs to Joan Bethel.

JOAN

Well, all right, junior, so you'll owe me three.

## EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

A scribe finishes writing a note home for Hasari. The scribe hands it to Hasari.

## INSERT - NOTE AND MONEY ORDER

"We are well. Manooj does not go in the cinema. I am earning my living as a rickshaw wallah. It is my honor to send you this."

## RESUME

With great pride, Hasari pays the scribe, seals the money order with the message in an envelope, licks the flap, and puts the envelope into the mail slot.

## EXT. SQUARE (CITY OF JOY) - TEA SHOP - DAY (DUSK)

Surya plays his zither. Max and Joan sit at a table. Max pops little boiled candies into his mouth from a dish on the table.

JOAN

Oh, it was just a whim in the beginning really -- to try to convince them not to be so bloody passive, that they could pull themselves up on their own. I get a little money from a Swiss organization. Now it's become a bit more than I can manage.

MAX

It's got to be like trying to drill a hole in water, though.

JOAN

We just need a few more hands on this little life raft we've set afloat here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They stare at each other. Shambu has become one of Surya's tea boys and refills their tea.

JOAN

You know what I've come to think in my middle age, Max?

MAX

Nope, no, earthly idea. You're pretty much outta my league, thought-wise.

JOAN

There are really only three actions open to a person.

MAX

Only three -- okay. And what are they?

JOAN

To run, to spectate, to commit.

Max peers at her a moment, then around the square.

MAX

Has it occurred to you that this obsession with charity is really a flaw in your character?

JOAN

Charity! It's not charity, dear child, it's love. You're very badly twisted around, aren't you?

MAX

One of us sure as hell is.

The clinic's part-time doctor, SUNIL DASGUPTA, comes out of the clinic after a very long day.

SUNIL

I'm off for home, Sister Joan. A pleasure to meet you, Dr. Loeb.

MAX

The same.

SUNIL

See you day after tomorrow.

JOAN

Good night, God bless, Doctor.

(a beat)

Generous young man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As he watches Sunil head away, Max senses something coming at him from the side. A soccer ball almost hits him; he jumps up, handles the ball athletically.

SQUARE

He begins to play with Manooj and several other children. Shambu leaves his post in the tea shop to join them.

MANOOJ

Are you the American doctor? Are you coming here to help us.

MAX

No, I'm the visiting American soccer star, El Max.

MANOOJ

Do you go to the cinema in America, El Max?

MAX

When I was your age -- two movies, plus cartoons every Saturday.

Aloka and Amrita are cooking on an open fire bucket. Max almost knocks the fire over. Aloka looks at him, apologetic, shy... as Manooj knocks Shambu down at Max's feet. Max scoops the little boy up...

MAX

There you go, little guy. Ut -- what's this?

Reaching behind Shambu's ear, Max produces a boiled sweet. Aloka watches this with a smile; their eyes touch again... as Manooj lets out a cry at the sight of their father.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ram and Hasari return home. Hasari can hardly walk. Shambu runs to his father, explaining excitedly...

SHAMBU

Daddy, there is the doctor from America. He saw two movies every Saturday. What's in your fist? Open, Daddy!

Shambu pries his father's fist open: seeds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHAMBU

Seeds? Why?

HASARI

So we can watch something grow.

EXT. RAM'S HUNT NIGHT - UPSTAIRS

Children leaning down as smoke wafts up. We FOLLOW the smoke DOWN TO Max's cigar. Aloka and Amrita laying the food out. Shambu rubbing his father's aching legs as Hasari and Manooj plant the seeds in Hasari's little tea caddy full of earth from home. Max is watching this "family" huddled around the father.

RAM

Another few months, I'll be able to pay off the moneylender in my village and go home and open a grocery shop. All around me sacks overflowing with all kinds of dal and rice, aromatic spices, piles of vegetables... and at night, I'll lie on my back beneath the trees sniffing fresh aubergines.

This beautiful picture burrows into Hasari's mind. For a moment, he goes there -- home, to the village...

RAM

If my wife will let me come within a hundred miles of the place where she herself resides.

Ram laughs, Hasari smiles...

HASARI

Amrita, I saw a beautiful wedding sari today.

Amrita is terribly embarrassed.

RAM

It was six hundred rupees only.

He laughs at the impossibility of the price.

MAX

That's only 40 dollars, isn't it?

HASARI

If you have it.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MAX

I'll send it to you from America  
when I get home tomorrow.

HASARI

That's very generous but no,  
thank you.

MAX

Repayment for punching you in the  
nose.

HASARI

You have repaid me by sharing our  
supper.

Joan indicates that Max should let it go. Hasari ever  
so carefully waters the tea box.

RAM

Doctor Big Brother, I myself would  
be willing to accept a gift. Could  
you give me five rupees in a note --  
ten, perhaps. My ankle is badly  
swelled; the higher the number the  
more the swelling sinks.

Max has to laugh.

MAX

I don't have a cent on me. I'll  
owe you.

RAM

How much?

Now everyone's attentions is taken by a CRY from Shambu,  
who expels his breath, his terrified eyes directing our  
attention to...

ANOTHER ANGLE

It's an amazing sight. Two lepers: ANOUAR, bearded with  
a sharp intelligent, unmarked face, makes his way along  
on a small wheeled board, at an amazingly fast pace,  
ahead of SAID, a huge, mute leper. They stop some feet  
away. Lepers aren't often welcome. Out from behind Said  
steps Poomina.

POOMINA

Joan Di, my sister!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She sees Max, gasps, throws herself behind Said. Joan looks at Max -- he starts to speak, she points a finger that silences him...

JOAN

It was Poomina who brought you to us. She has herself and her sister to support. It's all right, Poomina. Anouar, what is it?

She moves to them. They're all three badly out of breath.

WITH JOAN AND LEPERS

ANOUAR

It's Meeta! It's her time. But something is wrong. The midwives don't know what to do! Dr. Sunil, could he help, perhaps?

JOAN

Dr. Sunil isn't here.

POOMINA

Meeta will die.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Joan turns to Max, who hasn't heard the exchange.

JOAN

Max, I wouldn't ask, but it's an emergency. A pregnancy gone awry. It's a leper. Could you have a look?

Max is clearly thrown by the sight of the lepers.

MAX

I don't have any experience with leprosy.

JOAN

Good Christ, son, because she's a leper doesn't mean she's not built like a woman!

HASARI

I can run and get Dr. Sunil.

JOAN

It's too far.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, impulsively...

ALOKA

I could help. I've had three babies.

RAM

You can't do that. They're outcasts, they're unclean.

There are murmurs of assent from the others.

JOAN

Oh nonsense! It's not contagious!

A beat -- everyone fixed on Max.

HASARI

You're a doctor, how can you not help?

EXT. PATH-NIGHT

The moon reflects off the dark puddles of muddy water that line the side of the railway tracks. Anouar propels his board with astonishing agility along the path, Said and Poomina running with him. Max, Joan, carrying a first aid bag, Aloka and Hasari following, slipping and sliding on the rough ground with its puddles and sewage.

EXT. RAILWAY LINE - LEPER HUTS - NIGHT

The little procession arrives outside the three rough huts, made of bamboo, plastic sheeting, cloth, wood and cardboard. A few shadows materialize. Lepers -- staring silently.

Anouar points into a hut. Joan and Aloka precede Max inside. Max forgets to bend and bumps his head.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

The only light is the feeble waver from a candle. The blind Meeta lies on a rough mattress on the ground. Her ragged sari is pulled up to her middle. Her face runs with sweat, her hair is plastered to her face. A girl with black eyes is fanning her with a piece of wood. Meeta sends up a SOFT, uninterrupted MOAN. A wedge of blood-soaked cloth is between her legs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A middle-age leper is leaning over her -- a midwife, encouraging Meeta with a string of commands in their own language.

Max kneels, Aloka at his side. His breathing becomes shallow... but then he pulls off the blood-soaked bandages. Between Meeta's legs he can just make out the bottom of a foot. The child is breached. Maybe already dead.

ALOKA

Will she die?

Max goes into reflex actions. Joan has opened the first aid kit. There's a flashlight among the medicine, alcohol, compresses, scissors, etc. He hands the flashlight to Aloka as...

MAX

(to Joan)

Pull me two c.c.'s of Coramine.

He nods at Aloka; she illuminates the scene.

MAX

Uh-oh, uh-oh, who's this coming' down the lane? Why it's -- is it possible -- way over here, in India -- yes, it's Mr. Choke.

He comes to a stop. Everyone stares at him. Meeta moans. For a moment, he stays frozen. Aloka reaches out instinctively, wipes the sweat from his eyes. This gesture seems to free him; he looks at her, looks at the room and its expectant, trusting faces...

MAX

I'm going to have to turn it -- the baby. Tell her she has to relax these muscles as much as she can.

He doesn't finish the sentence. Aloka speaks softly to Meeta as Max takes Meeta's arm, makes a tourniquet. Joan hands him the syringe and he injects. Hands the syringe back to Joan and begins to work at turning the baby.

Aloka takes Meeta's hand and it's a moment before we realize Aloka, with her fine hand, is holding Meeta's fingerless palm.

## OUTSIDE

A small group waits, trying to determine from the sounds what's happening inside. Anouar pours tea from a pot on the small fire, offers the cup to Hasari. Hasari stares at the cup, doesn't want to be impolite, but more than that, doesn't want to touch the cup. He shakes his head, smiles. Anouar drinks off the tea.

## INSIDE

Sweat pours down Max's face into his eyes. He shakes it out. Aloka leans forward and, with her new sari, wipes the sweat away again. Max nods thanks.

MAX

Tell her again to breathe in short little bursts now.

He demonstrates. Aloka does the same to Meeta. Meeta tries to cooperate. And suddenly Max has the baby turned.

MAX

All right! Now, tell her to push.

Aloka translates. Meeta pushes. The midwife, the little girl, Aloka lean forward.

MAX

Again. Yes! Again. It's coming.

## OUTSIDE

No one is sitting now. Everyone hangs close to the door. Only Hasari remains apart, seated on a tree stump in the middle of the quad. He coughs; suppresses it.

## INSIDE

MAX

I've got the head. Come on, little baby, come on, little baby. Be alive, be alive, be alive.

Aloka wipes the sweat away again. He looks at her, his voice squeezed out through his teeth.

MAX

We've got it, we've got it. Yeah!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He seems as released as Meeta. Then he gives a last gentle tug and a CRY squeezes out of the little piece of life in his hands. Max is fairly overwhelmed by the life in his hands. Poomina steps close, a smile on her lovely face, and touches the baby in Max's hands.

EXT. LANE - NIGHT

Max, Joan, Aloka and Hasari walk in silence down Nizamudhin Lane. There is only the mingled sound of COUGHING, MOANING, and a TRANSISTOR RADIO nearby playing a popular song. Outside the clinic, they stop. She takes his hand.

JOAN

For a non-practicing doctor, that was pretty practiced.

MAX

Never been so scared in my life.

It's a warm, open moment between them. But now there's the ongoing desperation of her needs.

JOAN

Max, please, won't you change your mind? We desperately need another doctor. Full-time. Think about it -- just give us a couple of months.

MAX

Can't do it. Maybe you've got it in you to be a saint. I just don't.

JOAN

Then what do you want? What are you going to be when you grow up? Good night, Aloka, Hasari.

Joan goes inside, leaving Max, Aloka, and a very uncomfortable Hasari alone a moment.

ALOKA

Thank you for allowing me to go with you.

MAX

You could make a helluva nurse.

A little smile comes over her face; no one's ever paid her that kind of compliment. She goes into Ram's hut, leaving Max and Hasari now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

I think perhaps you are a good man.

Hasari brings his hands together and goes inside.

EXT./INT. JOAN'S AND THE PAL'S (ALTERNATE) - NIGHT

Max hears Joan praying inside.

JOAN (O.S.)

Jesus, my brother, you who I am trying to believe are the light and salvation of the puking world  
...

THE PALS

Aloka sits huddled with her husband while their children sleep; they listen...

JOAN (O.S.)

Please see that we are living in madness and darkness here...

MAX

listens.

JOAN (O.S.)

... and we need help. Om, Jesus, om and amen.

Suddenly, he hurtles into motion. He runs down the alley, his stride stretching out, swallowing up the distance between here and the world beyond the City of Joy in great gulps.

EXT. CALCUTTA AIRPORT - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A busy, urban airport as opposed to the small country airport in which we saw Max earlier. V.O. we hear...

BETSY (V.O.)

Yes, yes, yes, that's right, yes!  
I turned in your ticket!

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

It's a small place; it's sweltering, and it's packed with hundreds of families shoulder to shoulder. Though Betsy's trying to be discreet, it's not a very private place, as we see by the number of people watching Max and Betsy.

BETSY

I bought it, I got a refund!

MAX

But I want to go home with you.

BETSY

You want to go home with me?

MAX

Yes.

BETSY

Then prove it.

MAX

Good -- how -- name it.

BETSY

Buy yourself a ticket.

MAX

I would love to do that, Betsy Ilene, boy would I love to do just that, but I'm financially embarrassed at the --

BETSY

Use your credit cards.

MAX

What credit cards? You know I maxed them before we left. Just lend me --

BETSY

No! You won't pay me back; you never have. Oh, Max!

MAX

They're calling our flight. I want to go home with you, Betsy Ilene Kahn. Because I have a vision. It's...

He's trying to woo and charm her. He mimes a kind of house shape.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MAX

I see you and me, Betsy Ilene Kahn, nibbling toward each other through a quarter pounder with cheese, chugalugging a frosty light beer -- great taste! Less filling! Bowling! I want to go bowling, Besty Ilene Kahn!

He fires a strike through the watching crowd.

MAX

I want... Oh, my Lord Amighty, I want so many American things --

BETSY

Oh, stop it! You have no earthly idea what you want, Max! And stop calling me Betsy Ilene Kahn.

MAX

Isn't that your name?

BETSY

You call me Betsy Ilene Kahn like you just met me yesterday.

MAX

What should I call you? My girl, my significant other --

BETSY

Don't get cute! You get cute and I swear to God --- you told me once I look like my mother!

MAX

You do -- so what?

BETSY

See -- you don't understand!

MAX

How could I possibly not understand a conversation as easy as this one, Betsy Ilene.

BETSY

I hate you!

MAX

Na ya don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETSY

I stood by you for three years!

MAX

I know.

BETSY

I supported you through your internship!

MAX

You did.

BETSY

Why? It was never working. What have I been thinking all these years -- that you'd change? You're the most self-pitying, self-destructive, self...

She can't find anything fierce enough, so she abates, tries to get it together to make a dignified exit.

BETSY

But you've taught me something, Max. You never finish anything. Well, I quit. I've found my light and I'm free of you.

She heads for the gate, people parting to give her a wide berth.

MOVING SHOT - TOWARD THE GATE

MAX

Will you at least call my mother and ask her to empty my savings account and wire --

BETSY

Do it yourself, Max. Call her collect. You should have called her weeks ago anyway just because she's your mother!

(to herself)

White light, white light...!

She hands her ticket and boarding pass over and she's through the gate. Max turns to find the audience fixed on him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Guerilla theater, folks. 'All the world's a stage.' Don't know if that word reached you here yet. If you'd care to show your appreciation by a small donation...

Many smiles... and several instant offers of rupees. A beat, then...

MAX

Aw, what the hell.

... Swallowing his incredible embarrassment, Max takes the money.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

The line is long. At this moment, Joan is checking a child's throat with a tongue-depressor. Aloka is walking beside her with a fistful of depressors and a bag for disposal. Hasari and Ram are getting ready to leave. Anouar appears at Joan's waist.

ANOUAR

Good morning, Joan Di. Dr. Loeb said many of us could be helped; that all it would take is money for medication.

Anouar hands Joan some newspaper in which something is wrapped. Joan opens the paper. Inside is a good deal of money.

ANOUAR

Please buy the medication for us. If we cannot come here to receive it, perhaps Dr. Loeb would come to us.

JOAN

I'll be happy to buy the medication, but Dr. Loeb is not part of this endeavor, Anouar; there is only his cherished memory.

ANOUAR

Then perhaps I am having visions.

Anouar's focus is up the lane. Joan follows his focus to:

## THEIR POV

Max approaches. A buzz about Max's heroics; hands coming together. Max raises a hand in benediction, makes the sign of the cross. Max claps Hasari on the shoulder; Hasari brings his hands together and gives Max a genuinely pleased smile. Children circle and touch him, Manooj and Shambu among them.

## BACK TO SCENE

MAX

Good morning! Good morning!  
Heckuva morning! Getting ready  
to practice medicine without a  
license, Sister Joan? You don't  
see me soliciting conversions,  
do you?

JOAN

Well, well, well, I do so love to  
be surprised.

MAX

Okay, for starters, pick me out  
someone with something easy I can  
heal, make me look good.

(to Aloka)

Aloka, you're my assistant, let's  
go.

Aloka smiles, she nods, she accepts.

JOAN

Max, knock it off, give us a bit  
of hush.

(as he does)

What happened?

MAX

I changed my mind.

JOAN

And I'm a bloody bathing beauty.

MAX

Okay, so I got left.

JOAN

Smart girl... So how long am I  
stuck with you?

MAX

Two weeks -- or until Mom sends me  
a ticket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Not worth the aggravation of your prattle every day. Six months -- and not a day less.

MAX

No way. Six weeks -- and that's my best offer.

JOAN

Two months -- and that's my final offer.

MAX

(a beat)

Done.

JOAN

Jesus and Mary. The Lone Ranger rides again.

And now smiles creep onto all their faces as Max goes inside, followed by Joan... and then Aloka -- after she looks at Hasari, gets his nod of encouragement. Too late, Joan says...

JOAN

Watch your --

Thud!

MAX

Thanks -- got it.

The children titter. The teacher, Margareta, admonishes them to pay attention and be polite... as we --

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL GIRL'S HOUSE - HASARI'S WHEELS - DAY (TWO WEEKS LATER)

The wheels spinning furiously and then stopping abruptly.

Hasari, dripping with sweat, panting. The School Girl comes running toward him. After her, in the b.g., her MOTHER.

SCHOOL GIRL

Hasari, where have you been? I've been waiting almost five minutes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

I'm sorry, forgive me. It won't happen again.

SCHOOL GIRL

We're not going to school today. You're taking my mother and me to the Bara Bazar. I'm getting married!

HASARI

Oh, I am so pleased for you!

Panting helplessly, Hasari smiles... as he helps the School Girl's Mother into the rickshaw.

MOTHER

Good morning, Hasari.

HASARI

Good morning, missus.

Briskly, he takes up the shafts and sets off.

MOTHER

Turn right at that corner, Hasari.

HASARI

It's farther that way, missus.

MOTHER

No, not really. Turn there, please.

Obediently, Hasari turns (as Ramatullah, heading the other way, passes; they wave) and Hasari pulls AWAY FROM us.

EXT. SECOND WEDDING SHOP - DAY

He helps them out of the rickshaw in front of an expensive-looking bridal shop.

SCHOOL GIRL

You must remember this shop, Hasari, when it's your daughter's time. This is the nicest in the city.

The Mother gives the School Girl a withering look and hustles her into the shop. Hasari can just barely hear...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOTHER (O.S.)

Don't say things like that. He's never going to be able to buy anything here.

ON HASARI

He watches from outside, a look of determination coming over his face. Suddenly a pair of fingers takes hold of his ear, twisting his face painfully.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ashoka, with The Goonda and two henchmen, in the b.g.

ASHOKA

Not working? How will my father eat this evening?

HASARI

I was just...

ASHOKA

You have a daughter?

HASARI

Yes, Babu.

MARWARI (O.S.)

Rickshaw wallah!

Called to work, Hasari starts for his rickshaw, but Ashoka hangs on to his ear for another uncomfortable moment... as he slips a rupee into Hasari's shirt pocket.

ASHOKA

Keep working. Give this to Sister Joan and your friend the doctor when you go home.

Now he hands Hasari a sealed envelope and turns his ear loose. Hasari springs toward his passenger.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Max with his stethoscope to Meeta's baby. Meeta in a brightly-colored sari and a lot of bracelets and Aloka looks on. Poomina clings to the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

He's just malnourished. Is she giving him the milk we gave her or selling it?

Aloka asks Meeta in Hindi. Meeta clearly swears she's giving the baby the milk. Aloka pushes her.

ALOKA

Not all. Most.

MAX

Tell her to give all the milk to the baby.

Aloka does so as Max bounces the baby, coos to it playfully. The baby pees all over him. Aloka translates quickly. Meeta starts apologizing. Poomina can't help laughing. Max reminds Meeta that that's once for each of the two weeks of the baby's life. Aloka soothes Meeta as she hustles her, Poomina, and the baby out, then quickly begins to wipe Max's face with a clean rag. This isn't something she's accustomed to doing, but she's doing it before she has time to think. Max finds himself conscious of her closeness to him... and then she becomes suddenly self-conscious and she backs off, ducks her head. He peeks up under.

MAX

Psst.

She looks at him.

MAX

It's okay.

He smiles. So does she.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

Sunil stands outside the clinic, rolling his sleeves down. Anouar waits at a polite distance. Exhausted but exhilarated, Max and Aloka emerge with an elderly woman patient, Max singing Chuck Berry to the woman's embarrassed delight: "They're really rockin' in Boston, in Philadelphia, P.A..." Sunil looks at his American colleague, smiles a small smile.

SUNIL

Good night, I'll see you day after tomorrow.

MAX

Good night, Sunil.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

"... Deep in the heart of Texas, around the Frisco Bay..." Manooj and Shambu come charging at Max with the soccer ball, hoping to engage him as a playmate. Hasari returns home with his rickshaw.

Selima waves at Max, indicates she's cooking dinner. Joan wanders out of the school as the kids are released and go charging through the square. Joan has the Pal kids in hand.

SELIMA

Very special supper for you  
tonight, Doctor Big Brother! Will  
you stay?

MAX

Wish I could, Selima, because I'm  
sure hungry! Sixteen hours of  
pestilence and misery always make  
me famished. I have to go with my  
man Anouar tonight. I've got  
lepers to heal!

ANOUAR

No, no, you know how patient we  
are. Eat, eat.

MAX

(to Aloka)  
You're not tired, are you?

ALOKA

Not if you're not.

Between Hasari and Aloka, there's just a flicker of tension; evidently, this has become Max's (and her) normal day. But he's also worried about the note from Ashoka. Joan joins them with the Pal children.

JOAN

Well, I think we've got three very  
good potential scholars here.

Behind the children's backs, she points at Manooj and indicates the kid's really got a head.

JOAN

Given him some time here, he'll  
be good enough for a proper school.

HASARI

It's more than a father could hope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Fifteen years from now: Miami,  
Florida, Dr. Manooj Pal, in  
association with Dr. Maxwell Loeb.

For a moment, Hasari is swept up in this little reverie,  
then remembers reality.

HASARI

(giving her the note)  
From the godfather's son. For you  
and the doctor.

Amidst instant concern, Joan opens the envelope. Looks  
at Max. We hear the sound of BANGLADESH MUSIC.

INT. GODFATHER'S "THRONE ROOM" - OLD RADIO - DAY

The MUSIC is of days gone by, playing on an old RADIO.  
Sticks of burning incense send off trails of smoke. The  
godfather, MR. GHATAK, Looking infirm, wipes a tear from  
his eye.

GHATAK

Acha!

Now we see Max and Joan seated on cushions before the  
godfather, tea in hand. Max catches a glimpse in an  
anteroom of several thugs with several young girls, one  
of whom is Poomina. She catches a glimpse of Max as she  
disappears past a door. A moment later, her head peeks  
around the door frame. She brings her hands together.

ASHOKA (O.S.)

You!

Poomina quickly disappears. Max's attention is pulled  
back to the godfather...

GHATAK

I understand that you're interested  
in expanding your clinic and free  
school, and that you intend to  
start treating lepers in the City  
of Joy.

JOAN

We'd like to better serve the  
entire community, Mr. Ghatak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GHATAK

Of course. That's very good. Admirable. And we'd be pleased to rent you suitable space. But you must understand that certain payments will go up.

JOAN

I understand the rent would have to go up if we rent larger quarters from you, Mr. Ghatak, but why should we have to pay more protection?

GHATAK

More people, more potential trouble. Strangers. If I don't charge you, what will I tell others?

JOAN

But we can't afford it!

GHATAK

Surely if you can expand, you can pay more.

Joan throws up her hands -- how do you reason with this man?

MAX

Am I stupid, but isn't this protection money money we're paying you to protect us from you?

GHATAK

We live in chaotic times, Miss Bethel, Doctor. I control the City of Joy and maintain it as a model of harmony. It's a miracle, but a very fragile miracle.

MAX

And how are we threatening your miracle?

GHATAK

I admire your courage in choosing to work in such a violent place, Miss Bethel.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GHATAK (CONT'D)

Your neighbors in the City of Joy, they're not educated, they're given to violence, to meanness, I can promise you they won't like having lepers among them, but because they know you're under my protection...

He dispatches a globule of spit into the copper urn next to his right toe... and tries to get to his feet. The Goonda hurries forward to help him.

GHATAK

Doctor, do you like our music?

MAX

Well, I can't say I've developed a craving for it yet.

GHATAK

It's difficult to appreciate what we don't understand, isn't it? Let me put it another way: The world is a terrible place. Only the ruthless prevail. My son will make the arrangements with you.

One of the thugs helps the godfather outside, where, in the b.g., we see him listening to his music and pottering in his garden. As Max and Joan turn, Max finds himself face to face with Ashoka, who wears Max's necklace and chai. There's a long pause as the two of them take the other's measure.

MAX

(to Ashoka)

I like your taste in neckwear.

Joan puts a cautioning hand on Max's arm. Ashoka seems just the slight bit uneasy dealing with Max and so keeps trying to direct himself to Joan. He smokes a long Indian cigarette.

ASHOKA

The entire package we're proposing will cost you three thousand rupees a month.

Joan is taken aback by the sum.

JOAN

If we pay you that, we won't have any money for supplies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHOKA

I'm told you're very resourceful.

MAX

I think I see a solution. May I? What if we were to work out a profit-sharing arrangement? We give you a share of our net profit.

ASHOKA

How do you expect to make a profit off of lepers and the poor, Doctor?

MAX

Beats the hell outta me, asshole. But you've obviously found a way.

The question would seem to be whether Ashoka will have Max killed here or outside the house. His eyes on Max, Ashoka puts the cigarette out against the back of his hand... and smiles at Max.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Joan is furious.

JOAN

Have you gone right off your rocker!? These people don't have a sense of humor. Are you trying to get yourself killed?

MAX

I don't think so... but with me, any duplicity is possible.

He tickles her; she knocks his hands away; he tickles her again.

JOAN

Stop it, you... you... you nudnick!

He doesn't stop, and as she storms off down the street, he stays right on her, tickling away.

INT. METAL PIECEWORK SHOP - DAY

It's dark and claustrophobic. The air vibrates with the SQUEAL and CLATTER of METAL. About twenty kids sit in a line, back to back, manipulating a series of lethal and unprotected lathes and polishers. No one can hear his neighbor.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Hasari, with Shambu in the rickshaw, arrives to take the children home. As he looks inside, he notices...

## HASARI'S POV

Not far from Amrita sits a handsome boy (Subash). He catches Amrita's eyes. Amrita is sweetly embarrassed to find her father staring at her.

## ON HASARI

But he can't help but smile. At the same time he's reminded moment to moment of his various obligations.

## EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

The three kids in the rickshaw. An ambassador car swerves in front of Hasari, forcing him to jam to a stop, jolting the kids. The Goonda sits in the back seat with Ashoka, who carves his fingernails with a switchblade knife. He crooks a finger at Hasari. Hasari leans close and Ashoka takes him by the ear.

ASHOKA

Who gave you your rickshaw?

HASARI

The Godfather.

ASHOKA

Who provides the food you eat?

HASARI

The Godfather.

ASHOKA

Remember: Loyalty.

He gives Hasari's ear a last tug... and the car continues on, leaving Hasari. He looks at his children, ashamed to have been cowed. Manooj fixes his father with a hard look.

## EXT. JOAN'S ROOM - KIDS - ABOVE - NIGHT

Leaning over, listening, taking in the aroma of...

INT. JOAN'S ROOM

Max's cigar. He sits slightly apart from Joan, Sunil, Aloka, Ram, Hasari, Selima, Margareta, Surya, SALADDIN, ASHISH and Shanta, Aristotle John, MEHBOUB, Anouar, and Said.

Hasari is stretched out, Aloka rubbing his screaming legs. Throughout the following, their eyes meet and deflect...

SALADDIN

The Godfather is at least civilized. The son is vicious. Remember the last elections -- the Molotov cocktails, the blows with iron bars. They'll throw us out. We won't be able to find anyone else to rent to us. We'll just have to agree to pay what he wants.

MEHBOUB

Saladdin's right. Neither nature nor the people with the power have any conscience. We have to pay.

A sigh escapes Surya. He shakes his head. Eyes flick at him.

ASHISH

What do you say, Doctor Big Brother?

SUNIL

I think we must try to break the Godfather's hold on us.

This is startling and is met with a babble of cautious agreement and dispute.

SUNIL

Please, hear me out. But I think we have to be very cautious.

MAX

How the hell do you proceed with caution against these people? You can't. You have to risk everything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX (CONT'D)

You try to negotiate with these people, you make compromises with them, they'll eat you alive. Stand up against them now and they'll fold. I guarantee it. Underneath, they're cowards, they got no guts. We show them we're strong and they'll just move on to easier pickings.

ASHISH

We? You have an airplane ticket.

Still, he's clearly piqued a lot of support.

SUNIL

You know, Max, this is not American gangster television.

SALADDIN

Yes, if you're wrong, you don't have to be here.

MAX

I'm not wrong. You bow your heads, you plead with your Gods to do what you won't do yourselves. You put up with this nightmare as if there were no choice. I'm telling you, if you don't stand up to that little pimple face now, he'll own you for the rest of your lives.

Everyone stares at him. Many of them want to buy his commitment. There's another large sigh from Surya. Aloka and Hasari's eyes bang off of each other, she silently urging him to speak. He's deeply conflicted and deeply frightened.

ANOUAR

Even though I am invisible to some of you and I don't have a complete set of legs to stand on, I stand with the Doctor Big Brother. Maybe nature doesn't have a conscience or those with the power, but don't we?

Said, the giant mute, makes an unintelligible sound in his throat, but clearly he's agreeing with Anouar.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MARGARETA

I agree with Anouar and Max Daddah.  
I think it's worth the chance.

Silence... until Aloka and Hasari's meet again and, out of his terrible fear and conflict, he says very shyly...

HASARI

Is it permitted to speak?

There are quick nods around the room. With great difficulty, Hasari says his piece.

HASARI

I want my children to be educated and cared for; this is our home, we have never had such friends. But many of us owe a great debt to the Godfather. He is strong and could kill us... But we must choose. I trust my Big Brother. I say we must stand up.

There's still dissension, but somewhat more support. Said makes a fierce, unintelligible supportive sound. Surya sighs again. Eyes flick at the old man.

SUNIL

Sister Joan, what do you think, really?

JOAN

Well, I think Max has hit on the heart of what we're trying to build here: a self-help society. Each of us has to decide for himself. As for me, I suppose I think, really, that if the bastards are going to suck us dry, I'd like to get in a couple of good left-handers before I turn the other cheek.

SALLADIN

But who will rent to us!

Surya clucks his tongue and shakes his head; everyone assumes he is preparing a heated refutation of the resisters. His sighs, though, have been a building commitment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SURYA

I have a property I will rent you  
for two hundred rupees a month,  
and not a rupee less. As for  
protection... you are on your own.

Many of the faces are uncertain -- Hasari's notable among them.

MONTAGE - INT./EXT. COWSHEDS - DAY

- A) Two cows are shoed out of the ramshackle building as bustling activity on the new clinic begins. Cleaning the place. Debris being torn out, hurled into a pile in the street.
- B) Said, with the strength of three men, holds up a heavy beam while Hasari tries to secure it. Max, hot, smelly, and hating the place, stands in the middle of the room, wishing he were elsewhere. The beams starts to slip. Max leaps to Hasari's side.
- C) We see that Max and Hasari are thrown together again in some carpentering task in uneasy camaraderie. A finger pokes Max on the back. He turns to find Poomina holding out two cups of tea.
- D) The whole group shares a meal, prepared under the direction of Selima, though the lepers remain separate from the normals. Anouar leads the lepers in singing a song. Joan and Margareta pick it up, as do several other of the normals.
- E) Equipment from the old school/clinic being moved from the square down here.
- F) Max and Aloka do one of those dances where two people with arms loaded try to go around each other. Finally he says he'll stand still and she should go around him. They both laugh. Hasari watches.
- G) As Max puts medicine into a cabinet, Ram peeks in, nods his approval, "helpfully" passes Max something Max can reach just fine himself, shows Max an enormous hole in his shorts and hits Max for ten rupees.
- H) A small truck carrying a charitable organization's logo on the side is being unloaded of powdered milk and various other things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

I) UPSTAIRS AND STAIRWELL

Hasari and Max move the last cot upstairs and into place beside a window that will come into play at the end (It looks down on the street). Hasari nods to Max, indicating he should look.

J) THEIR POV

Everyone gathered as Shanta and Ashish put a banner above the door: "You are invited to the festival of this world and your life is blessed." The assemblage applauds and embraces.

K) UPSTAIRS

Hasari smiles at Max, brings his hands together, but doesn't embrace the doctor.

EXT. CLINIC - NIGHT

Everyone lingers, adults and children. Max plays his trumpet, accompanying Surya on his zither. Manooj hovers over Max.

MANOOJ

Doctor Big Brother, aren't you going to smoke your evening cigar?

Max points at his trumpet, continues playing.

MANOOJ

Please.

Max indicates his pocket. Manooj takes out a cigar and a clip. Clips the cigar, holds it out to Max, who indicates Manooj should light it, and keeps playing. Manooj looks at Hasari, who nods. Shambu holds a match to it. Everyone watches as if this were a major event. Manooj takes a puff, chokes, offers the cigar to Mehboub, who takes it, puffs, passes it. Everyone relaxes, enjoys the peacefulness of the smoking and the aroma wafting upward. Ram taps at Max's elbow.

RAM

It has come to me tonight to write a letter to my wife.

Ram produces a mangled one piece letter -- envelope.

RAM

Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He thrusts the paper at Max. Max takes a pen from his pocket.

MAX

Okay -- shott.

RAM

Yes -- what is the word -- that word -- when land is watered... with canals?

MAX

"Irrigation"?

RAM

Yes, yes, that word, I want that word in the letter.

Max looks at him, nods, waits. Ram stares at Max; waits.

MAX

Well?

RAM

Well?

MAX

What would you like to say to your wife?

RAM

I don't know, Max Daddah. If I knew what to say to my wife, I'd never have left home.

Everybody laughs, though Ram's remark hits Max on a deeper level. Manooj slides in beside him.

MANOOJ

Why do you have to go home, Doctor Babu?

ALOKA

Because he doesn't live here, Manooj. This is not his home.

A look between Max and Alok; Hasari's eyes flicking at both of them... as Alok's eyes come to Hasari. The cigar reaches Ram. As Max starts to write, Ram takes a large puff and blows a huge ring out of his mouth. We FOLLOW it.

ABOVE

A whole row of faces on rooftops enjoying the cigar.  
This as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GREEN ACRES - THROUGH RICKSHAW WHEELS - DAY

THROUGH the WHEELS we see Max come briskly out of the hotel carrying his doctor's bag. He's met by the sight of Hasari between the shafts of his rickshaw and Anouar and Meeta perched on the seat.

MAX

On no! Lepers! Lepers in my neighborhood!

ANOUAR

Sshh! Doctor Big Brother, please, we are pretending not to be lepers.

MAX

Oh, oh, I didn't get the concept -- of course, not lepers. I think you're going to fool a lot of people. I have only one question: Why are you here?

ANOUAR

We've come to take you to the dispensary in grand style on this special day, haven't we, Hasari?

HASARI

Yes.

MAX

Na, I'll just trot alongside Hasari.

HASARI

No, please, get in.

Max climbs into the rickshaw beside the two lepers and Hasari pulls away.

ANOUAR

Meeta's very excited by this ride through Calcutta. You see, she's never been sightseeing before.

Meeta, of course, is blind. Max, Hasari, Anouar laugh.

MAX

You're incorrigible, Anouar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANOUAR

Yes, yes, I know, thank you very much.

As the rickshaw disappears into the sea of people and vehicles, we hear Anouar and Max LAUGHING.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Margareta, Manooj, Shambu, Shoba, several other kids and, at the end of the line, Poomina, all carrying water on their heads toward the City of Joy. Suddenly, someone whispers to Poomina. One of Ashoka's thugs. She glances after Margareta and the other kids who are turning a corner and steps into:

ALLEYWAY

Where Ashoka waits.

ASHOKA

You taking that to the clinic?

(as she nods)

You like it there?

(as she nods)

And they love your smile, don't they?

She's fearful now and doesn't respond. He grabs her, the water pitcher crashes to the ground, he puts his knife into her mouth and lays her face open on both side with his knife.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - DAY

Aloka comes TOWARD us leading a group of lepers. And stops. Her hand goes to her mouth.

THEIR POV - CLINIC - FROM DISTANCE

Two hundred normal people lined up outside the gaily be-decked dispensary -- many mothers with small children in their arms. Shanta sees Aloka, gestures to indicate the incredible turn-out. The normals at the end of the line turn to look at the approaching LEPERS.

LEPER WOMAN

It is too beautiful to believe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As if indeed she were right, their path is suddenly cut off by the Goonda and a commando of thugs, armed with sticks and iron bars, backed up by a group carrying banners with slogans proclaiming in Hindi, Urdu, English: "We Don't Want Lepers Here!" There's a sudden uneasy silence. Behind the thugs a short distance is the policeman who harassed Max earlier and another cop. Joan hurries forward.

GOONDA

Good morning, Sister to the poor.

JOAN

Yes, Mr. Bhose?

GOONDA

Those people aren't coming into this neighborhood.

JOAN

They are going to be treated at the dispensary. You have no right to stop them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hasari arrives with Max, Anouar, and Meeta.

JOAN

Go ahead, Aloka, take them inside.

The Goonda puts his hand on Aloka. The policeman in the b.g. keep their distance.

JOAN

Take your hands off her, you waster!

Joan is seized by a sudden fury and grabs the Goonda. He grabs her much harder. Said growls and pushes forward. Several thugs turn, step in to neutralize him. Joan elbows the Goonda and tires to wrestle free of him. As a reflex he raises his hand. And as he does, it's seized.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max (with Hasari in the b.g., confused, conflicted). Max slings the Goonda against the side of a truck.

GOONDA

That was a mistake, Doctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

The mistake's yours, putz.

(to Aloka)

Get these people inside.

Aloka starts forward, leading the lepers. She's stopped by a sudden blow from the Goonda's stick across her shoulders, knocking her to the ground, bleeding from the neck.

Hasari bolts for his wife, gets caught up in the melee.

Max swings around on the Goonda and for the first time we realize how strong he is, and that he knows how to box. The Goonda goes down and violence erupts. Anouar is chopping at the legs of one of the thugs working on Said. The massive Said tears free and starts to beat the crap out of the two thugs holding him.

The noise brings everyone out of the square, those lined up at the clinic, the children from the school.

Sunil comes flying out of the clinic.

A stampede of those waiting outside the dispensary and those normally in the crowded alley ensues. Shanta runs inside for help. Shopkeepers barricade their shop windows.

One of the thugs pours gasoline over Anouar and lights a match. Hasari kneels beside Aloka when he sees the match ignite the tiny leper. Without thinking, Hasari hurls himself on top of Anouar, rolling him in the dirt and against his own body to put out the flames.

Joan shouts, demanding the violence stop. She's hit from behind; she decides talk isn't going to do it. She grabs a piece of lumber and starts to fight.

ANGLE ON DISPENSARY

An EXPLOSION in the doorway, scattering anyone who remains in the area of the dispensary doorway, badly wounding Mehboub.

More people with sticks. Hasari goes down under several bodies. Max reaches Aloka, helps her up, sends her toward the clinic. He tears an attacker off of Hasari and they fight back to back a moment. A SECOND EXPLOSION near them... and through the smoke Max sees...



## ANOTHER ANGLE

Ashoka astride his motorcycle, behind his dark glasses, with more thugs, these with Molotov cocktails and pick-axes, ready to raze the clinic and school and the surrounding neighborhood.

Sunil drags Mehboub inside.

People chant: "White Monkeys, go home! White Monkeys, go home! No lepers here! No lepers here!" The thugs cock their iron bars and bricks and Molotov cocktails. Max picks up an iron bar of his own and starts for Ashoka. Suddenly, there's a DETONATION followed by a BLAST of air so fierce, Max is thrown to the ground. A bottle of GASOLINE has EXPLODED just behind him. He's enveloped in smoke.

An assailant bears down on Joan with a cutlass. As the assailant is about to strike, Hasari seizes the attacker and hurls him backward. Ashish steps in and slashes the assailant with his own weapon, startling, even repelling Hasari.

From all over the lane, young fighters have come and joined the fray, not bothering to choose sides but merely enjoying the release. Hasari lunges for a woman under attack by a boy, arriving too late to stop the boy from plunging his knife into the woman's belly. Hasari fights his way to the woman, but she staggers into the mob.

Max knocks down one of the thugs only to have another hand grasp his shoulder. He turns, fist cocked to find Poomina, her hands holding her face together. Slowly, she takes hands away. The sides of her face have been laid open. Max sweeps her up in his arms, heads for the clinic.

MAX

Oh, little girl, little girl...

Joan is suddenly beside Ashoka.

JOAN

We'll pay! All right then, so by  
all means, protect us!

Ashoka raises a hand, The Goonda blows a whistle, and the fighting stops as suddenly as it began. The combatants are breathing heavily. There is silence but for the groans and cries of the wounded and grieving.

ASHOKA

In a world such as ours, everyone  
needs protection. For the fee we  
discussed, from this day forward,  
I can assure you nothing like this  
will happen again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat... Saladdin is at Joan's shoulder. Ashoka points a finger at Hasari.

ASHOKA

You. I warned you about the company you keep.

He REVS his MOTORCYCLE and SCREECHES away, leaving Hasari staring after him in his dust.

INT. COURTYARD - DAY

People peer in through every opening. Mehboub's chest is bandaged. Sunil squeezes through the packed courtyard and hallway, Ashish carrying a wounded woman behind him. Hasari steps into a doorway, us WITH him.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM - MAX, ALOKA, POOMINA

Max, blood crusted on her face, sutures Poomina's awful facial wound as Aloka prepares a compress.

ALOKA

Will she... Her face, will it...

MAX

If she's very careful and doesn't do anything to open the wound, the scarring will be minimal.

(to Poomina)

Do you understand? You can't... You have to stay here.

(to Joan)

You make her stay here.

JOAN

I'll try.

MAX

Don't goddamn try, Joan! Goddamn do it!

Poomina peers through her pain at Max, his hands putting her back together.

MAX

(a litany)

I hate this place, I hate this place, I hate this place.

Max looks at the doorway and he locks eyes with Hasari. Max breaks the contact. Hasari stares at him as we hear the godfather's MUSIC on the RADIO.

EXT. GODFATHER'S COURTYARD - HAND AND PENCIL - DAY

A hand tap, tap, taps against a ledger.

COURTYARD

Ashoka sits behind a little table, picking absently at his face. The Goonda is slouched near the table, smoking a cigarette and fiddling with a thin switch. (It's difficult for him to show Ashoka the respect his inherited position gives him.) The Goonda has a bruise under one eye from his altercation in the City of Joy yesterday. The air is filled with the MUFFLED SOUNDS OF the STREET. FROM here, we can see the evermore enfeebled godfather in his "throne room," wrapped in a cashmere, listening to the radio. Ashoka looks up, stares impassively at someone.

ASHOKA

Well. What have you got to say?

ANOTHER ANGLE

For the first time, we see who Ashoka's speaking to.

HASARI

I told them that your father provides us with a great deal and that --

Ashoka slams his hand on the register.

ASHOKA

From this minute, you are off the list! You will leave your rickshaw here... where it will be reserved for a man who deserves our trust.

He stands up. Hasari is near tears.

HASARI

Please, Babu, this is as if the ground has opened up. I have to speak to Mr. Ghatak!

Hasari starts for the house. The Goonda stops him and, quickly, has Hasari on his knees, his arm twisted painfully behind his back. Ashoka jumps at Hasari, grabs his ear.

ASHOKA

My father's ill! You are speaking to me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

I have a family!

ASHOKA

The decision is made. I have made it. Now get out before I have Mr. Bhose break your legs.

He gives Hasari's ear a vicious twist and slams his head against the table.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

The side gate opens and Hasari is shoved out. Stumbling, he runs to the fence, peers through. Two men are pulling his rickshaw into the courtyard. Hasari watches as a steel shutter is pulled down, cutting his livelihood from sight.

ANGLE THROUGH BAR - HASARI

Numb, compromised, defeated. Perhaps the low point of his life.

INT. CLINIC - JOAN'S ROOM - "RAFT OF MEDUSA" - NIGHT

Flickering candlelight illuminates the "Raft of Medusa." Max rails at Joan.

MAX

I just don't... I don't want to...  
I don't want to care! I don't want  
to care this much! I just don't  
want to be invested in you people.  
In people! I became a goddamn  
doctor because my goddamn father  
wanted me to be a goddamn doctor!  
because he was a goddamn doctor!  
He was the goddamn king of  
doctors! It's too goddamn hard!

Out of breath, out of words, Joan reaches out and takes Max to her, brings him beside her on the cot. Beneath the "Raft of Medusa," she sits with an arm around Max, as if he were her son.

JOAN

Not everyone's cut out for this.  
You did the best you could.  
Better than many. It's all right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

I didn't do the best I could! I did what I always do! I shot my big mouth off and did a half-assed job. And what I want to do now is I want to go back to America and make money and live a life without entanglements and demands and people hanging on me.

JOAN

(a beat)

You know, the fact is from the minute we're born we're shipwrecked. Some see that as a lifetime of drowning, of fear, others only to endure, but to triumph. It's all in the individual spirit, isn't it?

MAX

Got it: To run, to spectate, to commit.

(raises his hand)

Running spectator.

JOAN

Then, by all means, go home, Max, and go with my blessing and my eternal friendship.

The candlelight flickers against them as they sit side by side. Neither speaks.

EXT. RAM'S HUT - TEA SHOP - NIGHT

At the tea shop, a group relive the day's events. The children sleep. Aloka sits outside, worried about Hasari.

Max comes out, meets Aloka's eyes and looks away. She's heard the conversation.

Hasari, drunk, comes down the slope. Face to face with Max.

HASARI

They took away my rickshaw.

Aloka's hand flies to her mouth. Hasari peers at Max with his drunken gaze. It's a terrible moment for Max, but...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

So what do you want me to do about it -- get it back for you?

Max takes away a step. Stops.

MAX

I'm sorry. I'm going home. Because this isn't my fight. I got one person to look after -- me.

Hasari stares at Max. On the roof, the children listen. At the tea shop, the late-night talkers listen.

MAX

All right, I'm running out, okay? Because I'm a coward, this is me, this is what I do, I get in over my head, I let people down, I run.

HASARI

But I trusted you.

MAX

Well, that was your goddamn mistake!

Max walks away, leaving Hasari desolate. Aloka comes to him.

HASARI

I don't know how I'm going to pay the rent, how we're going to eat.

ALOKA

We have what is saved for Amrita's dowry.

The thought of using the dowry is yet another awful blow to Hasari's hopes.

HASARI

The children must leave the school; they'll have to work. And you will not have anything to do with the clinic or those people anymore.

Ram joins them.

RAM

What I earn is yours, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

You can't support all of us. You  
have a family in your village, too.

Hasari touches his friend and goes into:

INT. RAM'S HUT

Alone in his pain, he spots his tea caddy in which he  
planted his seeds over a month ago. He bends over to  
tenderly touch the growing shoot and water the earth.  
He looks up and the three children are staring at him.  
What will their father do now to keep them alive?

INT. BLOOD DISPENSARY - CLOSE ON HASARI'S ARM - DAY

The needle injected, Hasari's blood flowing into a  
bottle.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hasari seated on the stool, watching his blood leave his  
body, his face again broken out in perspiration.

HIS POV - RAFIK

Waiting.

BACK TO SCENE - HASARI

His face immobile, his thoughts distant. The Attendant  
starts to pull the needle out. Hasari stops his hand.

HASARI

Take more.

The Attendant shakes his head.

HASARI

Take more.

The Attendant looks at Rafik, who shrugs, nods... and  
allows the blood to flow on out of Hasari's body.

EXT. BLOOD BANK - DAY

Barely ambulatory, Hasari starts down the street, but has  
to stop, lean against a wall. Through his woozy haze, he  
thinks he sees an apparition.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

There, in the entrance to a building, is Gangooly. Seeing a potential victim, he swoops in.

GANGOOLY

Not well, brother?

HASARI

Still stealing from refugees?

Gangooly looks at Hasari, recognizes him, and gives him an amazing smile.

GANGOOLY

Well, yes, I remember you, of course -- hello! I am delighted to see you -- yes. And tell me immediately, please -- your little family, your beautiful children, everyone eats, yes. Come, have a cup of tea or a little something stronger, we must celebrate.

Gangooly starts to move, to position himself for a get-away. Hasari blocks his egress, unsmiling.

GANGOOLY

Ah, well, you're angry at me, yes, I wondered if that was still on your mind -- I am full of regret about that, yes, even a little tormented. What can I say? I have the spirit of an eagle trapped in the body of a crow.

HASARI

I'm touched.

GANGOOLY

My friend, I am lame and I am poor. Does that mean that I shouldn't survive? Huh? When a man is struggling in a rough sea, he clutches onto what he can or he drowns. You don't look so well.

HASARI

I lost my rickshaw.

Gangooly gives Hasari an appraising look for a moment, then...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

GANGOOLY

Ach! I have an offer. No, listen! Shiva be my witness, you must at least think about this. Please, I can help... Or my name is not Mr. Gangooly.

HASARI

Which, fortunately, it is.

EXT. STREET - MOVING SHOT - DAY

Gangooly guiding Hasari onward.

GANGOOLY

Remove the children from the school -- no, why? When you, the father, can make a small sacrifice. Nature has foreseen your plight. For she has given you two eyes, yes, and two kidneys. But. To live, you have need of one only. I have a friend who sold his kidney -- this one -- and now -- believe me, this is the truth -- he lives in a brick home... which he owns.

That smile.

EXT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE (MITRA & CO. EXPORTERS) - JUDAS DOOR - DAY

A forbidding face appears at the grill, stares out.

INT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE - DAY

Hasari and Gangooly enter. A repulsive smell almost makes Hasari gag. Gangooly takes Hasari's arm and steers him through the gloom. Hasari discovers the origin of the smell.

A line of skeletons arranged along the walls. Tables stacked with bones: skulls, spines, rib cages, hands and feet. Each skeleton sports a label with a price in U.S. dollars.

Crouched among the bones and packing crates are men working. Some smoke, some have masks over their faces. They scrape and clean and decorticate. They skillfully assemble their grisly creations, emotionless but like artists.

POV - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

THROUGH a dusty, glass, interior window, we see, almost in mime, the manager examining Hasari.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE

With a smile, the manager produces some papers. Hasari shakes his head, starts for the door. Gangooly stops him.

GANGOOLY

Of course, take some time, think about it. People all over the world, anxiously waiting, willing to pay. 15,000 rupees for a kidney. 25,000 for an eye.

Gangooly winks, peers at Hasari with a single eye, and smiles.

INT./EXT. TAXI - ROAD TO AIRPORT - DAY

Heat haze on the road. As we FOCUS, we FIND Max, Joan, Aloka, also with their thoughts. Joan gazes out the window of the taxi. Max looks at the back of Joan's head a moment, then looks at Aloka, who sits between them. She deflects his eyes forward.

JOAN

Hasari has forbid her to have anything more to do with us. He'd be very angry if he knew she was seeing you off.

Max looks at Joan. Looks out the window.

INT. AIRPORT - DEPARTURE AREA - WIDE SHOT - DAY

First we see joyous people greeting arriving passengers; parents greet a young man returning from college abroad. The way clears and we CLOSE IN ON Max, Joan, and Aloka, a tiny island in this sea of people at the moment of their parting. Max empties all the money out of his pockets.

MAX

This is for Poomina. When I get home...

He thrusts the money on Joan and Max offers his hand; she goes through the hand to embrace Max. Then Max and Aloka look at each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

                          ALOKA  
 You did good things.  
                           (chokes up, but  
                           manages)  
 Thank you for coming to our  
 country.

And now Max heads out the door.

INT. CAFETERIA - ALOKA AND JOAN - DAY

Sparsely populated. They sit in isolation at a table over a cup of tea.

                          JOAN  
 It's not like he's royalty or anything, so I'm not persuaded we have to wait for the plane to actually take off.

                          ALOKA  
 No. We should go.

Yet, they remain another moment... then get up. Joan puts her arm around Aloka and they turn to go. The looks on their faces suggest they've come face to face with something startling.

ANGLE ON DOOR

Max. Standing inside the departure doorway.

                          MAX  
 What were those three choices again?

Their faces. And his with just a wistful version of his old grin... and we --

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Hasari returns. Goes into Ram's hut.

INT. RAM'S HUT - DAY

He finds his family... and Max. The two men stare at each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

I need Aloka at the clinic.

(as Hasari stares)

All right, they, the patients,  
need her. She's a good nurse.

(as Hasari stares)

Come on, man, this is between you  
and me. Why take the kids out of  
school, why punish your wife?

Hasari holds his anger in; he moves to a mat and lies  
down, his back to Max. But Max doesn't go.

MAX

I have a little money, I can get  
it from the States...

HASARI

It's not a question of money.  
We'll survive on our own.

That's it. Hasari lies with his back to Max. After some  
moments of silence, Aloka indicates Max should go. And  
he does. After another moment...

ALOKA

Maybe he's right. The clinic is  
for everyone and if I am needed --

Hasari bolts up, a look of anger on his face we've never  
seen.

HASARI

No! I'm your husband and you'll  
do as I say! Unless, of course,  
you've become an American wife and  
then you'll do as you please!

HASARI

Stay away from them. They are not  
part of us. They will only be good  
to you as long as you please them.

The children, Aloka are frozen, she very close to tears.  
Hasari lies back down, again turns his back on them.

EXT. LEPER COLONY (DAWN) - DAY

The small colony alive; a line of patients outside a door.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Max unwraps a bandage from a leper's partial limb. Looks around for Aloka. She's not there. Said is acting as his nurse. Points at his instruments.

MAX

Hand me the scissors, please.

Helpfully Said hands him the tweezers.

MAX

Scissors, scissors.

He demonstrates. Said fumbles through the instruments, picking up the scissors by the ends.

MAX

Not that end -- No, that's fine,  
thanks, I've got it.

EXT. LEPER COLONY - DAY

Max comes out with his last patient. Anouar waits.

ANOUAR

Max Daddah, you are finished?

(Max nods)

Follow me.

Anouar takes off down the lane and disappears quickly into a little building, Max following.

INT. TANNERY - DAY

Max follows Anouar past bubbling cauldrons and heaps of animal skins. The place stinks fiercely. Anouar and Max exit into...

A SMALL YARD

Two young men (the two pullers Chomotkar and Ramatullah) ... and something covered with a tarp.

MAX

You didn't steal this.

RAMATULLAH

The police, Sahib, they stole it.  
We stole it from them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The pullers whip the tarp off. A battered rickshaw, the springs poking out of the seat, the broken wheels lying in the body, the finish scarred and gouged, one shaft broken.

MAX

How much?

EXT. SQUARE - DAY

Max comes into the square. Aloka and Selima are preparing meals. Manooj, Shambu, and three other boys playing. Ram is trying to jolly Hasari, who's deep in his own reverie. Max stands in front of Hasari.

MAX

I'd like to show you something.  
Just take a minute.

A beat as Hasari fixes Max with an empty stare and the family waits to see if Hasari will respond.

MAX

Go ahead. Go on.

EXT. COURTYARD AND STORAGE SHED - CLINIC

The sound of a PADLOCK being UNLOCKED. DARK SCREEN. Light flashes. Max and Hasari appear in the doorway. Surprised by the light, a few rats scurry off. Somewhere a dog BARKS. Slated, shafted light. He indicates a corner.

THE RICKSHAW

Piled up in its ruin.

MAX

I'm good with my hands. You're  
good with yours. What do you say?

Hasari looks at Max, part resentful, part touched.

HASARI

If I were to go on the street with  
this machine, I would end up in a  
gutter with my throat cut.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Well, it's yours if you want it. You know the license, the cops, all that can be fixed. You'll own this -- it'll have nothing to do with the Godfather.

HASARI

Doctor Daddah, I'm just a small man. Don't try to tempt me again with big thoughts.

Hasari starts to leave. Max blocks his way.

MAX

You didn't want me to quit. Well, I came back.

HASARI

But can you be trusted?

MAX

I hope so.

Hasari can see the hope and desire in Max's face. After a moment, Max steps aside. Hasari bends his head and makes off. Leaving Max and a small sigh of disappointment.

EXT. LATRINES - FOUNTAIN - ALOKA - DAY (DAWN)

She takes her morning absolutions, bathing in the fountain. The process is extremely sensual, though there is not even a glimpse of her nakedness as she moves her clothing around, cleansing this area, then that. She glances up to see...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max, in an Indian shirt, heading for the square; rather naturally, he brings his hands together in the Indian salutation. He carries several bottles of distilled water, a large value pack of bar soap, and a carton of medical supplies. As he passes, his eyes hook on Aloka's. He lifts a hand in greeting. After a moment, she ducks her head. He turns and continues on coming face to face with Ram, an enormous smile on his face. With him, Hasari. He glances at his wife in the water.

MAX

(to Hasari)  
Going to look for work?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When Hasari doesn't answer...

RAM

Yes, he is.

Ram has a small coughing fit.

MAX

Are you taking your medicine?

RAM

Yes, yes, but look at this.

He points at the wheel of his rickshaw; the rim is cracked. Scornfully, Hasari walks on. Max and Ram glance after him. Max digs out several rupees. Ram takes them and goes. Max looks after the two men as they disappear. When he turns...

ANOTHER ANGLE

...he finds himself face to face with Aloka. Without a word, they start walking side by side toward the square. It's several seconds before she says...

ALOKA

He's very proud.

They walk on in silence -- two friends, separated by a gulf.

EXT. DOCKS - FROM THE GATE - DAY

Men moving like ants into the bow of the ship. Hasari is locked out, turned away without work.

EXT. METRO CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A huge gouge in the black mud, sunlight streaming through steel girders across it. Hasari emerges from the ground, looking for someone. Stops him. The foreman shakes his head, no, before Hasari even has the chance to ask for work.

EXT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE - EXTREME CLOSEUP - HASARI'S FACE - DAY

Then we see he's standing outside Mitra & Co., staring at it, wondering if it's time to sell part of himself. No! We see on his face a look that tells us he will not be beaten.



## EXT. CLINIC - COURTYARD - DAY

The street children's school now takes up two rooms. Children peer out of one room now as, to the accompaniment of Surya's zither, twenty or so girls are doing some Indian classical dancing, under the eye of a young Indian teacher.

Across the way, in the other room, some children are translating Bengali words into English. A boy is writing on the board. It's Manooj. We see that Shambu is in the same class.

## INT. EXAMINING ROOM

FROM BEHIND, we watch Max take a wrapping off of Poomina's wound, Joan assisting him. Indeed, Ashoka extended Poomina's smile on either side of her mouth. The scars are healing as nicely as could be expected. Max did a fine job.

## MAX

You must have had a good doctor. Still no running, jumping, picking up anything heavy. And you stay here. You're going to help Sister Joan and you're going to school. Do you understand?

A beat, Poomina nods. But now a look of abject fear comes over her face.

The Goonda stands in the doorway. Max begins singing "Sweet Little Sixteen." The Goonda stares impassively at Max.

## THE GOONDA

Time to collect the rent, Sister.

## JOAN

Of course. Come with me, please.

Joan leaves, followed by The Goonda. Max works carefully at the fine line of scabbing on Poomina's scar... but then something takes his attention.

## ACROSS THE COURTYARD

Manooj, with a small tin of food, looks this way and that... and then sneaks into the shed.

## EXT. SHED - DAY

We hear a, TAP, TAP, TAP. The door is half open. The padlock is hanging on its chain. Max opens the door.

## INT. STORAGE ROOM

Startled, frightened, Hasari presses himself against the wall, as does Manooj. Hasari is wearing a wet dhoti, caught in the middle of straightening the wheel rim of the old rickshaw.

HASARI

Close the door!

Max is very surprised but, needless to say, pleased. He looks at the rickshaw, looks at Hasari.

HASARI

Close the door. The Godfather has more eyes than a pineapple.

Max quickly closes the door. The half light is broken by thin beams of light that dance with dust.

Hasari studies Max a moment, then moves to put the first wheel on. Instinctively, Manooj moves to his side, takes hold of the rickshaw so Hasari can slip the wheel on. Hasari nods and goes for the other wheel. Manooj moves around to the other side, hefts the carcass. Hasari slips on the second wheel. Hasari looks at Max. Max brings his hands together and starts to go.

HASARI

I was saying to Manooj that if a man bows down too many times, there will come a day when he will no longer be able to stand upright.

The two men look at each other... and then Hasari gets on with his work.

MAX

I promised Manooj and Shambu I'd take them to the movies. Is it all right?

HASARI

(a beat)

If a man makes a promise...

Max brings his hands together and starts for the door. Hasari picks up one of the worn seat boards.

## INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

We're TRACKING WITH a moving bag of peanuts behind a row of boy's heads. On the screen in front of them, a "medieval era" sword battle between the great Kumar Kapur and a legion of bad guys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We hear the sound of CRACKING NUTS as we MOVE FROM Manooj to three kids we've seen in the neighborhood (two boys Manooj's age and Shoba, who's Shambu's age) and then to Shambu, each kid dipping into the bag in his turn. Finally: Max's (and on the other side of him, Amrita and Poomina.) The bag arrives... empty.

MAX  
(whispering)  
Thanks, guys. Who wants to go for more peanuts?

No one. We're talking about rapt attention. We hear NUTS CRACKING. Max smiles.

EXT. STREET - NEAR CITY OF JOY - NIGHT

Max and the boys walking home after the movie, the boys dancing around each other, acting out the fight sequences, all of the sword-fighting against Max, who battles them all over the street, in and around cars, Poomina and Amrita looking on shyly, as El Max fights to save their honor.

MANOOJ  
I can't decide if I want to be Kumar Kapur or a doctor.

MAX  
Ha ha! You can be both! Manooj Pal, swashbuckling physician!

MANOOJ  
You're so much fun, El Max. I wish my daddy were as much fun as you.

Max stops the fight, takes Manooj by the shoulders.

MAX  
I wish my father loved me like your father loves you. Your dad's a very special man. And now, en garde!

As the battle continues, the bright beams of a truck come at them.

MAX  
Time out, men. Off the street till this truck passes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The kids move toward the wall of the building they're passing, but the truck seems to turn toward them, seeming not to intend to pass, but to hit them.

The look on Max's face lets us know he senses something terrible is in the offing here. He shouts for the kids to get out of the way, shoving the kids closest to him into a doorway. He turns to Shambu, who's behind him, calls to him.

But in a panic, Shambu doesn't move into the shelter of the building on his right... but tries to run across the street. Max leaps for the little boy too late... as the truck just misses Max and clips Shambu hard, sending the little boy flying.

EXT. SQUARE - NIGHT

Manooj runs ahead of everyone as he charges into Ram's hut, crying for his father. Behind Manooj come the others, Max carrying Shambu in his arms. Hasari and Aloka, Ram, Joan, others in the square hurtle out of their huts.

MAX

I can't do anything here. He's got a compound fracture, he hemorrhaging. We've got to get to a hospital -- now!

JOAN

You'll never get a taxi at this hour.

EXT STREET - HASARI'S FEET - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

He pounds along, the wheels wobbling and squeaking, urging people out of his way. Max runs alongside Hasari. Aloka sits on the seat with Shambu, whose quiet moaning fills her ears. Blood drips down the rickshaw.

EXT. PARK STREET - FROM THE RICKSHAW - DAY

Several taxis waiting for clients outside a row of restaurants. Hasari and Aloka watch as Max argues with the drivers. They won't take a bleeding passenger.

SAME STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The race to the hospital continues.

EXT. MEDWAR PINE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The arrive at the gates of the huge, Victorian hospital. People sleep outside the gates.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - SIDE ROOM - DAY

The wards are full, as are the corridors. Patients on beds and stretchers everywhere. Most have at least one member of their family to look over them. In a side room, Max is arguing with a porter who tells him he can't help him. Max slaps some rupees into the porter's hand, tells him to take him to the person in charge.

Shambu is fading. Aloka smooths the sweat from his brow, trying to keep Shambu alive by force of will and love. Then Max is back, standing over her with another man. It may take a moment before we recognize the ATTENDANT from the Blood Bank.

MAX

They'll admit him, but we have to pay for the blood. I gave him all I had. He wants more. Do you have anything?

ALOKA

Sister Joan gave me this.

Aloka holds out a fistful of rupees. The Attendant blows through his lips, indicating it's a paltry sum. Max grabs the money and shoves it at the Attendant.

MAX

We haven't got any more!

The Attendant doesn't move... until he sees Max is about to explode.

MAX

If this child dies while you stand here, I'll kill you.

The Attendant is smart enough not to push any further.

MAX

Now, I need an X-ray room and I need an O.R. nurse.

ATTENDANT

Not possible. You can't give care, you're an American. You must be an Indian doctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Then take me to one!

As Max takes flight with the Attendant, Aloka strokes Shambu and Hasari hovers. We CLOSE IN ON Shambu's inanimate face and HOLD a moment.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max hurtles down the corridor with a young INTERN in tow. Almost a kid, he's been up for days. But he's going to help.

INTERN

This way, please.

Max scoops Shambu up and rushes down the corridor behind the Intern, leaving Hasari and Aloka looking after him. His arm comes around her shoulders.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY (DAWN)

Hasari and Aloka wait. People are starting to move about.

HASARI

You're my wife, Aloka, you and my children are all my wealth. But if Max Daddah and Big Sister Joan have need of you, you may go to them.

Max comes out of the hospital. The two Pals stare at him.

MAX

We pinned his leg. Couple of months, he'll be better than ever. They want to keep him today. We're a good team. Gimme five.

He smiles, holds out a palm for them to slap. They look at the palm, unsure what this means. Yet, each takes Max's hand.

EXT. CLINIC - COURTYARD - DAY

The whole community is here, around the tree.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

I don't think it was an accident. I think they were aiming for Max. So, what we have to ask ourselves is whether his presence is endangering all of us.

ANOUAR

Even from my low vantage point, I know this: It's the son. He's mad.

HASARI

Max Daddah is our friend. If they're trying to harm him, then they're trying to harm all of us. We must stand by him as one.

INT. SHED - CLOSE ON TWO PAINTBRUSHES - NIGHT

dip into a little box of paints. The boys look on as the two men paint an intricate design on the shafts. Shambu sits in the rickshaw seat. He wears an ankle to hip cast. Manooj is spelling words and urging Shambu to follow suit. Aloka is putting out a tray of food. Ram, Ramatullah, and Chomotkar slip in, quickly close the door. The two pullers focus on the rickshaw, Ram on Max.

RAM

Doctor Daddah, please, very important, only one moment.

MAX

This is going to cost me every rupee I didn't make today.

Ram thrusts an envelope into Max's hand.

MAX

A letter from your wife.

Ram nods nervously. Max looks at the postmark as he slices it open with a finger.

MAX

This is postmarked six weeks ago.

RAM

So?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

So, what have you been doing --  
incubating it?

RAM

I was afraid.

Ram waits, his hands twisting each other.

MAX

'My dear husband...'

RAM

Oh that's very hopeful so far!

MAX

'Your words brought tears of joy  
to my arid eyes.'

RAM

Oh, I'm in love! My words  
brought tears to her arid eyes!  
(then fearful)  
What does that mean -- arid?

Manooj throws his hand up.

MANOOJ

I know! Dry.

MAX

Correct. Her eyes were dry, your  
letter irrigated them.

RAM

Aaah!

He snatches the letter, crushes it to his heart. Notices  
the finish work on the rickshaw.

CHOMOTKAR

This is a puka nasgar. What a  
curse that you can't use it.

HASARI

I'm going on the streets tomorrow.

This gets everyone's attention. The pullers shake their  
heads, they're worried for him.

MAX

Listen. I don't want you to think  
I'm crazy, but I don't think that  
truck was an accident.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MAX CONT'D)

I think Ashoka was after me. You can bet he'll be after you too.

HASARI

I'm going to speak to his father.

MAX

Can I go with you? I'll go with you. Can I go with you if I shut up?

A beat... and Hasari gives him a small nod.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Ghatak is literally carried out of the house by an orderly and placed into his car. There's a driver and there is the Goonda. They start down the street. We're WITH the car. Suddenly, the driver slams on the brakes and from:

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see Hasari and Max blocking the street with the new rickshaw. The Goonda jumps out of the car, comes threateningly at Hasari.

HASARI

Babu, please, I beg you, hear my words!

As the Goonda is about to land on Hasari we hear a feeble...

GHATAK

Wait.

The Goonda backs off. The Godfather waves Hasari and Max close. Hasari brings his gleaming rickshaw to the window of the car, Max at his shoulder.

HASARI

May I say first, Babu, I wish you long life and good health.

GHATAK

Acha! They take me now to the scientists. They stick needles in me, take pictures of my insides, study them, and then tell me what I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Godfather stares at Hasari, flicks his eyes at Max. Waits.

HASARI

When you gave me work, I swore I would be as your youngest brother. Your son thinks I have been disloyal. He took my rickshaw. With my friend, I have remade this one. I beg you to let me go again onto the streets. I have my family.

The old man looks at the rickshaw, at the obvious care that went into its renovation, at this unlikely team of refurbishers. He reaches a shaking hand out toward a shaft. Hasari brings it close. The old man rubs the shaft.

GHATAK

It is very beautiful.

HASARI

Thank you, Babu.

GHATAK

If I may say, it has an allure.

HASARI

An allure, Babu -- thank you.

The Godfather stares at Hasari, then at Max.

GHATAK

The world is chaos. We struggle to build something permanent, then our bodies betray us, our sons betray us.

(to Hasari now)

Yes, you may take your rickshaw out. If you can face up to my son.

The Goonda gets back into the car and the car pulls away and we are left with Hasari and Max as moment.

EXT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE (MITRA & CO) - DAY

Hasari enters.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

The manager stares at Hasari, as he consumes a pot of rice and vegetable curry. Gangooly hovers like a crow. Hasari stares at the contract before him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

If a man dies and he's not burned,  
what do you think becomes of his  
soul?

The manager turns his palms up, continues chewing.  
Hasari stares through the window at the row of skeletons.

HASARI

I must provide for my family.

GANGOOLY

Oh, it's a noble fate. If indeed  
your wheel ceases to turn, you will  
help educate somewhere in this  
great world a fine doctor.

Hasari bends to the contract and laboriously signs his  
name.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Hasari arrives to an outcry of anger. There are several  
dozen rickshaws. Among the passersby, we see umbrellas,  
as the people on the street try to combat the incredible  
heat.

HASARI

What's going on?

CHOMOTKAR

The Godfather ill! The son is  
raising the rent!

Ashoka is on his front steps with a loudspeaker before a  
growing crowd of pullers. He's backed up by the Goonda  
and a dozen of his thugs. The loudspeaker lifts  
Ashoka's voice above the anger.

ASHOKA

Do you know how much it costs to  
change the spoke in a wheel? Or  
how much baksheesh I have to pay  
the police?

Impulsively, Hasari moves forward. Cries from pullers:  
"Who will be the victims of this madness? You?" "Hell  
no!" "You don't need the six rupees each old crate  
brings you per day to fill your belly! For us, it means  
death!" The street is so packed with rickshaw and  
pullers now that cars can't get through. A chorus  
of HORNS HONK; drivers scream.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAMATULLAH

We haven't been breaking our backs between the shafts of our rickshaws in order to weep for you!

Hasari continues forward, his eyes on Ashoka.

CHOMOTKAR

The only thing that matters is the bundle of rupees we take to the munshi each month to feed and to answer the daily needs of our children!

RASSOUL steps up on a telagarhi with a loudspeaker.

RASSOUL

Listen to me! Listen now! Listen to me!

(when the pullers  
quiet)

Friends! I ask you to vote for an unlimited strike. Inkalabad zindabad! Long live the revolution! Rickshaw Workers Union zindabad!

A strike? No income at all? The slogan is taken up by a small percentage of the assemblage. Fear and doubt on many faces.

ASHOKA

That's what I thought. All right, get to work! Customers are waiting!

ON HASARI

Something detonates in him and he jumps onto the telagarhi and grabs the microphone from Ashoka. Police arrive in vans.

HASARI

Friends! The Godfather at least is a caring man! This one, though, the son --

A signal from Ashoka and one of the thugs knocks Hasari down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHOKA

We helped this man! We gave him a job, a place to live! This is how he shows his gratitude. Get on the streets now! Or turn in your machines!

Hasari gets up and tries to speak.

HASARI

Friends -- don't! If we stand --

He gets hit again. A number of the pullers come forward and a riot starts. The police move in, beat and arrest many of the demonstrators. Ramatullah and Chomotkar try to help Hasari, but they are descended on by cops who hurl them aside and beat Hasari senseless until the:

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BONSAI COURT - DAY

Birds flying below ceiling. The room has a barred cage running all around its edge; the cage is filled to near overflowing. Hasari stands before the JUDGE, his face covered with blood, his body a mass of aches and welts. At the back of the room, Max and Aloka; elsewhere, Ashoka, the Goonda, and several of his thugs.

HASARI

The life of a rickshaw puller is not one a man would choose if he had a choice. Our feet blister and burn up from the boiling asphalt, our noses burn from the fumes of countless motor cars and buses, our backs curve permanently from the loads we carry hour after hour, day after day. But I am proud to be one of the human horses who carry my countryman from place to place and I am thankful for the opportunity to make a living. But I will not keep silent anymore and I will not be cheated and threatened anymore. Life is hard enough. No more.

Ramatullah starts to applaud. Rassoul follows suit. The Judge bangs his gavel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE

Silence!

(when it's silent)

This man will be permitted to use his rickshaw without let or hindrance. And I will make a restraining order against Mr. Ghatak.

Cheers from the pullers. The Judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE

I haven't finished these proceedings. For his part in this disturbance, I fine the defendant 50 rupees.

HASARI

Fifty rupees, Your Honor?  
That's --

JUDGE

Pay at this time or spend seven days in jail!

Seven days in jail will cost him far more than fifty rupees. As he reaches into his pocket for his screw of money, a hand suddenly protrudes into the cage through the bars.

RAMATULLAH

Hasari!

And now another hand with several rupees reaches through.

RASSOUL

Hasari!

Now a dozen voices call his name and a dozen hands reach through the bars with rupees clutched in their fists and press the money into Hasari's hands. The Judge, Max and Aloka, and certainly Ashoka watch this in amazement. The Judge bangs his gavel.

Max turns, shoots a little finger gun and winks at Ashoka.

CLOSE ON ASHOKA

ON his face, we see pure hatred for these two men.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - DAY

Amrita, Manooj, and Shambu. With them, Subash flirting with Amrita, incurring the wrath and admiration of her brothers, causing her to flush.

THUNDER sounds. They all look up. Rain starts to fall. People run outside of workshops and huts, crying, "The rains, the rains." Suddenly, a THUNDERCLAP shakes the earth and rain begins to bombard them. The rain falls, the WIND HOWLS, and people in the lane are dancing, praising the beginning of the monsoon season. Men tear off their shirts, women rush out fully clothed, singing. Swarms of naked children run about. The kids run toward the clinic/school.

EXT. CLINIC COURTYARD - DAY

Hasari is locking his rickshaw into the shed. Staff and several patients come out of the examining rooms -- Joan, Aloka, Sunil, Anouar, Poomina. Margareta and her students, a new teacher, Bandona, her students come out of the classrooms... They're all swept up in dancing, Joan's metal cross jumping about as if it were beating out time.

From his balcony, Max emerges with his trumpet and plays the first bars of "Singin' In the Rain." Everyone looks his way; he begins to hum and sing as he jumps over the balcony to the ground and takes off in a wild, improvised, but damn good version of Gene Kelly's dance in the rain, bringing Anouar on his cart in as his dancing partner. Everyone in the courtyard crowds around them, laughing and encouraging the dancer/singers on. The number builds to an extraordinary climax with Max sliding through mud to an exquisite finish at Joan's feet. There's thunderous applause.

INT. CLINIC - NIGHT

Rain. Max, The Pals, Ram, Joan, Anouar, Meeta and the Baby, Poomina, Saladdin, Mehboub, Ashish, Shanta, Margareta, Bandona, and the other members of the committee sharing a meal.

HASARI

Really -- a boyfriend, Amrita?

AMRITA

No!

Amrita whacks Manooj.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANOOJ

Yes, she does. His name is Subash Ghosh. His father owns the workshop.

HASARI

Is there someone you care about?

The look in Amrita's eyes tells us indeed there is. Hasari smiles at Amrita and then at Aloka.

HASARI

Then I must speak to his father and I must complete your dowry.

Amrita squeezes close to her mother. This is serious and joyous.

HASARI

You will make people sigh at how beautiful you are. And I shall drop tears of joy.

RAM

At my wedding I became so frightened, my father gave me things to drink to calm me down. I went out to piss and fell asleep under the village tree. When I woke I thought it was the tree I'd married. I still love that tree.

The laugh. But Hasari's attention is on his daughter. He reaches a loving hand to her.

INT. GREEN ACRES - MAX'S BATHROOM - TUB FAUCET - NIGHT

A rag has been wrapped around the faucet and water runs slowly and silently down into the nearly filled tub. The scene is illuminated dimly by a flashlight with fingers over the beam.

ON MAX

He sleeps. Suddenly he's grabbed, his eyes spring open in fear. Hands yank him out of bed, slam him up against the wall, then hurtle him across the room and into:

BATHROOM

Where the tub has been filled. His head is slammed down underwater and he's held there struggling.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

His head is yanked up and through bleary eyes he sees a knife at his throat and the Hewbrew letter chai dangling from the knife - wielder's neck, illuminated by a flashlight.

ASHOKA

Go home, Doctor.

Before he can respond, he's slammed down into the tub of water again and held there until it seems his lungs will explode. Then he's dumped backward, gasping for breath.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SQUARE - NIGHT

Max on the run through the rain, carrying his belongings.

CLINIC

He pounds through the puddles, past a sleepy old watchman, and through the gate.

INT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

He bangs on Joan's door. She opens the door in her Indian pajamas. One look at him...

JOAN

What's happened?

MAX

Ashoka ordered me to go home.  
Well, I've come home.

A beat. She steps aside, he steps in, and the door closes him safely inside.

EXT. PARK CIRCUS - DAY

The rickshaw station. The rain pours down. People clambor for rickshaws. The line moves forward as fast as the pullers can take on passengers. Hasari, Ram, Ramatullah, Chomotkar look at the stalled buses, the streetcars, the taxis, the private cars.

CHOMOTKAR

What a joy it is to survey this disaster! We will all make a fortune!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

The monsoon is the great Durga's  
gift to the human horse!

Hasari glances at Ram, who isn't a part of the joking.

HASARI

What's the matter?

RAM

I'm wet and I'm cold. Your  
daughter is getting married. Time  
is passing. I want to go home to  
my wife.

Chomotkar touches Hasari, nods across the street. There,  
we see the Goonda and two thugs.

RAMATULLAH

Hasari!

It's Hasari's turn. He can't stay to talk with Ram now.  
He has to go.

MARWARI #4

How much to the market?

HASARI

Eight rupees.

MARWARI #4

What! I won't pay it!

HASARI

Who else needs a ride? I am  
available at a price!

Several others crowd and shove toward him.

MARWARI #4

No! Take me -- I'll pay, let's  
go!

HASARI

The price just went up! Ten  
rupees! In advance.

The Marwari hesitates only as long as it takes him to dig  
in his soaking wet pants and to slap the bills into  
Hasari's hand and climb aboard. Hasari sets out with  
great difficulty -- and greater determination -- through  
the floodwaters, flicking his eyes at the Goonda as he  
goes.

## EXT. WEDDING SHOP - DAY

Water pours down. FROM HERE we see Hasari inside, putting money down in front of the shop owner and then hustling back into the rain and taking up his shafts. We WATCH the owner look after him with a touch of disdain as he comes into the window and takes down the beautiful green and gold sari.

## EXT. CLINIC - GUTTERS - NIGHT

Water pouring from above; the gutters overflow with refuse. We PAN UP to the clinic.

## INT. CLINIC COURTYARD

Water pouring off the room into the courtyard. Hasari locks his rickshaw into the shed and turns out, attention to Max, Aloka, Joan, Poomina, Margareta, Mehboub, several others trying to patch leaking roof tiles and keep supplies high and dry.

## INT. CLINIC ROOM

Hasari enters. Max looks at him, doesn't like the look of the obviously exhausted man.

HASARI

How can I help?

EXT. CIRCULAR ROAD - FISTFUL OF RUPEES (RUNNING MONTAGE)  
- DAY

An Anglo couple jockeying for preference. Hasari selects them from a crowd. This is the beginning of RUNNING MONTAGE.

- A) He runs AT us from different directions with riders -- pushing, pushing -- the water getting higher, our FOCUS VARIOUSLY IN NORMAL AND SLOW MOTION ON his feet, his tensed muscles; for a moment, we hear only his breathing, the sound of his feet on the pavement, the RAIN AGAINST the CANOPY of the rickshaw.
- B) He drags up with an entire, well-to-do family of six, packed into the rickshaw.
- C) He stumbles to a stop outside the emergency entrance to the hospital, carrying a mother and her sick child.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- D) An upper-crust Brahmin dressed in crisp white, an umbrella protecting him against the harsh elements.
- E) Four uniformed school children huddled, laughing together under the rickshaw's canopy.

INT. LEPER COLONY - MEETA'S ROOM - DAY

The rain continues, as does the work in the clinic. Max is working on Anouar, Aloka assisting. Meeta and the baby (now 6 months old) in the b.g.

ANOUAR

I think Aloka would have a gentler touch than you, Max Daddah. Maybe she should perform this surgery on her own.

Aloka ducks her eyes, embarrassed.

MAX

Last time you told me you were more than two women could manage.

ANOUAR

Yes, but given a choice between one and none, I will accept the one.

Max lifts Anouar off the table and places him on his cart.

MAX

Okay, you ought to be good for another few days. Send in the next patient.

Anouar scoots out. Max and Aloka both turn to the instruments lying on the table and knock a pair of scissors to the floor. Simultaneously, they bend to pick it up and bang heads.

LOW ANGLE

The first impulse of each is to touch the other's head. But almost simultaneously, their hands freeze short of touching. Several months ago, Max might have tried to kiss her; now, though, there is friendship and affection. FROM here, we see a pair of bare feet. We COME WITH Max and Aloka UP.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Shoba, a deeply concerned look on his face. Slowly his hands come forward, holding his parrot, with a broken wing. He puts the parrot on the examining table.

## INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Hasari seals a letter and a money order into an envelope, seals, and puts it into the slot. He is clearly exhausted. Outside he can see two Sikh merchants at his rickshaw, looking around in the rain for him. He hurries toward the door.

HASARI

Here! I'm here!

## INT. SUBASH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aloka and three women huddled beside a window, Amrita half hidden behind them. We PAN ACROSS a staircase TO another window, THROUGH which we see a doorway. In the doorway, Subash turns to smile a shy smile at Amrita; he shrugs. PAST him now, we see Hasari facing SUBASH'S FATHER and three UNCLES, surly men with hair matted with mustard oil. The Ghoshes are all seated on low chairs and stools. Hasari is standing.

## INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Ghosh and the Uncles stare at Hasari, who stands politely and hopefully before them.

MR. GHOSH (SUBASH'S FATHER)

You're a rickshaw puller, am I correct?

HASARI

Yes, that's correct.

He looks at his brothers, on either side. They look at him.

MR. GHOSH

And I a partner in the workshop where your daughter is employed. Were you aware of that?

HASARI

Yes, yes, I was, my daughter told me, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. GHOSH

Yes, well then, perhaps you can tell me why I would permit my son to marry your daughter.

Mr. Ghosh raises his palms. It's all over as far as he's concerned.

UNCLE #1

Just a moment, please.

The brothers huddle, whisper just loudly enough for Hasari to hear.

UNCLE #1

Are you saying there's no way you'd consider this match?

Mr. Ghosh shakes his head, shrugs his palms.

UNCLE #1

Perhaps some inducement? Would that be of any help?

MR. GHOSH

(considering this)

What could he possibly offer?

UNCLE #1

Probably nothing. But perhaps, in fairness, we should find out.

Mr. Ghosh shrugs. The huddle breaks. All five men stare at Hasari.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Hasari, mouth half open, flecked with spume, pulls a huge Marwari. He's pouring sweat, his eyes are blood-shot. He has never looked more like a horse.

They arrive at a cross street. The Marwari gets down and pays Hasari. Hasari slumps against the rickshaw and, while he awaits his next rider, counts his crumpled pile of notes and coins.

EXT. CLINIC - DAY

Max, Joan, Aristotle John, Margareta, Mehboub, perhaps a dozen others trying to raise the level of the low wall at the entrance with bricks. The wall caves in. Other people in the neighborhood rush to rebuild it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX  
 (shouting to the  
 others)  
 My dear friends, it's just  
 occurred to me what inspired me  
 to stay here.

Thinking he's about to make some cogent remark about  
 this unified effort...

MARGARETA  
 What's that, Doctor Big Brother?

MAX  
 The opportunity to acquire  
 waterfront property at a reasonable  
 price.

Joan begins to laugh; the others don't get it, query  
 each other as to what's funny about that.

JOAN  
 I hate to admit it, junior, but  
 that was actually quite witty.

She whacks him on the shoulder with a wet, muddy paw.

JOAN  
 Ut-nobody laugh; it's a natural  
 disaster -- we have guests.

Everyone turns to...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Manubai and Ravi, their car parked at the entryway to  
 the clinic. A big puddle separates them.

MAX  
 I'd throw my cape down, but I'm  
 all out of dry capes.

He sloshes through the water to them, wiping his muddy  
 hands on his pants. He offers a semi-clean hand to  
 each in turn.

MAX  
 It's very nice to see you. Both  
 of you.

RAVI  
 We heard you were still here.  
 Vijay wanted to send some things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She indicates the car, which is packed with dry food and such.

MAX

Shall we unload the car?

RAVI

Yes, yes, by all means.

Max whistles, indicates the car. People come and start unloading it, Ravi showing the way, leaving Max and Manubai alone a moment, Aloka flicking her eyes at the two of them.

MANUBAI

I'm surprised. I really didn't think you'd stick it out.

MAX

People grow older; sometimes they even grow up.

He smiles a sweet smile at her. She smiles back at him.

EXT. MUD BANK - WIDE SHOT - DAY

Anouar on Said's shoulders. The big mute runs, followed by Hasari and a phalanx of rickshaw pullers: Chomotkar, Rassoul, Ramatullah-Joan, Aloka, Manooj, several others in the rickshaws, Max and Sunil, each with his doctor bag -- all of them running in silhouette along the embankment in the rain.

ARISTOTLE JOHN

Where can we take them? We can't take them back to the clinic. No one will put up with it.

SALADDIN

We can't let them drown, can we? Eh, Max Daddah?

EXT. LEPER COLONY - DAY

The leper colony is submerged. The parents have put their children on the roofs and the relatively able-bodied lepers are piling charpoys one on top of another to protect the sick and the infirm. Meeta and her baby are on a roof. The mud bank is too slippery to get the rickshaws down and back up.

HASARI

It's too deep!

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

A beat.

EXT. LEPER COLONY - PAIR MUDDY, PARTIAL HANDS - SAME DAY - SOME MINUTES LATER

A leper clings to a rope as several of the human horses pull him and others up the mud bank.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max, Hasari, Rassoul, and Chomotkar up to their necks in water; Hasari and Rassoul have a door on their shoulders; on top of the door, a sick leper woman. Max is lifting one child, then another onto the door. The two pullers make their way slowly toward the mud bank.

ON MUD BANK

Aloka, Joan, helping lepers into rickshaw.

MEETA

Anouar!

ANOUAR

Max Daddah!

ON MEETA AND BABY

The hut starts to come apart under them. Max and Chomotkar quickly move to the house with another door.

MAX

We're here! We're here!

Chomotkar holds the door up as Meeta holds the baby out in the direction of Max's voice. Max catches the baby as the house slips down, then grabs Meeta, who clings to him.

EXT. MUD BANK - DAY

Hasari pulling the lead rickshaw. Anouar on Max's shoulders, the two of them leading a terrible ensemble version of "Hound Dog." An air of festivity among lepers and rescuers.

They come to a bridge made of two planks over rushing water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Several rickshaws go across but as Max and Anouar start over, suddenly the ground gives way beneath Max's feet. Anouar falls free; someone grabs him; but a blackish stream rushes into Max's mouth and in an instant he's swept beneath the gurgling filth. The density of the filth makes his effort to surface ineffective. It looks for all the world like he's going to drown.

ON OTHERS

Max has disappeared. Instinctively, Hasari dives into the maelstrom. He, too, disappears. After some moments, Hasari surfaces, spitting the filth out of his mouth. He dives again, comes up somewhere else. Dives a third time. Is down. Is down. Is down. Then suddenly bursts out of the filth, dragging the unconscious form of Max Loeb into the air. More people have gathered. Cries of:

OTHERS

It's the doctor. Save Doctor Big  
Brother!

Aloka passes a baby to someone and helps Hasari push Max up onto the bank. But now Hasari doesn't know what to do and turns to his wife.

Aloka quickly clears Max's mouth and begins to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. She blows, she breathes; she blows, she breathes. People crowd in. Aloka blows, she breathes. It seems, though, that by his stillness and by the looks on people's faces that Max is dead. Yet, more determined still, Aloka goes on; blows, breathes...

CLOSE ON ALOKA AND MAX

And now Max gags, his body erupts in spasm, and he explodes a stream of black liquid out of his lungs. Aloka supports his forehead as Max retches again and then comes still. A beat.

INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

We PAN ACROSS members of our group -- lepers and normals -- passing bowls of rice in a simple communal meal, singing a religious song quietly. On the floor in the b.g., Anouar is writing something on a slightly damp stretch of cloth with a child's crayon. Said takes the cloth and tacks it to the wall. What Anouar has written is this, "All that is not given is lost." Everyone in the room stares at the words.

INT. CLINIC - MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Max opens his eyes to find Joan, Hasari, Aloka, and the children keeping a vigil.

MAX

Oh, Jesus, the guy went to sleep  
when he was supposed to be working?  
I gotta get up --

He tries to get up. Joan pushes him back down.

JOAN

Sshh, sshh, sshh! No heroics,  
junior. Lay back. You're all  
right.

MAX

All right.  
(a distant laugh)  
Yeah, I am, I'm all right.

He is a little delirious. The boys come close, kneel at his side, instinctively reach out to him.

MAX

Want you guys to know something.  
About me. Wanted to be the  
world's greatest heart surgeon,  
just one better than my dad. Just  
one. First time I'm the lead  
surgeon on a case, the main guy, I  
choke. Froze. The chief made me  
step aside. My teacher. Had to  
take over for me. Went into  
radiology. Photography. Had to  
have somethin' easy. No pressure.  
Wasn't too nuts about myself.  
Quit.

Hasari reaches out and touches Max, telling him with a touch that it's all right. He stares up through bleary eyes at all of them with utterly open love. Amrita holds out a small gift to him: It's a banana leaf, holding a small scoop of rice and surrounded by little decorative leaves.

MAX

You people... You...  
(a beat)  
I love you guys.

EXT. RAM'S HUT - TWO MONTHS LATER - DAY

A group gathered on a dry, sunny afternoon, peering into the hut. We FOCUS on the growing flower in the tea caddy in the window and then go THROUGH the window into:

INT. PALS' ROOM - DAY

Hasari, Max (dressed quite India), the local Hara Giri, Mr. Ghosh and the four Ghosh uncles crammed into the tiny room. Members of our group jam the doorway, spectating. The air is close.

HASARI

I can offer no more than I've offered! No more! All right, I'll add two dhotis, two vests, and a punjabi. But that's all.

Mr. Ghosh lights up a bidi, looks at his brothers, wrinkles his brows at Hasari.

MR. GHOSH

That's all? Did he say that's all?

HASARI

My daughter's qualities will make up for what is lacking.

SUBASH'S FATHER

Well, it won't do! I am firm in requiring for my exceptional son the bicycle, 1000 repees... and one ounce of gold.

HASARI

That's robbery! The child of a rajah might be worth that, and I'm not even sure of that! Impossible!

We linger on Shambu a moment.

INT. ST. PIUS SCHOOL - HEADMISTRESSES' OFFICE - DAY

Sister Cecilia, in full habit, looks over a sheaf of test scores.

Then she peers up at...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Manooj, seated between Hasari and Max.

SISTER CECILIA

Well, indeed I think Sister Joan is right -- we've got a prospect here. We'll start you off with a few classes; if that works out, we'll make a proper student of you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari can't believe his ears. Manooj sits frozen. Max grins.

EXT. NARROW LANE - NEAR CITY OF JOY - DAY

Amrita, Subash, and Shambu heading home from the workshop. Shambu's cast is gone. Subash flirts with Amrita. They see Hasari, Max, and Manooj coming toward them. Manooj runs to them, shouting that he's going to the school; Amrita, Subash, Shambu congratulate him...

HASARI AND MAX

Suddenly the rickshaw wheels jam. They turn to find two men, one of whom has slammed a stick into Hasari's spokes. Retribution, it would seem, has arrived.

The kids stop, huddle instinctively together in fear.

Our policeman disappears into a doorway as shutters close up and down this little street. There are thugs at both ends. No one else is visible on the street.

The two men stare at Hasari a moment, smiling. Then one gets into the rickshaw, crosses his legs as if he might want transport. But now he whips out a narrow bladed knife, and still staring at Hasari, begins to slice up the newly covered seats of the rickshaw. Max looks around, trying to cool things.

MAX

Hey, come on, don't do this.

VOICE

Well, what's the problem here?

They turn, Ashoka. Behind him, the Goonda.

ASHOKA

You've become very brave of late, haven't you?

MAX

Don't do this.

ASHOKA

Oh, I do what I please. You see, my father's dead, I'm in charge now. So you will get off my streets, you will leave my country, and that clinic and school will close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Why?

ASHOKA

My father was weak. He let you and your European friend give these little people ideas. It's over.

MAX

You can't do this!

He takes no more than a step at Ashoka, a hand coming up, when he's hit hard from behind. Goes to his knees.

MAX

Jesus Christ.

His hand comes away from the back of his head with blood. He tries to rise and is hit again.

HASARI

(to the kids)

Get back! Stay back!

ASHOKA

No, no, come forward. Come.

Ashoka glides toward the petrified Amrita. The Goonda remains unmoving, watchful. Ashoka puts out his hand with its rings, and strokes Amrita's cheek.

ASHOKA

What a little woman already, hey?

HASARI

Please, don't touch her, Babu.

ASHOKA

What did you say?

HASARI

I said, Please, don't touch her.

Hasari glances over his shoulder, his eyes bouncing off the Goonda's impassive face. Now, the knife comes out of Ashoka's pocket, snaps open, glints in the light.

ASHOKA

She's going to give someone a lot of enjoyment. Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a moment of unbearable tension as everyone, including the Goonda, realizes this man is out of control.

ASHOKA  
 (to the Goonda)  
 He said 'please' didn't he?  
 'Please, don't touch her?'

The Goonda stares at Ashoka... And now Ashoka reaches out and we FOLLOW CLOSE on his hand as it moves ever so slowly through space to settle on Amrita's breast.

And now Hasari explodes. He hits Ashoka. A hard punch to the chest. Ashoka stumbles and falls to one knee.

The Two Thugs make a move to come to his rescue... but a curious thing stops them: the Goonda's arm, outstretched across their path, his eyes alerting them not to proceed. Max lurches to his feet unsteadily.

ASHOKA  
 Bhose, help me!

Hasari unloads a punch into Ashoka's face; Ashoka's nose pours blood; he starts to whimper. He clutches Hasari hard to him. Holds him. Hasari struggles, slams his palm into Ashoka's chin, sending Ashoka to the ground, sending the knife skidding across the ground. Hasari grabs the knife, straddles Ashoka, about to kill. But he can't do it.

HASARI  
 Life is hard enough. No more.  
 Leave us alone.

Hasari backs off, leans against a wall, stares down at Ashoka, his hands in tight against his body.

Manooj and Shambu stare at their father in awe.

Shambu sees something on the ground where the first blow was delivered to Ashoka's chest. Everyone has moved slightly to one side. He bends and closes his fist around something.

The Goonda steps between Ashoka and Max and Hasari.

GOONDA  
 You won't be bothered again.

A look from the Goonda and the Thugs vanish, leaving Ashoka cowering in a doorway on his knees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shutters start to open, people begin to appear again in doorways and windows.

Fearing for his life, Ashoka suddenly bolts.

Max is fixed on Hasari. He lets up a scream of exultation, his hand going out for a "five" from Hasari. The kids charge toward Hasari.

Then everyone freezes.

Hasari lists to his right side and blood starts to pour from the knife wound in his abdomen under his pressing arm.

EXT. MAX'S ROOM - UPSTAIRS BALCONY - NIGHT

From here we can see Hasari on Max's cot under "The Raft of the Medusa" in the little room overlooking the street. Out here, the two doctors are alone.

MAX

Why don't you go on home. I'll stay with him.

Sunil nods. Max grips Sunil's hand strongly. Sunil goes down the steps. Max moves to Hasari's bedside. He watches Hasari breathing. He looks up at "The Raft of the Medusa."

INT. MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT (SEVERAL HOURS LATER)

A thin stream of dawn light coming through the half-closed shutters.

FROM HERE - THE BALCONY

Through the open door, we can just see Joan, praying quietly. Close around her, Anouar, Meeta, Surya, Margareta, Poomina...

THE ROOM

Beneath "The Raft of the Medusa," Hasari Pal speaks to his family and Max, Aloka sitting close to the bed, the Children on the bed beside their father, and Max standing close.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

HASARI

A man's journey to the end of his obligations is a very long road. And you have to remember that you can never give up. We pray that life will bless us, that we will be kings, with possessions and money that we can rule over all around us. But it's a mist; the only thing that makes it possible to endure life is our love, one for the other.

A beat, the family and Max tightly bound together. And now we hear the dim sounds of RICKSHAW BELLS.

HASARI

I was dreaming the sound of rickshaw bells, and now I hear them.

Max opens the windows. Manooj helps his father sit up.

COURTYARD - THEIR POV

Outside, there are rickshaw pullers filling the courtyard and spilling out into the street. When the window opens, all the Pullers start ringing their bells and the room is full of their music.

HASARI

Are they here for me?

Unquestionably, they are.

HASARI

A city so big. When we arrived, we didn't have a place to live, a friend.

He smiles.

OUTSIDE

The many hands with their ringing bells.

CLOSE ON WINDOW

The tiny figure of Shambu joins Max in the window. Max bends close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHAMBU  
 (whispering)  
 Is my father going to die?

Max makes the same sound he made in the ashram at the beginning of the movie, though this sound of dismissal different.

MAX  
 Get serious.

INT. RAM'S HUT - HASARI'S FACE - DAY

Hasari mirrors Max's expression of dismissal!

HASARI  
 Get serious! I've agreed to the bicycle, I've agreed to the 1000 rupees! I can go no further. I have nothing more to give!

OUTSIDE THE HUT

Everyone crowded around the door. From within, we DIMLY HEAR the negotiations continue. Max approaches from the clinic. Shambu slips down the steps from above as...

MAX  
 How's it going?

RAM  
 All that stands between them now is the ounce of gold. Max Daddah, Joan Di -- is she a good reader?

MAX  
 What do you mean?

RAM  
 She read this letter to me.  
 ( he shows Max)  
 But I think she must have read it wrong. She said my wife writes that irrigation has come to our village.

MAX  
 But that's great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

But it means I should go home to my wife.

MAX

I thought that's why we've been writing all these letters.

RAM

Yes, of course, I love her from here, yes; but, what if I go home and find I don't love her from there.

Shambu takes him by the hand and tugs him quickly to the edge of the tea shop. The little boy indicates Max should bend close. Max leans down.

SHAMBU

Daddy needs gold, right?

Max nods. And Shambu brings his fist up from under the table.

CLOSE ON SHAMBU'S HAND

He opens his hand to disclose what he scooped off the ground during the fight: Max's necklace and Hebrew letter.

SHAMBU

Do you think this is pretend gold or real?

MAX AND SHAMBU

Max stares at the little boy's hopeful face.

INT. PAL'S ROOM - FLOWER

We see the fully blossomed flower in the tea caddy and then Hasari's fingers come INTO THE FRAME. He carefully snips the flower free of its stalk.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Amrita is dressed in the beautiful sari her father bought her. Father and daughter are alone. He hands her the flower and adjusts her veil tenderly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

You never did belong to me. You were only lent to me by God until you marry and continue the wheel of life.

Amrita stares at her loving father and slowly her arms come up around his neck, the flower against his curved back. Tears fill Hasari's eyes, but a smile graces his lips.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY - EARLY EVENING

The procession to the courtyard begins when a BRASS BAND strikes up, accompanied by singing and shouting. Tiny lights have been strung over the street. We see Max and Manubai. Margareta and a group of children. Joan with Poomina. Anour, Meeta, Said. Everyone who's become part of the family is present.

EXT. CLINIC COURTYARD - DAY (DUSK)

The procession arrives and enters. Smoke from the chul-las. Light from a half dozen lamps.

Subash and his procession make their entrance. A ritual veil is fixed to Subash's face. The Pujari waves for Hasari to come to his place. Hasari turns to Max.

HASARI

I would be pleased if you would stand with me in the place of honor to the right of my daughter.

Deeply touched, Max nods... and the two men step forward... as Subash is motioned forward by the Pujari. Subash sits beside Amrita.

THE CEREMONY

A flame. The shyness of bride and groom as the ceremony proceeds with the winding of the red thread. Hasari looks on with unspeakable pride, Max beside him. We see the faces of all our family again: Aloka, Manooj and Shambu, Joan, Poomina, Surya, Selima, Aristotle John, etc.

## THE WHEEL

Turning. As Amrita and Subash, joined by the thread, circle the flame... as we PULL BACK AND UP. Now we see the clinic and school and the surrounding area, the alleys full of people and activity. As we continue to PULL BACK, we see the entirety of the City of Joy and then beyond -- Calcutta, its teeming streets -- life continuing as the sun sets against an infinite sky and we ROLL END CREDITS.

FADE OUT.

THE END