

©Copyright

Dilara Elbir

Sordid Details (and tender echoes)

Dilara Elbir / Ingrid Ege Apaydın

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

University of Washington
2021

Committee:
David Nikki Crouse
Rae Paris

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:
English: Creative Writing

University of Washington

Abstract

Sordid Details (and tender echoes)

Dilara Elbir

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Rae Paris
Department of English

Consisting of two short stories, a personal essay, a piece of film criticism and a feature length script, “Sordid Details (and tender echoes)” explores themes of memory, queer time and mental illness through repetition, obsession and sex.

Acknowledgements

This manuscript has been written all around the world including the lands of Duwamish and Coast Salish Peoples, lands of Wampanoag and Nipmuc Peoples and my homeland Anatolia. I thank them for allowing me to create on their land.

Thanks

to my wife Sinem Apaydın.
to my mother Arzu and my grandmother Nurten.

table of content

Short Stories	1
Lovers.	1
daily logs of failure.	4
Essays	7
The Poet Acts, or On Writing Sadness	7
Queer vs Lesbian: On “Portrait of a Lady on Fire”	15
Script	18
Sordid Details	18

Short Stories

Lovers.

[Outside. Sunny. The lovers are having a picnic. We only see lover one, directly from across where they are sitting on a bench. They are drinking. Lover one speaks. They sip their drink and smoke in between sentences.]

“I had a very vivid dream last night, about my social studies teacher from second school. She was my first woman crush, actually my first crush ever. She had shoulder length blondish brown hair. She was very beautiful, to me I mean. I guess to others she was general looking. I was a teachers pet, especially for her. I always got full marks and sat at the front. I remember in 7th grade I think, one of the boys in my class found a sheet with every teacher’s phone number on it’ and 10-15 of us met that Saturday at a park to picnic and prank call all of them. I secretly wrote down her number on a piece of paper and called her several times later from a blocked number. Not to talk, I just wanted to hear her voice. It felt exciting to hear her outside of school, know she exists in a whole different world outside the classroom. Of course back then I didn’t know how creepy and invasive that was, I was just a child, it felt mischievous. A week later the principal announced that they knew a student stole the phone numbers and they were gonna punish the person responsible. No one snitched and we threw the sheet away. I kept her number but never called again. I felt bad that I made her upset but keeping it felt too tempting.

I lied to her and said I hoped to study history like her, which made her happy but our literature teacher who believed I had to study literature was very unhappy. I hated history actually but I had the talent of focusing on things that had my obsession and you know crush is just a nicer

word for obsession. It's strange how as children we knew we could never be with our adult crushes and try anyway. That's why I never call kids with crushes adorable, because I know that as silly as it is, it's their whole world in that moment. I think if I was a boy, she might@ve thought that I had a crush on her and tread lightly around my silly little children emotions but to her I was a girl and that was impossible. My faked love for history made her believe I looked up to her.

She once said something very strange about me to my mom at a teacher parents conference. She said I was one of her favourite students but sometimes she felt strange after talking with me. She said that sometimes I talked to her as if she had done something bad to me and talk back to her. She said that, "strangely" she found herself almost fighting back at me. But she said it never lasted longer than a day or two and then I'd just be completely normal like nothing happened. I remember my mom saying it was the strangest thing a teacher ever said to her.

I remember some of those little fights. Once, in 7th or 8th grade, freshly 14 and full of hormones I said something really mean to her. I don't remember what I said, all I remember is that it was bad and I can still feel the shame of it. She refused to talk to me for a whole week. Finally one lunch break when she was walking around the grounds I walked with her for five minutes without talking that she turned to me and said "What you said made me so sad that I cried when I went home that day. Please don't ever do that again.". God I wish I could remember what I said. It must've been pretty bad to make her cry. See that's another talent I have, finding the meanest thing to say.

I don't know why but since I was very little I've been very good at getting people to tell me things. Well maybe not "tell me things" because I never asked anything, they'd just tell me. I don't know if it's a charm or some Machivellian gene I possess but people find it easy to tell me things and unfortunately when in anger, I find it very easy to hurt them with what they've given me. I always regret it after though that's not really an excuse. So I have no doubt that I said something really hurtful but I'd still like to remember what it was. It's like a part of her life she trusted me with and I forgot it.

This one time at school I couldn't breathe. They thought I was having an asthma attack but I think it was a panic attack. I don't know who it was that sat me down. My eyes were closed but I could hear someone running to me and then holding my hand. She told me to open my eyes and I did. She was kneeling next to me and I could see my tiny face reflected in her eyes, all red and crying. The principal took me to the hospital in his car and she came with us, holding my hand the whole ride. I wish I savoured that moment but all I could think about was trying not to faint. After we were finished at the hospital and I was better, she walked me home and hugged me as she said "Goodbye.". It's one of the most sensual things that ever happened to me.

[Silence]

It's so strange the more I tell the more I remember. I don't even know we ended up here.

[Lover two speaks]

"You said you had a vivid dream."

daily logs of failure.

She had an obsessive personality since childhood, a keenness to theatrics. Some days she woke up and spent all day thinking of a woman she was once in love with from afar, or a friend who wronged her. She'd spend hours, days sometimes, thinking about them. Most times she'd not go beyond thinking, maybe look them up on social media. And on some rare occasions she'd shoot them an email with an excuse only to be angered by an unenthusiastic reply, or no reply at all. She knew it was childish to be angry at people whom she no longer -sometimes never- had a relationship with. She thought that maybe the anger was for herself, for being stuck in memories that no one but her cared for, or even remembered. There was a time when she took pride in her ability to remember anyone and anything till it hit her that all her memories were tainted by her inclination to put more meaning into every mundane aspect of her life.

By now she had come to terms with her habits and accepted that she'd rather live a dramatization of her life and be angry at everyone else for not caring about her as much as she did for them than to live a life of middles where emotions were only acceptable if they were expressed with same passion as reading a grocery shopping list. None of them would ever know what it felt like to wake up from a dream in love with someone else they haven't seen in years, even only for a night. She only wished she could take it further, make them part of her stories but no matter how much she changed them and turned them into characters only she could recognise, she could never get rid of the fear that everyone would be able to see their fictionalised lives as clear as day. The imagined shame of being found out was too much to bear for her. She'd return to those stories weeks later, only to give up reading after a paragraph from embarrassment and burn the pages before throwing them out. Some risks were not worth it. If only she could write anything else.

She carried a notebook around in the hope that she might write a little, maybe a diary or on the nature she saw on her little daily walks, but rarely did. The notebook was plain, a light brown cover with nothing on it, with off white, almost a pale yellow, pages. When she bought it, 5 for 10\$, she thought their plainness made them fancier. They made her look like she didn't need fancy ornaments or flower designs on cover with rose gold spiral and a special attachable pen. A 27\$ notebook that forced you to write just because you paid too much for it. No, it wouldn't do. It had to be her words that hold the weight. They weren't written yet, but she knew once they were, they'd be beautiful. She believed in it.

Carrying around large novels though, that she no longer believed in. After carrying "A Little Life" around for two months and getting more neck pain from carrying it than reading it, she gave up. She now preferred a small short story collection and a thin book of poetry for her bag. It was much easier to read one poem in those short moments with nothing to do, a story or two on the commute. Still, it felt a bit like cheating. Though she read every poem once or twice, even thrice, sometimes she still didn't fully understand what she had just read. It made her feel bad that she was not as well read as she would've hoped. She tried looking up some of the words, but if she didn't write down their meaning, she would forget them by the next time she read the same words. And her pride would simply not allow to write dictionary descriptions on her books like some college student, even though she was a college student just a year ago.

It often felt like she was much older, not in a "mature for her age" or "ahead of her peers" kind of way which was good, but more like it was over for her, like she had passed a threshold and somehow, everyone else younger were doing much better things than she did in their age while her peers had somehow avoided the now desperate situation she found herself in. Everytime she read about someone from her college getting published at 19, winning awards at

20, graduating with flying colors at 21, she felt a piece of her once ambitious self getting buried deeper. The life of a sad writer that she once glorified was no longer attractive once she realised that those writers had indeed spent sad lives even their art could not heal, and there was in fact nothing attractive about being good writer, something that she wasn't even sure if she was, if its fruits only blossomed on your grave. And on top of that, it seemed no longer possible to live a bohemian life where you worked at a bookshop during your days and wrote deep into the night only to sleep when your hand could no longer hold the pen. How was it so much harder to be Someone now when everything was so much more easier? In her more desperate moments she came face to face with the truth; she was never meant for anything special, and sooner she accepted that she was just like everyone else, the sooner she could move on with her life, and maybe then, and only after then she could learn the glorious lives within the mundane.

Essays

The Poet Acts, or On Writing Sadness

“It is possible to die. Laura thinks, suddenly, of how she—how anyone—can make a choice like that. It is a reckless, vertiginous thought, slightly disembodied—it announces itself inside her head, faintly but distinctly, like a voice crackling from a distant radio station. She could decide to die. It is an abstract, shimmering notion, not particularly morbid. Hotel rooms are where people do things like that, aren’t they? It’s possible—perhaps even likely—that someone has ended his or her life right here, in this room, on this bed. Someone said, Enough, no more; someone looked for the last time at these white walls, this smooth white ceiling. By going to a hotel, she sees, you leave the particulars of your own life and enter a neutral zone, a clean white room, where dying does not seem quite so strange.”

The Hours, Michael Cunningham

Here is how it goes. It happens when I settle in bed to go to sleep and falling asleep has always been a hard task for me. It can take as little as half an hour and as long as till the morning for sleep to come to me. That waiting period is what I think of as a dangerous time. It usually starts as small as thinking of all the things I should do tomorrow, or should’ve done last week. The stress of thinking about that earns me easily another half an hour period. Then the frustration begins, mostly with myself. *Why didn’t I do that thing that I was supposed to do? Why did I keep procrastinating? Why am I like this?* And moves on to self hate. *Why am I so lazy, so irresponsible? Why am I not better at this? Why am I not doing better? Will I ever be better?* And this is when the danger starts. It can easily end here in a crying to sleep situation but crying has been coming to me harder and harder as the years passed. Or it can end in deciding to change myself. Some radical changes that go from *Yes I will wash my face every night* to *Never eating pizza again* to *I will do everything in time*. And that’s good to a point, but I never do all those things. I do half of them, and half assing that half. The final way it can go is further, to more

hate, to more frustration, to more hours. “Always the hours.” And after ten years of having similar versions of this, I now know when I’m going that way. The only problem is I am yet to learn how to stop it.

It always gets colder when my mind starts to go that way. This is when I crave a cigarette. When I light a candle because the room lights will be too much but I am now too awake to try to sleep. This is when my mind says *What if you just died?* and I listen to it, because I must and I don’t know how to think the other way. This is where the shaking of my body is at its minimum and I think it’s due to the cold. I furiously smoke my e-cigarette, because I gave up the real one. At this point sometimes I do the smart thing and decide to watch a film, usually one that I have seen before, either something like “The Hours” that’ll make me so sad that I will cry enough to forget anything else, or something like “Mamma Mia” where the joy on screen will distract me enough for one night. But if I am particularly tired, and the laptop is too far away and I have to plug it to the charger and everything just requires too much energy and *How could I leave the bed when it’s so cold?* then I must go down further, because I don’t know what else to do and I still haven’t learned what else to do and how much cognitive behavior therapy it takes until telling yourself that you’re enough and what you’re doing is enough and “There is so much a person can do till they take to the streets and start screaming”. I do wish I had a beer, or something stronger that is too much for me to drink slowly. Or some weed. I’m sure there is something out there that helps and tells me to look the other way. The statistics of how many people with major depression disorder end up killing themselves plays in my mind constantly. I think I engraved it in my mind years ago and I don’t know how to take it out and it comes back

to haunt me in the middle of the night. It's not a huge number. But it's a number that's threatened me before.

At this point it's hard to remember what happens in my mind after it happens. I always tell myself when it's happening that I should write it down but I am in no situation to write it at that moment. And when I try later it never comes to me. But I know this is where I think of the previous times, four so far, and the experiences are so blurry I have no idea if they actually happened that way or if I made them up to be that way. The most detailed memory I have of any of them is the second time. When it was after they washed my stomach and did everything they had to do and my best friend Ahmet came into the emergency room and I was fine until that moment when I realised he buttoned his shirt wrong and I broke down in tears because I never saw him button his shirt wrong. He was always so put together and checked himself in the mirror more than I ever did. It was me, my doing that made him this, made him button his shirt wrong.

At this point the shaking is unbearably strong and I can't even make myself believe that it's due to the cold. At this point I thought about what pills I have in my possession that could make me go the easiest way possible because I hate pain. And at this point I considered if I have any razor I could take apart and use to cut myself a bit to release some tension and finally cry a bit enough to forget about going all the way. At this point there are three ways to go. A) I try to kill myself. B) I cut myself. C) I force myself to not do anything, just sit and wait in bed, just cry until it's enough, until I somehow fall asleep, to wake up next morning exhausted.

I wake up exhausted in both B and C. I don't know if it's the shaking or because I was too tense the night before but my whole body hurts. It feels like I was at the gym for five hours, not that I'd ever willingly go to the gym. Waking up the day after is either really early, too early to do anything or too late in the afternoon. My body aches and it takes me some time to figure out why when I first wake up.

I feel like people don't talk enough about what wanting to kill yourself can do to your body, and to your mind too of course. It's one thing to think and try to do it. That's a completely different experience. That comes with, in my case, damaging your liver, scars on your body and most importantly, time to heal from it all. Because people know and they let you do your thing until you smile and act "normal", act "yourself", the self they know as you. But it's another thing to think about it, think about it so strongly to the point of planning and wake up knowing the next day that the previous night you went to bed wishing you did not wake up. It's as if your body knows you considered destroying it and is punishing you. Your mind had experienced all the ways you planned it. Because sometimes the mind cannot tell apart, at least mine can't, if it really happened or if you just imagined it all. The thought of how much you hated yourself, to the point of despising your existence, looms over you, sometimes for days. It has become such an integral part of my life, the wish to kill myself that is, that sometimes I forget how big of a deal it is, the wish to not exist.

Sometimes I write, very quickly, after these episodes. They are nothing more than diary entries and they are all scribbles because I write them in candle light like some dramatic 19th century lady who haunts a mansion or whatever. Days later when I decide to sit down and turn my pain into "profit" that is writing, I reread the diaries to lead me somewhere. In the last ten

years or so that I've been suffering, I've never written anything that says anything more that couldn't have been explained by saying "I am very sad."

For the longest time I couldn't figure out how to write about that sadness. Everything I write about my depression sounds the same as everyone else's sadness, because at the end of the day there is nothing special about being sad. Sadness, as an emotion by itself, is useless for anyone but the person experiencing it. It is the way people write about it that makes it special, romantic even. Good writing of sadness is what makes teenage girls sit by the window and watch the rain as they scribble a Virginia Woolf quote on their wall. Like I did back in the day.

There is also fear, which I guess is something every other writer experiences, I sure hope they do. Fear that my sadness will be scrutinized, or that my mother will read it. I don't know what's worse, no one caring enough to read or people reading and knowing my sadness. Or worse, acknowledging my sadness.

But despite all that I came here, to do an MFA so that I could learn how to write about my sadness. So I could turn it into profit. Not a financial profit, obviously, but something that I could show to myself and say "Look, your sadness is useful for something!". Or maybe financial profit too, you never know.

In my experience, everytime I read something that touches on something I've been through (mental illness, rape, suicide, take your pick) some cunt -and here I use cunt as a gender neutral insult- tells me afterwards that I'm brave and everytime it happens I want to punch the person. They touch my arm, or shoulder, usually without my permission, and give me *the eyes*, you know *the eyes* if you ever told someone something sad. *The eyes*, genuine or not, drive me as mad as "brave". I don't know what the fuck I'm brave for. Am I brave for getting raped? Am I brave for wanting to kill myself? Am I brave for still being here despite all that? I know that

when the time comes and I finally fucking finally die, hopefully by my own hands cause otherwise would be too comical, some cunt is gonna whisper “She was so brave.” at my funeral and I will jump out of my grave to punch them in the face and scream “How is this for brave you little piece of shit?!”

I know they mean well, everyone means well, but just for once I’d like someone to go “Dude that is fucked up shit, let’s get a beer!” and be done with it. I am yet to find someone who does that but I’m on the lookout, send your applications for an uncaring friend to me with at least two recommendations.

So anyways, I came here, to the great University of Washington’s, according to some online ranking of MFA programs, not so great creative writing program. I believed that what my procrastinating, lazy, useless self needed was some writer, some real writers, to inspire me and hit me over the head again and again until I wrote something that said more than “I am very sad.”. They’d teach me how my not grand vocabulary in English was actually a plus, that I could say more in less words, and other beautiful things I made myself believe on the ten hour plane from Istanbul to Boston and then the five hour plane to Seattle. I stepped foot on the beautiful campus that looked like something out of a wet dream that only my academically ambitious self would have. It was like that scene from a film I now cannot remember where students sit on the green Oxford grass and discuss Anna Karenina. Hell yeah, I wanted to discuss Anna Karenina with some people on this green grass. Obviously I have done none of that. First because it turns out American students do not read Russian literature. Second because there is no amount of great writers or great teachers, the two are different things as I learnt here, that can fix whatever is wrong with my brain. They can leave comments in the margins and fix my grammar mistakes on google docs, but they cannot make me write what I am not able to write. Turns out only I can

make myself write and so far I've been doing a pretty lousy job, and I'm graduating in three months. Fuck writing, I don't even remember reading anything that made me inspire to write. Everything I wrote and read has been in an effort to meet a deadline, to please someone, to do what I'm supposed to do and not even in a good "profitable" way. When I go back and read what I wrote in the last two years, I have no memory of writing half of them. Best thing I read in last two years was listening to Lana Del Rey's "Norman fucking Rockwell" album. Where is the Pulitzer for "Your head in your hands / As you color me blue"?

And it is influrating. Not the MFA which is under no obligation to deliver my delusions about what an MFA would be like (and I must write this to please our MFA overlords). But writing. Because then I think what's the purpose of all this sadness. If I was given the great capacity of being sad at a tiniest comment that had no intention to be hurtful, of hating my existence so much that I have to see a doctor once a month to keep my brain chemicals balanced enough to not think of killing myself but still trying to kill myself, then why can't I write something that says more than "I am very sad.". Why get raped by one of your best friends if you can't write "Sullen Girl"? Why be depressed if you can't write "Mrs Dalloway"? Which is of course, an awful way to think of things.

My psychiatrist, who is one of the loveliest women I have ever met, said "I believe every person is on a spectrum of sensitivity." when I asked her what she would diagnose me with. "Some people don't care what anyone says or does to them, the spectrum begins with them. And then there are people who are so open and sensitive to their surroundings that it can become overwhelming. They care so much that it is unbearable. The world can be a very cruel place, and unfortunately, it is most cruel to people who are sensitive. I think you are just very sensitive, but if anyone asks, say you have major depression disorder and PTSD."

Now I could never write something as haunting and hilarious as that. Christine the Psychiatrist is a better writer than I am.

My therapist on the other hand has no talent for words, but she comforts me nonetheless.

So the thing is, I believe I learnt the best thing from this MFA which is that you can be surrounded by the best people (teachers or writers) and still the only person who can make you write is yourself. I am not sure of what to do with this lesson yet. But I'm sure that the lesson will reveal its secrets on my journey to write something that cannot be said with "I am very sad.". And when I finally do that, I will go to a hotel room, peacefully, and kill myself. Every word is a march to where I always want to go, where I have always been meant to go, to death!

Queer vs Lesbian: On “Portrait of a Lady on Fire”

In spring of 2019, acclaimed director Céline Sciamma’s latest film *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and attracted widespread coverage from journalists attending it and other film festivals throughout the year. The film is about two lesbians who fall in love with each other shortly after meeting. Despite the film being a lesbian love story, you won’t find many publications using the word “lesbian” in their reviews. The term used instead in almost every review is “queer” which does not mean the same thing. In fact, it has a very different – and controversial – historical background when compared to “lesbian”.

The word “queer” was once used as an insult. Today it is an umbrella term used to define anyone not heterosexual and/or not cisgender (people whose gender identity matches their assigned birth sex). It is a new label for people who want to be labelless to the point that sometimes it’s used by people who are heterosexual and cisgender but date people who are not.

Queer has many benefits for those who are unsure about how to define their gender or sexuality, as it also does for those who simply don’t want to. It creates an environment to have more open discussions about gender and sexuality, and includes those who don’t feel like they fit into any or all labels under LGBT.

Yet the use for queer for everyone who falls under non-heterosexual and non-cisgender comes with problems. The word “queer” was used in early 16th century to mean “strange or unusual”, and became a derogatory term in 19th century to insult non-het and non-cisgender individuals. Later, queer was reclaimed by some LGBT-identifying individuals to define themselves.

To this day, many LGBT individuals perceive “queer” as an insult, especially when it is used by a heterosexual or cisgender person. Which brings us to using queer to describe films in

criticism – a problem that’s recently become more visible due to reviews and talk around Céline Sciamma’s latest film, *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*.

The film’s two main characters are women who fall in love with each other and are never shown displaying attraction to men. Yet, as mentioned above, it is almost impossible to find a single review that uses the word “lesbian” to describe it. Headline after headline describes *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* as “a queer film”, and the majority of these reviews are written by male critics who identify as heterosexual and cisgender.

It’s important to know that, though I don’t believe a film must be directed by a lesbian to deserve being described as a lesbian film, director Céline Sciamma and co-lead Adèle Haenel identify as lesbians. Then why, despite all that, it is almost impossible to find a review that describes *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* as “a lesbian film”?

Unfortunately, *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* is not the only film that suffers from this problem. Todd Haynes’ *Carol* and Sebastián Lelio’s *Disobedience* are recent examples of lesbian films that have been described with either umbrella terms like “queer” or “gay”, or my personal favourite “a forbidden romance”. Again, many reviews I’ve read do not feature the word lesbian even once. There are those who argue that *Carol* is not purely a lesbian film because characters had unhappy and unsatisfactory relationships with men despite the characters being defined as lesbians by the book’s author Patricia Highsmith, who also identified as a lesbian. Assuming that lesbian characters might be also attracted to men because they are shown in a relationship with men completely ignores how the heteronormative expectation enforced by society has pushed women into living heterosexual lives to fit in.

An argument could be made that the purpose behind using queer to describe lesbian films might heighten inclusivity and stand against another important problem which is bisexual

erasure. But why is that inclusivity only practised when it comes to lesbian films? Why must a character have to verbally state that they identify as a lesbian in the film so they do not have to face with questions about their sexual attraction?

If we're going to assume there is a chance of attraction to the opposite gender in seemingly lesbian characters, why not carry that same assumption for seemingly heterosexual characters? If they don't explicitly state that they are straight, couldn't that mean they experience same-sex attraction? Shouldn't we also assume any character who seems heterosexual but does not say they identify as heterosexual out loud in a film might be attracted to same gender, and therefore must be defined as queer?

The answer should be that, yes, the same standards should apply. One of the main reasons why questions regarding sexuality are mostly pointed towards LGBT films is that heterosexuality is seen as the norm and is thus not questioned. Our first job as critics when it comes to talking about sexuality in film is to understand and then deconstruct compulsory heterosexuality. When it comes to questioning sexuality of lesbian characters and using queer instead of lesbian to define films, we arrive at the problem of fetishising the word lesbian.

Throughout history, lesbians have faced a particular kind of homophobia where they were only accepted when they are dehumanised and fetishised for sexual desire of men. This has resulted in "lesbian" being perceived as a dirty word, a porn category, and it has pushed many lesbians into to avoid describing themselves as a lesbian and using umbrella terms for their sexuality from the fear of being fetishised.

Lesbian activists have and are still doing significant work to help lesbians feel more comfortable using the term to define themselves and to fight against the fetishisation of the word. We as critics should make it part of our job to contribute to that work by using the word lesbian

in our writing whenever possible. Referring to lesbian characters as lesbian rather than queer in our writing will contribute to normalising the word and open up space for more conversations about lesbian representation in film. This will hopefully mean more opportunities for lesbian filmmakers to claim their space in LGBT+ cinema.

(This piece was published on “Little White Lies” on September 17th 2019)

Script

Sordid Details

A guide on how to read this script can be found [here](#).

"And oh, poor Atlas
The world's a beast of a burden
You've been holding on a long time
And all this longing
And the ships are left to rust
That's what the water gave us
So lay me down
Let the only sound
Be the overflow"
What The Water Gave Me
by Florence Welch

ACT ONE: DENIZ
THE MEET CUTE

1 EXT. TURKEY. ISTANBUL. 2013 - AFTERNOON

1

DENIZ, in her early twenties, the main character, exits a dorm building.

It's sunny outside. Deniz is wearing comfortable clothes, a biking short and a short sleeved button up. They carry a single sheet of paper in one hand, keys and a pack of Camels in the other hand. As they exit, two freshmen with luggage approach the building's entrance. Deniz holds the door open as students pass. Deniz takes a cigarette out of their pack and asks a nearby student for a lighter. They light their cigarette and start walking down the hill to their destination. We follow them from behind.

The hills are filled with buildings that house students. As Deniz walks, some of the campus and the city's view below the hills are revealed. It's a relaxed walk, they know the place like the palm of their hand.

2 INT. CAMPUS BUILDING. - CONTINUOUS

2

They take the shortcut, through the bridge that connects economics building to once-was-engineering-but-is-now-humanities building. There aren't anyone on the bridge, and the buildings are mostly empty. Deniz enjoys, always did, the empty state of campus before everyone arrives. They feel almost sentimental to walk these corridors one last time before graduation, but don't dwell on it.

They pass the bridge, walk down the a corridor and pass through the arch that once had a door and a sign that said "Welcome to umanities" with a missing H.

Deniz stops in front of a slightly ajar door that reads "Main Office". They knock and go in.

3 INT. OFFICE. - CONTINUOUS

3

Inside, a middle aged woman with a welcoming aura sits behind a cluttered table.

DENIZ
 (joyful)
 Ben geldimmmmm!
 I'm here!

SECRETARY

(smiling)

Hoş geldin! Erkencisin bakıyorum.
Welcome! You are early!

Deniz sits down on one of the chairs with a sigh.

DENİZ

Of ya geçen dönem bıraktığım bi
dersi almaya çalışıyorum ama sistem
izin vermiyor.

Ugh, I have been trying to take a
class that I dropped last term, but
the system is not allowing me.

SECRETARY

Neden?

Why?

DENİZ

Bilmem. Şu belgeyi bastırıp imzalat
dedi kaydolmaya çalışınca.

I'm not sure. It asked me to print
out and get a signature on this
paper when I tried.

Deniz extends the paper to her, she reaches out and takes
it.

SECRETARY

(okuma gözlüğünü takar)

Bakıyım neymiş.

(putting on her reading
glasses)

Let's see what this is.

(belgeyi okur)

Sen dersin kodunu bana gönder ben
hallederim. Bazen imza filan almak
gerekıyor ama sorun değil.

(She looks it over.)

You send me the code for the class
and I'll handle it. Sometimes you
need to get a signature but it's
ok.

DENİZ

(ayağa kalkar)

İyi bare. Odaya gidince atarım
hemen.

(getting up)

That's good. I will send it to you
as soon as I get back to my room.

SECRETARY

Başka bir şey var mı?
Anything else?

DENİZ

Yok. Mezun olup gidicem inşallah
sonunda.
Nope. I will graduate and leave
soon hopefully.

SECRETARY

Uzattın mı ki sen?
Were you beyond the fourth year?

DENİZ

(Kapıya doğru gider)
Yok ama bıktım okumaktan.
(Moves to the door)
No, but I am tired of studying.

SECRETARY

Hep öyle diyosunuz sonra
özlüyorsunuz.
You always say that, but everyone
misses here after they graduate.

DENİZ

Bakalım görücez. Gidiyorum ben o
zaman?
I guess we will see. I'm off then?

SECRETARY

Git bakalım. Göndermeyi unutma.
Bye then. Don't forget to send it
to me.

DENİZ

Unutmam merak etme. Hadi görüşürüz.
I won't, don't worry. See you
later.

SECRETARY

Görüşürüz!
See you!

Deniz is just out of the door when the Secretary calls to
them.

SECRETARY (cont'd)

Deniz!

Deniz stops, sticks her head back in.

DENİZ

Noldu?
What is it?

SECRETARY:

(kapının oradaki orta
boyutta bir kutuya işaret
ederek)

Hazır burdayken şu kutuyu yeni
hocanın ofisine bıraksana. Benim
belim kötü biliyosun.

(points to a medium sized
box by the door)

Since you are already here, would
you drop that box to the new
professor's office? You know my
back isn't up to it.

Deniz picks up the box and reacts to its heaviness.

DENİZ

Yuh.
Ugh.

The secretary laughs.

DENİZ (cont'd)

Nerde ofisi?
Where is the office?

SECRETARY

Colleen'in eski ofisi.
Colleen's old office.

Deniz nods and leaves. The secretary shouts behind her.

SECRETARY (cont'd)

Teşekkürler!
Thanks!

4 INT. CAMPUS BUILDING. - CONTINUOUS

4

Deniz walks to the office three doors down and places the
box in front of it to knock. They see a piece of taped paper
falling off on the empty name placement that's not yet been
updated with the new name. The paper reads, in italic
handwriting "Dr. Alex Robinson". Deniz picks the paper and
tapes it back, then knocks on the door.

ALEX (O.S.)

Come in.

Deniz opens the door, picks up the box and enters.

5 INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

5

ALEX, an attractive woman in her thirties, is sitting behind a desk, working on her computer. Her office is mostly empty except few books on the bookshelf and two cardboard boxes on the floor. Walls are freshly painted and white with nothing on them except some notes taped haphazardly on the wall behind the computer.

Alex raises her head from her work as Deniz enters. When she sees Deniz carrying the box, she quickly gets up and goes to Deniz to get the box from them. In the few seconds it takes her to walk to them, Deniz gets to have a full view of Alex and is taken aback by her looks. They are attracted to her, physically, from the first moment.

ALEX

(Reaching out to grab the box)

Oh I'm so sorry I forgot to-

DENIZ

No worries! It's heavy I'll put it down.

(They put the box down and reach their hand out)

I'm Deniz by the way.

ALEX

(smiles and shakes their hand)

Nice to meet you, I'm Alex.

(They stand together smiling to each other and shaking hands)

Dennis, am I saying that right?

DENIZ

No it's Deniz, with an z instead of s and one n instead of two.

ALEX

(listening carefully and nodding)

Deniz, no Deniz, is that right?

DENIZ

(lying)

Yeah you got it.

ALEX

(playfully)

You're lying I can tell.

DENIZ

What? No!

Alex raises her eyebrow.

DENIZ:

Okay you say it with an accent but you can't really fix that.

ALEX

Just say it again.

DENIZ:

Deniz.

ALEX

Deniz. Okay I'll learn it by- Well I don't know. The next time I see you I guess.

DENIZ:

Tuesday. I'm in the fourth year class.

ALEX

Great! I'll say it perfectly by Tuesday.

DENIZ:

I'll put you to a test.

ALEX

Please do.

DENIZ:

What about you?

ALEX

What about me?

DENIZ:

Your name, is Alex short for anything or just Alex?

ALEX

It's short for Alexandra but I use Alex.

DENIZ:

Oh that's a cursed name.

ALEX

Why?

DENIZ:
Well your namesakes are a burnt
library and a gay man obsessed with
conquering the world.

ALEX
(laughing)
I never thought of it that way.
Explains so much.

DENIZ:
Oh no does it?

ALEX
My dad is a gay librarian.

DENIZ:
Now you're the one lying.

ALEX
Am not.

Deniz stands awkwardly, unsure what to say.

DENIZ:
Well, I should get going.

ALEX
It was nice meeting you.

DENIZ:
You too. I'll see ya in class. Let
me know if you need any more boxes
carried.

ALEX
(laughs again)
I will, thank you again.

DENIZ:
You're welcome. Bye!

ALEX
Bye!

6 EXT. ROAD ON CAMPUS. -CONTINUOUS

6

Deniz exits the building and starts walking on the campus
road to their dorm building. As they walk, they take their
time. They light a cigarette while walking. Their expression
is thoughtful, as if reconstructing the memory from just
before.

After ten minutes of walking, they come closer to a new set of buildings where the dorms and some cafeterias are. As they enter the pavement that connects a few dorm buildings, they start walking towards one of the buildings. Right when they start climbing the short stairs that lead to the entrance, they hear some rustling from the bushes on the side of the stairs. When they go to check it, an orange cat climbs out of the bushes in front of them. They crouch and hold out their hand to wait for the cat to come to it. The cat soon comes towards their hand. The cat starts purring and pushing their head towards Deniz's hand.

DENİZ:
 (with a soft voice)
 Napıyosun sen burda minnoş?
 What are you doing here little
 buddy?

The cat starts playing with Deniz's hand. It is not yet an adult cat. Just a bit older than a kitten. After playing a little, the cat seems to lose interest and goes near the bushes to lay down. Deniz goes into their dorm building.

7 INT. DENİZ'S DORM ROOM. -CONTINUOUS

7

Deniz goes into their building and nods at the clerk at the info desk across the door. They climb the stairs and arrive on the first floor and stop in front of their room's door. They look through their bag to find their key. Then they enter the room.

Their room is not very large, but more than sufficient for one person to live comfortably. They have a single bed, a nice mid-sized desk with lots of bookcase space on each side. There are some empty boxes and small emptied bags on the floor. The tight but long wardrobe is half full and its lids are open. Deniz makes their way through the sea of things on the room's floor and throw themselves on the bed and gives out a big sigh.

After resting on the bed for a minute, Deniz gets up and goes to the window that is above the desk to open it. The window resists Deniz's effort for a second but then gives out. A nice breeze comes in. Deniz starts to organize the books and notes on their desk. They come across a few posters and postcards with art on them. They start sorting through them and putting some of them to the side. After choosing a handful, Deniz gets up to look for something on the floor between the desk and the bed. They look around for a second before leaning down to pick up a roll of tape. Deniz starts taping the posters and postcards they set aside to the wall space next to their bed. They carefully decide the spot for each of them.

After a couple of hours, Deniz wakes up with a few books, posters and some more items that are left mid-organization on the bed next to them. They realize they fell asleep. They woke up to the bling sound that came from their phone. They check the phone, Meriç is calling, they answer.

MERİÇ:

Deniiz! Naptin? Yerleşme nasıl gidiyo? Akşam yemeği yedin mi? Ben çok açım, buluşup beraber bişeyler atıştıralım mı?
Deniiz! What's up? How's it going with unpacking? Did you have dinner yet? I'm starving, do you wanna go and eat something together?

Deniz takes a second to come to their senses after waking up. They turn on the small bedside lamp.

DENİZ:

Olur ya aynen. Ben de aşırı açım. Şu yurtların ortasındaki meydanda buluşup, kampüsün hemen dışındaki kafeye gidelim mi? Hem bişeyler de içeriz yemekle.
Yeah sure. I'm also starving. Do you want to meet at the central square between the dorms and go to the cafe right outside the campus? We can also drink something there.

Meriç replies quickly.

MERİÇ:

İyi fikir. Tamamdır. Beş dakikaya hazır olurum ben. Görüşürüz!
Good idea. Ok then. I'll be ready in five minutes. See you!

Deniz gets up and walk towards the door of the room to reach the main light's switch. They turn on the light. The room looks a bit tidier than before. The clothes that were on the floor before disappeared. Deniz goes to the closet and opens the lids. They change their clothes quickly, grab their bag and leave.

8 EXT. CENTRAL SQUARE. - MOMENTS LATER

8

Deniz walks up to a man. He looks same age as them. He is slightly taller than Deniz. He has dark hair and a slim look. He is also wearing a button up short sleeve, but with jean shorts. He has no bag.

He is looking at his phone with one hand in his pocket. He does not realize Deniz walking up to him.

DENİZ:

Hey!

MERİÇ:

Heyo!

They hug to greet each other.

DENİZ:

Özlemişim ya!
I missed you!

MERİÇ:

Aynen ya.
Me too.

DENİZ:

Nasılsın? Naptın bu yaz? Anlat bakalım.
How are you? How was your summer? Let's hear it.

MERİÇ:

Ay neler neler, hiç sorma.
Anlatırım şimdi ama ben çok açım ya. Önce bi gidelim de yerken anlatıyım. Sen nasılsın? İyi mi keyfin?
Oh my god, don't even get me started. I will tell you all about it but I'm really starving. Let's get to the cafe first and then I'll tell you. How about you? Are you ok?

DENİZ:

Benden de iyi ya, nolsun. Aynen madem, kafeye gidince daha detaylı konuşuruz, bi' özlem gideririz.
I'm good, not much. Well then, we will talk more when we get to the cafe and catch up.

They start walking towards the main campus roads. As they get closer to a shuttle stop, they see a shuttle bus getting ready to take off. They start running towards it to catch it before it leaves. They yell and make hands for driver to wait for them. The driver does not see them, but they still make it just in time.

9 EXT. CAFE. EVENING -CONTINUOUS

9

Deniz and Meriç are sitting on one of the outside tables at the cafe. There are not many people around. Only two other tables are full out of the ten or so tables. They have food and drinks in front of them. They are eating and chatting.

DENİZ:

Ee, nasıl geçti yazın? Sen bi' staj yapıyodun bu yaz. Nasıl geçti o? Neredeydi, bi' medya şirketi miydi? So, how was your summer? You were doing an internship, right? How was it? Was it at a media company?

MERİÇ:

Evet evet. Güzel geçti ya. Biraz beklediğimden çok daha hareketli ve dramalı bir ofisti gerçekten. Böyle ne dedikodular çeviriyodu herkes birbirinin arkasından. (güler) Yes yes. It was pretty nice. It was a bit more fast-paced and dramatic in the office though. Everyone was gossiping so much behind each other.

DENİZ:

Bir de ofis hayatı çok profesyonel olur derler. And they say office life is very professional.

MERİÇ:

Götümün profesyonelleri. Onun dışında hep klasik aile dramasıyla uğraştım. Biliyosun işte. Professional my ass. Apart from that, I was mostly dealing with the classic family drama. You know how it is.

DENİZ:

Evet yaa. Tahmin edebiliyorum. Ailenin olduğu şehirde olması kötü oldu senin stajın o açıdan. Aman neyse en azından bitti gitti. That's true. I can imagine. It was a bit unfortunate that your internship was in the same city as where your family lives.

Deniz and Meriç both eat a little bit of the food in the middle and take a sip of their drinks.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
 Ama en azından kira ödememiş oldun
 bir yere bu süreçte. O da bi' şey.
 (gülerler)
 But at least you didn't have to pay
 rent for a place during that time.
 That's also something. (they laugh)

MERİÇ:
 Doğru diyosun. Zaten paralı staj
 diye bir konsept olmadığı için
 ülkede, en azından zarara girmemiş
 oldum valla.
 You are right. Since there is no
 such thing as a "paid internship"
 in this country, at least I did not
 have to suffer any money loss for
 it.

Deniz makes a gesture of nodding and agreeing while taking a
 big sip of their drink.

DENİZ:
 (jokingly)
 Ee, peki onun dışında naptın? Hiç
 birileriyle tanışmadın mı be? Az
 anlat kimden saklıyorsun.
 Soo, what else did you do? Did you
 not meet anybody? Come on tell me,
 you know you can't hide it from me.

MERİÇ:
 (smiles)
 Saklamıyorum be. Kimseyle
 tanışmadım nerde tanışcam. İzmir
 diye de ortada aşık atmıyo heralde
 geyler. Bi' de zaten annemlerle
 kalıyorum nerde buluşcaktım ki
 insanlarla?
 I'm not hiding anything. I didn't
 meet anyone, where would I? Just
 because it's İzmir, the gays are
 not just revealing themselves in
 public. Also I was staying with my
 parents, where would I meet with
 anyone?

They both agree.

MERİÇ: (cont'd)
 Ee, sen neler yaptın peki? Valla,
 bu yaz çok arayıp soramadım kuzum,
 kusura bakma.
 (MORE)

MERİÇ: (cont'd)

Staj filan derken, nasıl geçtiğini anlayamadım zamanın.
What have you been up to? Sorry that I wasn't in touch this summer much. With the internship and everything, I couldn't tell how the months passed by.

DENİZ:

Yok yaa, sorun değil hiç saçmalama. Biliyorum zaten ben yoğun olduğumu, dert etme. Ben çok bişey yapmadım ya zaten. Aynı geçti işte. Geçici bi' işte çalıştım biraz, azcık para biriktirmek olsun maksat. Bi' de bol bol yazdım işte. Bir iki film fikrim var ama sene içinde işte üzerine çalışcam bakalım.

No no, don't even worry about it. I know that you were very busy, you don't have to feel bad at all. I didn't do much really. I worked at a temporary job to save a little money. Other than that, I wrote a lot. I have a few film ideas, but I will work on them and see how it goes this year.

MERİÇ:

Ooo, süper! Nasıl hiçbir şey yapmadın ya, bir sürü yazı yazmışsın işte. Daha ne olsun. Ooo, that sounds awesome! Why do you say you did nothing? You wrote a lot, what else do you need?

Deniz shrugs and makes a gesture like "whatever" with their hand while taking a sip of their drink with the other.

DENİZ:

Yani, henüz bir sonuç çıkmadı ama onlardan. Aman neyse, geçelim bunları. (güler)
I guess, but there is no results from them yet. Whatever, let's just not talk about this. (laughs)

They keep chatting and laughing for a couple hours over dinner and drinks. Their voices become muffled and scene closes out.

10 EXT. IN FRONT OF DENİZ'S DORM BUILDING. CONTINUOUS.

10

Deniz is shuffling through their bag to find their key. They are at the door of their dorm building. It is dark out now but there are some street lights and there is a light right above the door. They hear shuffling from the bushes near and then the same cat from earlier comes out of the bushes. She immediately goes to Deniz's legs and starts purring and walking around their legs.

Deniz stops for a second. Then they crouch down to pet the cat. They pet the cat for a few minutes before making a gesture of suddenly remembering something.

DENİZ:
(to the cat)
Dur bak unutuyodum.
I almost forgot.

Deniz shuffles through their bag for a second before finding something. They pull out a can of cat food. The cat realizes the treat and starts moving faster and meowing. She hits Deniz's hand with her head, asking for the food. Deniz laughs softly.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
(laughing)
Dur eşşek açılım bi dur.
Wait till I open it you donkey.

Deniz carefully places the can near the bushes. They take out a small plastic container they had taken with them earlier, before leaving their room. Then they take out a bottle of water and start pouring the water in the container. Deniz then places the water container next to where the cat is eating.

Deniz watches the cat for a minute or two without disturbing it. They then make a gesture towards their bag and take out their keys.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
İyi geceler minnak.
Good night buddy.

Deniz unlocks the door to the building and goes inside.

THE PRINCE CHARMING

11 EXT. CAMPUS. SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

11

Deniz is biking around the campus, enjoying the scenery. They pass by Alex, who is walking slowly and carrying a box. They notice her from the corner of their eye, stop and pedal back. Alex notices them and puts the box down. She looks tired and sweaty, still in her work clothes. Deniz stops next to her.

DENIZ:
Hey there!

ALEX:
Hi.

DENIZ:
Another box situation?

ALEX:
Unfortunately.
(she takes a deep breath)
Turns out fifteen-minute walking
distance is not the same when
carrying a heavy box.

DENIZ:
Yeah, that might have been a
mistake on your part. Luckily, you
have a designated box carrier.

ALEX:
Are you sure?

DENIZ:
Yeah, we can put it on the bike.

ALEX:
God, thank you so much.

Deniz gets off the bike and they put the box on the bike together, tightening it on place. Deniz moves to the sidewalk and pushes the bike next to themselves. Alex starts walking next to them. She takes her blazer off and rolls up her sleeves. Deniz notices.

DENIZ:
I don't know how you teachers spend
all day in these clothes.

ALEX:
You get used to it.

DENIZ:

I thought the good thing about teaching at a university was that you could wear comfortable clothes to work.

ALEX:

They are comfortable, just not when carrying boxes under the sun. Besides, you would never see me dressing this formal when I'm not working.

DENIZ:

Why?

ALEX:

I enjoy having work clothes and normal clothes separate. Makes the distinction of my time better.

DENIZ:

That makes sense.

ALEX:

Also, students treat you differently. Not all of them, but some see their teacher... well, female teacher, in jeans and think it's an invitation to be disrespectful.

DENIZ:

Great to know that having "Dr." in front of your name doesn't really change some things.

ALEX:

Unfortunately, not.
(she points to the side road)
This way.

DENIZ:

Can I ask why you moved to Turkey?

ALEX:

I have a feeling that I am going to get that question a lot.

DENIZ:

Oh yeah, you definitely will.

ALEX:
Truthfully?

DENIZ:
Hmhm

ALEX
I moved here because I got a job.
That's usually the reason why any
academic moves across the world, at
least the ones in humanities. It
doesn't even matter how many
diplomas or papers you might have
any more. Universities no longer
care about their humanities
department. In any other job,
people retire after a certain age
and younger ones fill in the space
they leave. In this type of job,
half of every department is over
sixty years old.

DENIZ:
Well... That sounds great!

ALEX:
Sorry, that became a bit gloomy.

DENIZ:
No, no. It's the best answer to
that question I heard so far.

ALEX:
Don't get me wrong, I also want to
travel here, learn the language,
experience the culture and all
that. But I also know that I am at
work for most of my time. It seems
like a beautiful place from what I
have seen so far, but...

DENIZ:
I see.

ALEX:
You don't like it here?

DENIZ:
How could you tell?

ALEX:
Your smile when I said it seems
like a beautiful place.

DENIZ:

I mean, it really is beautiful here...Well, maybe not Ankara since it's mostly gray buildings everywhere but- Hm, you probably know a bit about our politics here.

ALEX:

Oh I definitely know.

DENIZ:

I don't really fit into those politics. Neither do most of my friends. Most people my age can't wait to graduate and get out of here as soon as possible.

ALEX:

Is it not possible to live here and still live the way you want?

DENIZ:

Not the way I want. Some do, but I don't want to. I admire people who stay and fight, but I'm not made for that. I just want to live a life, not fight for it.

ALEX:

That's ok. There is nothing wrong with that.

DENIZ:

(Jokingly)

Maybe I can take your place, what do you say? You stay here in Ankara and I go to-

ALEX:

Manchester.

DENIZ:

Oh come on! You left Manchester for this place?

Both laugh.

ALEX:

Ever been there?

DENIZ:

No, but I know it's cool and gay- I mean, it's-

Deniz stops for a second then keeps walking.

ALEX:
No, you are right. It is very gay.

DENIZ:
(Laughing uncomfortably)
Sorry.

ALEX:
For what?

DENIZ:
I don't know. I don't normally spit
it out like that.

ALEX:
Don't worry. I would figure it out
eventually.

DENIZ:
(jokingly)
Come on I'm not that obvious!

ALEX:
You are wearing a rainbow bracelet.

DENIZ:
That could be anything! Maybe I
really like colors.

ALEX:
Sure sure...

Alex stops.

ALEX: (cont'd)
We are here. Thank you so much once
again.

DENIZ:
Of course. Do you need help
carrying it up?

ALEX:
No, it's just the first floor.

Deniz's phone vibrates and they check it with one hand while
holding the bike carrying the box.

DENIZ:
Well then, I should leave you to
it.

ALEX:

I really appreciate the help. I
will be sure to make better choices
when I carry things from now on,
you can trust that.

DENİZ:

(Laughs)

That's nice to hear.

Deniz untightens the box from their bike and lifts it up.
They make a gesture to put it on the floor but Alex picks it
up from their hand instead. Deniz stops for a second, then
moves to get on their bike.

DENİZ: (cont'd)

I will be off then. Goodbye!

ALEX:

Goodbye!

Deniz rides off on their bike. We do not see their face,
only watch them from behind for a bit as they ride off.
Their riding seems energized and faster. They stand up on
the bike.

12 EXT. A GREEN FIELD. SUNDAY EVENING.

12

Deniz arrives near a group of people sitting on the grass.
They park their bike just on the side of the road near the
green field and walk towards the group. There are three
people in the group; one woman, and two men. They are
drinking beers and having snacks, all of which are scattered
around the area they are sitting. They are talking and
laughing. A bit tipsy.

DENİZ:

(sits between the woman
and one of the guys)

Naptınız bakalım?
What's up?

MERİÇ:

(sitting next to Deniz and
the other guy in the
circle)

Oturuyoruz işte nolsun.
Just sitting.

EYLÜL:

Sen naptın bakalım? Yerleşebildin mi odana?

How about you? Did you finish settling into your room?

DENİZ:

Gibi gibi işte. Bir bavul kaldı henüz açmadığım, ama yapasım yok hiç. Ders kaydı, planlamaca filan derken yapamadım bişey pek. Almost. I only have one bag left to unpack, but I really don't feel like doing it. I have been so busy between planning for the semester and registration stuff.

EYLÜL:

Aynen yaa. Ne kadar uğraştırıyorlar her dönem. Bildiğin Survivor yaşıyoruz her seferinde. Same! Every semester we struggle so much. It's as if we are in the Survivor every time.

They all laugh.

KAAN:

Ee ne dersler alıyorsunuz bakalım bu dönem. Son senede az ders alma keyfi yapıyor muyuz hepimiz? So, what classes are you all taking this semester? Are we all going to enjoy taking less credits in our final year or what?

MERİÇ:

Ben sadece iki ders alıyorum bu dönem, çok mesudum. (Güler) Hem de bir tanesi baya kolay ve zevkli olacağı benziyor, sinemayla ilgili bişeyler. I am taking only two classes, I'm so glad. (Laughs) And one of them seems like it will be an easy and fun one, it has something to do with cinema and stuff.

DENİZ:

Aynen ben de. O ders için baya heyecanlıyım. Beraber almamız çok iyi oldu ya, ortak proje filan yaparız belki.

(MORE)

DENİZ: (cont'd)

Same, me too. I am very hyped for that class. Also, I'm glad we are taking it together, we can do some collaboration or something.

EYLÜL:

Off, ne güzel yaa. Keşke ben de sizle beraber ders alabilsem. (Şaka ile karışık bir üzgün surat yapar) Ben bu dönem sadece bir ders alıyorum, ama ne yazık ki gelecek dönem daha çok dersim olacak... Keşke son döneme bırakmasaydım şu core kimya dersini. Ugh, that sounds so nice. I wish I could take classes together with you! (She makes an exaggerated sad face as a joke) I am only taking one class this semester, but sadly it will be much more in the second one...I wish I hadn't left that core chem class to the final term.

KAAN:

Eylül, seni çok iyi anlıyorum yaa. Eylül, I feel you so much!

MERİÇ:

(loudly)

Ayy, yeter bee! Daha dönem başlamadı içimi şişirdiniz ders muhabbetiyle! Enough! The term hasn't even started yet, and you already made me sick with this class talk!

Deniz laughs. And then the rest of the group starts laughing.

DENİZ:

Hadi, bu dönem hepimiz için çok iyi geçsin dostlar! Let's drink to this semester hopefully treating us well guys!

They clink their drink bottles, then they all drink.

EYLÜL:

Ya senin yurdun keşke bana daha yakın olsaydı Deniz. Bugün yerleşirken oda arkadaşım ile tanıştım, biraz garip bi' tipe benziyo.

(MORE)

EYLÜL: (cont'd)

Yakın yerde olsak en azından odaya
gidene kadar hep takılırdık.
I wish your dorm was closer to mine
Deniz. I met my new roommate today
while I was unpacking, and she
seemed a bit weird. We could have
at least hanged out together until
I went to my room to sleep.

DENİZ:

Yine yapabiliriz ki bunu? Neden
yapamayalım?
We can still do that? Why couldn't
we?

EYLÜL:

Yaa, yapabilir miyiz? Sen bu dönem
tek kişilik odada kalıyordun di mi?
Really? Can we? You are staying in
a single room this term right?

DENİZ:

Aynen.
Yup.

EYLÜL:

Study-sesh yapabiliriz o zaman
senin odanda bu dönem!
We can do study-sesh in your room
this term then!

MERİÇ:

Evet! Süper fikir! Ben de katılıırım
ki!
Yes! Genius! I will join in!

KAAN:

Ben de!
Me too!

DENİZ:

(jokingly)

Haydaa! Noluyoruz ya, o zaman siz
temizlersiniz odamı valla.
Hey, what's happening! You will
clean my room then!

MERİÇ:

O işi Kaan'a bırak. temizlik
kraliçesi toz bırakmaz ortada.
Leave it to Kaan. Cleaning queen
will not leave a speck of dust in
the room.

KAAN:

Belki sen de arada temizlik yapsan
fena olmaz Meriç'cim...
Maybe you could also clean
sometimes Meriç...

DENİZ:

Aa, siz yine bu dönem de mi aynı
odada olcaksınız?
Will you two be sharing a room
again this term?

KAAN:

Evet. Ne yazık ki...
Yes. Sadly...

MERİÇ:

A-a diyene bak! Sen değil miydin,
'seneye de beraber kalalım mı
Meriç?' diyen? Kime bu roller?
Look who's talking? Weren't you the
one that was saying 'can we please
stay as roommates next year too?'

DENİZ:

Yani, aile ile kalmaktan iyidir her
türlü.
Well, it's better than staying with
your parents.

MERİÇ:

Doğru diyosun. Katlancaz artık
napalım.
You're right. I will just hang in
there I guess.

KAAN:

Sadece kendi tarafımı temizliycem
bu dönem, görürsün bak. Biraz
kıymetimi anlarsın o zaman. Hıh!
I will only clean my side of the
room this term. You will see my
value then!

They all laugh. Meriç tries to hug Kaan and apologizes in a
cute voice to agitate them. Kaan pushes them away, but then
also starts laughing.

EYLÜL:

Bu arada, bugün garip oda
arkadaşımla tanıştım dedim ya. Sana
o zaman bir sürü mesaj attım, ama
hiç bakmadın mesajlarıma.

(MORE)

EYLÜL: (cont'd)
 Neden? Benden başka kimlerle
 konuşuyorsun gün içinde bakalım?
 By the way, when I met my weird
 roommate today, I sent you a bunch
 of texts but you never checked
 them. Why? Who else are you talking
 to during the day except for me?

Eylül pokes Deniz jokingly and makes a fake angry face at them. Deniz laughs.

DENİZ:
 Senden başka kimselere bakmıyorum.
 Valla!
 My eyes don't see anyone else than
 you, I swear!

After Eylül stops poking Deniz, she crosses her arms.

EYLÜL:
 Peki, inandım madem.
 I guess I will believe you then.

DENİZ:
 Su Meriç'le beraber aldığımız
 "world cinema" dersinin hocasını
 biliyor musunuz?
 Do you know the professor whose
 class we are taking with Meriç this
 semester? The "world cinema" class?

MERİÇ:
 Evet ama henüz hiç görmedim.
 Yeah? But I haven't seen or met
 them yet.

DENİZ:
 Ben gördüm işte bugün. Bisiklet
 sürerken denk geldik. Bir kutu
 taşımaya çalışıyordu evine, yardım
 ettim. Ondan görmemişim mesajları
 hep.
 Well, I did today. I encountered
 her while I was biking around. She
 was trying to carry a box to her
 house, so I helped her. That's why
 I missed your texts.

MERİÇ:
 Nasıl tanıdın ki?
 How did you recognize her?

DENİZ:

Ha, daha önceden görmüştüm.
Oh! Well, I had seen her before.

MERİÇ:

A-a. Nerde gördün ki, daha dönem
bile başlamadı?
Where did you see her, the term
hasn't even started yet?

DENİZ:

Sekreterle bi' işim vardı dün, o
zaman odasına bişey götürmüştüm ya.
Orda gördüm.
I had some business with the
secretary yesterday, and brought
something to her room that time.
That's when I met her.

MERİÇ:

Hee.
Ooh.

After a second.

MERİÇ: (cont'd)

E, nasıl biri peki? Boyle uyuz bir
hoca gibi mi, yoksa iyi biri gibi
mi?
So? How are they? Do they seem like
a tight-ass or more like a nice
person?

DENİZ:

Oncelikle, hoca olmak için çok genc
duruyo ama iyi birisine benziyor.
Well, first of all, she seems too
young to be a professor but she
seems like a nice person.

Meriç stops for a second when he sees Deniz's face. Then
moves on.

EYLÜL:

Keske benim de "cool" yabancı
hocalarım olsa programımda. Ama ne
yazık ki bizde sadece acayip yasli
ve huysuz hocalar var.
Yeah, exactly. I wish I had some
"cool" foreign professors in my
program. All we have are super old
and cranky scientists.

The weather seems to get darker. They all take out their phones to use their flashlight as their light source and open up new drinks.

13 INT. NOWHERE. NO TIME.

13

Alex and Deniz are having an email exchange. They both will be sitting in front of a velvet screen, facing and saying their lines directly to the camera. This set-up repeats for every email and letter exchange.

DENIZ

Dear Dr. Robinson,
Here is the film you said you could
not find. Do keep it our secret
though, as piracy is a crime and I
have a reputation to uphold.
Best Regards,
Deniz.

ALEX

Hello Deniz,
I can't believe you found it! Thank
you so much. I will absolutely keep
your secret. Does this also mean I
can ask again in the future?
Please do let me know if you get a
chance to watch it. I would love to
hear your thoughts.
Best,
Alex

DENIZ:

Dear Al- Hi Alex,
Yes, you can ask. My piracy talents
are wasted on my friends.
By the way, I don't know if you
know, but a cinema downtown is
showing Chantal Akerman's "Je Tu Il
Elle" this weekend.
Best,
Deniz

ALEX:

Really? I had no idea! I should
follow the schedule from those
theaters more. Do you know where I
can get tickets?
Alex

DENIZ:

Hi,

(MORE)

DENIZ: (cont'd)
I am buying a ticket for myself today, and can get you one too if you would like? The film is on Saturday, one showing at 1 pm and the other at 4 pm. I am going to the 4 pm one. I can print the ticket and drop it at your office tomorrow.
Best,
Deniz

ALEX:

Deniz, thank you so much! I look forward to it! Alex

14 INT. ALEX'S OFFICE. NOON.

14

The door is slightly ajar. Deniz peaks their head through and knocks. Alex lifts her head up.

DENIZ:
Here is your ticket. I wrote the address of the cinema at the back. You can just take the bus downtown, then walk from there. It is a ten-minute walk.

ALEX:
Oh, thank you so much! How much do I owe you?

DENIZ:
No, please. It was nothing really.

ALEX:
I will get you a movie snack then.

DENIZ:
For "Je Tu Il Elle"?

ALEX:
Yes, well, maybe a coffee.

DENIZ:
Sure! I will see you there, before the movie?

ALEX:
Yes, looking forward to it.

They smile at each other. Then Deniz leaves, happy, almost skipping.

15 EXT. OUTSIDE THE CINEMA. - EVENING

15

Alex and Deniz come out of the cinema building. They are mid conversation.

ALEX:

My favorite shot from it back in college was after she puts the mattress up against the wall, and then puts it in front of the window and sits in the corner. The light in that scene is just incredible.

Deniz seems half a world away.

ALEX: (cont'd)

Sorry, am I talking too much?

Deniz turns to her.

DENIZ:

No, I'm sorry. I was just thinking about the film and what you were saying. I always get so disoriented when I enter the cinema during the day and it's dark outside when I leave.

ALEX:

Yes, I know the feeling. I like it though.

DENIZ:

Yeah I like it too. But I think it's better when it's still light outside; it's like you just experienced someone else's life in a dark room and then you leave and see that you still have your day ahead of you.

ALEX:

You know people write about that feeling? I mean academically.

DENIZ:

Do they? There really is a paper to be found in every subject isn't there.

They stop and look at each other.

ALEX:
Are you hungry?

DENIZ:
Yeah, I am a bit.

ALEX:
Want to have dinner?

DENIZ:
Sure! Where to?

ALEX:
I don't know the area well
actually.

DENIZ:
I do. Come on.

Deniz starts walking, Alex follows, walking next to them.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
Sorry, you were saying?

ALEX:
It's okay. You must be tired of
listening to me both in class and
here.

DENIZ:
I'm not, really. I enjoy talking
about films with you. You say
things that I never would've
thought of myself.

ALEX:
The more you watch, read and write
about them, the better you'll get
at thinking about them. It's just
that I have ten years on you.

DENIZ:
Yeah of course, but lots of people
have extensive knowledge on many
subjects but they are dull as shit,
excuse my language.

ALEX:
(laughing)
Excused.

DENIZ:
You just seem genuinely excited
about what you're teaching and it's
a joy to listen to you in class.

ALEX:
Thank you. That's very kind.

DENIZ:
And I get the privilege of
listening to you more. Why
complain?

ALEX:
I also enjoy talking with you, in
case it was not clear.

DENIZ:
Always nice to be reassured.

Deniz ruffles their hair.

ALEX:
You do that a lot.

DENIZ:
Do what?

ALEX:
Your hair.

DENIZ:
Oh, yeah. That's my "I'm thinking
hard but trying not to show it"
move, as my friend Eylül calls it.

ALEX:
Now you revealed your secret to me.
What are you thinking so hard
about?

Deniz stops in front of a restaurant. Opens the door for
Alex.

DENIZ:
We're here.

Alex goes in, turns to Deniz halfway.

ALEX:
So what was it?

They walk in together.

DENİZ:
Oh nothing important, I was just
trying to gather my thoughts about
the film.

Deniz sees the waiter.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
Arkada boş masa var mı?
Are there free tables at the back?

WAITER:
Evet. Siz geçin ben birini
yolluyorum.
Yes. You go ahead and sit, I'll
send someone to take your order.

DENİZ:
(to Alex)
Come on.

They walk to the back together.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
They have a garden at the back.
It's really nice.

They walk to the back and sit at the small table that is for
two people at the back.

CAMERA, UNMOVING, IS POSITIONED ACROSS THE TABLE, SHOWING
ONLY THEM, FROM THE SIDE.

ALEX:
It really is nice here.

DENİZ:
Glad you like it.

The waiter comes and gives them the menu.

WAITER:
Alkol menüsünü de ister misiniz?
Would you like the alcohol menu?

DENİZ:
(to Alex)
Would you like the drink menu? They
have a really big wine collection.

ALEX:
Sure why not?

DENİZ:
(to the waiter)
Evet, alalım.
Yes, we would.

Waiter leaves and they look at the menu.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
Let me know if you need help
translating anything.

ALEX:
Yes, I might need that.

DENİZ:
It's not you, they named the foods
after famous Turkish proverbs and
sayings.

ALEX:
Oh, good. I thought I was way
behind on my progress than I
believed.

DENİZ:
Are you craving anything?

ALEX:
(puts the menu down on the
table)
I don't know. Why don't you choose
something for me.

DENİZ:
(excited)
Okay. Any requests?

ALEX:
No meat or chicken.

DENİZ:
Okay.

ALEX:
That's it.

Deniz looks at the menu. The waiter arrives and gives them
the wine menu.

WAITER:
Yemek seçtiniz mi, yoksa sonra mı
geleyim?
Do you need more time with the
food?

DENİZ:
 Bana pesto soslu makarna, ona da
 bir falafel tabağı.
 We're ready. Pesto pasta for me and
 a falafel plate for her.

Waiter nods and takes note. Alex listens their exchange carefully.

WAITER:
 Birazdan içecek siparişiniz için
 geri gelirim.
 I will be back to take your drink
 orders.

DENİZ:
 Teşekkürler.
 Thank you.

Deniz pushes the wine menu to Alex.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
 Now you choose the wine. Don't
 worry, they are named normal.

Alex takes the menu and reads it.

ALEX:
 Okay, but don't blame me if it's
 bad.

DENİZ:
 I won't.

Alex keeps looking at the menu. Her lips move silently as she reads it. Deniz watches her. The waiter returns.

WAITER:
 Karar verdiniz mi?
 Have you decided?

DENİZ:
 (to Alex)
 Have you decided?

ALEX:
 (looks up)
 Uhm, yes. It's-

Deniz points to the waiter.

ALEX: (cont'd)
 Oh come on! Okay; biz (şarabın adı)
 almak istiyoruz.
 (MORE)

ALEX: (cont'd)
We would like to get (wine's name).

WAITER:
Kadeh mi, şışe mi?
A glass or bottle?

Alex looks at Deniz. Deniz shrugs.

ALEX:
Uh, iki şışe lütfen.
Uh, two bottles please.

Waiter and Deniz smile.

DENİZ:
(to waiter)
Bize bi' şışe lütfen.
One bottle please.

Waiter nods and leaves.

ALEX:
Which part did I fail?

DENİZ:
You said "two bottles".

ALEX:
Oh! I wanted to say two glasses.

DENİZ:
"Bardak" is "glass", "şışe" is
bottle.

ALEX:
Oh, well...I tried. Even though I
was ambushed.

DENİZ:
Come on, it was two sentences. It's
good practice. How else will you
improve?

Deniz raises their glass.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
To... I don't know.

Alex raises her glass too.

DENİZ
To cinema?

ALEX:
Too broad, you have to be specific
with these things.

DENIZ
You do it then.

ALEX:
To you, for inviting me.

DENIZ
Then to you too, for coming with
me.

They clink their glasses, smile and drink.

ALEX:
(appreciatively)
Good choice on my part.

They drink, look at each other, smile again.

16 INT. NOWHERE. NO TIME.

16

Alex and Deniz are having an email exchange.

DENIZ
Dear Alex,
Happy monday! I hope you've had a
nice weekend.
I'm emailing you to let you know
that the cinema we went to last
week is showing Cherly Dunye's "The
Watermelon Woman" on Saturday as
last film of their series. Would
you like to go together?
Best, Deniz.

ALEX
Dear Deniz,
My weekend was unfortunately filled
with work but I hope at least you
had some fun.
I'd love to go. I haven't seen it
since grad school. But you'll have
to let me pay this time.
Best, Alex.

DENIZ
We'll see about that. I'll drop off
the ticket before the weekend.
(MORE)

DENİZ (cont'd)

I've never seen the film before but
I am looking forward to it.
Deniz.

ALEX

I look forward to it too. Alex.

17 EXT. ISTANBUL.- AFTERNOON

17

Note: When Deniz checks the time, audience does not see what time it is.

Deniz is walking down the street, smoking a cigarette. They are dressed nice, clean. Cream linen pants just above the ankle, black leather flats they bought for a special occasion but never wore and an old black fanny pack that used to be their mother's. They are even wearing a little make up.

They walk to the theater and look around to see if Alex is there. She isn't. They check their phone's clock. It's 11:30. They go outside and wait in front of the place. They check their phone again. 11:35. They light a cigarette. They check again. 11:45. They keep waiting. 11:55. They put out the cigarette and walk in.

DENİZ:

(to usher)

Merhaba. Arkadaşım biraz geç kaldı
ama girebilir hala dimi?
Hey, my friend is a bit late but
she can come in right?

USHER:

Evet 12.15 kadar girebilirler. O
zaman kadar fragmanlar bi de kısa
bi tanıtım var.
Yeah, they can come in until 12:15
pm. There are trailers and a short
introduction.

Deniz walks out again, looks around. 12:07. Deniz takes a deep breath. Takes a mint gum out of her fanny pack and --
A taxi pulls up. Alex gets out.

ALEX:

I'm so sorry. I missed the bus.

DENİZ:

It's okay, don't worry. They are
showing the trailers.

ALEX:
Thank you so much for waiting.

DENİZ:
Of course.

The usher shows them their seats. The theater is mostly full. They sit. A trailer is ending. They turn on the lights. A woman stands up from the front row and gets on stage.

ALEX:
I forgot your coffee.

DENİZ:
Don't worry about it! Do you want me to translate?

ALEX:
Yes, please.

Deniz leans in closer to Alex.
THE CAMERA IS DIRECTLY ACROSS ALEX AND DENİZ.

PROGRAMMER:
Kuir Kadınlar serimizin dördüncü ve son dan ikinci filmine hoşgeldiniz. Eğer ilk defa katılıyorsanız bu serimizin dördüncü yılı. Her sonbaharda kuir kadınlardan ve baharda kuir erkeklerden filmler gösteriyoruz

DENİZ:
(translating)
Welcome to fourth and second to last film of the season's Queer Women Films. This is the fourth year of this series. If you don't know, every fall for four years, we show films by queer women and in the spring, by queer men.

WOMAN
Bugünkü filmimiz Cherly Dunye'nin "Karpuz Kadın" filmi. Film hakkında konuşulacak çok şey var ama onu sonrasındaki tartışmaya bırakıyorum.

DENİZ:
(translating)
Today we are screening Cheryl Dunye's "Watermelon Woman".
(MORE)

DENIZ: (cont'd)
There are many things to talk about
this film but I will leave that to
post discussion.

WOMAN
Geldiginiz icin tesekkurler ve iyi
seyirler dileriz!
The lights go down. Deniz leans in
closer.

DENIZ:
(whispers, translating)
Thank you for coming and we hope
you enjoy the film.

Deniz moves back. They look ahead at the screen. Alex slowly
turns to Deniz and looks at them. Theater gets dark, and the
film starts.

HAVE YOU FED THE BIRDS YET?

18 EXT. OUTSIDE THE CINEMA. - LATER

18

Deniz and Alex walk out of the cinema. Deniz holds Alex's coat and helps her wear it.

DENIZ:

(to Alex)

Do you want to see my favourite house in the city?

ALEX:

Yes.

DENIZ:

It's a bit far though. We have to take the boat.

ALEX:

It's okay, it's still early.

They start walking to the pier together, talking. Deniz stop right before they enter.

DENIZ:

Have you done feedings the birds on the boat yet?

ALEX:

No what's that?

DENIZ:

Ohhh it's an Istanbul classic! Come on.

Deniz looks around and spots a simit seller and walks to him, Alex follows next to them.

DENIZ: (cont'd)

Merhaba abi iki simit alabilir miyiz?

Good day brother can we have two simits please?

SELLER:

Tabi kardeşim 3 lira toplam. Peynir ister misin yanına?

Of course brother it's 3 liras. Do you want cheese with it?

DENİZ:
Yok abi sağol.
No thanks.

Deniz takes out change and gives it to the man and takes the simit from him.

DENİZ: (cont'd)
Hayırlı işler.
Have a good work day.

SELLER:
Sende kardeşim.
You too brother.

Deniz smiles at Alex and they walk to the pier together. They go through the gates and see the boat arrive. They get on with everyone else and sit at outside seats by the end of the boat. Deniz takes out the simits from the plastic bag and gives one to Alex.

DENİZ:
You're gonna love this. Just wait
until the boat starts leaving.

ALEX:
(smiling)
Okay.

Deniz gets up and stands by the age, looking down at the water bubbling as the boat starts moving. They turn to Alex and laughs. Alex gets up too and walks to them.

DENİZ:
When I was little my grandma said
there were dolphins under the
bubbles and I almost fell off once
trying to see them.

19 EXT. SARIYER PIER - MOMENTS LATER

19

They get off the boat and start walking into Sarıyer.

DENİZ:
It's a ten minnute walk from here.

ALEX:
I've never been in this part of the
city.

DENIZ:

It's not very touristy, but it's at the edge of Bosphorus so it's a bit far.

ALEX:

It's beautiful. So many fishing boats.

DENIZ:

Oh yeah. It's a big fishing place. Lots of restaurants by the sea, but the best fish is this guy at the other side of the street. He makes the best fish sandwich. We can grab one on the way back.

ALEX:

For us or for the birds?

DENIZ:

For us this time.

ALEX:

(...) So, did you grow up around here?

DENIZ:

Yeah. Though, don't worry I'm not taking you to my mum's.

They laugh and keep going uphill. Alex watches around as they walk.

They turn to the left, walk a few steps and Deniz stops. She looks at a brown house.

DENIZ: (cont'd)

It's that one.

ALEX:

It's really nice.

DENIZ:

It used to be my grandmother's. It was her mother's before her and she gave it to my grandma when she got divorced. My mom grew up here. But when greatgrandma died, all siblings decided to sell the house and my grandma had to agree.

ALEX:

I'm sorry.

DENIZ:
It's ok. Come on.

They walk towards the house. Deniz points to the second floor window.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
From there you can see all the way
down the street. I used to spend
all afternoon talking from one end
to another.

Deniz walks up the stairs that goes to the street above.
Alex follows behind. There is a wall behind the house.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
Look.

Deniz points at the wall; on it are lines with ages.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
It goes from 1 to 13.

Alex walks closer to the wall and touches it. She traces the lines with her fingers.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
I'm sorry. I don't know why I
brought you all the way here.

Alex turns to Deniz.

ALEX:
Because you wanted me to see it.

Deniz walks closer to Alex. They look at each other and
Deniz kisses her, but they quickly pull back.

DENIZ:
I'm sorry. I'm so sorr-

ALEX:
It's okay.

DENIZ:
I don't know what took over me, I'm
really sorry.

ALEX:
It's okay.

This time Alex kisses them.

20 EXT. BOAT. - LATER

20

DENIZ:
What's your chart?

ALEX:
My chart?

DENIZ:
Like your astrological sign; sun,
moon, rising?

ALEX:
Oh, I'm an Aquarius.

DENIZ:
(nods)
Okay, I can see that.

ALEX:
Am I like an Aquarius?

DENIZ:
Sometimes. What's your moon and
rising?

ALEX:
I have no idea what those are.

DENIZ:
In short, sun is like your core
self, moon is your subconscious
self and rising is how you present
yourself to others.

Alex turns her body towards Deniz and rests her head on the
head-cushion of the seat.

ALEX:
That sounds like you are making it
up but go on.

DENIZ:
I'm not making it up, someone else
did.

ALEX:
So you do agree it's made up.

DENIZ:
Everything is made up. Who are we
to say the way planets and universe
moves has no effect in our lives?

ALEX:

So what's your sun, moon and- what was it?

DENIZ:

My sun is Pisces.

ALEX:

Oh no, isn't that the really emotional one?

DENIZ:

(jokingly)

I thought you didn't care about this made-up stuff.

ALEX:

Even I know Pisces is not a good one.

DENIZ:

No, we are just very misunderstood! My moon is Libra and I don't know my exact rising.

ALEX:

Why?

DENIZ:

You need exact birth time for it.

The boat speakers announce they are about to arrive. They grab their stuff and leave the boat and walk to the bus stops together.

Deniz takes out her pack and lights a cigarette.

ALEX:

May I have one?

DENIZ:

Of course.

Deniz takes out a cigarette and puts it in their mouth and lights it. Then they give it to Alex. She watches them and then takes the cigarette out of their hand and smokes it.

ALEX:

I haven't smoked since I finished my PhD thesis. I remember it very well. I finished my defense, learned I passed and smoked my last cigarette.

DENIZ:

Well, now I feel bad for making you start.

ALEX:

Don't worry. You can't make me do anything I haven't already decided to do.

Then she gives them a cloudy look, as if she is looking directly at her but through something hazy. Then, she keeps walking, Deniz waits for a moment and then follows her.

DENIZ:

What's your birthday then?

ALEX:

Are you going to read my chart and figure me out?

DENIZ:

Just the chart, the other one is beyond my talents.

ALEX:

February 16th, 1986. 3:46 am.

DENIZ:

Very specific, yes.

ALEX:

My dad wrote it down when I was born.

DENIZ:

The gay librarian?

ALEX:

Exactly.

They stand by the stop and finish their cigarettes on the side while they wait for the driver. Alex laughs.

ALEX

I love how you guys never make lines. Just standing around in little groups.

DENIZ

Please I hate it.

ALEX
Smokers in the corner standing
together like war veterans, getting
dirty looks from old ladies.

DENIZ
See, you're already an expert.

ALEX
Should've gone into anthropology.

The driver arrives and opens the doors. They put out their
cigarette and get on the bus.

21 INT. BUS. - LATER

21

Deniz is giving Alex a impromptu Turkish lesson when the
driver announces their stop.

DENIZ
I'll get off with you and walk.

ALEX
Are you sure?

DENIZ
Yeah. My dorm is like ten minute
walk from yours.

ALEX
Okay. Come on.

Alex gets up when the bus stops. Deniz grabs their stuff and
gets off the bus with her.

22 EXT. CAMPUS. - CONTINUOUS

22

They start walking to Alex's building together in silence
till Alex stops and looks up. Deniz stops and looks at her.
She takes a deep breath and lets it out loudly. Then she
turns to Deniz.

ALEX
Fresh air.

Alex starts walking points to the building at the end of the
street.

ALEX:
That is me.

Deniz follows her.

DENIZ:

Yep.

ALEX:

I would invite you for a coffee
but- it wouldn't be appropriate.

DENIZ:

I know, don't worry about it.

ALEX:

It was very nice of you to walk
with me.

She leans in and kisses them on the cheek. Then moves away.

ALEX: (cont'd)

Good night.

DENIZ:

Good night.

Alex walks to the front door, Deniz watches her. She unlocks and opens the door, then turns to look at Deniz. She smiles and gets in.

Deniz stands there and looks up at the first floor. They smile when the lights turn on. They look up for a few more seconds, breathing. They close their eyes.

DENIZ: (cont'd)

(whispering)

Fresh air.

Then they turn around and walk home.

**İSTİKRARLI HAYAL HAKİKATTİR
CONSISTENT FANTASY IS A REALITY**

23 INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON.

23

Deniz knocks on the door. They feel happy today, a skip to their step.

ALEX (O.C.)

Come in.

Deniz goes in. Alex is sitting behind the desk, reading papers. She lifts her head up for a second to see who it is then goes back to her work before Deniz can say anything.

ALEX

Yes?

DENİZ:

Uhm... I'm here for feedback on my paper.

ALEX

You're early.

DENİZ:

(looking at her phone)
Just two minutes.

ALEX

I'm not done yet.

Deniz stands awkwardly, their cheeks redden.

DENİZ:

Should I wait outside?

ALEX

Yes.

DENİZ:

Okay.

Deniz looks at her for a moment, waiting for a recognition, a smile to signal this coldness has nothing to do with her but it doesn't come so they leave and close the door behind them. They sit down and open the book they are holding, pretending to read. They stare back at the door, confused, unbalanced, like they just tripped on nothing.

After seven minutes, Deniz counts, the door opens.

ALEX
You can come in now.

Deniz grabs their bag and coat from the floor and follows her in. They are surprised when Alex goes back to sit behind the table, instead of the two armchairs they usually sit together. Deniz stands by the door for a second, unsure of what caused this change.

ALEX (cont'd)
You can sit down.

Deniz puts their coat and bag on one of the empty chairs, and sit down.

DENIZ:
How are you today?

ALEX
I'm fine thanks how are you?

DENIZ:
Fine yeah.

ALEX
(at the same time)
So your pape-

DENIZ:
(at the same time)
Are you sure?

ALEX
Sure of what?

DENIZ:
That you're fine. You seem a bit-

ALEX
I think it's better if we talk of
your work rather than how I am.

DENIZ:
Yeah, sorry, I was just-

ALEX
So let's start with your
introduction which I think is the
weakest part of your paper.

Deniz tries to listen to the feedback but can't focus on anything Alex is saying. Their right hand scribbles down whatever, pretending to be taking notes while their left hand tightly clutches to the sleeve of their sweater.

Something akin to a panic attack makes its way from their stomach to chest to throat, threatening to come out. After ten minutes it's too much.

ALEX (cont'd)
In this paragraph your quotations are-

DENIZ:
(interrupts)
Have you decided who you're accepting to the seminar next semester?

ALEX
(still looking down at the paper)
Yes.

DENIZ:
And?

ALEX
(lifts her head)
It's full. I'm sorry but I couldn't accept everyone.

DENIZ:
What?

ALEX
There were a lot of students who were interested.

DENIZ:
I told you on the first class.

ALEX
It's not a first come first serve system.

DENIZ:
I- I got A on all the assignments so far.

ALEX
(stern)
So did many others.

DENIZ:
(confused)
Then why am I the one who didn't get it?

ALEX

I don't have to explain anything to you. I am the professor and it is my job to decide who gets in and who doesn't.

She puts the papers down on the table and pushes them to Deniz's direction.

ALEX (cont'd)

I have a lot of work to do and you wasted your last few minutes with this so good luck with your conclusion.

She turns to the computer and writes something. Deniz gets up to leave. They grab their stuff. Before they reach the door, they turn around.

DENIZ:

(crying)

Sorry, I'll leave but- sorry, does this mean you don't want to watch my short film's final draft?

Alex looks up and sees them crying.

ALEX:

Oh...

Alex gets up and walks towards Deniz. Deniz, crying, drops her bag and coat on the floor. They hug. Deniz cries harder, resting their head on Alex's shoulder. Alex closes her eyes, overwhelmed. She carefully caresses Deniz's hair. Deniz holds on tighter.

ALEX: (cont'd)

(whispering)

I'm so sorry. Of course I want to watch it.

They stand like that for a moment, until Deniz stops crying. Alex keeps caressing Deniz's arm.

ALEX: (cont'd)

Come here. Let's sit together okay?

Alex locks the door and pulls a chair up next to Deniz. They look at each other.

ALEX: (cont'd)

I'm so sorry- I really am for what just happened.

DENIZ:
I don't even understand what I did wrong.

ALEX:
Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

DENIZ:
Did someone say something to you?
Does someone know?

ALEX:
No, no. God no.

DENIZ:
Then what happened?

ALEX:
I- I have been thinking about this
and- it's hard to explain.

Deniz reaches out and holds her hand. Alex smiles.

ALEX: (cont'd)
What I have done in these past four
months was very wrong. I never
should have initiated this-

DENIZ:
You didn't initiate anything. It
was mutual.

ALEX:
Yes I did. You are not the first
student to have a crush on a
teacher or on me.

DENIZ:
It's not just a crush.

ALEX:
I know that but still it was my
responsibility to not encourage it.

DENIZ:
You didn't seduce me or anything it
that's what you are worried about.
We haven't even hugged before this.

ALEX:
That's not what this is about. You
are a student taking my class.
(MORE)

ALEX: (cont'd)
How could I ever prove that I
didn't raise your grades or treated
you differently?

DENIZ:
But you didn't.

ALEX:
How would anyone believe that when
even I can't tell? How am I to know
if my judgment is not clouded by my
feeling?

DENIZ:
Okay then, give me an F. I don't
care. I will take one more class
next term, and we won't tell anyone
until I graduate. Hell, let's not
even see each other until then!

ALEX:
No, no! I can't do that. That's no
different than giving you an A.
Either way, my work has been
compromised because of my feelings.

DENIZ:
(voice shaking)
Alex, please. I'll do anything...

ALEX:
I know you will. That is why I
thought giving you the cold
shoulder would work better.

DENIZ:
If you thought giving me the cold
shoulder will make me forget you,
you are seriously underestimating
my feelings.

Alex looks at them. Deniz smiles, Alex laughs.

ALEX:
You can't just say things like that
when I'm trying very hard here.

DENIZ:
Might as well say them now.

ALEX:
You will understand.

DENIZ:

I don't want to. What am I supposed to do now?

ALEX:

You will go home, work on your paper and finish your film. Then you will submit them and I will grade your paper as fairly as I can. Then we will be done.

They look at each other, remembering. Alex breaks eye contact first. She gets up, walks to the door and unlocks it. Deniz watches her, then gets up. They put on their coat, wear their backpack and stand face to face with Alex. Deniz leans in and kisses her, then leaves.

Deniz leaves and closes the door behind her. They stand there for a moment, look to the door and consider going back in just as their hand reaches the doorknob again, they hear the lock click from the other side. They wipe their face on their sleeve and walk back to their dorm quickly.

24 EXT. CAMPUS. - MOMENTS LATER

24

We follow them all the way to their room, from front. The campus becomes smaller and blurry behind them as they walk up the hill.

They climb the stairs quickly. Their room is locked and they struggle to find the keys in their bag. Frustrated, hands shaking, they enter the shared bathrooms and lock themselves in one of the toilets. They drop their bag to the floor, take their coat off but it gets stuck. They collapse on the toilet and cry. Their hand clench, nails digging into skin and leaving red marks in their wake. They cry as long as they can, until they are breathless and exhausted. They wipe their face with toilet paper and whisper to themselves unintelligible words of encouragement to get up and let go.

They take their bag and the coat and drop them in front of their door then walk back to the bathrooms to wash up.

They wash their hands, arms up to elbows to calm down and splash their face. They stare at their red face in the mirror. Something passes through their eyes and they punch the mirror. It comes down shattering, cutting their hand.

They look at their hand and the dripping blood with no expression, transfixed and unable to comprehend what they just did as if it was done by someone else. They come out of the trans when they hear someone scream.

They look up to the source of the sound and see the girl from three rooms down grabbing toilet paper. The girl runs back to Deniz and gives them the toilet paper

GIRL

Hold it down here and I'll get help.

Deniz stands there, holding the roll of toilet paper, staring at it like it's an alien object. They sit down on the floor and wait for help.

25 INT. HOSPITAL. - EVENING

25

Deniz, sitting on a chair at the ER that is too busy, is getting last of their stitches. They listen to the nurse talk about after-care and nod along.

NURSE

Böyle mi kalsın yoksa kapatıyım mı?
Do you want me to leave it like
this or wrap it?

DENİZ

Bişeyle sarabilir misiniz sorun
olmazsa?
Can you wrap it in something if
that's okay?

NURSE

Olmaz tabi. Bekle bandaj alıp
geliyorum.
Sure. Wait here I'll get a bandage.

Deniz takes her phone out and sends a text while waiting for the nurse. Nurse comes back and wraps Deniz's hand up in white bandage. She then takes out another bandage and gives it to Deniz.

NURSE (cont'd)

Al bu da yedek olsun. Çok sıkmamaya
dikkat et yoksa iyileşmesi
zorlaşır. Sürekli kapalı da tutma.
Here have this for backup. Try not
to wrap it too tight and don't have
it wrapped all the time or it'll
heal slower.

DENİZ

Teşekkürler.
Thanks.

NURSE
(puts her hand on Deniz's
shoulder)
Dikkat et kendine.
Take care.

Nurse leaves. Deniz picks up her coat and leaves after.

26 EXT. PARKING LOT. - MOMENTS LATER

26

Deniz leaves the hospital and walks over to the parking lot to wait. They light a cigarette and stand against the wall. They light another one, and another. After fifteen minutes, Zerrin pulls up. Deniz puts out the cigarette on the wall and throws it to the floor then gets into the car.

27 INT. ZERRIN'S CAR. - CONTINUOUS

27

ZERRIN
Ne olduğunu şimdi mi sorayım yoksa
yemek yiyene kadar bekleyelim mi?
Should I ask what happened now or
should I wait till we go to dinner.

DENİZ
Yemek yiyene kadar bekleyelim.
Let's wait until dinner.

ZERRIN
Tamam. Acıyor mu?
Okay. Does it hurt?

DENİZ
Yok. Ne yiycez?
No. What are we having?

ZERRIN
Canın ne istiyor?
Do you want anything specific?

DENİZ
Fark etmez.
Anything is fine.

Zerrin nods and they drive the rest of the way in silence.

28 INT. CLUB. - NIGHT

28

First they walk to the side door, hidden behind a table where their friend and renowned Queen, Yıldız, is sitting with her friends.

They approach Yıldız and she takes out a stamp when she sees them. She laughs, loudly and waves at them, just as loudly. They hug and exchange as they always do.

YILDIZ

Şekerim kapıyı daha açmadım çünkü
domuzlar hala gitmedi. Ana kapıdan
girin.
Sugar I haven't opened the door yet
the pigs are still around.

MERİÇ:

Bu saatte hala dolanıyolar mı?
They are still around at this hour?

DENİZ

Cuma ya ondandır.
It's because it's friday.

Yıldız stamps their hand as they give her 10 liras each.

YILDIZ

Bilmiyorum vallaha ne bok yiyolar.
I don't know what shit they are up
to.

DENİZ

Sağol abla aşağıda görüşürüz.
Thanks sis we'll see you
downstairs.

Deniz gives Yıldız a kiss on the cheek and the group makes their way to the entrance.

YILDIZ

(yelling behind them)
Bensiz çok eğlenmeyin!
Don't have too much fun without me!

They laughs back and enter through the main door. Loud Turkish music can be heard even from outside. They make their way through the crowd that can only be described at painfully straight, dancing and jumping out of rhythm.

They walk to the back, pass by toilets already dirty at 10p, and open the door covered with so many posters that it does not exist to unknowing eyes. Even when closed, you can hear the loud tempo of the music through the door and once it opens, like a queer Narnia, cigarette smoke welcomes you as if it was snow. But the real snow is usually at the back.

ASPECT RATIO CHANGES (FROM 4:3 TO 16:9), EXPANDS, AS THE DOOR OPENS. THE SCENE MOVES WITH MUSIC.

THE FOLLOWING SONGS PLAY IN ORDER AS IF THEY WERE ONE CONTINUOUS SONG, ARRANGED WITHOUT THEIR DISTINCT BEGINNING AND ENDS, WITHOUT ANY BREAKS. SONGS ARE WRITTEN IN PARENTHESES TO SIGNAL TIMING FOR EACH PART. PLAYLIST IN ORDER: "İSTIKRARLI HAYAL HAKIKATTIR" GAYE SU AKYOL, "KAPADOKYA" BY MERCAN DEDE, "SAÇLAR" BY KALBEN. THE SCENE SHOULD LAST APPROX. 18 MINUTES.

("İstikrarlı Hayal Hakikattir" Gaye Su Akyol) They are welcomed, as always, by a crowd so big that you'd think the tiny cramped basement was endless. A dimension of eternity where dead comes to life and bodies move differently to the same tempo. The basement exists outside of time just like its occupants. Small and endless, its existence is a contradiction.

The group moves to the bar, get their drinks, shots inside beer glasses and red-bull "do not mix with alcohol" in vodka. The group expands and becomes part of the crowd. They dance, touch and move cigarettes back and forth with strangers.

Deniz takes another shot and lights a cigarette. A guy, Ashton, touches their shoulder.

ASHTON

Do you have another one?

DENİZ

What?!

Ashton points to Deniz's ear like asking for permission. Deniz nods.

ASHTON

(to Deniz's ear)

Do you have another cig?

DENİZ

(taking out their pack)

Yeah here.

Ashton takes one and Deniz lights it for him.

ASHTON

(pointing to Meriç)

Is your friend taken?

DENİZ

No he is free!

ASHTON

Get him and come to the back.

Deniz nods and tries to grab Meriç but he is dancing with someone.

DENİZ

Meriç!

MERİÇ:

Ne?!

("Kapadokya" by Mercan Dede) Deniz makes a "follow me" with their hands and walks to the back, follows. The tiny corner at the back seems even more crowded. Deniz sees Ashton waving at them and crams their way to him. He is with two other people smoking a joint.

ASHTON

Sorry I just started sharing.

DENİZ

No problem!

MERİÇ:

Absolutely no problem.

Meriç reaches to his pocket and takes out a plastic bag and a little bottle. Ashton and his friends laugh. They all dance to the music, singing along, take turns with the joint and inhale the popper. Deniz can barely hear anything, looks at the exchange of drugs happening around them. Yıldız is at the other corner with a guy Deniz has never seen, doing god knows what powder on a surface no one should even touch.

The basement keeps growing, the back where they stand becomes one with the dance floor.

CUT TO: AERIAL SHOT. CAMERA MOVES AWAY FROM THE BASEMENT, REVEALING THE NEIGHBORHOOD. BASEMENT STANDS AT THE MIDDLE OF THE SHOT. THERE IS NO ONE EXCEPT PEOPLE IN THE BASEMENT, JUMPING. CAMERA ZOOMS AND BACK, ALMOST NAUSEATING, THEN ZOOMS BACK TO DENİZ IN ONE LAST FAST MOVE. END OF AERIAL SHOT.

Deniz stumbles, almost falls. Someone holds her. They both laugh and hug and jump together.

CLOSE UP THEN DISSOLVE TO AND FROM FACES IN THE CROWD. NO ONE "PASSES" HERE, THEY NEVER WILL, THEY DON'T CARE.

The crowd moves in waves. The basement is full to the brim and no one can move anywhere else nor do they want to. They move as if they're all stitched to each other. They all move their arms up and intertwine hands with each other.

POINT OF VIEW SHOT, THROUGH DENİZ'S EYES. IMAGE MOVES BETWEEN BLUR & SHARPNESS.

("Saçlar" by Kalben) Deniz, through blurry eyes, sees someone who looks like Alex on the other side of the floor, near the door. They try to get themselves out of the crowd, to Alex. It's almost impossible but they push themselves through from back to front.

Suddenly everyone turns to Deniz's directions, looking at them and start to move towards their way in slow motion. Deniz is the only one trying to get to the front and Alex is the only one standing still, their movements are normal speed.

All the lights in the club turn to a blinding blue and stops the crowd dead in their tracks. Alex turns her body to Deniz and Deniz, not realizing everyone around them is standing up and still, finally reaches Alex. They both stand face to face, looking at each other. Deniz and Alex raise their hands, palms facing each others but not touching. Everyone else disappears, literally. They slowly, hesitantly, intertwine their hands.

CUT TO, SUDDEN: A COMPLETELY BLACK SPACE WITH NOTHING AND NO ONE ELSE EXCEPT DENİZ AND ALEX, BOTH NAKED.

Note: Refer to storyboard for dance sequence.

They dance together. Their lips move to the lyrics, but no voice comes out from either of them.

DENİZ

(mouthing along)

Ben olsam almam beni

Adamdan saymam beni

Uzun uzun soymam beni

Deli miyim?

If it was me, I wouldn't marry me

I wouldn't count myself a man

I wouldn't undress myself for long

Am I crazy?

ALEX

(mouthing along)

Ben olsam bakmam bana

Bi' çorba bile yapmam bana

Tüm bunları sen öğrettin bana

(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)

Sevgilim
 If it was me, I wouldn't care for
 myself
 I wouldn't even make soup for
 myself
 You taught all of this to me
 My love

They close their eyes and keep dancing. Slowly, Alex becomes blurry and disappears. Deniz, unaware, dances alone. They lay on floor on their side.

CUT TO AERIAL SHOT OF DENIZ LAYING DOWN ON THE FLOOR.

Their body is still moving and responding to the song. Suddenly blue lights from above lights their body and they open their eyes. Then they open their mouth wide towards the sky as if screaming, a loud siren comes out and their body spasms as if something is leaving their body with the siren.

CUT TO BASEMENT. DENIZ IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SHOT ALONE. ASPECT RATIO IS BACK TO 4:3.

Deniz is on the floor of the basement on their knees, breathing fast as if they just came out of the water. Their hair and clothes sticking with sweat. Ashton and Meriç enter the shot from left, with the basement crowd from behind them, police enters from the right. They grab Deniz from the floor and drag them out as crowd clashes with police.

29 EXT. STREET. - MOMENTS LATER

29

Deniz and Ashton's friend group, together, are walking fast to somewhere. They are all drunk or high or whatever, but fear moves them fast. Deniz, arm in arm with Meriç, can barely open their eyes.

After few minutes they turn into an empty street and stop. They sit down on the floor trying to breathe. Deniz vomits then lays down on the floor, looking at the sky.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO: ALEX
THE BURNT LIBRARY

30 INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. - EVENING

30

Alex walks into the open kitchen, grabs a wine glass from the cabinet. She opens a the bottle of red that is on the counter and pours herself a glass. She grabs the bottle and walks to the living room, turning off the kitchen lights on her way out. She sits on the sofa and grabs her laptop. She clicks around a few times before stopping abruptly. She stares at the screen.

SHOT: SAME AS PREVIOUS EMAIL EXCHANGES.

DENIZ:

Dearest, I've finished my film. I am sending you the alternative version; a "director's cut" if you will. You are the only person to ever see this version. You will see why.
 Yours, Deniz

END OF SHOT

Alex looks at her screen and takes a deep breath. She reaches for the remote and opens the tv. She clicks around her laptop and projects the film to the tv. She gets up and turns off the lights. The room is only illuminated by the tv screen and the dim lights that come through the windows. She sits down, takes a large sip from her glass and presses play.

DIRECTLY ACROSS ALEX'S FACE, CLOSE UP. THROUGHOUT THE FILM CAMERA VERY VERY SLOWLY EXPANDS, ALMOST UNNOTICEABLE. IT EXPANDS UNTIL IT IS A WIDE SHOT OF THE WHOLE ROOM, STILL DIRECTLY ACROSS ALEX.

ALEX IS SITTING IN FRONT OF A BLACK SCREEN. THE FILM STARTS AND IS REFLECTED TO THE SCREEN. PARTS OF THE IMAGES FROM THE FILM ARE BLOCKED BY ALEX'S BODY IN FRONT OF THE SCREEN.

Moving images and photographs dissolve and become one with each other. As the images move, a photo of Alex appears within the images and Alex leans in to see better. We watch her watch herself and the film. Deniz's voice is heard from the film, reading a poem.

DENIZ (V.O.)

"Let the day grow on you upward
 through your feet,
 the vegetal knuckles,
 (MORE)

DENIZ (V.O.) (cont'd)
 to your knees of stone,
 until by evening you are a black
 tree;
 feel, with evening,
 the swifts thicken your hair,
 the new moon rising out of your
 forehead,
 and the moonlit veins of silver
 running from your armpits
 like rivulets under white leaves.
 Sleep, as ants
 cross over your eyelids.
 You have never possessed anything
 as deeply as this.
 This is all you have owned
 from the first outcry
 through forever;
 you can never be dispossessed."

The film ends and Alex is sitting in the dark, barely visible.

31 INT. A BOOKSHOP. AFTERNOON.

31

Alex is in a bookshop. She is reading the back of a book in the shop. Standing in one of the isles.

SCENE STARTS WITH A CLOSE UP OF ALEX'S HAND CARESSING THE BOOK SPINES. HER HAND STOPS AT AHMET HAMDI TANPINAR'S "MIND AT PEACE". THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HER HAND UP TO HER ARMS, CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE THE HAIRS ON HER ARMS. THE SHOT KEEPS FOLLOWING UP TO HER SHOULDER, NECK AND FINALLY HER LIPS BEFORE IT STOPS MOVING.

CUT TO FULL BODY SHOT FROM A DISTANCE SHOWING ALEX STANDING BETWEEN TWO LINES OF BOOKS AND LOOKING AT THE COVER. SHE TAKES THE BOOK AND WALKS TOWARDS THE CAMERA WHERE REGISTRY IS.

While waiting at the register line until the woman in front of her finishes her purchase, she sees a selection of postcards with a sign that says "Libraries of the World". She smiles when she sees a photo of Library of Alexandria. She grabs it and puts it on the counter when it is her turn at the register.

ALEX:
 I'm so sorry, can you tell me how
 to read this?

REGISTRAR:
 İskenderiye Kütüphanesi

Alex tries to say it.

REGISTRAR: (cont'd)
Something like that.

Registrar reads the barcodes.

REGISTRAR: (cont'd)
That's 25.99.

Alex takes out her wallet and gives him her card.

REGISTRAR: (cont'd)
Do you need a bag?

ALEX:
No, thank you.

Alex puts the postcard between the book's pages and puts them in her bag. She takes back her card.

REGISTRAR:
Have a good day.

ALEX:
Thanks, you too.

32 INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT. MORNING.

32

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Alex is lying awake in bed, the sun is hitting her face. She lays down a minute more, then sits up, crosses her legs and takes a deep breath. Then she gets out of the bed, puts on her robe and goes to the kitchen. She goes through her daily routine; heats water for her coffee, washes her face and brushes her teeth while waiting for it to heat. She fills herself a cup and goes out to sit on her small balcony.

33 EXT. ALEX'S BALCONY. -CONTINUOUS.

33

It is chilly outside with some early morning sunshine, but not cold. She takes the blanket, book and cigarettes she left outside last night from the chair and sits down. She puts the blanket on her legs, opens the book and starts reading while drinking her coffee. Few minutes later, she lifts her head up and looks at the horizon, buildings and the sky that she can see, a little bit off sea if she looks far enough. Then she takes a cigarette out of the pack, lights it and keeps reading. She is reading an english translation of Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar's "Huzur" (The Mind at Peace).

She finishes her cigarette and coffee. Gets up and pours herself another cup. She goes back out, sits down and looks ahead. She takes a deep breath, lights one more cigarette and takes a sip from her coffee. She takes out the "Library of Alexandria" postcard that was stuck in-between the book's pages and starts writing on it.

SHOT IS SAME AS EMAILS.

ALEX:

My darling,
Meet me tomorrow, 8 pm, my place.
Yours, A.

34 EXT. OUTSIDE OF ALEX'S BUILDING. EVENING.

34

Alex leaves her house and calls for a taxi. She gives the driver a little paper with the address on it. She watches the road from the window.

SHOT SHOWS ANKARA THROUGH THE CAB WINDOW, THROUGH ALEX'S EYES.

She arrives to her destination, pays the driver and gets out. She walks a small path towards the location, gives her invitation to the doorman and enters.

EVERYTHING COMES FULL CIRCLE

35 INT. GRADUATION PARTY. EVENING -CONTINUOUS.

35

There are students and professors. Everyone is either dancing or sitting at the tables in deep conversation. She smiles at the scene. One of the students sees her, while Alex's eyes are scanning the whole room.

STUDENT:

Hey, you're late!

ALEX:

(turns to the student)

I know! I have already seen all of you sober, so I thought I'd wait until you are already drunk.

STUDENT:

Excellent choice!

Alex smiles as the student turns back to his table and sees Deniz making their way through dancing people to go over to Meriç. She sees them talking to two professors. Just as she is about to walk over to them, she sees Deniz and Meriç leaving them to dance with other people, including James. She watches them for a bit. She does not know the song, but it is "Halkalı Şeker" by Altın Gün. Deniz is dancing with some moves Alex assumes is a Turkish dance. They are a bit drunk, laughing. Deniz sees Alex. Alex takes a deep breath and smiles. Deniz smiles back. Someone gets in-between them and she loses them in the crowd. She turns and walks towards her friends so as not to be standing alone in the crowd.

As Alex is chatting with friends, James comes to them, out of breath.

ALEX:

You need anything?

JAMES:

Yes, my youth please!

They all laugh.

JESS:

I'm going to get another drink, does anyone want one?

JAMES:

Get me a beer please.

JESS:
I will, old man.

Alex nods no and scans the dance floor with her eyes again. She find Deniz quickly, jumping and moving without rhythm. James' voice breaks er out from her trance.

JAMES:
Alex.

ALEX:
Sorry, yes?

JAMES:
I was just saying I don't know how they find the energy still. They've been up on their feet all day.

ALEX:
Yes. How was the ceremony?

JAMES:
Boring mostly, as always. I've been attending them for nine years and the only change is the names of the students.

ALEX:
Nine years? Wow

JAMES:
Yeah. This is, I think, the sixth group I've taught from freshman to graduation.

ALEX:
How does it feel?

JAMES:
Damn good!

Alex smiles. DJ makes an announcement.

ALEX:
What's happening?

JAMES:
He said the night is ending soon and he's going to start playing slow songs.

ALEX:
Oh, okay. That's my cue then.

JAMES:

Oh no! It's not over for half an hour still, stay a bit more! You already came in late.

ALEX:

I'm just very tired.

They say goodbye. Alex sees Deniz in the other corner. They are with friends but are also looking at her. Alex keeps the eye contact for a moment, then turns to leave. She stops very briefly by the door but then leaves. She starts walking down the path she came from. She stops when she hears Deniz call out to her.

DENIZ:

Hey!

Deniz runs to her and stops when they come close enough. They are out of breath.

DENIZ: (cont'd)

Are you leaving already?

ALEX:

I'm not in the mood for anymore socializing today, so...

DENIZ:

Not even with me? Come on, let's sit and have a cigarette together.

ALEX:

I actually quit, but I'll sit with you.

DENIZ:

Ah, good for you.

They sit together. Deniz is smiling ear to ear next to Alex, drunk.

ALEX:

What's going on with your face?

DENIZ:

What's going on with YOUR face?

ALEX:

I don't know.

DENIZ:

I'll tell you. It's very beautiful.

Alex laughs. She is amused. The song changes.

ALEX:
I have something for you.

DENIZ:
You got me something?

Alex takes a box out of her handbag. It is a small, simple box with a lavender ribbon. She gives it to Deniz. Deniz takes it, excited.

CLOSE UP TO DENIZ'S HANDS.

They take the ribbon off slowly and wrap it around their finger and put it in their pocket. They take the box's lid off and reveal an engraved notebook and a pen.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
Alex...this is beautiful.

Deniz's hand touches all over the cover and fingers go over their engraved name on it. They open it and see the cover of the postcard. As Deniz is about to flip over to see the other side of it, Alex stops them.

ALEX:
No. Don't read it now. There is a note.

DENIZ:
Why not?

ALEX:
Just read it when I leave.

DENIZ:
Okay.

Deniz is halfway through their cigarette. They flip the ashes to the ground.

ALEX:
You look good by the way.

Deniz looks down to their suit, oversized on purpose.

DENIZ:
Really?

ALEX:
Yeah.

DENIZ:

Thanks.

(brief silence)

I was kind of hoping you would see me in it. It looked better when I wasn't all sweaty and tired.

ALEX:

Why don't you stand up and show it to me.

Deniz gets up, without a pause. Turns around themselves to show off the suit. Their cheeks are red from alcohol and dancing. Their hair is all over the place. They stop turning and pose. One hand in pocket, other holding the cigarette. Then they laugh. Alex smiles ear to ear, as if her heart is full of love. Deniz finishes their cigarette and puts it out. Alex gets up too.

ALEX: (cont'd)

Time for me to go.

DENIZ:

Can't you stay a bit more?

ALEX:

No, I'm sorry. I feel quite tired.

She leans in and hugs them. Deniz hugs her back and they stay like that for a moment. Then Alex breaks the hug and quickly starts walking away.

WE SEE ALEX FROM BEHIND AND, CAMERA SLOWLY TURNS AROUND HER UNTIL IT SHOWS HER FACE.

ALEX: (cont'd)

(without turning to look)

Good night.

DENIZ:

Goodnight.

Alex keeps walking.

36 INT. ALEX'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

36

Note: When Alex checks the time, audience does not see what time it is.

Alex is in the bath, both eyes closed. She keeps laying there until her phone's alarm rings. She picks it up. She pulls the drain and gets up. She washes the soap off herself.

She gets out, wraps a towel around herself and walks to her bedroom to get ready. She looks at the clothing she put out on the bed earlier. She wears her underwear and bra first, it is a simple black set. She puts on moisturizer, then she sets aside the blouse and pants she had prepared. She wears a dress instead. She dries her hair with the towel, takes out her make up materials and stops for a second to look at them. She puts them back into the make up bag.

She goes to the kitchen and takes the food she prepared earlier out of the fridge to heat it. She sets the table. She checks the time again, goes to the balcony and takes the ashtray. She washed it in the kitchen sink. She dries it carefully and puts it on the coffee table.

She checks the clock again. She goes to the bedroom and puts on par fume on her wrists and behind her ears. She opens her make up bag from earlier and puts on a lipstick. She turns off the bedroom lights and goes to the living room.

She spends some more time walking around and changing things, and checking the time.

She grabs the ashtray and goes out to the balcony. She lights a cigarette.

A knock on the door is heard.

Alex quickly puts out the cigarette and throws the blanket she had off herself. She walks to the door and opens it. It is Deniz.

ALEX:
You're late.

DENIZ:
I know I'm sorry.

Alex opens the door wider to let Deniz in. Deniz takes their shoes off. Alex closes the door behind Deniz.

ALEX:
I don't have any house slippers though.

DENIZ:
(jokingly)
Come on! You've been here for a year now.

ALEX:
I keep forgetting about it.

Deniz puts their shoes aside and stands up to look at Alex.

DENIZ:
I am really sorry about being late.

ALEX:
(jokingly)
Do you have a good excuse?

Alex moves to the fridge and takes out a beer.

ALEX: (cont'd)
Beer?

DENIZ:
Yes please.

Alex opens the beer and gives it do Deniz.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
My friends didn't think this was a
good idea.

Alex picks her wine glass and goes to sit at the dinner
table.

ALEX:
I have to heat them again.

Deniz pulls a chair next to her.

DENIZ:
Hey, I'm here though, that's what
matters.

Deniz takes her hand and she looks up. Alex takes a sip and
nods. She is silent for a moment.

ALEX:
(almost tearing up)
I'm sorry, I'm just really anxious.

DENIZ:
Then you know how I always feel
around you.

Alex laughs.

ALEX:
Do you just have these one liners
laying around somewhere.

DENIZ:
No... I just love you so much that
if I don't say it I'll combust I
think.

Deniz chuckles.

ALEX:
Really?

DENIZ:
Really.

ALEX:
Still?

DENIZ:
Even more now.

Alex kisses them.

ALEX:
I love you too.

Alex holds Deniz's face in their hands. There is a moment of quiet.

ALEX: (cont'd)
Do you want to move away with me?

Deniz laughs.

DENIZ:
Talk about a lesbian cliché.

ALEX:
I'm serious.

DENIZ:
Move away? Away where?

ALEX:
I got a job offer in Germany. You
can come with me; apply to grad
school or take film classes,
whatever you want.

Deniz gets up and goes to grab the beer they had left on the kitchen counter. Alex watches them drink it.

Deniz takes out a pack of cigarettes from their bag.

DENIZ:
Can I?

Alex nods, gets up and gets the ashtray from the balcony. She puts it on the coffee table and sits next to Deniz on the couch. They look at each other. Alex takes a cigarette and lights it, and gives it to Deniz.

Deniz takes it, looks ahead and takes a deep breath from the cigarette. They turn back to Alex.

DENIZ: (cont'd)
When?

ALEX:
Job starts September.

DENIZ:
Okay.

ALEX:
Okay?

DENIZ:
Yeah. I'll move with you.

Alex is speechless for a moment. Deniz takes another breath from the cigarette and then puts it out.

ALEX:
Are you sure?

DENIZ:
(laughing)
No.

ALEX:
You can think on it.

DENIZ:
(turns to look at her)
I already have.

They look at each other in understanding. Alex moves closer and takes Deniz's face in her hands.

ALEX:
I'm really bad at relationships.

DENIZ:
I haven't had enough relationships
to know whether or not I'm good at
them.

ALEX:
I am very hard to live with.

DENIZ:
(holds the hand on her
face)
We will learn together. It's okay.
I promise.

Deniz leans in and they kiss again. Then a bit more.

THE END.