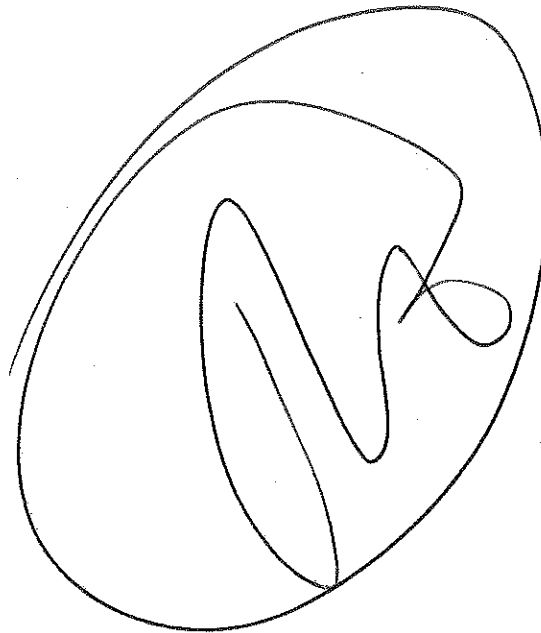


NOT A BLACK MARKET
INT. RELEASE
MOMENT OF TRUTH
NEW SCAFFOLDING
PAINTER CUT
MO RECORD RELEASE
GET THIEVES VIDEO
CITY OF JOY

Written by
Gerard Brach & Roland Joffe



FOURTH DRAFT

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CITY OF JOY

FADE IN:

EXT. MIAMI, FLORIDA - DAWN

The screen is full of the Miami skyline. Looking inland from the sea. The sun is kissing the high-rises with pink. An early morning breeze is bending the palms. Waves are lazily lapping at the beach. The world is at peace with itself.

INT. MIAMI - JAMIESON CENTER HOSPITAL - OPERATING THEATRE - DAWN

The theatre is emptying, one of the two surgeons leaves the room, banging the door behind him. Two nurses, sweating in the heat of the theatre, start to pull a white sheet over the still figure on the bed. It's the body of a girl, about ten years of age. Her face waxen in death. The remaining surgeon wipes at his forehead. He looks at the body draped in the sheet. His eyes are rimmed with red.

This is MAX LOEB. He is the resident. He hasn't showered and his hair is sweaty and pulled out of shape by his surgical cap. The nurses leave. Max stands alone in the operating theatre surrounded by tiny sounds: the cooling of the METAL, distant HOSPITAL NOISES. The surgeon's VOICE floods in faintly from next door. We can't quite make it out, but we hear something about money. Max sighs. He looks at the girl. He leaves the operating theatre. Through a glass pane in the door we see a middle-aged couple coming towards him. The woman is holding back tears, but she thanks Max for all he's done for her "little girl."

INT. LOCKER ROOM (JAMIESON CENTER HOSPITAL) - HIGH ANGLE - DAY

Rows of lockers stretch away from us diagonally. Early sun just reaches the room and nudges with the pale moon that creeps in from the corridor. The room is empty save for one lone man peeling off his green surgical clothing and stuffing it into a locker. It has his name on the door. It's Max Loeb. He stares at himself in the mirror of the locker door. It's clear he doesn't like what he sees.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The door of the freezer is open. There is nothing in it but the remains of a six-pack. We hear the sound of the RUNNING WATER. Max is in the bathroom, his head under the tap. He crosses into the bedroom. He flings himself down on the bed.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Max lies on the bed. The room is full of school sports trophies. A surfboard leans against the wall. The TV is PLAYING, unheeded, some shoot-out or other. Max's eyes are held by a clipping from a color magazine. It's an Indian boy, maybe seven years old. One arm is in a sling. But what dazzles is his smile. Enough hope to keep the world spinning. Max looks at the face, seems to make up his mind, gets off the bed, opens a cupboard, fiddles around, pulls out a backpack. The PHONE RINGS.

Max picks it up. A voice starts to squeeze through the mouthpiece. Max interrupts.

MAX

It's not even six in the morning.
No, I haven't forgotten lunch...
no, I won't.

He listens for a moment, then:

MAX

Well, actually, yes, I will be a
little late... How late? About
a month. No, I said a month,
that's how late...

The CAMERA SLIDES off the bed ONTO the floor, ACROSS a pile of medical books and one or two magazines.

MAX

No, I'm not joking... I'm going
to India.

The CAMERA has been TRAVELING ACROSS the carpet which has imperceptibly turned to a rough and barren soil.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN INDIA - DAWN

Cracked and parched earth, shimmering in the sweltering sun. It's India. It's oven-hot. It's been dry for weeks. Life is being snuffed out. A tortoise drags itself slowly across the dust, searching for shelter, for some forgotten patch of moisture in this barren place. There is something hopeless in its struggle.

It begins to give up. Its neck stretching desperately out of its shell. It waits to die, motionless. An almost human tear runs from its eye as it stares at the harsh wilderness stretching away towards the horizon.

The CAMERA PANS gently. We discover an old man, an Indian, in a greying and ragged dhoti. He sits motionless. He is thin, he looks at the dry plain. In this remorseless place he seems to count for very little.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

The road gleams in the dawn light. It stretches towards the horizon, towards the night. The sunrise is behind us.

LOW ANGLE

We see the ground in all its detail: stones, blades of grass, not a human around, not a house. There is the rustle of wind. The world seems suspended in the half-light. Stars still shine in the sky. Clouds pass across a large pale moon. A thin yellow dog wanders momentarily onto the road, then disappears.

A LOW HUMMING. A bus comes towards us out of the distance, showing through the paint. It's followed by a plume of its own dense black exhaust smoke.

It RUMBLES PAST us, towards the rising sun.

The sun sprays golden light up into the immense sky. The bus disappears into the distance. Silence falls, the road shimmers in the oblique morning light. We see nestled behind a boulder at the roadside, a tiny, blue flower -- beautiful and fragile, and like all things alive, determined to live.

INT. BUS - DAY

It's hot. Not an empty inch in the little vehicle. Entire families are crushed together on the wooden seats -- young and old: men, women, and children, squashed together with their pathetic belongings: old suitcases, bundles, shapeless bags. Their owners sit in silence emanating misery, tiredness, and resignation.

A woman breastfeeds a baby. A couple of passengers fan themselves, others sleep.

One family, squeezed up on the back seat, hold our attention. The father is HASARI PAL, 33, his wife, ALOKA, 28. Their daughter AMRITA is 13, and their two sons, MANOOJ and SHAMBU, are 11 and 9 respectively.

An enormously fat passenger snores fitfully, mouth open wide. He slumps unconsciously against Hasari. Hasari tries patiently to ease him away, but it doesn't do much good. Amrita, wearing the traditional sari like her mother, has her mother's beautiful face, already touched with intuitive wisdom. The two boys, eyes shining with curiosity, watch the countryside as it unfurls outside the windows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari fights sleep. His eyes snap open and he smiles at his wife as he, once again, pushes the fat sleeper towards his corner.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK

Another endless horizon. This one is lusher. There is a glint of water. A railway runs along the edge of the water, on a raised embankment. A village lies at the other end of the FRAME. We see a house. In a garden a striped awning.

Tiny lights glow. A SHENAI is releasing its plaintive notes into the sky. The sound of a TRAIN WHISTLE.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - ANOTHER ANGLE - DUSK

The train is still coming TOWARDS us. It's a huge ancient steam train. Still proud enough to fill the air with balls of black and white smoke. The WHISTLE SHRIEKS as the train starts to slow up.

INT. TRAIN - DUSK

Hasari and his family are in the train, wedged up near the window. The train is even more crowded than the bus. People are everywhere, squeezed together with this baggage. A peanut seller is clambering through the bodies. It is sweltering. People squashed together anyhow, like shipwrecked survivors on a raft. The women's saris punctuate the gloom with exuberant points of color.

Manooj and Shambu have their faces pressed against the windows. Aloka's head rests on Hasari's shoulder. He is sitting bolt upright, trying not to disturb his sleeping wife.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAWN

The SHENAI'S NOTES mingle with the TRAIN'S WHISTLE. The train is slowing up. Carriages ENTER the FRAME. The windows passing slowly by. The faces of passengers stare out of them. They look at something out of sight. We FOLLOW Manooj and Shabu as they stare out, faces pressed against the window.

The train almost stops. The shenai has been eclipsed by the sound of a ragged BRASS BAND.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - MANOOJ'S POV - DUSK

We see the source of the music. It's a large house set in its own garden. The lights of the striped tent glitter in the fading light. A small band in bright uniforms, but no shoes, is playing elderly brass instruments. A man is approaching the tent. He is riding a horse. He is festively dressed, and surrounded by men and women dancing.

The little lights are shining in the trees. The dancers are swaying with joy. The horse rears. The rider holds him in. A stiff smile on his face.

VOICE (O.S.)

It's a wedding... look.

EXT./INT. TRAIN - DUSK

Amrita joins the faces at the window. The train jolts, begins to move. Amrita's head turns as she tries to hold this image of inaccessible good times in her gaze.

INT. TRAIN - DUSK

Amrita returns to her seat. She finds herself looking at her father. He leans forward and pats her head.

HASARI

Beautiful, eh! One day that will
be you... surely, surely.

He sits back with a light smile at his daughter, and the TRAIN starts to RUMBLE forward.

INT. DELHI AIRPORT (INDIA) - NIGHT

The airport is all but asleep. A lone figure with a blue backpack and a case comes INTO VIEW. He stops and looks around, trying to make out the signs. He's jet-lagged and recognizable as the young man from Miami. He wipes his eyes, then follows the thin trickle of passengers towards the desk marked "Immigration."

INT. IMMIGRATION DESK (DELHI AIRPORT) - NIGHT

A sleepy immigration OFFICER eyes the young man standing in front of him, looks at his passport.

OFFICER

Is this your all name... Loeb
Max?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Yes... Max Loeb, that's all.

The Officer taps at his computer. Gives Max a suspicious look.

OFFICER

Where else in India are you intending?

MAX

Er... tomorrow, I fly on to Calcutta.

The Officer gives him a sweet smile.

OFFICER

For a holiday?

MAX

Not exactly...

He shrugs. He's too tired to start explaining.

EXT. RAILWAY LINES (CALCUTTA) - EARLY MORNING

A crisscross of lines. People walking this way and that. A huge bridge dominates the skyline. The steam train trundles INTO VIEW, WHISTLE clearing its way. People hang on its sides and sit on its roof.

We FOCUS ON Hasari and his family. They stand close together, frozen, hanging onto each other and clinging to their possessions in the middle of the human anthill that swirls around them.

Gradually, the platform clears. The crowd is soaked into the station. The Pal family stays where it is. The father, the mother, the three children lost in a new world.

Hasari leaves the group. He makes for a slew of sweet and tea sellers.

WIDE SHOT

He shows a piece of paper to one of the sellers. With a series of operatic gestures the man describes to Hasari how to make his way to where he wants to go. It looks like it's going to be a long and complicated journey. The seller is getting carried away. Hasari is finding it difficult to follow.

ON ALOKA AND CHILDREN

She senses someone near her. A hand stretches out. It's deformed. Aloka looks up. It's a beggar, face half-hidden, and eaten away by leprosy. A terrifying image.

EXT. CINEMA MARQUEE - DAY

The FRAME is FILLED by a poster above the entrance to a large local cinema. An Indian film. The painted face of a doe-eyed movie star. It's a love story.

We see Manooj. He's looking at a display of photographs from the film. He's in ecstasy. He's got a bundle slung over one shoulder. He's standing stock still, fascinated.

His family have stopped a few yards further on. They're waiting for the laggard. It's a shabby part of town. People go in and out of the cinema.

Hasari waves at Manooj. Unwillingly, the boy drags himself away from the cinema and goes to his parents. The family shoulders their bundles. The biggest is carried by Aloka. Hasari looks at his piece of paper, looks around, then sets off into the crowd, and the noise, and the traffic.

EXT. COURTYARD OF TALL BUILDING - DAY

Hasari and his family emerge into a huge courtyard. The building is old, with thick walls, and each floor opens out onto a balcony draped with washing, hanging out to dry. The courtyard is dotted with muddy puddles, oil stains, discarded bits and pieces. Children play in the wheel-less body of an old car. A couple of women are cooking on an open hearth.

Hasari and Aloka are nervous. They look around the high building, wondering where to find the person they are looking for. Aloka looks anxious.

Hasari looks at her, reads her expression.

HASARI

It'll be alright.

Aloka hopes that it will, but centuries of tradition ensure that she says nothing.

They cross the courtyard. We see them talk to an old woman, Hasari, paper in hand, explains who they're looking for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They disappear into the maw of the building and make their way up a large stone staircase.

INT. DAS' FLAT - DAY

DAS is a soft, fat man, flopped onto a pile of cushions in the corner of his gloomy room. Indolent as a stroked cat, Das is enjoying the attention of a teenage boy, kneeling beside him as he massages Das' leg.

The room is full of assorted objects: bicycle frames, tins of jam, packs of American cigarettes, Scotch whiskey ... petty black market stuff.

Shadows appear in the doorway that leads onto the stairway and the courtyard.

Hasari and his family, backlit, stand with their baggage in the doorway. They are silent and fearful as if they've just arrived from the moon.

DAS

Well, can I help you?

Hasari greets him.

HASARI

My name is Hasari... Hasari Pal.
I'm looking for Mr. Sinha...

Against the light, he's just a silhouette.

DAS

I can hardly see you. Step in.

Hasari comes into the room. He goes on:

HASARI

Mr. Sinha? He's a friend... he said if I ever came to Calcutta ... needed anything... I should come to him.

Hasari gives him the paper. Das looks at it, shaking his head and grunting.

DAS

This heat is a curse... Well, Mr. Sinha gave you an address alright. But not his address. My address.

Hasari looks pole-axed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

Not his address?

DAS

No.

Hasari and Aloka look at each other, uncertain what to do next.

DAS

I suppose you have some awful tale of woe to sadden my day. Some malevolence has visited your village?

HASARI

Yes, babu. The sky held back the rain. Three years without rain. Terrible. Even the tears dried out in our eyes. Nothing came out of the earth but debts.

DAS

Why are those children staring at me? Some people's misery brings bad luck to everybody...

HASARI

Well, but the drought, babu... it drove us out. Is it possible to stay... just for a few days...?

DAS

To stay here? Now, I'm getting upset. Are you sure you haven't just come to torment me?... Feroze!

An enormous young man who has been lying on the bed in the gloom, sits up. Das waves at the children.

DAS

You should put your children out to beg. The girl, she could be a nice source of income... Feroze, show them how to get to the street.

And Das lies back, dismissing them with a wave of his hand.

EXT. CHOWRINGHEE LANE - DAY

The city is pulsating in the midday heat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The crowds are out in the Maidan. Every kind of battered truck and bus and taxi and cart is making its way through the streets. A few clean and cared-for ambassador cars sweep into the gateway of the Grand Hotel. The Pal family -- a fragile group in this seething mass of people -- are wearily making their way down the road. They stop at the edge of the park.

SHAMBU

Daddy... I'm tired. Where are we going to sleep tonight?

HASARI

Somewhere, we'll see. Let's rest a moment.

The family puts their bundles and bags down by the side of a low wall. Across the way a thin policeman is sharing a cigarette with a group of traders. Hasari takes out his precious bundle of rupees and gives one to Manooj. He indicates a stall just across the main road.

HASARI

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

Manooj, delighted with his task, sets off into the traffic under the anxious gaze of Aloka. Hasari settles Shambu on the pavement.

They find themselves close to a family who had made a semi-permanent home on this bit of pavement. The MAN, who has grizzled thin hair, throws Hasari a sympathetic look.

ARUN (MAN)

God is above and Mother Earth below. But it costs money to find shelter inbetween... brother.

And he throws a look towards the policeman, who is swinging his stick, lightly, to and fro.

HASARI

Well, we hope to find a room...

Arun laughs lightly. His face says that they have been doing the same. For a long time.

ARUN

Yes... well, a city is a wonderful place. Full of rooms. Yes...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARUN'S WIFE offers the family water from a cup.

SITA (ARUN'S WIFE)
People who have no place, go to
the riverbank...

There is a brief pause. Hasari drinks, then says
positively.

HASARI
I am looking for work, too...

Arun's face creases into a smile. He pats Hasari on the
shoulder.

ARUN
Friend... if I knew, I'd be
happy to tell you.

Aloka gives a worried look. Hasari swallows, forces a
smile. The family sit, gathering their strength.

EXT. CINEMA - DAY

A riot of color, adventure, fast cars and beautiful
women and handsome men. One beautiful woman, painted
twice the size of the rest, is an actress with doe eyes.
The hoarding tells us she's called Nirupa.

Manooj, clutching a bunch of bananas, is staring,
mesmerized at the display. A SOFT VOICE makes him
turn around. He is looking up into the face of a tall
man with dark eyes and a sweet smile.

GANGOOLY
It's a beautiful film. I've
seen it four times.

Manooj looks at him, unsure what to say.

GANGOOLY
I suppose you were thinking of
slipping in without paying, eh?
Well, I was young once... My
name is Gangooly. Mister Gangooly.
And you are Mister...?

MANOOJ
Manooj.

GANGOOLY
Manooj? Very nice. Well, Mister
Manooj, where do you live?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANOOJ

Bankuli... well, here. Nowhere.
We are looking.

Gangooly gives a sad smile.

GANGOOLY

We are looking? Very nice. From
the village. Yes? All the
family on the street?

He sucks on his teeth for a moment. Then feels in his
pocket and pulls out a two-rupee note. He slides it
into Manooj's palm.

GANGOOLY

For the cinema... no, don't thank
me. I may be able to help...

He makes a little snake-like movement with his hand.

GANGOOLY

This is a slippery place. And
if I can't help, my name is not
Mister Gangooly. Bankuli, you
say? Very nice... now take me
to your good father.

And Gangooly, who has a pronounced limp, steers Manooj
into the traffic.

EXT. SMALL BUILDING IN BACK STREET - DAY

A brick slides out of the wall. We are behind the brick
and see Gangooly's soft face as he reaches in and pulls
out a key.

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

INT. SMALL BUILDING - ROOM - DAY

We are in a small ground floor room. Through the patched
window we can make out the impoverished outlines of
the small street.

The room is small, there is a cage occupied by two parrots.
In one corner, a little altar dedicated to the goddess
Lakshmi, is decorated with some flowers, and behind a torn
plastic curtain, is a corner, part kitchen, part washplace,
containing a tap with running water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The street door opens.

Gangooly appears, followed by Hasari and the family. Gangooly glances quickly around the room, then beckons the Pals inside. They look amazed. Gangooly launches into his pitch.

GANGOOLY

Well, here it is. Be free -- look around.

He gestures at the parrots.

GANGOOLY

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

He bows briefly in front of the altar.

GANGOOLY

You see, Lakshmi will watch over your stay -- surely, surely, she will.

He shows them the little washing corner.

GANGOOLY

And now, one of the miracles of life in the city. Now look, and one, and two, and three!

He turns on the tap, and a stream of water gurgles out.

The faces of the Pal family light up.

GANGOOLY

Water! Holy water from the Ganges! Flows out forever...

For a moment Gangooly has the family hypnotized.

GANGOOLY

Touch it... come!

Manooj and Shambu put their hands under the tap. The water splashes down.

GANGOOLY

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

They drink. Gangooly claps his hands in delight. Then beckons Hasari to one side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANGOOLY

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

Hasari pulls out his little screw of money.

HASARI

I have only seventy-five...

GANGOOLY

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

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

GANGOOLY

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

He turns on his heel, stops at the door:

GANGOOLY

Don't thank me... I'll come tomorrow. What beautiful children, beautiful.

And he is gone.

INT. SMALL BUILDING - ROOM - LATER

LAUGHTER from Aloka and Amrita. Joyful SHOUTS from the children. Hasari is alone in the main room, on his knees, in front of the pile of their baggage and bundles. He's just opened an old suitcase. In it there is a humble assortment of things: some clothes, some bowls, a little wooden box of primitive water colours, and an old metal tea box.

Hasari opens it delicately. It's full to the brim with something brown. He pushes his fingers in and feels with a tenderness that's almost religious -- what we see is earth. He is deeply moved. He takes a pinch of earth to his nose and, eyes closed, breathes in the smell. Then he carefully closes the box and puts it back into the suitcase.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The LAUGHTER and SHOUTING from the "bathing area" is growing.

INT. BATHING AREA - SMALL ROOM - DAY

Shambu is paddling near the tap. Aloka, standing, is bending over towards the drain. The dark, heavy mass of her hair is running with the water that Amrita is pouring over her head from a pot.

Manooj is nearby, rubbing himself with an old towel. Hasari enters unnoticed and looks at the group with sudden tenderness. A smile almost forms on his face. They are in luck, all of them.

In the other room, a door bangs open. A MAN shouts:

MAN

What's all this stuff... What's all this...?

The family freeze. A Man, red with anger, pulls the curtain aside. A moment -- then he bursts out:

MAN

What are you doing here?

The shock silences Hasari. Aloka's wet hair drips down her sari without her noticing.

MAN

Who are you?

Hasari manages a mumble:

HASARI

My name is Pal, Hasari... Mr. Gangooly rented this space to us while you were away.

MAN

What's this rubbish... Gangooly?

HASARI

Well, you must be his cousin, Mr. Moti.

MAN

I don't know any Gangooly, and I'm not anyone's cousin. My name is Binal.

Hasari, shocked, and his heart sinking, tries to explain the unexplainable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

But this is true... we even paid
to him a deposit of fifty rupees...
rent in advance.

Furious, Binal starts to shout, making for the door
where a small crowd, attracted by the noise, has
already gathered and are adding their views.

BINAL

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

The scene is beginning to get nasty. Binal is throwing
things out onto the street. It doesn't prevent him
from picking up a rather ugly stick. The odd
sympathizer meets with a snarl from Binal:

BINAL

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

Hasari looks at Manooj, who drops his eyes. Hasari
and the children start to collect the remainder of
their possessions.

BINAL

They're lucky I don't kill them.

EXT. SMALL STREET - DAY

The street is now surprisingly full of neighbors, some
of whom are giving full vent to their natural curiosity,
some giving vent to their natural love of drama. But
there is a suppressed violence in the air. This could
turn nasty. Someone pushes Aloka. Hasari confronts
him. The sweat streams down his face. A woman takes
Aloka's arm.

MAHNAZ

Come -- you and the children can
be with me. Let your man be on
the street...

She swings round and lets fly a stream of invectives
at the crowd.

MAHNAZ

Come... he'll survive.

Aloka shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAHNAZ

Don't want to leave your man, eh?

You'll learn! Go to the river.

Try to squeeze yourself in there...

And she turns back to the fray, separating the pushing men.

HIGH ANGLE

We see the little family making their way out of the street, trying to keep up their pride.

EXT. VICTORIA MONUMENT - STREET - EVENING

The usual life of Calcutta is broiling away. Buses, vendors, carts, a gaggle of rickshaw pullers. Children are begging at car windows. The Pals stand uncertain. Then Hasari shoulders his burden and the rest of the family follows as he heads off towards the river. We HOLD ON THEM till they grow small against the setting sun and the huge gleaming white domes of the Victoria Monument.

EXT. SUDDER STREET HOTEL - WIDE SHOT - TAXI - EVENING

The street is empty. No, not quite. A thin white cow lies lazily on the ground. Night is falling -- the frenzied activity of the day has wound down. There is the sound of a CAR PULLING UP. The cow lazily inclines it's head towards the noise. A taxi has just driven up to the modest hotel, not far from Chowringhee Lane.

Max, looking relaxed but jet-lagged, gets out of the taxi. He's wearing jeans and a floral shirt that could only have been made in Florida. Max stands for a moment surveying the hotel. It looks as if a loud noise would make the whole structure collapse in a cloud of dust. It announces it's name proudly in what were once gold painted tin letters: GRAND P LACE. The missing "A" is leaning against the wall some two feet below the sign. Max shakes his head and gets back into the taxi.

EXT. GREEN ACRES HOTEL - EVENING

The taxi is waiting in a small walled and well planted courtyard. The hotel is old fashioned, painted green, and is called Green Acres. The sign has all its letters. A faded, painted Maharajah stands near the doorway advertising the delights of B.O.A.C.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's a step up from the P LACE, not a huge step, but a step nonetheless. Max emerges from the foyer with a BELLMAN. He signs the taxi driver to hand over the bags.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - EVENING

The bath has brownish stains along the middle, the water has a brownish tinge as it flows out of the tap. Max looks at it with slight distaste. The Bellman turns the tap off.

MAX

Does it stay brown? When I was at school they used to call me Suds... I kind of like my water white...

The Bellman nods wisely, heads for the door.

BELLMAN

Anything more Sahib? Would you like lady Sahib? Very sweet girl, good nature, very sweet... or boy very good...

MAX

I don't think so...

The Bellman suddenly decides that he likes Max. He smiles a huge smile.

BELLMAN

No like boy?... You like something to smoke... Mmmmmh very good for smoke!

MAX

No thanks. I like to grow my own.

This tickles the Bellman's fancy and he laughs in an open asthmatic giggle. He tries again, as Max starts to unpack.

BELLMAN

Very nice girl, verry nice! Otherwise you will be verry much on your own... she verry sweet!

MAX

Well, I'll see. Maybe tomorrow.

The Bellman gives another asthmatic chuckle. Tickled by the word "tomorrow". He shuffles out.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Max has finished unpacking. He doesn't have much with him. On the table we notice a trumpet case. Max is pinning the little photograph of the Indian Boy (we saw on the wall in Miami) onto the door of the wardrobe. He steps back to survey his handiwork. He walks to the bed, sits on it. Lies down. Picks up a book. Puts it down. He looks at the ceiling. It is flaking. A lizard clings to it. Mocks at Max with a small croak. Max feels a sudden wave of dejection.

MAX

Oh God! What the heck did I do
this for!

There is a knock at the door. With a sigh, Max gets up. He opens the door. In the corridor stands the Bellman, he is sporting his infectious grin. In front of him stands a GIRL. She's not very tall but she is undeniably beautiful. The Bellman chuckles and pushes the Girl into the room.

BELLMAN

Verry good girl! Verrry sweet!
Tomorrow...

And enjoying himself hugely he closes the door. Max looks at the Girl. She's outrageously made up.

MAX

How old are you?

GIRL

Twenty, Sahib?

MAX

Twenty huh! Have you eaten...
Supper, have you had supper?

GIRL

Supper?

MAX

Yeah, the meal that kids your age,
usually have before bedtime.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - LATER

Max is smoking the Monte Cristo and watching the Girl finish off the last of a meal. It's nothing special but the Girl is hungry. Max watches while she wraps a small piece of fish in the paper napkin. She looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Now, time for home...

The Girl looks at him surprised. And a little distressed. Max realizes that she might get into trouble for not pleasing him. He pulls out some notes.

MAX

For you.

As he gives her the money she reaches up and kisses him. Torn, Max responds to the kiss, begins to kiss back, stops himself.

MAX

Okay! Great, now out you go.

At the door she kisses him again.

MAX

Hmm! That's nice. Work on it,
then get in touch in five years...
Okay?

He eases her out of the door, closes it, stands against it. There is a gentle KNOCK on the door. Max debates. The KNOCK AGAIN. Max loses the debate. Opens the door. The Girl is there, slight, shy smile.

MAX

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

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

EXT. HOWRAH BRIDGE - RIVERBANK - DAWN

In the dawn light the huge silhouette of the bridge is etched against the sky.

After their humiliating flight from Binal's house, Hasari and his family have found refuge here, by the river. Tiny figures huddled together with their baggage and bundles, near a tree on the bank, not far from the steps that dip down to the smooth water.

It's an infinitely tranquil dawn. Next to his sleeping family, Manooj lies with his eyes open, awake, staring up at the sky spread above the enormous city. He gets up quietly and, light as a cat, goes and squats next to the river.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We HOLD ON him as he looks pensively at this new world spread out before him: the bridge, the amazing structure that links the two parts of Calcutta, heavy barges moored midstream. A boat with a red sail sliding silently over the thick water.

Not far away on the riverbank, other huddled groups of destitute are making thin spirals of blue smoke from their tiny open fires.

Someone comes and sits next to Manooj. It's Hasari. They sit there for a moment without moving, sharing the silence. Manooj takes something out of his pocket. It's the crumpled two rupees given to him by Gangooly.

MANOOJ

I forgot... Mister Gangooly. He gave me these.

Hasari takes the proffered money. Gives a faint smile.

HASARI

Money... in this place it's as difficult to hold as a wild bird.

He reaches out and ruffles Manooj's hair. And they sit, near their sleeping family, under the rising sun, preparing for what the day may bring.

INT. JUTE MILL - DAY

A flaking grey wall, half-obsured with moldering flies. To the left, a grilled window lets in a little light and the quiet supplications of those outside.

An old clerk is working at a desk. A VOICE calls out. The clerk looks up, crossing to the grill.

Hasari's face through the bars. A TRUCK RUMBLES past, drowning out the words. But we can make out the words, "Trade Union". The old clerk shakes his head sadly. He goes back to his desk. Hasari hangs onto the window. Someone moves him on.

EXT. JUTE MILL - DAY

Hasari comes out through the gates. Past a line of disconsolate men waiting for a job. The guard stops him at the gate, wants his bribe.

EXT. BARA BAZAAR - DAY

Hasari is struggling through the bazaar. It's obvious that he's walked a lot and that he's tired. He looks with amazement at the jewelers behind their bars. Their treasures glint in the light behind them. A girl of Amrita's age is trying on a ring, watched by a plump and indulgent mother.

INT. BARA BAZAAR - WORKSHOP - DAY

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

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

Hasari stands at the dock gates. The man behind shakes his head. He points. Hasari looks. A line of a hundred men stretches from a door. A man is in the doorway. He's holding a board and his hand is in the air, indicating three. We look at Hasari's face, increasingly desperate.

EXT. QUAYSIDE - BARGE - DAY

The midday sun is blinding. A long plank stretches from a barge, loaded with sacks of cement, to the riverbank. Howrah Bridge dominates the b.g. Even from a distance we can make out Hisari. He is part of a column of ragged men unloading the sacks. Each man carries one on his head. They load up a truck, then they walk back along a parallel plank onto the barge for another load.

The merry-go-round of porters, streaming with sweat, moves ceaselessly, monotonously: the men resemble a colony of ants.

INT. CLINIC - LOW ANGLE - DAY

A pair of smooth, strong brown feet emerging from a sari with a blue border, makes its way towards us. Next to them, a pair of feet in white sneakers does the same. The sneakered feet dance about every so often, like a boxer's. The floor is clean, shiny, grey concrete. Every so often a shaft of sunlight indicates a window.

MAX

I'm sorry I'm so late. I had a little trouble getting started this morning... and since I'm working for free, I figured I couldn't get docked for showing up late...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We see the corridor. Max and a sweet-faced Indian Sister are coming towards us.

MAX

... Just joking, Sister.

SISTER JOHN acknowledges the joke with a half-smile.

MAX

So, do I have a roster... I mean,
how do we work here? What's the
system?

Again the half-smile. The Sister speaks softly:

SISTER JOHN

You arrive in the morning. You
leave at night.

MAX

No, I meant with the patients...
the system.

The Sister nods her head, but says nothing. Max looks at her, realizing that whatever the system is, it's likely to be a surprise.

INT. DISPENSARY CLINIC - DAY

The door swings open. Max and the Sister come into the little grey room. Simple blue shelves line the walls. Dotted about are boxes of medicines, bandages, syringes, disinfectant, etc., but the shelves are mostly empty. Sister John crosses to a plain wooden table. Next to it stands a single blue wooden chair. A large picture of a sweetly smiling Christ hangs on one wall. Under it is the exhortation "Love Them."

SISTER JOHN

This is the dispensary.

She crosses and opens the wooden shutters on a small window.

MAX

Great...

He looks around the little room, taking in the empty shelves, the bareness. His heart sinks, but he puts on a smile.

MAX

Okay! So.. where do I wash up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pushes the sleeves of his Banana Republic shirt up his arms -- holds his hands in the manner of surgeons the world over.

SISTER JOHN

Over there.

She indicates a single cold water tap sticking out of the wall. Under it is a bucket. The drain is in the floor. Max looks at it. It's clean, but it isn't Cedars Sinai.

Max nods, then half claps, half rubs his hands together.

MAX

And where are the patients?

Sister John, who is unpacking surgical dressings, nods towards another door. Max walks over and opens it.

The room is not more than thirty-feet long. But there must be close on a hundred men, women and children in it. A tableau vivant of the sick and needy. Max is thunder-struck.

INT. CLINIC - HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is surprisingly tall. A stone stair winds up near some tall windows. They are shaded to keep out the sun. MICHELLE, a young French volunteer of about twenty-four, has a stack of windowpanes on a table in front of her, and she is washing the glass with water from two aluminum bowls. She's feeling the heat and wipes at her face with her arm. She notices a figure in the doorway. It's Max, caught by a slant of light as he stands in the door. He looks spent. There are sweat stains under the arms of his once crisp Banana Republic shirt. Michelle gives him a sympathetic grin.

MICHELLE

Asleep on your feet, Doctor?

MAX

Yeah... it's a technique they teach at medical school.

There is suddenly rather a lot he'd like to tell her about his day. She looks alive and attractive. He throws her a smile.

MICHELLE

Welcome to India! You here for long?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

I don't know... month or so maybe... I was flipping through a magazine. Saw some stuff on this clinic. You know. One face got to me I guess. Just a kid...

He grins a self-deprecating little laugh. It's a sound Michelle likes.

MICHELLE

Yes, I know... I've been here five months... then I go to Zurich. I'm training as an investment broker.

She gives an "I'm serious" grin.

A voice calls out from one of the archways. It's a young sister with the radiant face of an angel. Max glances across at her, nods, takes a breath. Gives Michelle a wry look.

MAX

See you around.

And he crosses into the archway.

INT. CLINIC - WOMEN'S WARD - DAY

The ward is large and the walls are a shiny dark grey. On one of the low beds a young Indian girl, no more than ten or eleven, is staring at something with her large, serious, and fever-filled eyes.

Max, with the stethoscope in his ears, is listening to the breathing of an emaciated woman in a red sari. Her back glistens with the light sweat of fever.

Max straightens up. There are lines of low beds on either side of a central aisle. There appears to be no other trained medics, but the Sister and a couple of young volunteers seem to have an idea of what to do if the need arises. The ward is clean but spartan.

Max addresses the Sister:

MAX

This woman's suffering from malnutrition...

SISTER

Yes. She was brought in this morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The woman says something Max doesn't understand. The Sister is fixing a drip. She translates.

SISTER

She says you're very handsome.

Max can't resist a pleased smile. He looks at the old woman. She laughs shyly and pats his cheek.

The little girl sits, eyes fixed on Max. She watches his movements as he makes the old lady comfortable.

Max gets up. Looks around the long room. He looks very tired, overwrought almost. He catches sight of the girl. His eyes lock onto hers. She gazes at him. Max crosses to her. He looks at some scribbled notes. Then looks at the girl's solemn eyes. As he reads the pencilled medical history hanging on the end of the bed, his eyes cloud over. The child never takes her eyes off his face. Softly he asks:

MAX

What's your name?

She stares at him, silently. He leans towards her and repeats softly:

MAX

People call me Max, what do they call you?

The voice of the Indian Sister makes him turn his head. She's a touch irritated.

SISTER

She won't understand you... she's called Madhavi.

Max glances at the medical notes in his hand. Instinctively moving away from the little patient.

MAX

Meningitis... cerebro spinal...?

He looks at the Sister. She nods coolly.

SISTER

They brought her in two nights ago. She was on the streets. Doctor Chandragupta came in to see her...

Max glances sharply at the child, suddenly incensed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Well, what's she doing here? She should be in the hospital.

SISTER

This is a place of last resort, Doctor. She was brought here from the hospital. She has no one... Doctor Chandragupta has done what he can. Now, it's up to God.

Max looks down at the child. Suddenly she holds out her hand. Max takes it. She pulls him down -- her face looking into his. Suddenly she's cradled into Max's arm: he holds her. It's almost as though she has some kind of hold over him. Has touched somewhere deep that doesn't want to be touched.

EXT. RIVERBANK - HOWRAH BRIDGE - EVENING

Hasari, clutching some bananas and dried grain, is standing by the tree where the family have made their camp. The space has been cleared. There is the sign of a dead fire or two, otherwise the space has been taken over by trucks. Hasari looks around in a panic. There is no sign of his family.

EXT. HOWRAH BRIDGE - ROAD - EVENING

In a panic, Hasari searches without success.

EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - EVENING

Hasari thinks he sees a familiar figure. It's Arun. He runs.

HASARI

Friend... have you seen my...?

Shambu appears from behind Arun, runs toward his father. Aloka and Amrita rise up from the sea of people. Manooj follows Shambu. Hasari sweeps Shambu up in his arms.

SHAMBU

A man came... he was angry. He made us go away.

MANOOJ

He needed the space for his trucks. He didn't listen. The police came.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari comes together with the rest of his family.

ALOKA

These friends have found a space
here. They will share with us.

Hasari looks at the small space being offered. The roof is made up of old cardboard and cloth. And half an old movie poster. We can just make out the face of the doe-eyed star.

HASARI

I found work this afternoon. I
would be proud if you could share
our food with us.

Everybody looks at the food. There is no disguising their hunger.

EXT. HOUSE OF DOE-EYED STAR - NIGHT

The house is set back from the road. Once it was magnificent, now its magic is a product of its decay. Quite a number of ambassador cars are drawn up in its driveway. People are coming and going.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY/STAIRCASE - NIGHT

A waiter, in a jacket as faded as the house, is carrying around a little tray of Indian delicacies. A party is taking place. There's no lack of beautiful women, or ordinary, or ugly people.

A little group of photographers have persuaded the hostess to give them a "photo opportunity." She's NIRUPA KALIKINKAR, and she is the star whose face set Manooj's heart beating outside the cinema.

Max is sitting on a sofa holding a glass of whiskey and wondering if he's on the moon. He's changed his clothes, but the humidity has already made them rumple.

Nirupa has caught sight of the figure of this isolated American, and it intrigues her. She signals one last photo.

Max swigs the last gulp of his drink, and finds the svelte figure of the star sitting next to him.

NIRUPA

The expression on your face. It's
either boredom or jet lag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max warms to the almost tangible sensuality that emanates from this exquisitely-dressed woman. He gives her a teasing look.

MAX

How about if I say I'm just
craving a Big Mac and some French
fries.

NIRUPA

When I pine for something, it's
usually because my morale needs
boosting. Come...

And she takes Max by the hand and leads him towards the stairs.

INT. HOUSE - TOP OF STAIRS - NIGHT

Nirupa and Max make their way through the crowd towards us. She knows every member of this group of Calcutta glitterati who are here to orbit around her risen star.

NIRUPA

Personally I adore jet lag. I
can behave abominably and disclaim
all responsibility... did I hear
an American accent?

Max nods. He is quickly falling under the spell of this woman whose eyes seem to belie the flippancy of her words.

They are nearing the top of the stairs. Nirupa points Max towards a patrician-looking man surrounded by a doting group in Indian clothes.

NIRUPA

My elder brother, Raghuram. He's
a film director. He takes life
very seriously. When I find life
getting too serious, I go out and
eat lots of little cream cakes
at Flury's Restaurant and wait
for the feeling to disappear.
Don't I, Raghuram? This is
Mister...

And she throws Max a questioning look. Max introduces himself to the patrician Indian.

MAX

Doctor... Doctor Loeb.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tall Indian gives Max a hooded look. He's too well-known to bother to introduce himself.

RAGHURAM

Doctor... I hope you are enjoying Calcutta. We have some wonderful museums here...

Nirupa cuts him off with a mischievous laugh.

NIRUPA

Yes! And a wonderful film festival! I shall tell Mister... Doctor Loeb all about it. Come...

And she steers Max into the main room.

INT. HOUSE - SALON - NIGHT

This room is a dirge to past glories. Faded paintings, dusty chandeliers, scrofulous animal trophies. The people in it are having a nice time however. A trio of musicians is playing Indian music on a little dais.

NIRUPA

Let me introduce you around, or tongues will start to wag...

Max would quite like them to wag, but Nirupa is sweeping him towards a woman with pale hair and a red dress.

NIRUPA

Now there is someone you must meet. This is an angel without wings. Joan... meet my good friend, Doctor Loeb.

JOAN is talking to a middle-aged Scot in a kilt. She turns to face Max and he finds himself looking into a pair of blue-grey, humorous, but direct eyes.

NIRUPA

Joan... Doctor Loeb... Joan Bethel... and this is Julian McIntyre. He does something unspeakable at the British High Commission...

She pats McINTYRE on the shoulder and then sweeps away. It's obvious from the look that McIntyre shoots her that he is hopelessly under her spell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McINTYRE

Hah! Did you know, laddie, that our delightful hostess has made no less than 162 films? She lives in Bombay... manages to star in three films at the same time.

MAX

Only 162? Someone should kick ass and help her find a good job. Does she belong to anybody?

McINTYRE

Husband. Laddie! Over here you belong to your husband, lock, stock an barrel, be he dead or alive. Hers is dead, bye the bye... Well, here's to you.

And with a sour grin he drains his glass and heads to intercept a waiter carrying a tray of drinks. Joan is staring at Max. It's more direct than rude, but the effect is disconcerting. After a pause, Joan says calmly:

JOAN

So, you're a doctor.

MAX

I guess so.

Again the appraising look.

EXT. HOUSE - TERRACE - NIGHT

The terrace looks out over a garden shared by rusty trees. High-rise apartment blocks loom over the garden. The grandeur of the empire has long since gone from this city. It's a full-time job just sweeping up the decay. Guests are talking and laughing, looking and being looked at, eating and drinking.

Max and Joan stop at the balustrade. Max is finishing a thought.

MAX

... guess this place must drive some people clean out've their minds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

It can certainly seem a bit screwball... for all its genuineness. It takes a bit of understanding.

MAX

No kidding. That's a genuine understatement. You should have it framed.

She replies half to herself.

JOAN

Twelve years.

MAX

What?

JOAN

I came here for a two-month trip... and I've been here for twelve years.

In the garden a PEACOCK SHRIEKS and unfurls its tail.

MAX

And... did you find what you were looking for?

The peacock furls its startling plumage.

JOAN

Sometimes... and sometimes I feel I'm on a shipwreck.

Max doesn't try to work out the significance of the allusion. He's too absorbed in his own preoccupations to snag himself on other people's.

Max feels her eyes on him again, penetratingly direct. He says, lightly:

MAX

Well...?

JOAN

Useful. I think we'll be able to find a use for you. Yes, yes I think so.

A sudden NOISE from the garden catches Max's attention.

Nirupa is being photographed next to the statue of a goddess displayed in a niche decorated with multicolored tiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She adopts a classical pose, feet turned out. She's graceful.

Max turns back to Joan, but she's not there.

A small round of applause from the garden is led by a woman sparkling with jewelry. Suddenly the peacock redeploys his wonderful tail and gives a triumphant shriek.

EXT. HOWRAH BRIDGE - RIVERBANK - NIGHT

It's a calm night. Calcutta sleeps. The Pals are lying under a primitive shelter of sticks and plastic. The family seems to be asleep. Aloka's body trembles slightly, her back is resting against Hasari, who has put a protective arm around her. He whispers softly:

HASARI
You're not asleep.

Aloka doesn't reply. We see that her face is running with tears. Hasari's hand passes gently over her features, feeling her tears.

HASARI (O.S.)
What is it, Aloka?

She doesn't dare reply. She kisses her husband's hand. She holds it close to her face. She cries silently.

HASARI
What's the matter?

She chokes back a sob, whispers:

ALOKA
I miss the village. There I could help... maybe I should go with the children to the cars...

They stay motionless. After a silence, Hasari asks:

HASARI
You mean beg?

She says nothing, just nods her head.

HASARI
No... that's not why we came here.

He holds her close to him. Caresses her, letting her feel his warmth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

I won't give in... I'll find a way. It will come.

We see Amrita... her big eyes open and full of the desire to help out.

EXT. BACK OF FLURY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

A tray of yesterday's food. Amongst them a cream cake or two is being handed out to a line of the destitute. Hasari is in the line and gets his tiny morsel. He eats half, puts the rest in a bag.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Hasari puts a small offering of rose petals on a lingam of Shiva. The black cylindrical stone stares at him. He offers a prayer. His head is aching, his belly screaming with hunger. He looks left and right. Across the street along a flecked and pitted brown wall, a small group of men, women and children are rooting around in the garbage for any stray item that can be recycled. Hasari watches them a moment, wondering if there would be room for him. He feels a tug at his elbow. It's a small MAN wearing a thick pair of scholarly spectacles.

RAFIK (MAN)

Why do you think of foraging like an animal? When you can do something simple for much more.

Hasari swallows and stares at the little man.

INT. PARK STREET BLOOD DISPENSARY - DAY

We see Hasari's arm. The needle injected -- the blood flowing into a bottle. Hasari is seated on a stool. Watching his blood leave his body. His face streams with sweat.

HASARI

I thought you were only taking a little.

ATTENDANT

We pay more, friend... we take more. It'll pass. But don't give more for a month.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari looks at the two waiting men. The little man in spectacles and the thin man. They are chatting easily and exchanging cigarettes with another attendant. Hasari's VISION BLURS. He holds on to the Attendant to keep his balance. He starts to fall, and the SCREEN GOES BLANK.

EXT. BLOOD BANK - DAY

Hasari, trying hard to pull himself together, is paying off the touts. The thin man takes five rupees and bows a farewell. The bloodman takes his share.

RAFIK

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

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

HASARI

What are those?

RAFIK

Vitamins. They give back strength
to the blood. Take these and you
can give again in one week...

Hasari considers.

RAFIK

Even with what you've given, you
have thirty-seven rupees... at one
blow! How much does a mounted
policeman make? Half, my friend...
half!

He pours the pills into Hasari's hand. Hasari hesitates, then swallows them down.

RAFIK

I'll meet you here in one week?
At this time.

And he's gone, leaving Hasari to regain his strength as best he can.

EXT. DESTITUTES' ENCAMPMENT - EVENING

A little group of foodstuffs: chapatties, dal, small bananas, etc. We see Aloka, Amrita and Shambu staring at the little pile of gifts in awe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Some way off, Manooj, arrested in midblow, stares too, as he crouches next to a small barely-flickering fire.

Hasari, slowly, almost comically, unpacks an assortment of modest packets from a little hessian bag. He puts the things in front of Aloka -- like a small offering -- proudly he unwraps them: fruit, pulse, pulse, coconut.

Faces light up at this treasure.

Hasari looks at them with a rush of tenderness. They look at him marvelling, but he's exhausted. His eyes half close. Unconsciously, he rubs his arm, the one he gave blood from to feed his family. Arun looks at Hasari with a mixture of shrewdness and concern.

INT. CLINIC - NIGHT

The clinic is lit by one or two night lights. In the hallway a desk light illuminates a small room near the bathing area. Michelle is sitting reading.

The clinic is never silent, people move relentlessly, cough, or cry out. A young volunteer, Janet, the Australian girl, is whispering quietly to an old man who needs to be coaxed back to bed.

In the distance we hear the sound of the MAIN DOORS being UNLOCKED. We hear MAX's soft but cheerful GREETING to the old doorman. He makes his way down the corridor towards Michelle. He does his little boxer's dance step. He takes off his jacket, and enters the little side room.

MAX

Morning shift... bad night?

The question is rhetorical. Max feels in the pockets of his jacket, pulls out a newspaper-wrapped packet.

MAX

Almond and pistachio... one for you and the other for Madhavi... I might be able to persuade her to eat them... you never know...

Then he stops as he looks at Michelle's face. He looks away. Then back again. Her face tells him what he doesn't want to hear.

MAX

Oh, shit...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Michelle nods. Max is fighting to hold himself together.

MAX

When...?

MICHELLE

About four o'clock this morning...
I'm sorry.

Max looks at her. Trying to convince himself that he's not beginning to hurt. He runs his fingers through his hair.

INT. WARD - DAWN

Max walks into the women's ward. He looks down the length of the room. Madhavi's bed: still with its 8, is empty. The single blanket gone. Max stares at the bed.

INT. CLINIC - HALLWAY - MORNING

Through the open door, we can see a van unloading the day's crop of the sick and dying. Max is sitting at the desk. A cold cup of tea in front of him. He's only half-looking at the door. Abruptly he gets up. Picks his jacket off the back of the chair and walks towards the entrance.

Joan, holding a small and glowing baby, comes in through the doorway. She almost collides with Max.

JOAN

Max... hello!

But Max says nothing, just walks straight past and out through the doors, and, in a moment, he's passed OUT OF SIGHT. Joan looks after him, her strong face creased in a slight frown.

EXT./INT. BUS - DAY

Max's face imprisoned behind glass. Images of Calcutta float across the window of the bus, but it's hard to tell whether Max's brain registers what his eyes see.

He is slouched in a corner. Opposite him a row of young novices say their rosaries in sweetly-accented English. But Max just stares sightlessly out of the window.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The street is as crowded as usual. The bus swerves around a pothole. It nearly knocks over a pedestrian. It's Hasari, who, running to avoid the bus, collides with a rickshaw, causing it to swerve. It nearly hits a cart, swerves back dangerously in front of a tram. The puller slips, the tram grinds to a halt inches from the fallen rickshaw puller and his vehicle, with its passenger, a blind and venerable Brahmin.

The driver and the conductor of the tram let fly a tirade of insults and instructions.

The blind Brahmin sits unperturbed, waiting for his journey to resume.

The rickshaw puller has sprained his ankle badly and is wincing with the pain.

Hasari is trying to collect his small collection of parcels that have fallen onto the road.

A general agreement has begun between a contingent from the tram, and the rickshaw puller, a man in his 40's called RAM. He in turn, is yelling at Hasari.

Someone pulls the rickshaw out of the way of the tram. The tram moves off.

The blind Brahmin sits impassively in the rickshaw, now held by the limping Ram, waiting for his journey to resume.

All this has happened in a flash. Hasari is eating what he can't save. Ram's voice rings out through the traffic.

RAM (PULLER)

Hey, you! Ten years I've pulled
this machine and never seen such a
fool...

He's hopping around like a wounded bird. His ankle is badly sprained. He shouts at Hasari:

RAM

I should beat the life out of you!
What do you think this is? Some
village street?

He turns to his impassive passenger.

RAM

Just a moment to be patient, sir,
one moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ram rolls his eyes helplessly. Tries a hobbling step or two. Hasari sees Ram's dilemma. He moves forward to help.

HASARI

I've never pulled a rickshaw
but...

RAM

You have legs and arms, what more
do you need? Come on! I have to
eat, too...

Hasari does as he's bid. He gives the remainder of his food parcels to Ram. He slides in between the shafts of the rickshaw. He tries to pull, but the center of gravity is not easy to find. The rickshaw tips up -- Hasari's feet leave the ground and Ram pulls him back to earth. The Brahmin sits impassively. Hasari strains forwards. The rickshaw moves with him. Ram limps alongside, shouting instructions and oaths.

The Brahmin stays imperturbable -- he senses they are moving and is content. The little group make their way through the maelstrom.

Gaining confidence, Hasari begins to move quicker and quicker, earning shouts of approval from Ram who has trouble keeping up with him.

INT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

At first all we see are feet. The Goonda's in a pair of new running shoes. Then Ram's bare feet (left ankle bandaged) and then the bare feet of Hasari. They are walking on a marble floor.

This is the partitioned splendour of an old house sprinkled with the relics of a grand colonial past. Everything is baroque, rotting and somehow impressive.

Hasari has never been anywhere like this, and is caught between curiosity and the fear of breathing.

The three men walk into a large room, shuttered from the sunlight -- dusty, and packed with a ramshackle assortment of furniture: a large antique desk swimming with papers, an old Chesterfield, huge sofas, shelves of books, yellowy-green tropical plants, two fat blue tits perch in a cage next to an ambitious plaster portrait of Napoleon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sitting behind a desk, a thin young man leaning over a mirror, as he squeezes a recalcitrant pimple.

Near a large window, a sixty-year-old man in a European jacket and dhoti is working with intense concentration at repairing a pair of broken glasses with a twist of fine wire. It's a complicated little task, but the old man is patient and dexterous.

The man, leaning over the mirror, is ASHOKA. He is the son of GHATAK, the "Godfather" who, at the moment, only has time for his glasses.

The three new arrivals stand silent and respectful in front of the desk. At last, without raising his head, Ashoka speaks:

ASHOKA

Not a tongue between you then?

RAM

I spoke to Mr. Bhose. Let me explain it for your ears, sir. My ankle became sprained...

GOONDA

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

The Goonda places a small bundle of rupees on the desk. Ashoka raises his head and throws a bored glance at Hasari. Now that he's finished with his pimples, he starts on a plate of sweetcakes set nearby.

ASHOKA

So you are interested in being a horse?

Hasari holds his look.

HASARI

Yes, Babu.

ASHOKA

How much does he weigh...? He wants to be a horse and no one knows how much he weighs? And his lungs? How are they? Is he strong?

RAM

He will be very good, sir. I have witnessed it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tickled by his own pointless cruelty, Ashoka sneers:

ASHOKA

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

HASARI

Can I... umm...?

ASHOKA

Neigh! Like a horse.

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

The old man puts his glasses on his nose and walks up to the desk, barely glancing at his son.

GHATAK

Is that the telephone?

They listen. There is no sound, but Ashoka gets the message.

ASHOKA

Oh, yes...!

And he gets up and goes out, leaving his place to his father. Ghatak chews on a paan and casts a benevolent eye on Hasari.

GHATAK

Whoever has possession has rights... acha! So what is your name?

HASARI

Hasair Pal, Babu.

GHATAK

You are from Bihar? Yes...? When a man has left a home, he has been uprooted like a tree. You are with family?

HASARI

I have a wife, and three children, Babu.

GHATAK

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

He chews on this for a moment, then waves and pushes the plate of sweets toward Hasari.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ghatak opens a ledger. Hasari can barely contain his joy.

GHATAK
Stay loyal... these days it's a
crop nobody plants.

And he starts to make an entry in his book of numbers.

EXT. HOWRAH BRIDGE - NIGHT

Aloka, Manooj and Amrita pack up their bundles. The rickshaw stands by the side of the road. Ram is sitting in it, looking at Hasari who is holding Shambu in his arms. Arun gives them an embrace.

INT. RAM'S HOUSE (CITY OF JOY) - NIGHT

A door opens -- moonlight shines in. Faces peer through the door. Ram lights an oil lamp. In the glow, the family look around their tiny space. Hardly able to suppress smiles. They have a home.

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

About twenty tattered street kids' faces shining with enjoyment are running and shouting as they pursue something just OUT OF VISION. In a...

WIDE SHOT

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

Ram is standing near the center of the small square. He shouts out a command and Hasari struggles to bring the rickshaw to a stop. It's not easy and Ram has to dive out of the way to the accompaniment of hoots of laughter from the children.

EXT. SQUARE AND STREET - DAY

Feet are rushing TOWARDS US. The wheels of the rickshaw bounce over the ruts. They hit a bump. Hasari loses control, the sack tips back and Hasari is lifted into the air, feet kicking as he tries to regain his balance. Aloka and Amrita sitting near the bawling Ram can't hold back from laughing.

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

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

INT./EXT. GREEN ACRES HOTEL - DAY

The afternoon sun is bleaching the street. A barber, perched on the roadway, is delicately shaving the face of a client. A street pump is gushing water at a group of children who wash themselves in its cool brown flow. (NOTE: This should be a repeated image in the film.) Children's laughter fills the air. We are LOOKING DOWN into the street THROUGH slatted blinds. We EXPLORE the room, the beds, Max's backpack, a half-eaten plate of food, a FLY BUZZING around it. The fan turns lazily on the ceiling making a small photograph lying on the floor flutter up and down. It's the photo of an Indian child with a smile powerful enough to make the earth rotate. We FIND Max lying on the bed. He's unshaven and sweating profusely. His BACK is TO us. He turns over and we look at his face.

Max gives a start, he turns over in bed, looks towards the door. In the doorway of the bedroom stands Joan Bethel.

JOAN

Hello, Max... can I offer you a cup of tea before you leave us in Calcutta?

Max bristles at this and asks sharply:

MAX

Who says I'm leaving Calcutta?

JOAN

Everyone and no one. You only have to think of sneezing in this town and everyone will pull out a handkerchief.

Her blue eyes have locked onto his, strangely insistent but gentle.

JOAN

Just give me an hour or two. Well, will you be on for it, or not? My bus's just outside...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

No, I'm fine here... thanks!

Joan walks over to the window and flings it open.

JOAN

Place needs some air...

(looks at Max
sitting on the bed)

... you know, Max... sometimes
there are only four actions open
to a person: to fight, to share,
to spectate, or to run...

She picks his jacket up off the chair and drops it onto
his head.

JOAN

You'd best bring this, if you're
on for it.

Max flares up, puts his jacket back on the chair.

MAX

No, Miss Bethel, I won't be 'on
for it'! Thank you so much, but
I don't want to be preached at.
I don't want a cup of tea! I
don't want to go out! I don't
want any company! And don't look
at me like that -- I don't like
it, it's offensive!

She smiles lightly.

JOAN

Oh! It's offensive, is it?

MAX

Yes... offensive! That's what I
find it -- offensive!

JOAN

Well, I'm not persuaded... not
persuaded at all...

And she crosses to the door and calls out.

JOAN

Gopal... Ranjit...!

Max flings himself down on the bed in frustration. The
sound of a small stampede is heard outside the door.
It's a group of ten grinning kids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aged from nine to fourteen and a couple of very pretty girls. Max looks at them in shock.

JOAN

Well, children, meet Dr. Loeb...
One of America's premier
baseball coaches... Doctor Loeb
... meet the founder members of
the street kid's little league.

Max is looking at Joan, open-mouthed. Indeed, one of the smaller children is clutching a worn-looking softball.

JOAN

What do you say to Doctor Loeb,
children?

And the children chorus:

CHILDREN

Thank you...

Max gives in with a smile, a look at Joan, a laugh, and finally a shake of the head.

EXT. CALCUTTA STREET - HIGH ANGLE - DAY

A small van is worming its way through Calcutta's traffic as ever, part-dream, part-nightmare.

INT./EXT. SMALL VAN - DAY

This is really an old ambulance that is lent out by one of the charitable organizations. It's small, too small for two adults and ten highly-excited children.

JOAN

Thanks.

MAX

Forget it. I'm regretting this
already.

There is a burst of squealing and laughter from the children. Max looks at them.

JOAN

Actually this gang don't play
baseball. They play cricket.
But we thought you'd need the
company. If you take my meaning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

I take it.

She smiles. Max idly picks up a folded newspaper from the dashboard. He half-consciously glances at a picture of Nirupa, and then starts fiddling with his seat.

MAX

Doesn't this seat go back?

JOAN

No... it's stuck, too.

And Max gives her a long look.

EXT. VAN (IN STREETS) - DAY

The little bus with Joan at the helm and Max by her side navigates through a herd of cows and comes to stop in a muddy little street near a bustee.

Joan stops the bus near a tiny alley. Every corner is crammed with the fruits of some small industry -- cobblers, grinders, bidi sellers, food stalls, pot makers -- all are piled one on top of another. Often literally so.

The kids spill out of the van, some clutching packages of medicaments. Arms full of packages, Max clambers out of the badly-parked vehicle. Hampered by his size, and unable to see where he's going, Max steps into a patch of mud, slips, loses his balance -- and a package. Whoops of laughter from the kids, as the package hits the ground.

One of the many children in the street pounces on it. It's Manooj. He sweeps up the package enthusiastically. Joan, who obviously knows the little boy, smiles at him.

JOAN

Come with us, then, Manooj...

Manooj, proud to be useful, follows Max and Joan and the kids down the alleyway towards the little square where Joan has her school and Ram, his tiny house. The CAMERA RISES as the group disappears into the heart of the slum.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SQUARE - DAY

The small group of children and the two Europeans cross the square towards a tiny building distinguished by a sign that says "Nizamuddin Lane Self Help School." This is Joan's baby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A swirl of tattered kids surrounds Joan. She scoops one little girl up and from the way that the mite hangs on to Joan, she obviously needs the affection. Across the way, a young man is dangling a baby on his knee, rubbing its back and sniffing at its neck.

A little group of men at a teashop watch Joan's progress. The old owner raises a hand in greeting.

Just across from Joan's, Aloka, Amrita and Shambu watch this arrival with interest. Amrita is cooking, Shambu is swinging in a hammock, and Aloka is hanging up some washing.

So, destiny, in some strange throws of the dice, has brought these people together and caused Hasari to take a minute but immense step up in the cauldron of the city.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

The face of a girl of about twelve. Beautiful enough to squeeze the heart. She is looking almost directly at us. Fear and embarrassment are fighting it out in her face. She is half-obsured by someone in a white jacket.

JOAN

Sunil... this is Doctor Loeb.
Max... this is Doctor Dasgupta.
He kindly gives us three days a week. We stopped on the way and Doctor Loeb has kindly bought us some supplies, Sunil...

SUNIL gives Max a quick smile, then turns his attention back to the girl. Joan looks at Max, gives him a half-shrug. Max can't help a wry, admiring laugh.

JOAN

Well, I didn't really intend for you to pay for it all... God's truth! But thanks again anyways...

And she starts unpacking the medicines. Max crosses to Sunil and his patient.

MAX

What's the problem?

SUNIL

Syphillis.

Joan answers Max's unspoken question:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Poomina works as a prostitute...
Her father ran off... she supports
a mother and two sisters. You're
at street level here all right,
Max. At least she's a survivor.
Somehow most of them are. Now
about this tea... you want tea?

Max shakes his head. He looks at Sunil working: at
the prints hanging on the wall, amongst them Einstein
sticking out his tongue, and a color reproduction of
Gericault's "Raft of the Medusa." Joan pours herself
some tea and sits down on an old charpoy, as though
suddenly overcome with weariness.

JOAN

Ah, well... I think it behooves
me to thank you... thank you
kindly, Doctor.

Max replies gently:

MAX

No need. You sure as hell know
how to twist an arm.

Joan nods, looks across at the children. Max's eye is
caught by the print. He asks mechanically:

MAX

Why 'The Raft of the Medusa'?

JOAN

Because that's how my Western
mind sees the world, I suppose...

MAX

You guys... I don't know. I
don't know how you stick it out
... It's like you're trying to
drill a hole in water.

The sound of SHOUTING drifts in from the outside. Joan
sits up. She finishes her tea.

JOAN

Seems it's time to pay the rent.

Two burly figures come through the doorway. One we
recognize as the young Goonda. Max looks at the stick
swinging easily in the young man's hands. Joan smiles
at him easily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Ah, yes! In this fair city even
for a slice of bare pavement we
have to pay rent to someone. And
they in return pay to someone
else. Isn't that right,
Mr. Bhose?

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SQUARE - DAY

Max comes out, takes a breath, immediately a little girl
comes to pull at his trousers. Across the way Poomina
is playing at being a little girl for the afternoon.
Max scoops the child up. A boy's voice shouts. Max
just about catches the ball... throws it back, whereupon
it is caught by Manooj.

MAX

Hey, guys!! I just realized the
date... It's the fourth of July
... I've gotta great idea.

EXT. MIDDLETON STREET - DAY

A line of rickshaws. The pullers are on their haunches
chatting to each other. Hasari is polishing the leather
seat of his rickshaw with a cloth. He rubs his moon-
stone ring on the shaft, then touches his heart and
forehead. A SCHOOL GIRL in uniform approaches the
rickshaw stand.

RASSOUL (SCHOOL GIRL)

Let Hasari go...

The group of rickshaw pullers turns to Hasari, signal
to him. One or two wish him well. His heart pounds:
proudly he helps the school girl into the rickshaw.
She gives him an address.

His moment has arrived. He thrusts his hips forwards
setting off towards the insanity of the traffic.

EXT. MAIN ROAD (CALCUTTA) - LOW ANGLE - DAY

Stones, tramlines, potholes, wheels and... feet. We
LOOK UP at Hasari as he threads his way through the
maelstrom.

HIGH ANGLE - HASARI

is at full speed now as he ducks and weaves through the
traffic and the fumes.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SCHOOL/SQUARE - DAY

A joyful, if somewhat feverish atmosphere pervades the school and the area immediately around it. A few of the neighbors are settling down to watch the preparations. Everybody loves a party. There are three distinct communities in the bustee: Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Joan has contacts with them all.

Max is at the center of things. He is getting Manooj to help him make some little American flags. For the first time he seems unweighted down by his troubles. (Max has rather overdone the presents -- some are thoughtful, others like the ghetto blaster are a little over the top, and are causing a certain amount of tension amongst the recipients.) But Max is enjoying playing Father Christmas. Something that does not go unremarked by Joan.

Max is busy explaining the significance of the fourth of July. Aloka and Amrita are cooking on an open fire bucket. Max steps backwards and almost knocks the fire over. Aloka looks at him, apologetic, shy. This time Max holds her gaze for an instant before she looks away.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

A huge advertising hoarding dominates the street. On it a fat maharajah is lying comfortably on a mattress. Underneath a caption asks: "Have you ever thought of giving a Simmons Mattress?"

Under the mattress advertisement is Hasari's rickshaw. It is loaded with an enormous wardrobe. It is on its own.

Across the road, we discover Ram and Hasari. They are outside a bangla bar. Ram is rubbing his bandaged ankle and is a little tipsy. Hasari is sipping at a little clay cup of tea. Hasari finishes his tea and makes a move to go. Ram waves him back.

RAM

No... it can wait. I want to tell you something... You are a very, very good friend. So I want to tell you this thing...

He sits swaying a little but silent.

HASARI

So what is this thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

What thing?... to buy a mattress like that we'd have to work for ten years. What do you think of that?

HASARI

I think we had better go.

And he hauls Ram to his feet.

EXT. LANE - EVENING

The rickshaw, laden with its precarious burden, is making its way down a narrow lane. Hasari is pulling. Ram is hanging on. Suddenly Ram stops.

RAM

Wait... stop?

Hasari is almost crushed by the load.

RAM

I remember! I remember what it was!

Hasari can't help a smile.

RAM

Mister Ghatak, the godfather...

He looks around, then lowers his voice.

RAM

He is a snake! We should break his head open... burn his house down...

HASARI

Be quiet! He feeds us. He gave me this. Without him, I'd live like a rat!

RAM

He is a dog...

HASARI

You are drunk.

Ram suddenly whacks at the rickshaw with his hand.

RAM

That's why I'm telling the truth.

Ram sways dangerously.

EXT. SMALLER LANE - EVENING

Hasari is trying to maneuver the rickshaw past some boxes. Ram is now sitting squashed up by the wardrobe and in full flood.

RAM

I have three children... and a wife. Don't forget that, brother. One morning I left the village. Silent as a winter mist... I embraced my tree by the canal and I vanished...

HASARI

You abandoned your family?

Ram doesn't answer the question. He taps on the wardrobe.

RAM

Your wife, Aloka, is as sweet as the dawn. Your children are ripening like next year's rice... Amrita should marry... she is ready. Sometimes men should watch out...

He sits up, looks like he may try and stand. He thinks better of it.

HASARI

Watch out how?

Ram succeeds in struggling into a standing position.

RAM

How? You are not in the country anymore, brother. You have a heart as pure as the inside of a rose... one day you'll remember what I told you.

Hasari looks round at him.

HASARI

You haven't told me anything.

RAM

You'll remember all the same.

Neither of them see the overhanging branch. Not until it has swept Ram clean out of the rickshaw.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - ENTRANCE TO STREET - NIGHT

Ram is now in his own world and vocal. Hasari is pulling the rickshaw and trying to ignore the attentions of a little group of street kids who are running along beside him. To his horror, he is stopped by a local policeman who looms out of the dark. But before the policeman can say anything, a call comes from the shadows. It's the Goonda. He gives Hasari a little wave of recognition as the policeman sends the rickshaw on its way. Hasari is beginning to feel part of the system.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SQUARE - NIGHT

The little square is glowing with Max's lights, and human goodwill. About thirty people enjoying the festivities.

Hasari enters the square with his rickshaw. He stops, taken aback by what he's looking for. Perhaps a little upset as well. Not the least by Ram's drunken struggles to get out of the rickshaw and into the party. Hasari looks amazed as he sees Max, the American. Aloka is bending over him as she serves him some food, and he has made her laugh. This laugh, timid and restrained, is the first one since the beginning of this story to illuminate her beautiful face.

Suddenly she sees Hasari. Her smile fades and she looks at him with affection. Without a word, she crosses to him.

Ram manages to struggle out of the rickshaw. Hasari reaches inside it and removes a neatly-wrapped packet.

INT. CITY OF JOY - RAM'S HUT - NIGHT

The SOUND of MUSIC, CHILDREN'S VOICES AND LAUGHTER float through the window. Hasari offers the package that he brought back in the rickshaw to Aloka. They are alone in the hut. Hasari's eyes are fixed on his wife.

She opens the package. A new and beautifully coloured sari appears. He speaks softly:

HASARI

Put it on.

She obeys. She slides off her humble village sari and puts on the new one. We watch this piece of cloth being put on as the Indians do it (astonishing to Europeans). Graceful, quick. Hasari looks at Aloka, seeing something divine in her beauty, as for a moment she stands immobile like a goddess in the half-light of the rough hut.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SQUARE - NIGHT (LATER)

SOUNDS. Smells. Scents. All hang in the hot night air. The sky has been sown with bright stars. The crescent moon shines, bright as a sickle. Most of the children have fallen asleep. Some families have gone home.

Max is playing his trumpet softly, a beautiful jazz line. Surya, the old man who owns the teashop, accompanies him on a zither. Aloka sits, part uncomfortable, part proud, in her new sari. Hasari is captivated. JOAN is busy laughing with a group of older men. It's almost unreal in the strange light of the moon, and the single street-lamp. Slightly outside the group sits the Goonda and Kumar, another of the Godfather's men. Kumar has bright ferrety eyes and they don't miss the grace of Amrita as she collects dishes.

Max is being sucked in, integrated, into this tiny microcosm of the world.

Manooj is the first to spot something strange. Out of a shadow alley, a frightening shape emerges and comes towards the light and its varied colours.

It is a leper. His name is ANOUAR. Once he was a clerk in a jute mill. He is bearded with a sharp intelligent and unmarked face. He makes his way along on a small wheeled board, at an amazingly fast pace. This is a man with an astonishing lust for living. He has a sense of humour and he knows it.

He stops just about at the edge of the light. Lepers are not often welcome. He spots JOAN and beckons her over. She crosses to him.

ANOUAR

Joan, big sister... it's me,
Anouar. I didn't want to...
but...

JOAN

Take it easy now... now, what is
it. Anouar?

ANOUAR

Meeta... it is going badly...
the midwives don't know. They say
the baby is stuck... she's bleeding.
Too much bleeding. Could Sunil,
perhaps...

JOAN

Sunil's not here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANOUAR

She'll die... she will...

Joan turns towards Max, who has not heard the exchange.

JOAN

Max. I wouldn't ask, but it's an emergency. A pregnancy gone awry. It's a leper group...

Max is thrown.

MAX

Well I'm... come on, Joan, that needs a specialist. I'm not kidding. I don't have any experience with leprosy...

JOAN

Nonsense... just cause she's a leper doesn't mean she's not built like a woman... God! I should have become a doctor, not a teacher.

Aloka, noting Max's evident uneasiness, makes a sudden decision. She hardly raises her voice, but everybody hears.

ALOKA

I can help the Doctor...

She feels everybody's eyes on her, not the least Hasari's. But she doesn't give ground.

ALOKA

I have had three children.

JOAN

God love you! Good girl. We've got a medical bag in the school...

EXT. PATH - NIGHT

The moon is reflecting off the dark puddles of muddy water that line the side of the railway tracks. Anouar is propelling his board with astonishing agility along the path. Max, carrying Joan's first-aid bag, and Aloka still in her new sari, follow. The trio slip and slide on the rough ground with its puddles of sewage. Max is swearing through his teeth. It's impossible not to step into some puddle or other. Max slips, almost falls, holds on to Aloka.

EXT. RAILWAY LINE - LEPER HUTS - NIGHT

The little procession arrives outside the three rough huts, made of bamboo, plastic sheeting, cloth, wood and cardboard that make up their dwellings. A few shadows materialize. It's the lepers. They stand silent, watching this amazing arrival: a white man in their world.

Anouar slides into a hut. Max and Aloka have to bend low to enter, even so, Max bumps his head.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

The only light is the feeble waver from a candle. A young woman, MEETA, is spread out on a rough mattress on the ground. Her ragged sari is pulled up to her middle. Her face is running with sweat, her hair plastered to her face. A girl with black eyes is fanning her with a piece of wood. Metta is groaning weakly. It's a soft uninterrupted moan. A wadge of blood-soaked cloth is between her legs.

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

Max kneels down, Aloka at his side. He pauses a second before pulling off the blood-soaked bandages. Between Meeta's legs he can just make out the top of a small cranium. The child is stuck. Maybe already dead.

ALOKA

Will she die...?

Max suddenly goes into reflex action. He opens the first-aid kit. There is an electric torch amongst the medicines: alcohol, compresses, scissors, etc. Max gives the torch to Aloka. She illuminates the scene. Max rapidly prepares a syringe of Coramine. He takes Metta's arm, makes a tourniquet, and injects.

MAX

I'm going to have to turn the head... Jeez... it's jammed in the birth passage. Look, I'm going to have to push it back inside and turn it... tell her, tell her to hold on. If I don't get it out they're both finished.

Aloka turns to the mother, speaking softly. Max pushes. Meeta's face crumples with pain. Aloka takes her hand in hers, holds it. Her fine hand around Meeta's fingerless palm.

EXT. HUT - DAWN

A small group sits outside, trying from the sounds coming from the hut to determine what's happening. Anouar pours tea from a boiling pot on the small fire.

INT. HUT - DAWN

Max's face is set, concentrating. The sweat is running into his eyes. He shakes it out. Aloka sees, leans toward, and with her new sari, wipes away the sweat. Max nods his thanks.

MAX

Tell her to breathe again, again.
Tell her to push... regularly
for Chrissakes!

Aloka translates, helping the woman to push.

MAX

Again... again, yes... it's
coming... I've got one leg...
come on... come on...! Be
alive... for God's sake be
alive! Come on baby... come
on!

We can read the progress of events on his face. Aloka wipes off the sweat again. He looks at her, his voice squeezed out through his teeth.

MAX

It's coming out... yeah, yeah...!

He seems as released as the mother. Then he gives a last gentle tug and sits back.

MAX

Okay... okay!

And a CRY squeezes out of the little piece of life that he holds in his hands.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - DAWN

The sun is just touching the rooftops. Still, in this early morning, giving off more light than heat. A stray dog is rooting around for some odds and ends to eat. Very softly, alone, his back resting against a wall, Surya plays on his zither. The old man looks as though he could play like this until the end of the world. Amrita is lighting the chula and, in front of Ram's hut, Hasari is cleaning his rickshaw.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Slumped against one of the posts of the hut is Ram, who has quite a hangover. He watches his companion through blood-shot eyes. Manooj is polishing the puller's bell, and its sharp sound mixed with the music of Surya's zither. Hasari coughs, tries to stifle the sound. He spits. Ram speaks, his voice thick from the night before.

RAM

Sometimes I cough up blood...

HASARI

Blood?

RAM

That's why I chew betel. Then no one knows whether I spit blood or juice. Even I don't know! So, I don't worry and the Godfather won't take away my rickshaw...

And suddenly he laughs at the absurdity of it all.

EXT. RAILWAY - PATH - MORNING

Max and Aloka are making their way back along the slippery path. Lack of sleep has marked both of them. Max is still full of adrenaline, and a little light-headed with the success of the night. Max slips. Aloka instinctively studies him. He smiles at her.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - DAY

Hasari, Ram, Manooj and Shambu are crouching, eating their small breakfast. Amrita arrives from the stand-pipe with water. Hasari is sitting on the worn charpoy, holding Shambu in his lap. He rests his forehead on his little son's neck, smelling the skin. Shambu laughs. Hasari looks up just in time to see Max and Aloka enter the little square. Shambu leaps out of his father's lap, and runs to his mother. Aloka squats near the bed. Max stands, feeling the tiredness flow over him.

ALOKA

Doctor Max made the mother safe,
and the baby. It was a boy.

Hasari looks at Max. Then, without a sound, picks up his untouched clay cup of tea, and offers it to the young American.

INT. CITY OF JOY - RAM'S HUT - DAY

Max is uneasily asleep. But even sleep doesn't hide the heat. A NOISE from the roof penetrates Max's dreams. He opens his eyes. He finds himself staring at two giant rats who seem to have a home in the roof. Max is jerked away with a startled cry. The door opens and Aloka comes in. She is holding a small tin plate with rice and meat on it.

MAX

Christ... I must have dozed off...
What time is it?

He looks at his watch, shakes his head at the time. Aloka hands him the dish.

ALOKA

You went to sleep. We carried you
in... out of the sun. You should
eat.

Max looks at her. The shaft of sunlight makes a glow around her head. Suddenly Max is aware of her physical presence.

MAX

Thanks. Back there, last night.
You were great. I mean it. You're
a born nurse. I mean it. They
could've died... both of them
could've. Yeah...

There is something worn in his tone, but Aloka gives him her shy, pleased smile.

ALOKA

Perhaps you will stay with us
Doctor Da...

Then she slips out through the door. Max sits for a moment, then the SCUFLING in the roof attracts his attention. With a muffled curse, he gets up.

INT. COWSHEDS - DAY

It's a ramshackle building. On one side is the byre, on the other a small plastic factory is still working. Most of the cows have gone some time ago. But two beasts are looking over the low wall of their stable towards Joan, Sunil, Surya, and a young couple from the group, at Max's impromptu celebration. Joan is rather red in the face and in full swing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Of course, the Godfather doesn't want us here. We're a threat to him. We all know that's the scene here. What you've got to decide is -- are we going to let him be a threat to us?

SURYA

No one will say no to him, Sister Joan.

JOAN

I'm not persuaded, Surya, not persuaded at all. My own dear father used his right hand to put the fear of God into me, and one day, even this worm turned...

She turns her head as Manooj shows Max through the gateway.

JOAN

Oh, Max... come in. We were just wrapping up.

She turns back to the group.

JOAN

So, if I've got priorities right, we need a generator... water supply, etc., but we can start to move the school over... right?

There are nods of approval from the group who start to get up. Joan waves an arm around the courtyard.

JOAN

Well, Max, what do you think?

MAX

For real? Well... I suppose this is where you start. But God knows where you stop. It's great... it's impressive. But it's a drop in the ocean. Realistically speaking it's...

JOAN

... A drop in the ocean!

He shakes his head ruefully.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Last night... the look on that mother's face was beautiful... but she's half starving... the place was unbelievable... and suddenly I found myself thinking ... one more... added to all this... this misery.

JOAN

Well...

MAX

Well, what for? I mean what kind of world is this to bring a kid into... Look, I want to help. I'd love to change the human condition.

JOAN

Oh, you would!

MAX

But everything I see tells me nothing will work. And it doesn't make me feel good. Coming here was a big mistake...

A smile flits across Joan's face. Her reply is irritatingly soft.

JOAN

So, that's why you came here, so you could feel good, indeed! Well Max, 'Shut your door against mistakes, and the truth will stay outside'.

EXT. STREET NEAR CITY OF JOY - DAY

Max is walking through a muddy stretch where a stand-pipe gushes across the road. There is the sound of a RICKSHAW BELL. Max turns around to wave the man away. It is Hasari.

Max gives a small smile, shakes his head and walks on.

Hasari follows, his bell tapping.

Max stops. Considers. He didn't want to ride, pulled by a "human horse". But he's seen Hasari with his family. Max gets into the rickshaw.

EXT. STREETS - LATE AFTERNOON

Max is seated in the rickshaw. He can only see the back of the man pulling him along. Hasari's bare feet slap against the ground rhythmically. The wheels of the rickshaw spin round.

Deep in thought, Max is barely aware of the journey, only picking out details.

Khalighat, and a mendicant covered in ashes: shoemakers, a street of many-armed statues, beggars, lepers, a wedding in a metal and shining coach, prostitutes, and, like a spaceship, a brand new BMW Series 7 motor car.

These are reflections really of Max's thoughts and emotions as he is pulled along by his sweating and panting companion. A mosaic of compressed time and images.

Hasari stops. Max comes out of his reverie to see that the rickshaw has stopped at a red light.

HASARI'S POV - CROSSROADS - LATE AFTERNOON

Limping through the crowd is Gangooly. He's carrying, with great delicacy, a cage containing the two parrots from the slum house.

Hasari is too astonished to react. Before he recovers, Gangooly has been swallowed up into the swirling mass of people.

The traffic light changes to green. Hasari heaves the rickshaw forward.

EXT. SUDDER STREET HOTEL - SIDESTREET - LATE AFTERNOON

The rickshaw pulls up in a narrow lane at the side of the hotel. A little out of place in this superior area. Max gets down. Hasari is sweating, and though he's trying to hide the effects, it's clear the run has taken it out of him. Embarrassed by the situation, Max doesn't want to leave without saying something to this man.

MAX

Thank you... that was fast...
maybe too fast.

Hasari nods. Suddenly Max isn't sure if he can speak English.

MAX

You understand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari nods. Max looks at his watch. Hasari doesn't have one.

MAX

I'm telling you... that was a great run... really great.

Hasari gives a sudden triumphant smile. Max gives him a screw of notes. Hasari unrumples them, shakes his head.

MAX

It's okay, you deserve it, it's okay. Good luck.

Max claps Hasari on the shoulders, then turns and strides towards the hotel.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - STREET - DAY

Violence has erupted. About sixty rickshaw pullers are blocking the road with their machines. The Goonda and about twenty of the Godfather's toughs are laying into them ferociously. Blood is flowing. People are shouting, rickshaws are being overturned.

Ashoka is watching from the safety of a doorway. A group of protestors arrive, surrounding a political bigwig who is shouting through a loudspeaker fixed to the top of a car. A union wallah is arguing with a vanload of policemen. Ram and Hasari arrive on the scene; Ram's ankle is now healed. The crowd is starting to grow. Hasari is amazed.

HASARI

Why are they fighting like that?

RAM

There's going to be a big strike. They won't pay.

HASARI

Who won't pay?

A shower of stones rattles against their rickshaws. They duck down. Someone pushes Ram's rickshaw sideways.

RAM

This is getting dangerous.

HASARI

Who won't pay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

Ghatak and the other owners, they want to put up the rental... the union agreed but people are angry!

More people add to the crowd. More political banners. More loudspeakers. Someone throws a Molotov cocktail.

HASARI

We should help out... Ram?

A couple of rickshaw pullers yell at them as cowards.

HASARI

We should help our brothers.

Ram pulls him back.

RAM

What about your family? The union's not behind this... it'll be a bad end. It'll be the end of your work.

Suddenly there is a swirl in the fighting. Hasari and Ram find themselves behind the Goonda and group of his thugs. The Goonda swings round, Ram throws up his hands, eyeing the raised sticks and iron bars.

RAM

Babu... we're not strikers. No -- listen...!

GOONA

Are you or not?!

Hasari swallows his shame.

HASARI

No, we were passing. We were pushed here.

The Goonda who doesn't believe a word, laughs derisively.

GOONDA

You little eunuchs, get out of here... you meat maggots! Run! Run!

Ram pulls at Hasari's arm. Hasari is pulled back willy-nilly. A stone hits Hasari on the back. He goes down in pain. Someone yells at them as "scabs!" Someone pushes at Hasari's rickshaw. He dives to rescue it. Pushes his fist in someone's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari grabs for his machine and is running. That's when the first line of horse policemen arrives. HOOVES CLACKING on the road. The strikers respond with stones. Hasari sees Ashoka standing by the police van. Is he arguing or laughing? A mounted policeman rears over a rickshaw puller. The horse's eyes rolling, mouth flecked with foam. Hasari feels a pull at his arm as Ram drags him from the scene.

EXT. GRAND HOTEL - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

INT. GRAND HOTEL - DAY

The sound of WATER SPLASHING. The sweat-stained T-shirt and worn jeans that Max had sported in the clinic on the floor. A RADIO is PLAYING. Feet PASS the CAMERA. It FOLLOWS and finds Max, towel wrapped around his middle, finishing a shave at the sink of a simple but expensively marble-clad bathroom.

He looks like a man who's made his mind up. He goes into the bedroom, rummages amongst his baggage. Smiles briefly as he uncovers the trumpet, then finds what he's looking for: a book, "The Brothers Karamazon." He sits on the side of the bed and flicks through it: between the pages is an aircraft ticket. What he was looking for.

Max puts it with his passport. Humming to himself. The Eagles PLAY on his tape recorder "Take It To The Limit." The MUSIC CROSS-FADES into an INDIAN SONG.

INT. SUNIL SEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The sound of a husky VOICE SINGING to a FOLK ACCORDION accompaniment. Through a crack between the door and the jamb, two pairs of eyes peer out. They belong to Susheela and Sudevi, mother and daughter, and maids to the family.

Nirupa is finishing her song. Max is finishing his whiskey. Their eyes meet.

Applause. The two maids scuttle back into the kitchen, where Shoba, an old retainer, throws them an angry look as he prepares the soup.

In the living room, the guests are unwinding. Anil, Sunil's anglicized mother, turns to Max.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANIL

Max... do me a great favor.
Persuade Sunil to go back to
America with you?

SUNIL

Mother! I don't want to go to
America...

ANIL

How much does a doctor earn in
America, Max?

MAX

Well, that depends... it's
difficult to say...

ANIL

Then it's a lot. If it's difficult
to say, it's because it's a large
sum. It seems to me that in
America doctors aren't afraid to
have a good head for business...

And they cross into the dining room, where the other
guests are seating themselves.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

RITWIK SEN, a jovial man in his fifties, Sunil's father
and owner of the Simmons Mattress Factory, is standing
in front of a bar decorated with a glass-covered version
of the Maharajah poster. He picks up on Anil's remark.

RITWIK

Did I hear the word business?

ANIL

I was just asking Doctor Loeb
here to explain to Sunil that he
should first sort himself out
financially. Then he can afford
to do his good works and set his
conscience at rest.

McINTYRE

Ah, conscience.

RAGHURAM

When I was a boy this country
never bothered with a conscience
at all. It made for a very good
life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Raghuram obviously looks at the world from the vantage point of a man who knows that it is basically all an illusion.

ANIL

No, I'm not such a monster as my son makes out. I'm just thinking of his future... don't roll your eyes, Sunil, darling. Surely Max's parents wanted the same for him... didn't they, Max?

MAX

Yes... they did.

RAGHURAM

At the Palace we employed a staff of sixty. In two shifts. Would anybody here not want to live like that?

SUNIL

But what did you want, Max?

Max is suddenly overcome by a wave of morbid humour.

MAX

An Andy Warhol... a blue Mercedes... and a house in Malibu. The same as everyone else.

During the last part of this he has become acutely conscious of the smiling eyes of Nirupa fixed on him.

RAGHURAM

I can't abide Mr. Warhol. Fifteen minutes of fame... democracy! You know what that's worth to the ordinary Indian... thirty rupees! What it costs to buy his vote...

SUNIL

Now I'm getting angry... that's rubbish.

ANIL

Sunil!

At that point the lights flicker and go out, plunging the room into darkness.

RITWIK

Ha! Load shedding, welcome to Calcutta!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANIL

Sunil, if you're going to make
a speech please leave the room...
please! Oh my God!

This is occasioned by the old servant, Shoba, who has tripped over a stool, sending the soup flying into the table.

RITWIK

Jump on it! God save Ireland!

And he shines a large spotlight at the table. Anil is dabbing at the mess. Shoba is making it worse. Sunil is making his speech.

SUNIL

We always blame the past, refugees,
Delhi, Colonialism... We've got
to start thinking of the future...
of radical change.

Max and Nirupa still gaze at each other.

EXT. NIRUPA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clouds float past the moon. The house stands still.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

Luxurious but simple and somehow voluptuous. An oasis: this room is quite a contrast to the huts of the bustee. Nirupa is naked underneath her multi-colored silk sari. Her long dark hair falls to her shoulders. Her doe-eyes seem to smoulder. There is something wonderfully animal about her, with her perfumed golden skin. It is hot.

A STORM GRUMBLES in the distance.

Max is wearing a white bathrobe. On it are embroidered the initials of Nirupa's husband. His hair is damp. His clothes folded on a chair. He has a glass of Scotch in his hand. He drinks. The ice-cubes tinkle in the glass. Nirupa crosses to Max. She takes his hand, holds it delicately to her face, breathes in deeply a few times, as though trying to define something particular, then she says:

NIRUPA

The smell of poverty -- it never
quite washes off...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She settles herself in front of a dressing table. Max sits silent, looking at her. She starts to brush her long hair, watching herself in the oval mirror of the dressing table. She speaks quietly, without looking at him:

NIRUPA

It's what attracts you to this country, isn't it? The poor? ... Suffering seems to attract Westerners like bees to flowers.

She throws him a glance, lets out a little laugh. Max is feeling ill at ease.

NIRUPA

Am I wrong?

MAX

Go on...

She goes on brushing her hair, leaning her head sideways. There's a small erotic smile on her lips. She looks at Max in the mirror. He doesn't move. He watches her. She seems almost to be playing a part.

NIRUPA

Am I contemptible? I'm rich and I'm beautiful, why shouldn't I enjoy it? Is that self-indulgent?

She stops brushing, turns towards him.

NIRUPA

The poor... Sunil's poor, are not mine... to them I'm a screen idol. Someone to adore. And to me they are just a sad inevitable part of life, nothing more. That's how it is, you can't change that.

The STORM GROWLS as it grows closer. She goes and looks out of the window. She continues, without apparent emotion, always the actress.

NIRUPA

My husband died, in Paris. He was buying enriched uranium. He was a scientist and a believer in omens... he lived in two different centuries. We all do here.

She leaves the window. She stretches out on the bed almost as if Max wasn't there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at her. She looks at him with her dark eyes, her beautiful body barely covered by her gossamer sari. Max puts his glass down on the night table and comes to the bed. He starts to caress her gently. She puts an arm around his neck, pulling him to her. He kisses her. She pushes him softly away.

Their faces are close together. A mysterious rapport is growing between them. Nirupa's voice is full of feeling. Is she acting? Is she true? Max doubts it, as we do.

NIRUPA

Often... often I have this dream.
I'm running down some nameless
alleyway, full of putrid rubbish...
Behind me I hear the sound of
hand bells, of breathing. I'm
being hunted by the destitute
skeletons... by pullers of
rickshaws. I'm the prey they're
searching for. You see. It's
the night they take their revenge
on me -- 'your' poor.

Suddenly it begins to pour VIOLENTLY with RAIN.

And now another tone creeps into her voice. A kind of
hunger for reassurance.

NIRUPA

Will you come away with me, Max?
If you're going to run away
from here you may as well enjoy
yourself...

MAX

That'd be good.

The RAIN INCREASES in INTENSITY.

NIRUPA

I like you, Max... but maybe you
take life too seriously. I have
a house in the country. At Simla.
It's my retreat. Spend two weeks
with me there. It's very
beautiful.

Rain streams the windows, wind blows at the curtains. We
look back at the bed. It's barely light. Max and Nirupa
make love.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - STREET - EVENING

Aloka makes her way down the street carrying on her head a pitcher of water from the stand-pipe. Not a drop spills.

INT. CITY OF JOY - RAM'S HOUSE - EVENING

Aloka is making an offering in front of a little statue of Ganesha. The whole family is in the tiny house. It's a feat of companionship -- six people in this tiny space.

It's a gentle moment. Hasari feels proud that he is finding a way to keep his family from drowning in the rough seas of this city. He is carefully counting out a little wad of crumpled damp notes. Ram and Manooj watch in silence. Shambu is dozing. Amrita enters with the water. Ram is sweating and stifles the urge to cough.

RAM

I told you... sometimes money
would be hanging from the trees...

Hasari goes on doing his sums. Ram adds:

RAM

And sometimes it won't. They go
back to work tomorrow.

Ram gives a little sigh. Hasari still feels a lingering sense of shame at his part in the proceedings. He separates out a few more notes. Then he asks Manooj:

HASARI

How much does that leave us?

MANOOJ

195, Father.

Hasari nods. He looks across at Amrita pouring water from her pitcher. Aloka is rolling out dough. Mother and daughter look beautiful. Hasari holds up a little wedge of notes.

HASARI

I remember on the train coming
here... do you remember, Amrita?
We will have a band, too. And
you will make people sigh at how
beautiful you look. And I shall
drop tears of pride. And Ram
will dance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

At my wedding, I became so
frightened, my father gave me
things to drink to calm me down.
I went out to piss and fell
asleep under the village tree...
when I woke up I thought it was
the tree I'd married... I still
love that tree!

And he laughs and coughs. Amrita smiles shyly. Aloka
thinks her own thoughts.

HASARI

That cough is eating you up, Ram.
You should tell that doctor...

RAM

Oh, he's gone... back to America.
He gave me his glasses...

And he pulls Max's sunglasses out and puts them on,
making the children burst out with laughter. Shambu
wakes up, sees Ram in the glasses and starts to cry.
Aloka comforts him.

HASARI

Are you sure?

ALOKA

Sister Joan told me. I think she
wasn't happy.

HASARI

I didn't think he would stay.
You could see that in his eyes.

Aloka nods. Her eyes are down. She goes on with making
her dough. Hasari scrutinizes her for a moment, then
with sudden energy:

HASARI

Now a surprise!... First...

And he gets up and roots amongst his things.

HASARI

I bought some coconut sweets...
and also...

And he pulls out the little tea caddy from his suitcase,
and puts it on the ground in front of everyone, and pulls
the lid off with a flourish.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

I have some earth... from our village! And here...

Hasari roots around in a bag.

RAM

Ah, your village! When I go home I'm going to spend all day in the fields lying on my back and sniffing fresh aubergines!

Hasari has found what he wants: he holds out a balled fist.

HASARI

What is in here?

Aloka can't help smiling at his tone.

HASARI

So, no one can guess?

He opens his hand. A few black seeds shine on his palm.

RAM

You're going to grow me an aubergine!

Everybody laughs. Hasari pushes the seeds into the earth.

HASARI

Just so we don't forget how.

He waters the soil with water from a little clay cup. The dry earth sucks in the water.

EXT. SKY - DAWN

The sky FILLS the SCREEN. A jet passes by, leaving white streaks across the dawn. Its position lights flicker, mechanical and regular.

We PAN DOWN to find Max. Only his tired face. He is looking up, watching the plane. We don't know where he is.

EXT. HOWRAH BRIDGE - DAWN

Now we do. Max is not far from where Hasari and his family made their first home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max breathes out, sets his shoulders, and with a new lightness to his step, walks off.

EXT. NEAR NEW CLINIC - DAY

A sense of uplift and enjoyment. A small truck carrying a charitable organization's inscription on the side is being unloaded of powdered milk and various other goodies. The Pal family, Hasari excepted, Sunil, Joan, some women and children, Anouar and another leper are helping in the process.

There's sudden uneasy silence. The Goonda and three companions appear round the corner and saunter up to the truck. The Goonda is smiling in an offhand arrogant way. He stops in front of Joan.

GOONDA

Good morning, sister to the poor.

JOAN

Yes, Mr. Bhose?

The Goonda looks around. Shakes his head at the mound of building material that has now appeared at the old cow shed.

GOONDA

This truck is delivering goods without our permission. The union is upset...

JOAN

Union! My backside! What do you want?

GOONDA

You will put everything back into the truck. You will take it to us. You will ask... and we will deliver it. That's how it is arranged. Of course there will be the usual delivery fees.

Joan understands, but she's had enough.

JOAN

Of course... that's the way it is. Well, not anymore, laddie.

And she move to pick up a box. The Goonda puts his hand on it, pressing it down. Joan starts to go red.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Take your hand off! Or it'll
be the police...

This elicits a smile. She pulls at the box. The Goonda pushes harder. Signals to his men to repack the truck. It's forceful but still very polite. Joan is seized with a sudden fury and shoves the box against the Goonda. The big leper next to Anouar growls in anger and pushes forward. Two other goondas turn on him. He pushes them away. One bangs into Joan. She suddenly elbows the Goonda. He is pushed hard against the truck. Joan tries to wrench the parcel from him. As a reflex he raises his hand.

It's seized as it's raised. It's Max and he's angry. He slings the Goonda against the side of the truck.

MAX

What's going on here?

But the violence has flashed into being. Max makes a move against the two men going at the leper. He doesn't hear the warning cry. Hurt from being slammed into the truck, the Goonda lashes out at Max with his stick. It slashes down his cheek. Max swings around. He's working on instinct. For the first time we realize how strong he is, and that he knows how to box. The Goonda goes down. Anouar is chopping at the legs of the two thugs working on his friend. Manooj pitches in. Sunil comes flying out of the building. Joan is restoring order. The combatants are breathing heavily. The Goonda gets up, eyes Max. Then, seeing they're outnumbered, he gives them a hard, cold look. After a beat, he signals his men off. The victors exchange breathless but proud glances.

INT. CITY OF JOY - SCHOOL - DAY

Max is sitting on a stool. Joan is watching from the table. Anouar is by the door. The children are watching through the window. THROUGH the doorway we see Surya and Margareta and Aristotle John plus one or two faces that we know from the locality. They are taking tea at Surya's tea shop. Aloka is cleaning Max's wound as Sunil prepares a dressing. Aloka is doing her work with skill and tenderness.

There is a TINKLE of the RICKSHAW BELL. Manooj runs to his father.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SCHOOL - DAY

Hasari comes into the room. He takes in the scene. Conflicting emotions fight it out in his mind: unease at seeing Max, jealousy of the maternal way Aloka is tending to him.

ANOUAR

Since no one will tell you,
Hasari, and since I know you
won't ask. You see before you
a hero. Yes, a hero!! I made
my attack at ground level...

He mimes a jet plane.

ANOUAR

I bit into legs. I fought like
a regiment of punjabis. It was
a massacre. It was the battle
of Kurukshetra. Then Max daddah
came and...

JOAN

... and fell over trying to pin
a medal on you, you little devil.

ANOUAR

Medal! When do I get my medal,
Max daddah?

MAX

When I can find one big enough to
match your courage, brother
Anouar.

And the room dissolves into laughter. There is no need for declarations. Everybody understands that the doctor has chosen to stay. The blood spots on his shirt attest to that.

EXT. GHATAK'S HOUSE - DAY

In the courtyard of the godfather's house, stand three rickshaw pullers. Two we recognize as having shouted slogans during the strike, the other is Hasari.

Ashoka, the godfather's son, is sitting behind a little table on which is perched a register. His hands run absentmindedly over his face as if looking for a pimple to squeeze. The Goonda is slouched near the table, smoking a cigarette and fiddling with a thin switch. The still air is filled with the MUFFLED SOUNDS of the street.

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CONTINUED:

Hasari notices through a window, the godfather in deep conversation with a police superintendent. Another thickset man inside the room notices the direction of Hasari's gaze and nonchalantly pulls a slatted wooden shutter across the open window.

The noise causes Ashoka to look up from his book.

He speaks in a thin voice, oozing hypocrisy.

ASHOKA

So... We have played at being big men? You are all big men, eh? Well, now we'll see how big. Now everybody's back at work we can pick out the troublemakers can't we?

The three men standing, wondering what the outcome of this long work may portend. Hasari's eyes are attracted by a tinkle of girlish laughter. A fat young man with plastered-down hair comes out with two young girls. One of them is Poomina. At the sight of the men in the courtyard she cuts off her laugh. Ashoka puts down the tea he has paused to sip, and goes on.

ASHOKA

Now we can see who has something to say! Can't we... we have information.

And he titters as he throws a look towards one of his victims, obviously a Muslim. The MAN mumbles nervously:

MAN

But we didn't start the violence, sir. We didn't call the policeman....!

Ashoka gives vent to a huge yawn. His fingers idly tap at a piece of paper.

ASHOKA

In the beginning was the word... you! Hasari... you were everywhere.

He taps the paper again.

HASARI

But it's wrong... I didn't even stay...

ASHOKA

Were you there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He taps the paper. He is beginning to sweat with enjoyment.

HASARI

Yes. By an accident... not for a purpose...

Ashoka slaps the paper on the table.

ASHOKA

From this minute. You are off the list. You have no right to our protection! You will leave your rickshaw here. Where they will be reserved for men who deserve our trust.

And he stands up. Hasari is panicked. Near tears.

HASARI

Please... this is as if the ground has opened up. Can I speak with Mister Ghatak? This is a mistake... I have a witness... I can bring him...

ASHOKA

My father is not here. This thing has made him ill. This is for me to decide. And I decide that you can do your whining outside. So get out before I have Mister Bhose break your back!

Bhose takes his cue to step forward. Another goonda pushes the two remaining strikers towards the door. Hasari tries to push the goonda away.

HASARI

Wait... just wait! Please! Listen, I have a wife, children.

ASHOKA

Yes! You should have thought of your little sow and her litter before, shouldn't you?

This is too much for Hasari who takes a pace forwards.

HASARI

You can't do this...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Quick as a flash the goonda has Hasari down on his knees, arm twisted painfully behind his back, head banged hard on the table; Ashoka looking white, has jumped up. His voice is squeaky:

ASHOKA

... You know what you should do?
Crawl down to the Ganges and die,
that's what you should do, you
worthless little rat!

He has said this, having bent his face very close to Hasari's, and he rounds it off with a vicious little slap to Hasari's head.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - STREET - DAY

The side gate opens. Hasari is kicked out. He runs to the fence, looks through. Two men are pulling his rickshaw into the courtyard. There are some others stored there, too. Hasari watches as his is flung in with them, and a steel shutter pulled down, cutting his livelihood from sight.

Hasari looks through the bars, feeling the touch of the numbing fingers of defeat.

EXT. RUBBISH TIP - DUSK

Night is falling. A ship is being unloaded in the distance and the lights make long shadows. A SIREN WAILS mournfully then dies away. Hasari wanders around aimless, his heart tight with despair. The railway tracks close by suggest that we are not far from the little leper colony. Smoke drifts off the rubbish.

Hasari can't face going home. A thin pair of DOGS, startled by Hasari's appearance start to BARK wildly, then suddenly go back to their excavations.

In the distance, against the lights, Hasari makes out the silhouettes of some children. Their joyful shouting and laughter carries across the flat land. Gaunt and almost fainting with despair, Hasari stands without moving. Too low-spirited to fight the tears that run down his cheeks.

Something on the ground in front of him catches the light. The dogs probably unearthed it with their scratching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari goes over. The DOGS BARK again then turn and run, tails between their legs. Hasari bends down and picks up the object. It's a piece of glass, thin as a razor.

To Hasari this piece of glass is like a sign. He tests its sharpness.

There is a slight movement of the rubbish behind him. A small slide of earth and stones. It makes Hasari pause. He looks around. Nothing to see, only the distant lights and faraway sounds.

Hasari looks at the sliver of glass. The SIREN WAILS in the distance. Suddenly the place takes on an air of menace. DOGS BARK in the distance. Hasari looks around warily. The smoke makes a strange shape in front of the distant lights. Fear stirs in him, he becomes aware of something in his hand. He looks at it. He drops the sliver of glass as though it's hot. A whisper of wind blows.

Hasari blinks. Does he see a shape moving in the smoke? No... He relaxes, turns to leave.

Something touches Hasari on the shoulder. He jumps. A shapeless, faceless figure, like something born of the rubbish.

Hasari stares at the figure. It is Anouar.

Hasari relaxes a little.

ANOUAR

Hasari... when I had to live on
Sealdah Station cholera carried
off twenty of us. Death has been
trying to nibble away at me ever
since... but I choose to survive...

Anouar's voice softens.

ANOUAR

... they are waiting for you at
home. Everybody has been looking
for you, my friend. They love
you very much.

INT. RAM AND HASARI'S HUT - NIGHT

Hasari's depression hangs over the household. The family have just finished a frugal meal. Ram is sitting with them calculating on his fingers and a scrap of paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari is sitting, locked in his own thoughts. Aloka is full of concern for her husband, who hasn't touched the scraps on his plate. Ram tries to cheer his friend up.

RAM

Eat, Hasari, or you'll lose your strength.

HASARI

Strength! What for? To pull a ghost rickshaw?

(laughs)

Well, I'm not the same man tonight as I was this morning.

Ram tries to lighten the mood.

RAM

People who live by rivers are always generous. My wife lived by a river but she's as mean as a scorpion. Nothing is what it seems.

Hasari is not to be weaned out of his depression.

ALOKA

Sister Joan and Doctor Max have ideas to make the clinic big... Did you know?

HASARI

No...

Aloka proceeds delicately but it's difficult for her to control her enthusiasm.

ALOKA

They're going to expand the school, and the clinic. Sunil Da said we should do as much as we can, not as little as we can get away with... Joan Di said she had need of me...

HASARI

Are you trying to say something?

ALOKA

Well, I should like to help her... to work... a little.

Her reply was tentative, delicate. Hasari looks at her sternly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

Very good. And everybody will
laugh and say there is the she-man.
No one in his family respects him,
nobody depends on him...

RAM

We men just fool ourselves. It's
women who rule the world.

Then he senses there's going to be a domestic quarrel he
doesn't want to be a part of, he gets up.

RAM

I'm going to the tea shop. Surya
Da is going to read me the
newspaper.

He struggles out of the hut. The atmosphere is heavy.

HASARI

I do not want you to work. Not
with them. They are not part of
us. They'll only be good to you
as long as you please them.

ALOKA

Be quiet... Joan Di is as full of
love as a field in harvest.

HASARI

How do you know they won't just
leave tomorrow? How do you know?
How will you look then when that
happens?

During this the children have quietly made themselves
scarce. We FOLLOW them TO the little upper story, just
a few planks near the low roof, where they sleep.

ALOKA (O.S.)

Yes, maybe that's what you'd like.
Well I like them. They are trying.
They are made angry by injustice,
they don't kiss its feet.

HASARI (O.S.)

Don't talk to me like that! What
should I do, sell my blood to feed
this family!? Yes that happens to
some fools... I'm going to play
cards!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Amrita has taken down the little tea caddy that Hasari planted his seeds in. She peers inside. Shambu's face, illuminated by the single guttering candle, asks:

SHAMBU

Has it grown yet?

Amrita laughs softly.

AMRITA

Silly! It hasn't had time.

Below, Hasari quits the hut and Aloka angrily bangs plates and pots together as she cleans.

EXT. SURYA'S TEA SHOP (CITY OF JOY) - NIGHT

Mostly people are asleep. But a few hardy souls are still gathered outside Surya's little tea shop. They come to talk politics to tell stories, like Ram, to listen to snippets from the newspaper and of course to sip tea. A couple of oil lamps illuminate the scene. Sunil and Max are there taking a cup of tea before heading home. Surya is reading Ram a piece about canal building and irrigation. Ram's eyes are closed, he may be asleep. Max looks up as Hasari appears. Max touches Sunil's arm, gets up and goes to Hasari, who is standing morosely just outside the light.

MAX

Hi... I've been meaning to talk to you... umm...

In the face of Hasari's silence, Max isn't sure how to continue. He tries a new tack.

MAX

Look there's something I'd like to show you... would you mind...?
Come with me, just give me a moment.

Hasari nods his head. Mainly because he can't think of anything else to do. Sunil watches the two of them go off. Ram, whose head has been nodding, opens his eyes and asks the startled Surya:

RAM

Those who live by a canal... do you think they are as generous as those who live by a river?

EXT. COURTYARD AND STORAGE SHED - DISPENSARY - NIGHT

The sound of a PADLOCK BEING UNLOCKED. DARK SCREEN. Light flashes. Max and Hasari appear in the doorway. Max has a torch. Surprised by the light, a few rats scamper off. Somewhere a DOG BARKS. Then there is just a heavy, mysterious silence.

Max leads Hasari into the building, shines the torch into the corner.

It illuminates an antique and broken-down rickshaw. The wheels are separated from the carcass. The seats are missing. One shaft is broken. But it is a rickshaw. Max looks at Hasari.

HASARI

Yes... I can see.

MAX

Well...? I'm good with my hands.
I bet you're good with your
hands... what do you say?

Hasari makes a little farewell gesture with his hands. But he doesn't leave. Max pulls the rickshaw down from the wall. Sits on it. He presses on:

MAX

We could get this baby to run.
I'm serious. This is for real,
Hasari...

Hasari looks at Max part resentful and part touched. He shakes his head.

HASARI

You don't understand anything.
Nothing! If I could mend that
thing, how could I use it? The
police? A license? Ghatak? My
soul would be on its way to
heaven before the sun had even
half pushed the night out of the
sky!

MAX

All that can be fixed later!
Anything can be fixed in this
place... it needs the will, that's
all.

HASARI

Doctor Da, I'm just a small man.
Don't tempt me with big thoughts.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI (CONT'D)

I'll end up lying in an alley
with my throat cut. I'm sorry.
Perhaps you meant to do good,
but...

And he shrugs his shoulders, bends his head for a moment,
and then makes off into the night. Max sighs in
frustration.

EXT./INT. DISPENSARY (CITY OF JOY) - DAY

There must be about two hundred needy sitting in the
courtyard. Some in the sun, some in the shade. Mothers
and babies, children, old men and widows, tribals and
Moslems. Aristotle John, and Margereta, the two
Christians we have seen helping out in earlier scenes at
the dispensary, are trying to compile records. Surya is
supervising some building. The street children's school
is active in one corner. We notice Manooj there.

Joan and Max are in the dispensary cleaning up a sore
that Anouar has on his rump. Anouar is his usual
irrepressible self. He is experimenting with some gentle
flirtation.

ANOUAR

I think Joan Di has a better
touch than you, Max Daddah!
Maybe she can manage me on her
own.

MAX

Oh, changing our story, huh!
Last time you told me you were
more than two women could manage!
Hey, Anouar, I wish you could get
the rest of your folks to come
here for treatment. That's a
long walk out there and back.

ANOUAR

They would, but they are scared.
People warn them from coming.

MAX

Ignorance... goddamn ignorance!

Sunil, working nearby, throws him an irritated look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Sometimes I feel like I'd just like to get some wealthy guy from Miami to step in here, buy the whole place up, fix the sewage, the electricity, the water, everything... Hey Sunil, could you pass me that suture dish...?

SUNIL

Get it yourself! Your arms are long enough...

MAX

Hey, what's eating you!?

SUNIL

Take us as you find us, Max! That's what's eating me. Help us if you like... but let us find our own way. Is it our fault if we are poor? If we are the world's cheap labor...

MAX

Hey, Sunil... look, I was only joking, right?

But Sunil has stomped over to a patient on the other side of the room. Max sighs, wipes his forehead, then with a nod at Anouar and Joan, he goes out for a breather.

EXT. DISPENSARY - COURTYARD - DAY

Max emerges into the sunlight. Takes a breath. He looks around at the hive of activity. Something catches his eye. He walks over to the storage shed. The door is half open. The padlock is hanging on its chain.

INT. DISPENSARY - STORE ROOM - DAY

Max's head appears around the gap in the door. The sound of WATER SPLASHING. Max is looking at:

Hasari stripped to the waist, wearing only a water-splashed dhoti, is washing the carcass of the old rickshaw. He looks up as he sees Max's shadow. He signs with his head for Max to come in.

HASARI

Close the door! Ghatak has more eyes than a pineapple.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI (CONT'D)

I should like to stay alive long
enough at least to try this out!

Max slides through the gap in the door, then pushes it to. The half-light is broken by thin beams of light that dance with dust. The floor and walls are dappled with their bright patterns. Max crosses towards the rickshaw. Looks at it approvingly. Hasari goes on wiping down.

There is a moment of silence as Max watches Hasari work. Then he breaks the silence.

HASARI

It's my work...

MAX

Well, you sure ran that thing
fast...

HASARI

Yes. I was fast... too much
fast. A beginning mistake.

Max gives a rueful laugh.

MAX

Yeah... we all make 'em!

Withouth a word the two men fit the last wheel on, then stand back to admire their handiwork. It's not much, but it's something. Hasari coughs a deep cough. He spits. Max looks at him.

MAX

Do you often cough like that?

Hasari lies.

HASARI

No... it's the dust from this. In
here.

He taps his breastbone. And then crosses to pick up one of the worn seat boards to the rickshaw. He sets to work, without looking back at Max.

EXT. STREET NEAR CITY OF JOY - EVENING

The evening haze of diesel fumes and smoke sits over the city. The sun hangs in the hazy sky like a dark plum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the lane, a small group of locals, some storeholders and others are holding forth loudly to two sympathetic-looking local policemen and a superintendent. The Goonda and Kumal, with the slicked-down hair, are very much part of the proceedings. Egging on the unforthcoming. One of the men sees something coming towards them and nudges a friend. The group falls gradually silent, uncertain. The superintendent gives a smile and a brief wave. We note that he was the man Hasari saw in Ghatak's office, the day he lost his rickshaw.

Joan, Max and Sunil are coming down the narrow street that slopes up out of the City of Joy. Joan looks slightly odd in a pale sari. Max cheerily acknowledges the policeman's wave. But the three of them are aware of the hostility that emanates from the group.

They've arrived at a little car, a Padmini. From the mattress advertisement across the windscreen we deduce it belongs to Sunil's family. Joan looks at the sullen band of shopkeepers. She gives a worried little frown.

MAX

Go on, or those guys at the High Commission'll think you're not coming.

Joan reluctantly gets into the car.

JOAN

You'll be alright till morning?

Max gives a reassuring "yes" and gently pushes her into the car. Sunil GUNS the MOTOR. Joan looks at Max out of the window with ill-concealed anxiety. Max taps at the roof of the car in mock exasperation.

MAX

Look, I'm only going to be skippering your little raft for a few hours. So quit fussing and get outta here.

The little car pulls away. And Max gives a little smile, then walks back past the almost silent little gathering on the corner.

INT. CLINIC - STORAGE SHED - NIGHT

A paint brush dips into a little box of paints. The same box Hasari unpacked all that time ago at Binal's house.

Hasari puts the finished touch to a design on one of the shafts of his little cart. He smiles softly. Wipes the brush clean and prepares to go home.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - NIGHT

Even Surya's shop is closed up. FAINTLY from within we can hear the sound of the old man's ZITHER, and make out his shape in one of the dim windows.

INT. ROOM IN DISPENSARY - NIGHT

A faint strip of moonlight illuminates the Raft of the Medusa as it hangs on the wall. Joan's few possessions are scattered around the room, which is not noticeably tidy. A couple of nicely-colored saris hang on a nail. Max turns restlessly in his sleep. A FAINT SCRATCHING sound makes him open one eye. He looks at something, closes it again. A beat. Both Max's eyes suddenly flick open as he realizes what he might have seen. He sits up, flicks on the torch by his low cot. Illuminated in the beam is a river of cockroaches flowing in a line across the floor. Max rubs his eyes, the cockroaches flow on.

MAX

Mamma Mia! Oh boy.

He sighs. Switches off the torch and turns over. Ready to attempt to to back to sleep. A beat. Then there is the sound of VOICES from outside the yard. Max pulls the thin sheet over his ears. The NOISES go on. Someone starts BANGING urgently on the door. Max sits up. He listens, then struggles out of bed.

EXT. DISPENSARY COURTYARD - NIGHT

Max wrenches open the door. An extraordinary sight appears in the moonlit street. Said, the big mute leper is standing with Meeta, the woman whose baby Max delivered, hanging on his back. Anouar is with them, eyes bulging with panic.

ANOUAR

She's passing blood, Doctor
Apni... She's going to die.
Quickly, Babu, help us.

Max pulls them into the courtyard. The light of the torch reveals that Meeta is covered in blood. The mute puts her on one of the cots near the door. Max understands the gravity of the situation.

MAX

It's a hemorrhage... she's going
to need a transfusion fast!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX (CONT'D)

There's nothing here, Jesus!
Joan... shit, she's in town...
We've got to get her to a
hospital. Never get a taxi
here...

Suddenly he gets an idea. His voice calms.

MAX

Anouar, find Hasari. Wake him.
Tell him to get the rickshaw.
He'll know what that means! Now
scoot!

ANOUAR

The rickshaw...?

MAX

He'll understand... and tell Aloka
to get here. Pronto. Get moving,
for Chrissakes, this could be a
matter of minutes.

Anouar shoots off. Max turns back towards Meeta. Bends
to comfort her.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

In the soft mildewy light of a sleeping street. Hasari
is pulling the old rickshaw. The WHEELS SQUEAK, and
one wobbles, but it moves. In the back, Aloka is holding
the trembling figure of Meeta. Blood drips down the
rickshaw. Max runs alongside Hasari, Max is fighting for
breath and he's still in his boxer shorts and a shirt.

EXT. PARK STREET - NIGHT

A couple of taxis waiting for clients outside a row of
nightclubs. Max is arguing with the drivers who won't
take a passenger. Not a bleeding one and not a leper.

EXT. SAME STREET - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

The race to the hospital continues. Max is getting
blown. Hasari runs on, unflappable.

EXT. MEDWAR PINE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

They arrive outside the hospital gates. The hospital
is huge, gloomily Victorian, people are sleeping outside
the gates.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR/SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

The wards are full and so are the corridors. Patients on beds and stretchers everywhere, most have at least one member of their family to watch over them. With this number of patients and drips and beds, one could be forgiven for thinking the hospital was in the middle of a war or an epidemic. In fact, it's just unable to cope with the demands made on it.

In a side room Max is arguing with a porter who is trying to avoid admitting Meeta. In desperation he feels for money. In his haste he hadn't even put on his trousers.

He emerges into the corridor. Aloka has heard the argument. She was preparing for this. She has brought a tiny store of rupees. She hands a couple to Max. He blesses her in a look.

He charges back into the side room. The porter wearily bestirs himself.

In the corridor, Meeta is fading fast. Aloka smooths the sweat off her brow. She is keeping Meeta alive by willpower and force of love. Then Max is back, standing over her. With him is a man. Hasari looks at him, feels he knows him. How? It is the Attendant from the blood bank but Hasari can't place him.

MAX

I think they'll admit her... But
we've got to pay for the blood.

The blood blank man looks embarrassed. Tries to take Aloka on one side, but she stands her ground.

MAX

Take what she's got. We haven't
got anymore for God's sake!

Max is getting hysterical, every moment counts. The blood man is unsure, but he's also worried about upsetting this foreigner. Max grabs the money out of Aloka's hand and shoves it at the blood man. He looks at Meeta. Then heads off up the corridor.

MAX

I gotta get a doctor... Christ!

The blood man starts to haggle. Aloka turns away and comforts Meeta. The man hangs around looking put out. Aloka strokes Meeta's face, holds her fingerless hand. But Meeta doesn't respond.

Max is hurtling back down the corridor. He's got a young intern in tow. Almost a kid, he's obviously been up for days at a stretch. But he's going to help. Meeta is picked up, rushed down the corridor. Whisked out of sight. Hasari has watched this whole interchange with growing respect for Aloka... and for Max, and some gnawing pains of jealousy at the way they seem to make a team.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The rickshaw stands near the entrance. Hasari comes INTO the FRAME. He lifts the seat. He takes out a cloth. He starts to wipe the blood off his two-wheeled friend. Aloka is sitting on the curb. She watches her husband.

Hasari cleans. He looks up. His eyes catch Aloka's. He struggles with himself.

HASARI

Big Sister Joan... and Max Daddah.
They have need of you at the
clinic...

It's a statement. Aloka nods. She waits. Hasari struggles inside.

HASARI

You are my wife, Aloka... you and
my children are my wealth... but
when they have need of you at the
clinic, you may go to them.

Hasari looks hard at her. Then turns and continues his cleaning. Max has arrived on the steps. He sits near Aloka, sweat is running into his eyes. He nods.

MAX

We made it! She made it! That
Doc's a good kid.

They look at each other, with mingled relief and exhaustion.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

We can hear the SQUEAL of the RICKSHAW before we can see it. Hasari, Aloka and Max come into sight. Hasari pulls the half-painted chariot. They walk along in line. Max is teaching Hasari an Eagles song. They sing badly but they sing together.

MAX/HASARI

'Take it to the limit, take it to
the limit one... more...
tiiiiiiiime!!!'

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - WASHING AREA - DAWN

The sun is only just up, feeling at the edges of buildings with its soft yellow light. Howrah Bridge stretches paternally over the river.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max is standing by the bathing steps that lead down to the river. He's alone. Maybe he's just washed, maybe he's been swimming. He is wet. He is wearing a light cotton Indian shirt and he is surprised at how contented he feels. He enjoys the moment. Then gets up, stretches and readies himself to begin the day.

EXT. STREET - WASHING AREA AND STANDPIPE - DAY

A street, still half-asleep, stretches away from us. The walls are brick-red and faced with flaking yellow rendering. At the far end the street opens out into an open place not far from the river. FRAMED in the gap, a group of women are washing. Just three. One is Aloka. Her gestures are beautiful and sensual. She washes under her sari never revealing a moment of nakedness. The sari veils her body almost like mist but where it clings to her, it outlines her shape, hints at her skin beneath. This is a sweet and peaceful moment in Aloka's day and she savors it.

Max crosses the end of the street, on his way back to the clinic, his towel is around his neck. He sees Aloka. He stops.

Aloka continues to wash. Max is held by her grace, Aloka turns, looks towards Max. For a second their eyes meet. Then Aloka drops her head, maybe with the faintest of smiles. Max can't tell. The next moment another of the women has inadvertently blocked her FROM VIEW. Max walks on.

EXT. STREET (CITY OF JOY) - DAWN

Manooj and Amrita are hurrying up the still sleepy street. A few women are lighting fires. COOKING POTS are CLATTERING, people are waking up.

Max enters the street, waves a hello to Margareta, who has a small hut near the first square. She has some cut banana on a little tin plate. She offers some to Max. He takes one small piece. He walks on. He greets Manooj and Amrita.

MAX

Hi, you guys... you going to be at school today?

MANOOJ

Tonight. We have work now in the day, Max Daddah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Manooj gives Max a broad grin. He does a boxing feint with the doctor. These two are obviously getting on. Amrita watches with her shy smile. Max greets her, hands together in the Indian way. She returns the greeting and the two children head off for work. Max continues on down the lane, heading for the dispensary.

INT. DISPENSARY - COURTYARD/STOREROOM - DAY

The light slants into this place in its habitual rays. The rickshaw stands a little to one side. Hasari has put it there so that the light falls on it. He has been working on the hubs. He surveys the chariot. Gives a wry smile. Then crosses to the rickshaw. He looks up.

Max has come in. He looks at the rickshaw admiringly. There is a lot he'd like to say but somehow this isn't the moment, for either of them.

HASARI

I shall go to Park Circus. With Ram. He has friends on the stand.

It is clear that Hasari is frightened. Max says nothing. After a moment he squeezes Hasari's shoulder and leaves. Hasari looks at the rickshaw. His face is proud but grim.

INT. CLINIC - SURGERY/DISPENSARY - DAY

Max opens up the door. It's still early, no one is at work yet. Outside, some of the street kids have dropped by for breakfast. Aristotle John, looking a little frosty, pops his head around the door to see if Max needs a cup of tea. Max does. He opens a drawer, shakes his head at the mass of papers and accounts books. He feels a pull at his trouser leg. He looks down. Sees a little boy of about seven. Eyes as big as a lemur's. Max sits down, looks at the serious-faced boy over the desk.

MAX

What can I do for you...?

The boy regards him with silent attention for a second. Then bends down below the level of the desk. Max waits. After a moment the serious face appears again. Silently, the child raises his hands above the table. Cupped in them is a small green parrot. He puts it on the table and points at its wing. Max can't resist a grin as he looks at the serious face.

MAX

Sick, huh?

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Hasari is not far from the City of Joy. He pulls his rickshaw with a set face. A couple of street kids follow for a moment laughing and teasing him on the neatness of his machine. Hasari approaches a corner. A POLICEMAN detaches himself from a wall and stops Hasari. This is a constable we've seen talking to the Goonda. The Policeman starts, softly enough.

POLICEMAN

Good morning... that's a pukka nachgar you're pulling. Is it yours?

HASARI

Yes, sir.

POLICEMAN

Well, a man possessing such a sweet chariot should also possess a licence. Isn't that how it's written?

And he walks slowly around the rickshaw. Hasari waits.

POLICEMAN

But however, it is written, I don't see a licence.

HASARI

I was late... I didn't have time to fix it on.

The Policeman is close to him now and Hasari proffers him some rupees concealed in his fist. The Policeman brushes his hand aside.

POLICEMAN

Where's your licence, you son of a bitch!

HASARI

I'll fix it on tomorrow.

A few people have stopped to watch the proceedings. The Policeman is aware of the little crowd that's starting to form. Hasari holds his ground.

POLICEMAN

Stop flying kites. You don't have a licence.

Hasari puts down the shafts of his rickshaw. He leans towards the Policeman, grabs his fist and, holding it tight, squeezes his two rupees into the man's palm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

Look, you vulture... every day I pass here I slip three rupees in your palm. And that is what will happen today. Or the union will have you flung on the dung heap.

Hasari's voice has stayed very low. He bends to pick up the shafts of his beast. The Policeman is taken aback. He is also a little worried about the crowd who may or may not support him. He throws a nervous look towards a group of men lounging near a paan shop. Almost unnoticeably, one of them shakes his head. This man is one of the two guards on the day that Ashoka took away Hasari's rickshaw. The Policeman gives Hasari a flick with his bamboo, and waves him on. We FOLLOW Hasari visibly relieved at the outcome of this first encounter. Behind him the man who shook his head says a farewell to his cronies, pats the discomfited Policeman on the shoulder, and makes off.

EXT. RICKSHAW STAND - PARK CIRCUS - DAY

A line of rickshaws. The pullers are sitting in a group, talking and laughing. Ram is waiting, standing slightly apart. Hasari arrives with his chariot. The conversation amongst the rickshaw pullers dies down. They are aware of Hasari's situation. They are sympathetic but awaiting the outcome. Hasari salutes Ram, Ram nods at him.

RAM

I'm not going to run today, brother... my wind is gone and my muscles are hard as teakwood...

Hasari looks at him tenderly: Ram gives his nasty full cough.

HASARI

This is your rickshaw too, Ram... whatever I make today we divide... Go and buy honey for your chest.

Ram gives a wan smile. It's not honey he needs. At that moment they hear the cry -- "Rickshaw!" None of the other pullers move. They look towards Hasari. He nods, squeezes Ram's hand. He heads for the fat manhwari who needs transportation. The others watch, passive but curious.

EXT. BONSAI COURT (SCRIBES) - DAY

This street is alive with the clatter of typewriters. Under the thick overhanging trees scribes type out the legal documents that will pile up, gathering dust in the old court buildings. Ram accosts a YOUNG SIKH SCRIBE sitting in a fresh white shirt near the gates to the courthouse.

RAM

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

And he sits, as if that is sufficient instruction. The sikh looks at him. After a pause Ram raises an interrogative eyebrow.

RAM

What is the word, when land is watered... with canals?

SCRIBE

'Irrigation'?

RAM

I want that word in the letter.

He nods contentedly.

He waits for the clerk to start. The Scribe waits for him to continue. At length the man ventures:

SCRIBE

So! What would you like to say to your wife?

Ram looks at him in disgust.

RAM

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

INT. METAL PIECEWORK SHOP - DAY

It's a dark and claustrophobic place. The air vibrates with the SQUEAL and CLATTER of METAL. About twenty kids sit in a line, back to back. They are manipulating, with the dexterity of their age, a series of lethal and unprotected lathes and polishers. No one can hear his neighbor. Amrita and Manooj work amidst these lively grinning, but underpaid, kids. Their hands flashing like butterflies amidst and grimy machinery.

Not far from Amrita sits Kanchan. He's handsome. Every time he can, he tries to catch Amrita's eye. She pretends not to notice. But contrives to fail. This flirtation doesn't go unnoticed by the sharp eyes of Manooj.

EXT. STREET - DUSK

The day is coming to an end. The street is narrow and relatively empty. Two cyclists wobble a little before they turn the corner. We hear the RUMBLE of WHEELS and the SLAP of BARE FEET against the hard ground. Hasari is on his way home. A couple of boxes sit on the rickshaw. They are his last delivery. He is in the street where he encountered the policeman. Suddenly the rickshaw jerks to a stop. Impossible to move it. He looks round and sees why. A man has pushed a thick stick through the spokes of the wheels.

He smiles provokingly at Hasari. Suddenly from behind him another man emerges and climbs into the rickshaw as though he wants a ride. He sits, legs crossed for a moment. Then he whips out a narrow-bladed knife, and still staring at Hasari, begins to slice up the newly-covered seats of the rickshaw.

Hasari is alone and exhausted. The street has emptied. His heart sinks. The expected retribution has arrived. The two men, emotionless, start to scratch the new paint-work. Hasari stands, tasting the humiliation.

He hears a NOISE at the end of the street. Everybody glances round, but it's only a band of children on their way back from work. Hasari hears a SOFT VOICE in his ear.

VOICE

Well, little friend, what's happening here?

Hasari turns. Ashoka is behind him, smiling wolfishly.

ASHOKA

Have you upset your passengers?

The two men grin, then settle down to watch the inevitable. At that moment a woman comes out of the house and shouts at the children. They stop. But one, and then another, run forward. It's Manooj and Amrita. Hasari gestures them to go back. Ashoka waves them on. Confused, they arrive close to their father. They can see something dangerous is about to unfold and are mesmerized.

ASHOKA

People are talking about you, Hasari... they say you love your family... that you are a very good father, Hasari, very good...

Hasari is getting angry. He swallows a harsh cough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ASHOKA

You look ill... are you ill, little man?

Hasari entreats him to silence.

HASARI

Please, let us go through... Babu!

Ashoka glides towards the petrified Amrita. He puts out his hand with its ring. and strokes her cheek.

ASHOKA

What a little woman already...
hmm, you should have a husband
soon, little one. Hey?

Ashoka throws a quick look at Hasari. Ashoka's breathing is coming faster, he puts his hand up to his face feeling it with his customary gesture. He looks at Amrita, his lips moving as though he's chewing gum. Hasari glances over his shoulder at the two men. They watch, unmoving. But the knife glints in the light. Ashoka is beginning to lose control, though he stays calm as ever on the outside. He crosses close to Amrita. The two men by the rickshaw exchange looks.

ASHOKA

She's going to give someone a
lot of enjoyment... Oh yes! And
why only one, eh sweet! I could
show you how to make a lot of
money...

There is a moment of unbearable tension. Then Ashoka puts his hand out and touches Amrita's breast.

That triggers an explosion of rage in Hasari. Years of suppression and all the fury of the last few days bust through his veins. He hits Ashoka. A hard punch to the chest. Ashoka freezes with shock. Hasari is unstoppable. Ashoka goes down on one knee, he starts to whimper. The two men sit without moving, their faces barely concealing grins. But a blow from Hasari cuts off the words. Hasari stops. The rage subsides. He stares down at Ashoka. A movement makes him turn his head. The two men are leaving.

MAN

We were only paid to damage the
rickshaw!

They give approving nods. Then they are gone. Ashoka crawls towards a wall, leans against it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Manooj is looking at his father with awe. Hasari puts his arms around Amrita. Then he goes and picks up the shafts of the rickshaw. His shirt has a tear and spatters of Ashoka's blood.

He picks up the two packages. Puts them back in the rickshaw. Hasari beckons to his two children. They come to him. They walk down the street together, this little family, accompanied by the RATTLE of the WHEELS against the ground.

INT. CITY OF JOY - RAM'S HUT - NIGHT

Shambu is lying in Aloka's lap. She is singing very softly to him. Every so often she smells his skin. Enjoying the scent. She looks beautiful. The door opens. She looks up.

In come her husband and his two children. She notices Hasari's torn shirt, the specks of blood.

Hasari catches the alarm on her face.

HASARI

It's nothing... trouble with a passenger.

Manooj can't restrain himself. He balls his fists in imitation of his father in the fight.

MANOOJ

Daddy fought the...

But Hasari cuts him off with a gesture. The boy subsides.

ALOKA

What happened...?

HASARI

Nothing... it won't happen again.

And for the first time he allows himself to enjoy an enormous smile.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The sound of BARE FEET slapping against the ground, the rough noise of TRUNDLING WHEELS. The TAPPING of a BELL against shafts of wood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari comes INTO SHOT, He's in a clean shirt. He's noticeably thinner than the man that we first saw on the train with his family, but there is something proud now in the set of his head.

He approaches the Policeman leaning as usual against the wall. The Policeman flicks his eyes across the street.

Amongst the small group outside the bidi shop are the Goonda and Ashoka's two men. The Goonda makes a small negative wave with his hand.

The Policeman relaxes and Hasari sails past without a problem.

EXT. GIRLS SCHOOL - MIDDLETON ROAD - DAY

A small group of rickshaw pullers sitting near their carriages. They turn as something catches their eye. Across the road Hasari is depositing two school girls in their freshly-washed uniforms. He looks through the gate as they walk into the school and another way of life. A taxi pulls up. Two more girls jump out. Hasari watches the taxi as it drives away. He takes up the pull on the rickshaw, swings it around the street. A WHISTLE from one of the pullers. We've seen him before at the park street stand. Hasari looks across. The man is pointing at a cup of tea that he holds in his hand and beckons Hasari to join them. And that's what he does.

INT. DISPENSARY COURTYARD - DAY

The street children's school now operates in two shifts. To the accompaniment of Surya's zither a small band of twenty or so girls are doing some Indian classical dancing, under the eye of a young Indian teacher.

Hasari, pulling the rickshaw loaded up with some small boxes, arrives in the entrance. Across the way some children are translating Bengali words into their English equivalent. A girl is writing on the board. It's Poomina, the little prostitute. Joan and Max are watching from the window of the dispensary.

INT. DISPENSARY - DAY

Joan and Max are surveying the scene through the window.

JOAN

That's the third day she's been
at school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

It's like trying to reel in a blue marlin...

JOAN

Worse! Still, the trust's starting to come. You can see it in her eyes.

They turn away from the window. They survey the small clinic. The room is spotless, and this is one of the rare times we see it empty. Aristotle John is just finishing some filing. Two buckets and mops stand ready, suggesting a pause to clean up.

JOAN

The demand on the school is magnificent... we're going to have to make it a three shift day. I've a little left from that German money...

She bustles out leaving Max on his own, listening to the SOUNDS from outside. A pause. Then there is a KNOCK at the door. Hasari enters carrying one or two of the boxes from the rickshaw. Two of them are stamped with proprietary medical names. Hasari comes in. Max surveys him for a moment then says laconically:

MAX

Crushed like a cockroach. Huh?

Hasari gives him a slight grin. With a sigh, Aristotle John shuffles out. Max continues.

MAX

In this town, you've only got to think of sneezing and someone'll whip out a handkerchief.

He pauses a moment, remembering the last time he heard that phrase. Hasari puts the boxes down. Max continues:

MAX

It's Manooj, he told me all the details. That kid should be a sports commentator.

Hasari gives a pleased laugh. Suppresses the desire to cough, turns away. The cough comes anyway. Max looks up sharply.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

How long you been coughing like that?

HASARI

It happens sometimes...

Max looks at Hasari. Who's concealing something in his hand. Max's heart sinks. He knows what it might be. Hasari makes for the door. Max stops him sharply.

MAX

Let me see.

There is a battle of wills. Hasari looks around the room, Max doesn't give ground. At last Hasari says:

HASARI

Max Daddah, something bad is happening to me...

We see Max's face.

INT. DISPENSARY - DAY (LATER)

The curve of Hasari's thin back BISECTS the SCREEN. The stainless steel stethoscope slides over skin. Max finishes listening and stands up. They are in a screened-off section of the clinic. We are aware that Hasari is desperate to keep this examination secret. Both men are speaking softly, even though the room is empty. Max looks at Hasari gravely. Hasari returns the look.

HASARI

I will ask you to keep this secret.

Max starts to speak. Hasari cuts him off.

HASARI

From Aloka, from my children. I do not want them to know how bad... let them be happy.

Max looks at Hasari. He nods. He means it.

HASARI

There is something I want to do... before...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Before nothing! I'm going to put you on treatment of antibiotics that'll make a new man out of you!!

Hasari gives a smile. He is not convinced.

HASARI

Will it keep me strong? With this red fever you watch the sun rise each morning, and wonder if you'll see it go down!

MAX

It'll keep you strong, but you should try and... don't overdo it... if you can avoid...

HASARI

I have first to make five thousand rupees...

MAX

Five thousand!?

HASARI

It's a duty, Max Daddah. I have to make a dowry for my daughter... it's the custom.

MAX

I thought all that stuff had been abolished.

HASARI

Yes, some rich Babus can say so! But do they give their daughters to the paralysed or blind? No! No other will be let to take my daughter without a dowry... how else will she survive after I am gone! Eh, Max Daddah?

And he gives a sigh that indicates the weight of that burden. Then his face softens.

HASARI

I am from a village. The land is beautiful, always. Beautiful. If the crops are full... then it is most beautiful.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI (CONT'D)

Then it's green. When we cut the crops, we feel empty. But then we know the planting will start again... and we feel happy. So I feel when I look on my daughter...

Max nods. He gets up, goes to the medicine cabinet, checks out a few drugs. He's thinking out how to say something.

MAX

If you need help, Hasari, you've only to ask...

HASARI

Max Daddah, thank you! But there are plenty here who have nothing at all... and today I was taken by a dream...

MAX

What was that?

HASARI

One day I will drive a taxi. They say it has a meter that makes the rupees fall like monsoon rains...

Max laughs. So does Hasari, relishing the thought. There is a sudden COMMOTION in the corridor. The door is pushed open. In the doorway stand two policemen in uniform, and one in civilian clothes. His name is CHANDRAN. He's sweating profusely as he veers between apology and belligerence.

CHANDRAN

Dr. Loeb... I am from the D.I.B. We have cause to believe that you are committing irregularities.

MAX

What does that mean, exactly...

The policeman cuts him off.

CHANDRAN

... You are working here. Are you a missionary?

MAX

No, I'm a doctor... what is all this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a sound of a growing COMMOTION outside.
Chandran throws a nervous look at the window.

CHANDRAN

I would be grateful if you would
accompany me to General Police
Headquarters...

Hasari looks anxious. Joan and Sunil and Aristotle John
appear.

JOAN

Now what is troubling you here,
Inspector?

CHANDRAN

It can be explained at General
Headquarters. There has been an
infraction... Doctor Loeb will have
to leave the country...

He crosses to Max. As if to help him from the chair...
the tension in the room rises.

MAX

I want to know what this is
about... what infraction? Leave
the country when?

CHANDRAN

Please. It will be explained.

Joan gives Max a nod.

JOAN

Best to do as he says. I'll
follow you down.

EXT. DISPENSARY - COURTYARD (CITY OF JOY) - LATE
AFTERNOON

Max is hustled down through the courtyard and into the
small police car. Quite a crowd has gathered. The mood
is ugly. People don't like the sight of someone they
have begun to think of as their doctor being taken away
by the police.

Chandran soothes the crowd. Max climbs into the car.
The doors slam and he's driven off. He turns to peer out
of the back window. We see his face looking back at the
sympathetic crowd. Hasari and Aloka among them.

INT. D.I.B. BUILDING - OFFICE - EVENING

Yellowing walls with the ubiquitous flaking plaster. Posters warn against drugs. The evening sun slides in through the dusty windows. A pair of benches sit against one wall. There is a desk piled up with mildewed papers, Max sits in front of it. Across from him sits a SMALL MAN smoking a cigarette. On another bench sit three senior uniformed police officers. One appears to be reading a newspaper with great attention. At last, the little Man looks at Max. His face is sad.

GOYAL (SMALL MAN)

So you have been working in our city?

MAX

As a volunteer...

GOYAL

Quite so... but working... do you like it in our country?

Max nods. He does.

GOYAL

Don't you think our country has more beautiful things to offer foreign guests than its slums?

MAX

Yes. A lot of people point that out.

Goyal takes a drag on his cigarette. He smokes it cupped in his hand, as though taking a drink.

GOYAL

So, what are you doing in your slum?

Max pauses:

MAX

Helping. Helping out. I'm just a doctor...

Goyal nods, takes another drag, blows it out. He gives a knowing shake of the head.

GOYAL

Is that possible where you are, to be just a doctor? And helping? What kind of helping? Many people seem to have become upset.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

What people...?

GOYAL

I am sorry to cause unpleasantness... we appreciate that you are a good man. We take this into account. We even make certain exemptions... but not if there are complaints, if a disturbance is caused...

MAX

Well, maybe we can sort out these complaints... listen, at the clinic we have nearly seven hundred patients on file, and that's only...

GOYAL

Seven hundred! Really?

MAX

Yes... and it could easily double -- and that's a lot of disease and a lot of suffering...

GOYAL

Yes, we do know about the suffering, Doctor.

MAX

Well, then, you'll know that what we're doing is just a drop in the ocean. But it's something, and it shows them that somebody cares!

Goyal stares at Max. Sucks again on his cigarette. Gets up.

GOYAL

'He who sees the one spirit in all, and all in the one spirit, can look with contempt at no creature.' I quote from the Upinishadas, a simple truth, but a truth.

Goyal looks out of the window at the seething cityscape. He sucks on the cigar wistfully.

MAX

What exactly are these complaints, anyway?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOYAL

If they were smoothed over,
withdrawn... then we may be able
to come to some arrangement.
But...

And he's genuinely sorry.

GOYAL

But you must be out of the country
in one week.

He's embarrassed but it's final. Max inhales hard. He's
going to fight this, come what may. He gets up.

INT. D.I.B. BUILDING - OUTER OFFICE - EVENING

Max storms out into the outer office. Joan is sitting
waiting on one of the worn benches. A uniformed police-
man sits at a desk brooding over yet another mound of
papers. Max flops down next to Joan. He throws her
a look, and sighs.

MAX

Not so long ago I couldn't wait to
get out of here and go home. Now
that I've got to go... I realize
this is home!

Joan looks at him, reminded of a conversation at a party
on the terrace. She wants to hug him, but this isn't
the time.

JOAN

They can't just throw you out...
We'll get a lawyer...

MAX

No... there's someone else who can
get me off the hook. And I've got
a good guess who this is.

INT. GHATAK'S HOUSE - DAY

The burning sunlight has been almost shut out. The room
is almost empty. It's furnished with a few pieces of
tasteless modern furniture and one or two run-down
antiques. One wall is covered with the portraits of
Bengali musicians. There is a large television on a
table. Ghatak is reclining on some cushions. He's
drinking tea and fanning himself to gain some relief from
the intense heat. His eyes are half-closed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is listening attentively to the singing of a young woman. She is accompanied by a man playing a little accordion.

A servant enters and discreetly whispers in Ghatak's ear. Ghatak nods a "yes." The servant goes back to the door. He opens it and beckons in Max. Ghatak gestures Max to a seat. Max goes and sits down. It is an effort. But Max stays in control. It's impossible to interrupt the singing. After a moment, Ghatak signs to the girl and the musician to stop.

GHATAK

Srimati sings like a nightingale,
don't you think? She can bring me
to tears...

The singer and musician leave the room. Ghatak sips his tea. Then says suavely, as if he had invited Max:

GHATAK

She was singing of East Bengal.
Songs of my boyhood... a time of
mangoes and coconut sweets. An
innocent time...

The two men size each other up.

GHATAK

You probably don't understand our
music?

MAX

Not really, no.

GHATAK

Acha! It is difficult to like
what you don't understand.

MAX

I was arrested yesterday. I want
to understand about...

Ghatak cuts him off with a wave of the hand.

GHATAK

You have chosen to work in a
difficult place, Doctor. Violence
easily blossoms. Good intentions
enacted with small knowledge can
be dangerous. I wish to protect
you from that.

The meaning is ambiguous but his tone of voice conveys
the threat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Thank you for being so thoughtful.

GHATAK

I am glad to be of help. After you are gone I wish you to remember your visit with us as a happy one.

MAX

Thank you, again. The problem is, I intend to stay.

There is a flash of anger in Ghatak's eyes. He drains his tea.

GHATAK

Acha! You intend to stay. Doctor, without me, this place will fall into confusion. I have fashioned a practical thing... a community that works.. within a society that barely works at all! It's a miracle, a very fragile miracle!

MAX

So, how does looking after the sick and helping lepers threaten your miracle?

Ghatak gets up and starts to pace around in an excess of energy.

GHATAK

Because of respect! Because you show lack of respect! Because of lack of respect for me! Miss Bethel talks to me about compassion! Doctor, I am Hindu... Forty years ago I had to run from my home. As a refugee. Because of human cruelty as a refugee! You will open a hospital for lepers? Compassion! Without my protection you won't see compassion: you'll see a riot! These people do not want such a thing. They will burn your dispensary and lynch your lepers!

MAX

We don't want to open a leper hospital... we want to be able to treat some cases...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GHATAK

Let us be clear. You want to create a clinic, build a school, aid lepers... is that it?

MAX

Yes, if possible...

GHATAK

I can make it possible. But it should be done with respect... without disturbance... In other words, my protection must be sought... and it must be contracted, and paid for.

MAX

Paid for...?

GHATAK

Don't you pay taxes in your country? Understand, Doctor, I am a father to these people. I have certain contacts.

MAX

Yes, you do...

GHATAK

I intercede in their disputes, I find work for their children. I am the only authority they have.

MAX

So you exploit them...

GHATAK

I must be a realist... and I am so because I know to trust money only. I survive... they survive! Their little world must obey certain rules, without those... collapse! You understand that, Doctor?

The door opens and the Goonda comes in. He is stunned to see Max. He crosses to his Ghatak and they move to the far end of the room conversing in inaudible tones.

Ghatak is looking furious. He says something sharply to the Goonda, who runs out. With some effort Ghatak regains his self-control. He stares acidly at Max.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GHATAK

Did you ever play with a top?
When you were a boy? No? Keeping
it balanced... that was the
difficult thing... come, come!

And he almost pulls Max out of the room.

EXT. STREETS AND DISPENSARY (CITY OF JOY) - DAY

It's a riot in the streets of the City of Joy. Two groups fighting it out. On one side, supporters of the clinic -- Sunil, Aristotle John, Margereta, Shanta and Ashish the two teachers, Surya and members of the tea-shop, Salladdin and others, even some of the lepers -- Anouar, Meeta and four or five others. Amongst the children we see Manooj and Poomina, the little prostitute.

Against them are massed a horde of young demonstrators. They carry banners in English and Hindi calling for no lepers and the closure of the clinic. Their faces are alight with enjoyment, they are wielding crowbars, sticks, knives and one or two Molotov cocktails.

Joan and Aloka are struggling to put out a fire near the entrance to the clinic. Most shops are shut. But a cocktail lands smack in the middle of Surya's teashop. He and Ram struggle to put it out, not before Ram suffers a nasty burn. Smoke is filling the narrow lanes.

A cocktail rolls, smoking into the clinic courtyard. A street kid rushes to pick it up, to fling it back. Joan screams a warning. Too late, the child has it in his hand when it EXPLODES. Joan and Aloka rush to the badly-wounded boy.

Anouar is chopping at knees with a cudgel. He gets a whack from a stick that nearly knocks him senseless.

From a sheltered vantage point, Ashoka is directing operations through a megaphone, shouting, eyes gleaming with enjoyment.

An assailant comes at Joan with a cutlass. Hasari seizes the attacker and hurls him backwards. One of the older street kids stabs his gleefully. There's another DETONATION. Hasari, Joan and Aloka are thrown to the ground. A BOTTLE of gasoline has EXPLODED right next to them. They are enveloped in smoke. Through the smoke, Hasari sees two men trying to pour gasoline over the scuttling figure of Anouar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari charges, and knocks them aside, scoops up Anouar in his arms. Kanchan, the boy from the metal shop, throws him a cloth and together they smother the flames.

Two Ambassador cars pull up outside the narrow entrance to the City of Joy. The Godfather, the Goonda, Max and two other Godfather heavies, push their way through the throng. Max is staggered at the violence. The Godfather throws him a long, hard look.

Ashoka is still screaming through the megaphone when it is wrenched out of his hands.

GHATAK

Idiot!! You wish to be in the newspapers, eh?

Ghatak speaks a few sharp words. They cut through the noise.

Joan, clearly horrified by this explosion of violence, has tears streaming down her face. She tries to staunch the bleeding wound of a woman who has been gashed in the stomach.

Suddenly the carnage stops. The chanting stops. The Godfather's voice stops.

The silence is almost worse, broken by the odd groan or wail from the wounded and the shocked. The streets begin to empty of demonstrators, as if by magic. Leaving the debris: stones, broken bottles, a small fire or two -- and the wounded. Acrid smoke floats hither and thither.

GHATAK

This was my son. I would not have done this at this time... This smell will reach the wrong noses. Acha! More expense!

He glances towards the policemen who are listening intently to the Goonda. Ghatak clucks disapprovingly under his breath, then turns to find himself surrounded by bruised but still angry members of the Society for Mutual Aid. Hasari is in the front of the group, along with Joan and Sunil. Ghatak tries going on the offensive.

GHATAK

So! What is this -- you had to take matters into your own hands? No one could come and see me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But he is drowned by a series of shouts: "Exploiter -- Vulture -- Abuse of lepers -- We did not begin this."

GHATAK

Who do I abuse? Who? Who has not
come to me and received? Who?
Say! If you have complaints I
will find you a lawyer! We'll go
to the Minister.

But it won't wash. Ghatak throws a look towards the policemen who are staring at the group uncertainly. Ghatak changes back.

GHATAK

One of you, then! Speak! Speak!
You, Bihari!

Hasari, still angry, takes up the challenge. Kanchan is still by his side.

HASARI

We did not begin this! But we
will finish it! Are we to take
the mud, the shit, the heat, no
water, no money, and stay silent?
Are we not supposed to help
ourselves? You are a fellow
countryman, but you throw
firebombs... these I am glad to
call brother and sister, since
they share our life.

Joan and Max exchange looks. The crowd drowns out Hasari. Ghatak holds out his hand.

GHATAK

Quiet! So you have the courage
of Arjun. Well, that I admire.
The disturbance is over. Let it
so stay! Let it stay between us!
So, build your clinic, Miss
Bethel, you have my blessing. I
shall see there is no more
disturbance...

He turns and, with some dignity, walks away. The crowd still simmers, but they sense they have won a victory, if not a war. Ghatak pauses as he passes Max.

GHATAK

I will inquire into these visa
problems. Enjoy this little
victory... but stay wise!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gives Max a wicked grin, then heads off towards the Goonda and the policemen, who greet his effusive apologetic gesturing respectfully. Max watches for a moment.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Hasari mouth half open and flecked with spume, is pulling his rickshaw. He is pouring with sweat, his eyes are bloodshot. He has never looked more like a horse.

His passenger is a huge Mahwari, wearing a nice gold ring. He is reading a newspaper. We see from a photograph on the front page that Nirupa has a new film success to her credit.

They arrive at a cross street. The customer gets down and pays Hasari. Very well it would seem the way Hasari thanks him. Exhausted, Hasari slumps in his rickshaw while he waits for his next customer.

With some satisfaction he counts a crumpled pile of notes and coins. He puts them away in a wallet he folds into his dhoti. Suddenly he starts. He has seen a familiar shape. There, in the entrance to a narrow lane, is Gangooly! He's cracking a joke with a man who looks as shady as he does. Hasari pulls his rickshaw to the lane, stops in front of Gangooly. They look at each other. Gangooly frowns, then raises a broad smile.

GANGOOLY

I remember you... of course? Of course?

HASARI

Hasari... Hasari Pal...

GANGOOLY

Hasari! I knew it. I knew you were a survivor. Well, I'm so pleased... no, I'm delighted, to see that you appear to have been blessed, that you have work and your little family... beautiful children...

Gangooly's shady friend makes a farewell gesture and slides away. Gangooly grunts an acknowledgment, but with the smoothness born of practice, works his magic on Hasari.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANGOOLY

They were really beautiful! How are they? Look, come and have a cup of tea or a little something stronger... we should celebrate.

Hasari remains unsmiling.

HASARI

Are you still stealing from refugees?

GANGOOLY

Yes... that! I'm full of regret about that. No, really I am even a little tormented. Yes, really!

HASARI

Tell that to this rickshaw!

GANGOOLY

Hasari, I am lame... and I am poor. Does that mean that I shouldn't survive? Will need of money let anyone be honest? Will it? When a man is struggling in rough sea... he clutches on to what he can or he drowns.

HASARI

You are a crook!

GANGOOLY

No! I am a business man and I have the spirit of an eagle, though it lives in the body of a crow! I am thus forced to scavenge! I would rather trick rich silkworms smothered by their own wealth. But if I can't get at the honey, then am I not forced to gnaw at the hive? Eh? So... come and drink tea, brother...

Hasari starts to shake his head, but is seized by a wracking cough before he can speak. Gangooly holds him up. He pats Hasari lightly on the back. His voice is warm with concern:

GANGOOLY

Acha! You seem to be in a bad way, friend.

HASARI

Not seem... I spit blood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANGOOLY

A lot?

Hasari nods, but he's still trying to get his breath back.

GANGOOLY

The body is a very frail vessel...
a man needs the courage of a Hanuman
to go through this life... Come,
please... I'll pay.

And, despite himself, Hasari feels himself being guided across the road.

EXT./INT. TEASHOP - DAY

Hasari and Gangooly are seated at a little table. The sun is whitewashing the street. Hasari is talking, and Gangooly, who knows how to listen, is looking at him with genuine concern. Hasari is finishing his tea and his tale.

HASARI

So to have a dowry for Amrita's
marriage... before my wheel turns
for the last time.. that would
be a happiness...

GANGOOLY

Amrita! I thought that was her
name. Listen, your wheel's got
plenty of turns yet...

HASARI

No... the monsoon will finish me.
That's what will finish me... but
it will certainly provide a good
dowry for my sweet. They say
every drop of rain turns into a
rupee.

GANGOOLY

True... I think I can help with
this dowry... no, listen! Shiva
be my witness. You should at
least think about this. You could
make more than pulling that cart
of yours through a month of rains!

Hasari looks at him suspiciously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GANGOOLY

For a man to see his daughter
properly married. To perceive she
is cared for. That is a great duty
... and a very great bliss.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Gangooly knocks once or twice on a door. A forbidding face appears at the grill. Gangooly whispers something, face pressed to the opening. As Hasari is let in, the man with the spirit of an eagle, cannot resist a little jig of victory.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

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

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

Crouched amidst the bones, in the middle of packing cases, and boxes, are men working. Some smoke, some have masks over their faces like surgeons. They scrape and clean and decorticate. They skillfully assemble their grisly creations, emotionless, like artists.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Through a dusty glass interior window, we see almost in mime, the manager examining Hasari. With a smile, he produces some papers. Hasari shakes his head. The manager gives a little shrug. Hasari and Gangooly come out of the office. Gangooly stops him by the door.

GANGOOLY

Hasari, wait! Think... 150 rupees
when you sign. If you sicken
badly, 300 rupees, and for your
family 100 if indeed your wheel
ceases to turn. This is like a
life insurance only! And if
you should think again...
remember your friend... Mister
Gangooly, eh!

And he is mentally already computing his percentage.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - WIDE SHOT - DAY

First the sky. It is low with clouds the color of lead. The sun spins occasional rays through the cloud-banks. A light wind passes over the City of Joy. Blowing at the roofs, lifting the summer dust, moving the washing and second bits of stray paper scurrying up the street.

INT. RAM/HASARI HUT - DAY

The morning light makes the colors of the flowers that have blossomed in Hasari's tea tin glow softly. Through the flowers we can make out the faces of Amrita, Manooj and Shambu as they watch the flowers move in the breeze. Aloka has put some tiny items of food on a plate. She adds a flower. She leaves the house. It's hot. Ram is still asleep. Hasari is doing a small calculation with the aid of a scrap of paper and a stub of pencil.

EXT./INT. DISPENSARY COURTYARD - DAY

The first trickle of the poor and destitute are beginning to form their lines. Max, wearing faded jeans and an Indian shirt with the sleeve rolled up, is opening the shutters. Aloka appears at his elbow with the dish of food. He smiles at her. She looks at him gravely. Their faces are close together, backlit by the light under the eaves. They fight not to touch each other, then the noise comes: RAIN! Tapping on the roofs, then starting to drum, louder and louder.

The sky opens and the rains come. Big spots that steam when they hit the hot tarmac. Then millions of drops that skip and dance on every flat surface. It's the sign of deliverance from the crushing heat. People rush out into the streets in a fever of collective joy. A delirious union with nature. A spontaneous liberation of the body and the spirit.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - STREETS - DAY

The houses are emptied of people. Men tear off their shirts, women hurl themselves into the rain, and spin around, their saris clinging to their bodies. Children run about, hither and thither. The water, already starting to puddle, splashes under the dancing feet. People shout out to each other "It's the monsoon, the monsoon!"

EXT. DISPENSARY COURTYARD - DAY

The Pals, Joan, the Lepers, Sunil, Margareta, Aristotle John, Saladdin and the rest are swept up in the extraordinary exhilaration of the moment. Collective madness bubbles up in them all. Joan dances, hugging Anouar. Even the gentle Aloka, seeming almost naked in her clinging sari, dances like a dervish with Manooj, Amrita, and Shambu.

Suddenly Max, running with the water of the heavens, flings himself into his explosion of general happiness. He waves and shouts and dances and then, to everybody's delight and amazement, begins to sing like Gene Kelley "I'm Singing In The Rain". The kids pick up the tune, if not the words. Max dances to Joan, kisses her on the forehead and drags her into the dance. The lukewarm water continues to rise.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - STREETS - DAY

It's raining. Rain enough to float the Ark. The monsoon floods have come. In parts of the city, cars and buses are marooned.

Hasari is splashing along with his rickshaw. It's shared by three passengers. He passes children playing in the street.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - LATER

Hasari is pulling his rickshaw in another direction. Some men are disconsolately pushing a soaked and stalled car. Hasari comes to a stop, the passengers pay him well. Two men rush for the rickshaw.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - LATER

Hasari is coming TOWARDS us. His rickshaw is loaded up with a huge sofa wrapped in a tarpaulin. The family splash along after him. He passes a rickshaw puller going in another direction. "Hey, it's raining drops of gold," says the man.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - LATER

A man is helping a pregnant woman out of the rickshaw. Hasari is wet, shivering, and out of breath. We see notes being pressed into his hand.

INT. RAM/HASARI HUT - NIGHT

A little shelf. On it is a brand new and unused kettle. A hand comes INTO SHOT and deposits next to it a cheap but new transistor radio. We see Hasari smile as he looks at the little hoard. Behind him, we can make out the shy face of Amrita.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - STREETS - LATER

Hasari is up to his waist. He has to push hard through the water. There are five small children crammed into his carriage. For a moment, the rain has stopped.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

The rain is splashing down again, making the water dance. Where the road slopes out of the water, we see a rickshaw parked. Hasari is sitting in it. The rain is drumming on the roof. Hasari is doing his sums. A wedge of damp notes, plenty of coins. This has been a good week. Hasari is trembling with fever, his hands shaking with the cold, but he is content.

INT. RAM/HASARI HUT - NIGHT

The little shelf is now quite full of small useful objects. Hasari's face and hands COME INTO SHOT as he puts a beautiful sari, wrapped in plastic, onto the shelf. It's the same gold color we have already seen in the wedding shops. Hasari is looking ill, but his smile could light a wet fire.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - LANE - NIGHT

The rain falls ceaselessly. The buildings are almost hidden behind veils of falling water. Sometimes lightning illuminates the scene and we make out wet and shiny silhouettes making their way through the rising water. Voices are carried on the wind. "Flood! Flood!" The water is beginning to form whirlpools as it flows through the streets. Objects float on it, a broken chair, shoes, bits of wood, a dead dog, etc.

INT. RAM/HASARI HUT - NIGHT

Water is beginning to flow over the doorstep. Some sandbags have been laid across it in an attempt to keep the water out, but it's proving an insufficient barrier. Ram, Hasari, Aloka and the children are doing their best to augment the sandbag barrier, but the water slops over the top and over their feet. Shambu is crying.

EXT. DISPENSARY - NIGHT

Everybody fights the sly advance of the water: Max, Joan, Aloka, Sunil, Aristotle John and the rest of the Mutual Aid Society. Surya is there and some familiar neighbors. They are putting up a wall of sandbags, bricks, wood, anything. The dispensary is higher than the rest of the area, but the water is inexorably rising.

Near the gates, part of the wall gives way, and the lower sandbags split. Joan rebuilds the wall, almost out of her own willpower. Others are supervising the carrying of the bedridden onto the platform that surrounds the building. Joan glimpses Poomina helping an old woman struggle up the wet steps. The water is rising inexorably. People slip and slide. No one is in danger, yet, but catastrophe is on everybody's mind.

Max and Manooj find themselves near the storage shed. They are shifting boxes of powdered milk onto higher shelves. There is a BANGING on the window.

Through the curtain of rain the figure of one of the Lepers makes a grotesque silhouette. He shouts in Hindi, a voice squeezed by distress. Bandaged hands waving. Max shouts to Manooj:

MAX

What's he say?

MANOOJ

The lepers, very bad... some drown, Max Daddah!

EXT. CITY OF JOY - STREET - NIGHT

Hasari is pulling his rickshaw up the lane. He hears SHOUTS -- turns. It's Max, Manooj, Saladdin, the two teachers, Aloka. They need his help. They need the rickshaw. Boats even. Hasari hesitates. Looks up the street. There are passengers waving rupees at him as they shelter from the rain. Hasari sighs inwardly, his little family will have to wait while he helps that bigger one of which he has become a part.

EXT. LEPER COLONY - NIGHT

Catastrophe! The camp is situated where the railway line runs through a depression. A small dam has broken. The floodwaters have rushed through and are above head height. Some of the supports under the tracks have been eaten away. In the flashes of lightning we can make out the little band of lepers (about thirty or so) struggling towards a small rise. Children are crying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are a couple of stable buildings on the rise, and the petrified eyes of the cattle mirror the fear of the people.

The mud has made grip impossible. Some lepers have managed to cling onto the stables. Others are sliding about trying to get there. The water stretches around like a lake.

The rising water is full of flotsam, dead animals, broken wood. The stable is crawling with rats, trying to escape the putrid rising water.

Anouar, hanging on to the side of an abandoned and overturned railway carriage is trying to get everybody organized.

Lights shine in the distance, flaring through the milky screen of falling rain. Voices shout through the noise. Silhouettes appear through the silvery, falling water.

It's the rescue party: Max, Joan, Aloka, Manooj, Sunil, Surya, Aristotle John, Ram, and other volunteers. They've brought planks of wood, tires (these loaded onto Hasari's rickshaw), rope and any bits and pieces that will float. Work starts to build a hasty but serviceable raft.

EXT. LEPER COLONY - NIGHT (LATER)

The water sheets down still. The mud walls of the stable are in danger of collapse. The lepers are being ferried to safety. Everybody is coated in the glutinous mud of the fallen earth dam. Hair is plastered to heads. Clothes cover bodies like insect carapaces. Hands slide as they lose grip in the slime.

The last group of lepers is being maneuvered onto the makeshift raft. Meeta is in the last group. Those that can swimming by the side of raft. An old woman is carefully pulled on board. Then, last, Anouar. He half-slides off. Max grips him, pushes him back on.

A flash of lightning throws the whole scene into half tones. For an instant, we are reminded of the print in Joan's room "The Raft of the Medusa". A pyramid-shaped group of bodies, someone half in the water, someone crouching and all around the water. Then the image is gone, and the raft is being dragged to the shore.

EXT. SHORE - NIGHT

A column of lepers and their saviours slip and slide towards the safety of higher ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They wobble over a rough plank bridge that straddles part of the collapsed dam. The rain has stopped, but they resemble a procession of ghosts.

The last group -- Max, Aloka, Hasari are struggling along the muddy path. Hasari is weighed down with an old leper woman, Aloka is carrying ropes and Max, teeth bared as he struggles along, is carrying Anouar. Anouar somehow has the strength to joke.

ANOUAR

Max Daddah, you are my man-horse.
I shall never forget you!

MAX

Shut it, Anouar, or I'll let you
drop off into the shit!

They approach the bridge. Below it the mud is thick and glutinous. Max lets Aloka cross first, then Hasari and the old woman. Max and Anouar cross. They reach the other side. Max is visibly relieved. Then the soil gives way. Max twists, throwing Anouar to safety. He can't stop himself sliding into the mud. It sucks at him like quicksand. Its surface is oily and black, and offers nothing to hang on to.

Aloka sees, screams, calls "Max!" Hasari turns, sees for an instant the image of his wife, arms outstretched to Max as the muddy water sucks and gurgles at his body.

ANOUAR

He will drown!

Hasari reacts. He puts the woman down, grabs the rope, winds it around a thin tree, then, hanging onto it, slides and slips his way towards Max. Little by little, he stretches for Max's hand. Max's head dips under the water. He comes up again. Hasari stretches for his hand. Their fingers meet. Max is choking. Hasari tightens his grip. Aloka is rigid with fear. Hasari pulls, Anouar and Aloka pull on him -- little by little they drag Max out.

Hasari loses his breath with the effort. As in a mist he sees Aloka holding the retching figure of Max in her arms. She is forcing him to throw up the vile, glutinous mixture that's in danger of clogging his lungs. She is forcing Max to live, the energy of her body is like that of a mother saving a child or a woman with her lover. Then Hasari summons up the strength to help, and together they lift Max up. With a sudden convulsion he throws up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hasari and Aloka look at each other... a moment of intense sharing flashes between them, mingling with their relief.

INT. CLINIC - (CITY OF JOY) - JOAN'S ROOM - DAWN

The sun is rising. The rain has stopped. There is a curious calm as though the elements have exhausted themselves. The lepers are sleeping, camped out on the raised outer level of the dispensary. Tiredness has set people down hither and thither, no one in their exhausted state very conscious of the malady or religion of their neighbor.

Max is in an awful state. The mud hardly washed off. Joan has a huge bowl of water standing by. Sunil and Anouar are in the room near the bed. Max sitting up, retches into the plastic bucket. He recovers to find Anouar's eyes fixed on him.

Max forces a grin through the pain in his chest.

MAX

Hey, Anouar, stop looking at me like that. I just ate a bit of mud, that's all... I'm fine.

JOAN

Well, if you're fine, we'd better get you cleaned up a bit...

She starts to take off Max's still damp, muddied shirt. Max is a little light-headed.

MAX

No, it's true. I never felt better.

He struggles out of the shirt.

MAX

I mean I never felt more alive. Never ever! Isn't that crazy?

JOAN

Boyo, if we don't get you wrapped in a blanket soon, the only thing you'll be feelin's a bout of pneumonia!

And she starts to wash him down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

... You know, just because someone's a doctor, people don't expect them to have any problems.

JOAN

Give me a hand, will you, Sunil?

She is trying to turn Max over. He's got a nasty gash on his back. It needs cleaning.

MAX

Ouch! I want to tell you something, Sunil...

SUNIL

Later, Max... Joan, there's some more alcohol in there...

MAX

No, I want to tell you... I never told anybody about this... back in Miami, when I was a resident, at the hospital. I'd been on a month of eight-day weeks. I was wiped out... beginning to feel like I was owed something. You can get high on tiredness, know what I mean?

SUNIL

Yes.

MAX

I got this call, to do an emergency. I should have been going for some rest. It was a kid... about ten or eleven. She was a cancer patient, and I thought, 'Why now, goddamn it? How can you have the effrontery to do this to me now!' Know what I'm saying?

They've wiped his wound. Max struggles into a shirt. Joan gestures to Sunil, whispers:

JOAN

Sunil, be an angel and throw me those matches. I don't know what the hell was in that mud...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

The operation was a screw-up.
We'd suppressed her immune system
and basically she was falling
apart... whatever... she died. We
did our best, but she died...

Max pauses for a second. The others watch him. He puts
out a hand for Joan's cigarette. He pulls on it.

MAX

After the operation, I had this
screaming match with the surgeon.
I felt he was screwing me over
the fees. We were still in the
theatre... the girl was just
lying there like a piece of meat.
She'd died, and I didn't really
care, I was more worried about my
two hundred bucks!

Max takes another deep puff at his cigarette. It's
almost as though he's talking about someone else. Joan's
eyes are riveted to him. He looks exhausted. All the
lightness has slipped out of his voice.

MAX

Then, in the corridor, I ran into
her folks. Trying to be stoic.
Sweet people... and they came over
and thanked me... for all I'd done
for their little girl. That's
when it hit me. I was making some
bad choices... I realized I'd
become someone I didn't like. I'd
lost my self-respect.

JOAN

It's a feeling we can all relate
to, Max, my dear.

MAX

Not that I was doing anything
different to anyone else... I
mean, our whole lifestyle says --
make as much money as you can.
But I was still somebody I didn't
like...

He struggles to control his emotions.

There is a sound from the doorway. Hasari and Aloka are
there. Somehow they've scrounged a plate. On it a
single flower.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALOKA

We thought you'd like this, Max
Daddah.

Max looks at their faces. His heart fills up.

MAX

Thank you... you're really
something! Hey, nurse, we got
work to do. I should get outta
here!

But what he does is collapse into an exhausted sleep.
There is a pause as they look at him, this room full
of friends.

Max has a faint grin on his face, and it's infectious
enough to make the others laugh.

EXT. SURYA'S TEASHOP (CITY OF JOY) - EVENING

It's a gentle late afternoon. Hasari looks much thinner.
His eyes have the slight shine of fever, but there is
something serene about the way he is sitting with Ram,
half-reclining on a battered seat. They are playing
cards. Next to them Manooj and a group of noisy kids are
playing a sort of table football with plastic counters.
Surya is reading from the newspaper. Some other children
are playing cricket. Saladdin is on a charpoy, playing
with his year-old son.

Someone is flying a kite. All religions seem to be here
and, for a moment at least, all seem at peace. Women
come and go in their bright saris. At the end of the
street we notice some men and a concrete mixer. The open
sewer is about to go underground.

At peace, the two friends watch the endless, beautiful
unfolding pageant of human beings living their lives.

At the end of the street appears Amrita and Kanchan,
the young man from the metal shop. They are pushing a
small cart piled high with aluminum pots. Shambu is
trotting along beside them.

She's very beautiful, this daughter of Hasari's. Without
noticing her father, she says goodbye to Kanchan outside
their hut. And her shy smile illuminates the street.
Kanchan and Shambu head on for town. Amrita watches them
go. Hasari watches her watching, and his gaunt face
lights up with a soft smile that reflects his joy at
having seen what he's seen. The smile fades. He falls
into a reverie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

I'm not playing this game anymore!
You know I'm going to win, so why
are you dragging it out?

HASARI

What?

RAM

Play your card!

HASARI

Sorry...

And he plays his card. Whatever it was, it throws Ram up as the winner. He chortles with laughter, shows Surya the winning hand, shakes his head at his own cleverness.

RAM

Ha! My bones are starting to creak, but my mind is agile as a civet... now pay me my winnings, and I'll go home and buy another bigha of land... then I'll lie under my tree and dream I'm Lord Krishna!

HASARI

Ram... if a man dies, and his body is not cremated, what becomes of his soul, do you think?

RAM

Of course he'll be cremated! His family and friends have a duty... Surya, is there no one here to put a little tea into a customer's hand? Why not ask Max Daddah for it?

HASARI

For what?

RAM

Money to make up that dowry.
Isn't that what's ruining your card game?

HASARI

The boy's father has the will of a cobra -- and the priest will be expensive...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAM

Could you lend me twenty annas for a cigarette?

HASARI

I haven't got any money, Ram.

RAM

Exactly! So go and borrow from Max Daddah, and you can pay off that weasel of a father, and lend me five rupees at the same time... acha! You are more stubborn than a river. It's unbearable!

HASARI

I went to see that money lender near Alipore. He heard me cough... and... no, no!

He makes a goodbye gesture with his hand.

RAM

He did? I'll go and see him later and stuff hot chilies up his backside... that'll help him open up!

And Ram gives his heartwarming and joyous laugh. Anouar appears in the lane with Meeta. Ram hails him.

ANOUAR

Not working? On strike... or have you inherited?

Ram makes little gestures behind Hasari's back. They convey that Hasari's chest is bad.

RAM

Hey, Anouar, you used to own a vegetable shop. Sit down, tell me about the smells. Wait! Let me shut my eyes. Now start with the aubergines...

INT. RAM/HASARI'S HUT - NIGHT

All we see is a little shelf. A weal of moonlight falls onto the little tea caddy, bursting with flowers. A hand comes INTO SHOT and moves the flowers. Behind it is an old cigar box. This used to belong to Max (whom we have seen smoking cigars once or twice in this film). We see Hasari kneeling in front of the shelf.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Silently he opens the box -- there is a fat wad of crumpled and worn banknotes inside it. Notes he's earned with his sweat and blood. He counts them. Mouth tightly closed, he tries to stifle the racking cough that rises from his chest.

That cough wakes Alokā. Everybody else sleeps on. Alokā looks at Hasari lovingly. He is kneeling with his back to her. He makes a small gesture of worship to the little clay statue of Viswakarma, then he replaces the box. He checks over the little store of dowry objects. He takes the sari and savors its color -- then he comes and lies down again beside his wife. He sees that she is looking at him. They speak softly, their faces close together.

HASARI

I woke you up!

ALOKA

I wasn't asleep...

HASARI

It's nearly reached... I need only a little more.

After a moment she says gently:

ALOKA

Hasari... why not accept what Max Daddah wants to lend?

HASARI

I won't ever be able to pay it back.

ALOKA

He won't want it back... it is not a big thing to him, Hasari...

She holds back a sudden urge to cry.

ALOKA

But it's too much for you.

Hasari speaks softly, but there is an underlying hardness in his tone.

HASARI

It would mean bad luck! Using a stranger's money.

There is a silence. Then Hasari adds:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HASARI

I want to do this thing myself,
Aloka... this is a thing I must...
that our daughter must know I
did myself... that I was never
beaten... never overwhelmed...

They lie quietly side by side, waiting for the dawn.
Hasari closes his eyes, and places one hand tenderly
on his wife's side.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO MITRA & CO - DAWN

The early morning sun is licking gently at the sinister doorway. A shadow is outlined against it. It is Hasari. He pauses. He knocks. After a moment, the Judas hole opens: the same malevolent face as before appears. It recognizes Hasari. There is a SCRAPING of BOLTS as the door opens. Hasari disappears into the dark gap. The DOOR CLOSES HEAVILY.

EXT. REAR OF RAM/HASARI HUT - DAY

Amrita's face, eyes wide, is peering through a grill.
Aloka is by her side. We see:

TWO WOMEN - WIDE SHOT

and can also make out the courtyard. It is full of men. The pujari who is doing the negotiating, the father-in-law, and various uncles and brothers of the prospective groom, crowd out the little yard. Laid out in front of them is Hasari's little array of dowry goods. Hasari's face is rigid with tension as the father scrutinizes the radio. Eventually, the father smiles and nods. We see the money being counted. Relief all around.

INT./EXT. CLINIC (CITY OF JOY) - DAY

There is a sense of order. Patients in the yard, queuing up in lines. We notice a group of lepers near the plastic reclamation shop. We notice the school. Some children are dancing. We see Poomina, Anouar is teaching one small class. He has written on the blackboard -- "All That Is Not Given Is Lost." Max is looking from the doorway. He feels a small tug at his knee. He looks down. It's a small boy. Silent, he holds out a wounded bird. Max smiles, takes the bird towards his desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We see the neat filing cabinets, the files. There is a sense of organization. Sunil is examining a patient. Joan is doing accounts. A board announces the names of various sponsors, foreign and Indian. A shadow falls across the door. Max looks up. It is Hasari. He looks inconsolable, Ram is with him.

HASARI

It's off!

RAM

They wanted to twist the last hair out of his head!

JOAN

But why is it off!?

HASARI

Lights... they want lights! I cannot afford a generator...

MAX

How much...?

But he changes course in mid-sentence:

MAX

Okay! Don't worry... we've got power here... all we need's a feed -- a feed's all we need.

And the lights already shine in Hasari's eyes.

EXT. SQUARE (CITY OF JOY) - NIGHT

And the lights are running here. Big and small. For a moment we are reminded of that country house and its wedding at the beginning of the story. A taxi is pulling up, and out gets Kanchan, dressed like a groom. Reminding us of the young man on his horse. We see Hasari's eyes shining as he watches this arrival.

EXT. SQUARE - LATER

We see Amrita's face through its veil. The bride and groom walk around the sacred fire. MUSIC and LAUGHTER. Hasari and Aloka watch, full of pride, at this moment of joy. This moment of victory over their circumstances.

EXT. SQUARE - LATER

The festivities have really got under way. Ram is on his feet. He announces that he is going home to his beloved tree. That irrigation has come to his village. That there will be four harvests a year. He is waving a letter from his wife. He gets a cheer. The little square is crammed with all our friends and their friends, and their friends, about 150 people. Musicians, transvestites. Hasari announces his intention to learn how to drive a taxi. More cheers and laughter. But we see the strain on Hasari's face when he sits down.

EXT. SQUARE - LATER

The bride and groom looking entrancing and happy.

Surya is playing and Ram is singing. Joan and Max find themselves looking at the festive crowd.

JOAN

I was thinking about when I first came here...

MAX

For three months...

JOAN

Yes! 'Love for life and disgust for life... The battle of hope and despair. That's what you're in for.' I was in London, in the Strand... I saw a print in a shop window. That's what he said to me: the old man in the shop.

MAX

The Raft of the Medusa?

JOAN

Yes. 'Take it to India with you, dear,' he said. 'And when you look at it, no matter what life throws at you, you won't feel too alone.' Then he gave it to me. Insisted on it... choices! Ah well! What about yourself, Max?

MAX

Well, things are on the up here... I'm thinking about going home. I left behind a lotta bridges that need mending.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Well mend 'em, boyo, mend 'em!

And she gives him a hug that would melt an iceberg.

EXT. SQUARE - LATER

Hasari, pale and breathing with difficulty, is sitting near the taxi that brought the groom. He's just coughed up blood. Max finds him and understands at once. Flecks of blood still about his mouth. Hasari begs him:

HASARI

No! Say nothing...

Max helps Hasari to stand. He wipes at the blood around Hasari's mouth with his tunic.

MAX

You shouldn't stay here.

Together, they make their way slowly through the crowd of guests. People are having a wonderful time: music, dancing, singing, laughter. Hasari is calling on all his substantial willpower to appear as natural as possible. He stifles another racking cough. He sees Amrita and Kanchan, radiant. His daughter makes him a little sign with her hand. He waves back and walks on, supported gently by Max.

Joan and Aloka are talking. They see the two men through the crowd. Aloka throws Hasari a beautiful and tender smile. With an almighty effort Hasari smiles back. A serene and loving smile. Guests hide them from sight. Hasari and Max walk on. Two friends engaged in deep conversation. No one could guess that one of them is approaching the last moments of his existence.

EXT. STREET (CITY OF JOY) - NIGHT

Two arms supplicate the heavens: Hasari's rickshaw points its shafts up into the night. His bell glimmers in the moonlight, like a silver tear. The sounds of the WEDDING ECHO around the street.

Max and Hasari are standing, looking at the rickshaw. It's an effort to stay upright. Hasari smiles strangely as he looks at the barbaric but familiar contraption; companion in his failures as well as his victories. Hasari speaks softly:

HASARI

I am going to die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Difficult to guess whether he says that to Max or to the rickshaw, or to himself. He caresses the wooden shafts, almost as if they were alive. We hear Max's voice.

MAX

Come, come, Hasari, come,
brother...

Hasari, with an effort, unties the small bell from the shaft. We HOLD ON this action.

INT. JOAN'S ROOM (CITY OF JOY) - NIGHT

The noise of the WEDDING is still present, coming in waves. Hasari is lying on the small bed. He is terribly pale, bloodless. He's breathing with great effort. He coughs bloodily into a handkerchief. His nostrils are pinched, his eyes shine with a strange brilliance. Sweat beads on his forehead. Max is sitting by him. He's just finished administering a morphine shot. Hasari murmurs feebly. Max has to lean forward to hear.

HASARI

Stay... stay with me... Let them
be happy a little. They are happy
down there.

MAX

They're happy.

After a moment, Hasari adds:

HASARI

All that is not given is lost.

He gives a light smile. He has nothing more to give. His eyes close. Max wipes his brow. He sits, unable to do anything more. His eyes stray to The Raft of the Medusa with its eternal message of despair and hope.

Suddenly, Hasari's hand seeks out Max's. The two hands clasp. Brothers. Hasari sits up a little.

HASARI

We did a lot... I didn't give up!

INT. JOAN'S ROOM - LATER

The night has taken over from the wedding feast. Most of the guests have gone. Hasari is breathing painfully. Each breath seeming a long time coming. Aloka sits by the bed. Her face is streaked with tears, but she is calm.

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Max sits near the end of the bed. Suddenly, the little BELL rolls off the bed, and onto the floor. It makes a faint MUSICAL NOISE. Softly, Hasari speaks.

HASARI

I can hear them...

Max silently bends and picks up the bell.

HASARI

It's them... I hear them.

He raises himself slightly. Max is about to motion him down. Finally, over the sounds of the imminent dawn, we can make out the sound of a RICKSHAW BELL. This is what Hasari hears. A smile creeps over his worn features.

Then we hear the sound of other RICKSHAW BELLS -- five, then maybe twenty, or fifty. The air fills with their FAINT SILVERY NOISE.

Max gets up and goes to the window. He looks out. The lane is full of Hasari's companions. Full of the human horses that daily pad over the harsh streets of the city. They see Max and the noise dies away, except for one bell that lingers on.

HASARI

I want to see...

Aloka strokes Hasari's forehead. Max looks out of the window. He swallows. He crosses, picks Hasari up in his arms, carries him to the window.

The CAMERA LOOKS AT them looking out. Then it PULLS BACK and OUT and AWAY FROM the window, REVEALING the City of Joy, as it begins to go about its daily tasks, and then the whole sprawl and bustle of the great city beginning to go about its daily business, unmindful of the human soul that has just left this life that it loved so much.

FADE OUT.

THE END

THIS SCRIPT WAS PREPARED

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