TROPIC OF CONVENIENCE

by Edward Longden

EXT. ENGLISH FIELD (1981) - EVENING

Fading from the starry evening, a line of light crosses the night sky.

A young tan child child around five years old wearing a traditional gho walks through the fields.

EXT. ENGLISH TOWN – NIGHT

A quaint town, silent. The child strolls through the mist.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROAD – NIGHT

The child walks down a street of modern Tudor cottages, engulfed by nature.

He stops outside one, looks toward it, and enters the front garden.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE – EVENING

The child stops at the short front door and knocks. There is a wait...

A man, FATHER (50s), answers. He looks down to the boy.

FATHER
Good evening.

The boy stands looking up at him.

FATHER
Can I help you? Where's your parents?

CHILD
Você é meu avô?

FATHER
Huh?

CHILD
Você é meu-

FATHER
No English, child. English.

AMMA(O.S.)
What is it, daddy?

A girl in pyjamas, AMMA (14), runs to the door. She looks at the boy in confusion. Her FATHER holds her back.

FATHER
I'm not quite sure, Amma.

The FATHER bends down to the CHILD.

FATHER
Your parents? Your parents, sonny?

The child stays silent, looking. The FATHER stands.

FATHER
I... I... I don't know, I'm unsure, I-
(shouting)
Darling! Darling, there's someone-

A woman comes to the door, MOTHER (40s).

MOTHER
What is it?

FATHER
There's someone here, a child.

MOTHER
(to the CHILD)
Are you lost?

FATHER
He doesn't speak English, dear.

The MOTHER and FATHER look at each other.

MOTHER
Amma get inside.

The MOTHER pushes AMMA inside.

MOTHER
(to the CHILD)
Come on. Come here.

The MOTHER signals for the child to enter. He does so, carefully.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE - EVENING

An open fire burns, pictures are hung on the wall and strange statues sit on the mantle. Many toys are scattered on the floor.

The CHILD sits on an armchair, the MOTHER and FATHER stand either side, and AMMA sits opposite on a sofa with her two brothers, ARNIE (12) and TED (10), both in pyjamas.

FATHER
(to the CHILD)
Hello? Hello? Would you like a drink or something to eat?

(beat)

Speak! Drink?

MOTHER
Hush, you.

The child sits staring at the three children opposite.

MOTHER
What language did he speak when he spoke?

FATHER
I don't know, I only speak one.

ARNIE
Are you sure he can speak?

FATHER
He spoke!
(to the CHILD)
Say it again.

The CHILD squints his eyes to the three children. He points his finger to them then moves it horizontally left to right. He places his hand down.

CHILD
Um de vocês. Eu sou seu filho.

MOTHER
What language is that?

FATHER
Spanish?
(to the CHILD)
Espanol?

The CHILD laughs and shakes his head.

FATHER
What? What's similar to Spanish?

(beat)

Portuguese?

CHILD

Portugues. Eu falo Portugues sim.

FATHER
He's Portuguese. Arnie look upstairs see if we have a translation book.

ARNIE walks out the room.

CHILD
Eu estou com fome.

FATHER
Any ideas? None you do languages in school? Nothing?

The two kids shake their heads.

CHILD
Comida!

MOTHER
(to the CHILD)
What do you want?

The CHILD surveys the room. He then gets up.

INT. KITCHEN, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE - EVENING

The CHILD walks into the kitchen, the whole family following behind.

He opens a cupboard and takes out a can of Spam.

CHILD
O que é isto?

MOTHER
Spam, you want me to fry some Spam for you?

The CHILD looks at it in complete puzzlement.

MOTHER(CONT'D)
I can fry some Spam for you? Yeah? Here.

She attempts to take the Spam from the CHILD. He resists.

MOTHER
No, I'll cook it. Cook.

She pretends to fry something in a pan.

MOTHER
Yeah? Fry, cook!

INT. DINING ROOM, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE – EVENING

A plate of fried slices of Spam is placed in front of the boy who sits at the head of a table, along with cutlery. The three children watch him.

The FATHER flips through a large concise dictionary of 26 languages.

The CHILD looks at his food. He picks up the slice of Spam with his hand and eats it, quickly spitting it out.

MOTHER
It's okay, we'll get something else.

CHILD
Eugh.

The child looks up at the three children looking at him in awe. He points at each one.

CHILD
Um de vocês. Eu sou seu filho.

FATHER
Say that again.

The FATHER flips through the book.

The CHILD points at each child individually.

CHILD
Um de vocês. Eu sou seu filho. Seu filho!

FATHER
(flipping through book)
Your... f-f-f-f... filho- son. Your son.

MOTHER
Our son?

CHILD
Um de vocês três! Eu sou seu filho.

FATHER
(flipping through book)
Eu-eu-eu... I'm... sou- am. I am... your son. I am your son.

MOTHER
My son?

FATHER
It's a mistranslation surely.

MOTHER
I've not had more than three children! He's befuddled.

CHILD
Um de vocês três!

FATHER
Um...um- one, de...de- of, foce... voce... you... what'd he say last?

MOTHER
Trays, I think?

FATHER
Tes, tes... tres! Three. One of you three. One of you three, I am your son.

The FATHER and MOTHER look to their three children.

AMMA
Us?

ARNIE
I think it's wrong, daddy.

FATHER
We must call the police, poor child.

MOTHER
Why hadn't we done that earlier!

FATHER
Kids run all around, no worries.

MOTHER
He's not from here though.

The FATHER walks away. The CHILD keeps looking at the three children.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE – EVENING

The FATHER picks up the telephone and punches in 101. It rings.

FATHER
Hello.

(beat)

Hello, there's a very young child here, he doesn't speak English, he can't understand, he knocked at our door and we're not sure what to do.

(beat)

Yep.

(beat)

Great, thank you!

He slams the phone down.

FATHER
Police have been called.

He walks to the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE - EVENING

The CHILD waits still watching the three children, the MOTHER there waiting. There is a quiet tension.

We see the door to enter the dining room. Closed shut.

AMMA
One of us is his parent, is that what he said.

MOTHER
I don't know. He's sick probably, poor thing.

AMMA
Or we can't understand him.

TED
He said he is one of our sons.

MOTHER
It's not possible, Ted. Mistranslation more likely.

They stare at the CHILD.

MOTHER
Ted go and check on your dad.

TED stands up and walks out of the dining room. The painful silence continues.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE - EVENING

TED walks into the living room, empty, nothing touched.

TED
Daddy! Daddy!

INT. DINING ROOM, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE – EVENING

The CHILD looks around the room, at the pictures and ornaments. AMMA, ARNIE and the MOTHER watch the CHILD.

The creaky stairs are heard, then proceeded by the creaking floorboards upstairs. Footsteps can then be heard running down the stairs.

TED runs into the dining room.

TED
Dad's gone.

MOTHER
Gone where, Ted?

TED
He's not here.

The MOTHER exits the room, AMMA and ARNIE following. The CHILD is left alone.

He takes another bite of the Spam, again immediately spitting it out.

The CHILD then vanishes, without any transition.

'TROPIC OF CONVENIENCE'

INSERT – AN ORANGE MOROCCAN TEAPOT BEING CAREFULLY WRAPPED, THEN PLACED INTO A BOX AND SEALED.

INSERT – THAT BOX BEING GIVEN TO A WORKER AT A POST OFFICE.

INSERT- THE BOX IS PLACED WITH OTHERS IN A POST OFFICE

INSERT – THE BOX IS LOADED INTO A TRUCK

INSERT – THE BOX IS BEING PLACED INTO CARGO ON AN AEROPLANE.

INSERT – THE BOX IS REMOVED AT DESTINATION.

INSERT – THE BOX IS PLACED IN STORAGE

INSERT – THE BOX IS BEING LOADED INTO A VAN

INSERT – THE BOX IS BEING DRIVEN IN A VAN DOWN AN ENGLISH MOTORWAY

EXT. EXOTIC JUNGLE – DAY

A STILL SHOT of a loud, vibrant jungle, Amazonian maybe. A girl with slick back blonde hair, SISTRE, trudges toward us through the leaves.

She stands there, staring at us. She lifts her hand as if to touch us but refrains.

BACKPACKER(O.S.)
(in unknown language)
Sistre, come!

She looks away and rushes back.

The jungle ticks.

EXT. AMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

An EVRI driver, with a heavily red face, stands with the overly wrapped box at the front door.

He presses the button on the RING doorbell. There is no response.

He tries it once more. It is opened by GERALD (50s).

DRIVER
Delivery for Amma Armistead.

GERALD
Yes thank you.

GERALD takes the package and slams the door.

INT. STUDY, AMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

AMMA, now in her 50s, is taking photos of antique Moroccan jewellery in her study, which is lined with shelves with strange antique items on them. Some have price tags, some are encased in glass or wrapped.

There is a knock at the door. GERALD enters.

GERALD
Something for you.

There is a pause as she focuses.

GERALD
Birthd-

AMMA
Yes, just pop it down somewhere.

GERALD
Birthday package.

GERALD places it down. He waits by the door for a bit.

GERALD
You're not coming down?

AMMA
The Almoravid exhibition asked for photos a week ago, these only came in yesterday.

GERALD
Is that the one in Kenwood?

AMMA
Kenwood have paintings, dear.

GERALD
And what are those?

AMMA
Pop the kettle on, I won't be a minute.

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – DAY

AMMA and GERALD both sit in armchairs, holding a cup of tea, no milk. They sit in silent comfort.

GERALD
What was that thing that came today?

AMMA
I think it must be one of the three parts to a set of tea-ware.

GERALD
What's special about this tea-ware? Is there anything special?

AMMA
Well, it was said to be owned by a man named Ahmad al-Mansur, the most famous Saadi Sultan of Morocco.

GERALD
How old?

AMMA
Oh, 16th century. It's a miracle it'd survived.

GERALD
What's significant about it?

AMMA
It was made for him by a man who had travelled half the length of

Africa, who said that he could weld reverie and materiality and contort ontology.

GERALD
Right.

AMMA
Ahmad al-Mansur kept it by his side until his death. One of his prized possessions in his later life. A very rare piece.

GERALD
How much did you pay for it?

AMMA
Well you remember Zaynab, when we'd visited the small riad like place in Marrakesh, you remember? Where they served the urr- whasit- Kefta tagine? And she had served us that green tea to go with it and you refused?

GERALD
I remember vaguely, yes.

AMMA
You refused and they got very offended.

GERALD
I preferred the KFC two streets down.

AMMA
Zaynab had spotted the set, she lives deep in the largest souk in the city, rung me and arranged a price.

GERALD
And she authenticates it?

AMMA
Oh you know how that process goes.

GERALD
As long as you make money dear, I don't care.

They sit there in silence.

GERALD
Why didn't she ship the set in one package.

AMMA
Cheaper? Easier? Safer? I've not got a clue.

GERALD
Hm.

She takes a sip of tea. They sit in silence.

GERALD
Any way, happy birthday.

AMMA
I wouldn't've remembered if you hadn't had told me.

GERALD
Hm.

AMMA
What time should we be at Arnie's?

A pause.

GERALD
You know it was a surprise, dear.

AMMA
Quite a boring one.

GERALD
He's having dinner at 7. Do you want to be there long?

AMMA
No.

EXT. BUS STOP - EVENING

A girl, AURELIE (18), sits at a bus stop, looking uncomfortable. She takes out her phone and calls someone.

AURELIE
(on Phone)
Sienna? Sien. Sien is-
(beat)
Is mum and dad there?
(beat)
No I don't. Are they near you, can they hear you?
(beat)
Move, leave the room.
(beat)
Should I come? I-
(beat)
But it'll be so awkward I don't-
(beat)
I don't want them to mention it you know how they are. They'll bring it up just to scold me.
(beat)
I want to go but I want them to just shut up about it.
(longer beat)
Alright. I'm coming.
(beat)

Yeah, I'll come. Can you tell them in private to just act normal... actually don't say anything.
(beat)
Okay, bye.

She hangs up, gets up and walks away.

INT. LIVING ROOM, ARNIE'S HOUSE – EVENING

Balloons line the walls, glasses of Prosecco are placed on the coffee table.

AMMA sits on a sofa with GERALD. ARNIE and TED sit, both now in their late 40s. ARNIE's Brazilian wife, MONIQUE(Early 40s) and TED's Brazilian wife, JULIANA (Late 30s), is there.

ARNIE
It's a nice place, I'd visit but Monique never let's me actually visit the-

MONIQUE
It's dangerous!

JULIANA
Hm. It is.

MONIQUE
It's so dangerous. I never grew up in Sao Paulo but the favelas, you know it's known around Brazil to be you know where-

ARNIE
It's interesting. Sao Paulo, I love Sao Paulo, but Sao Paulo it's just a boring city without, you know- the

JULIANA
I-

ARNIE
The culture, the favelas. The places where people live for themselves and not for tourists.

JULIANA
I hate Sao Paulo.

MONIQUE
Hm! Eu também, you know my dad, he was a truck driver and he would never drive to Sao Paulo or through Sao Paulo because it's just so... como que fala... depressing, low, grey. (to JULIANA)

JULIANA
I agree. I agree. It's very grey city.

MONIQUE
Hm.

ARNIE
I thought you liked it?

MONIQUE
No. We had to go through there. Every time we're in Sao Paulo it's because we have to. I always try to fly to Rio, but-

ARNIE
It's too far.

MONIQUE
Yes, it's too far.

There is a knock at the door.

GERALD
I'll get it.

GERALD gets up and goes to the door.

GERALD sees AURELIE and goes to answer the door.

GERALD
Aurelie! How are you?

AURELIE
I'm good, yeah.

GERALD stands awkwardly at the door.

GERALD
Come in, come in.
(shouting)
It's Aurelie!

INT. LIVING ROOM, ARNIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

AURELIE enters the living room with hesitance. ARNIE walks up to her.

ARNIE
Hi, darling.

He kisses her on the head.

MONIQUE
Aurelie! Hi!

She walks to her mother, who hugs her, then kisses her forehead.

MONIQUE
We're having a few drinks. Say hello to everyone. Say happy birthday to Amma.

AMMA stands. AURELIE hugs AMMA.

AURELIE
Happy birthday.

AMMA
Thank you, Aurelie. How's everything.

People are heard racing down the stairs. Running into the living room is AURELIE's two sisters; ANA (12), NINA (15) and her cousins, daughters of TED and JULIANA; IRIS(8) and OLIVIA (6). Her older sister, SIENNA (20), follows.

ANA runs to hug AURELIE, so does NINA.

ANA, NINA, IRIS AND OLIVIA
Aurelie!

AURELIE
Hey guys.

ANA squeezes her.

AURELIE
Nina!

NINA
It's not me!

ARNIE
Girls!

They let go and run off. SIENNA hugs her.

SIENNA
Hey.

AURELIE
Hi.

SIENNA
You get here okay?

AURELIE
Yeah. How's Ana, Nina?

SIENNA
They're good. They miss you.

MONIQUE
Girls! Have you wished Amma a happy birthday?

The girls all rush back in. They all hug AMMA who is seated, smothering her.

AMMA
Oh, oh, oh.

ARNIE
Girls.

IRIS
Happy birthday, titia.

JULIANA
Auntie, not titia, filha.

IRIS
Auntie Amma.

AMMA
Thank you, Iris. You'll all huge, I can't. Iris how old are you now?

IRIS
Eight.

AMMA
Olivia?

OLIVIA
Ummm, six.

AMMA
Eight! Wow! Ana?

ANA
I'm twelve, I turned twelve last month!

AMMA
Oh yes I'm an idiot, I forgot! Old woman illness, what killed my mother. And Nina?

NINA
Fifteen.

AMMA
Fifteen. Wow. You're all huge.

OLIVIA
Amma, will you have any children?

AMMA chuckles.

AMMA
Why would I need children?

IRIS jumps on AMMA lap.

AMMA
Ow!

ARNIE
Kids! Come on! Sienna can you take them upstairs?

SIENNA
Girls come on!

ANA
Sienna you are still... one of us.

The girls all race off. AMMA looks at their youth in joy.

She looks over to MONIQUE, who is standing outside the living room talking to AURELIE. Their conversation seems innocuous.

INT. DINING ROOM, ARNIE'S HOUSE – EVENING

AMMA sits at the head of a table; GERALD, ARNIE, TED, MONIQUE, JULIANA, SIENNA and AURELIE sit around. They are all eating a feijoada.

AURELIE sits between the adult side of the table and the kids, where ANA, NINA, IRIS and OLIVIA sit. They chat amongst themselves.

ARNIE
It's all totally hopeless. There's barely any done up roads if you take that route to Bambui.

TED
It was quickest and we made the baptism.

ARNIE
A rock went through the window!

AMMA laughs.

JULIANA
It was stupid, Ted, it was.

TED
We got there!
(to ARNIE)

You left Aurelie at the waterfall, you remember?

ARNIE
Only for 20 minutes! Come on! She was ecstatic!

TED
She was what? Six?

ARNIE
She loved that waterfall. She always used to ask us to go back there! She was fine.

MONIQUE
I remember it was Amma that remembered.

AMMA
Oh yes, remember Gerald?

GERALD nods.

ARNIE
Didn't Iris get sick everywhere? I left Aurelie at the waterfall but we still got there first.

TED
Yeah the roads are brutal. Good thing we didn't raise her in Brazil!

JULIANA
And that was my decision!

MONIQUE
Hm, yeah.

JULIANA
I never wanted to raise my children in Brazil, Monique you know?

TED
I wanted to.

MONIQUE
Hm. Every time I gave birth; Sienna, Aurelie, Ana, Nina, every time, Arnie wanted us to move to Brazil.

ARNIE
It wasn't every time.

JULIANA
I came to this country, I remember Arnie I told you specifically, I wanted to leave Brazil. I love Brazil, don't get me wrong, it's a part of me and I am so proud, but when I met Ted I wanted to leave! I wanted to live in England, you know.

MONIQUE
Hm. You both hate England so much?

ARNIE
I don't hate it, it's just... we've talked about this, Juliana, I-

TED
I like England.

ARNIE
Ted, you're talking rubbish. All you do.

TED
Hm.

MONIQUE
I wanted the best for our kids, Arnie.

ARNIE
And they have it, I wouldn't change anything.

MONIQUE
Sienna, would you've liked it if you were born in Brazil.

SIENNA
Yeah, yeah, I like Brazil.

MONIQUE
She wouldn't've gone to the Imperial if she were raised in Brazil.

ARNIE
That is true.

AMMA
What are you studying, again, Sienna?

SIENNA
Biochemistry.

AMMA
Oh, biochemistry. You enjoying it?

SIENNA
Yeah, I love it. Love it, it's great.

AMMA
How old is Aurelie now, is she, seven-...?

ARNIE
Eighteen.

AMMA
Eighteen! Wow. Is she going to a uni, or...

MONIQUE
We don't know yet.

AMMA
What does she want to do?

MONIQUE
Aurelie!

AMMA
Aurelie, have you finished school?

AURELIE
Hm.

AMMA
What are you going to do next, do you think?

AURELIE seems visibly uncomfortable. A silence at the adults end of the table permeates, as AMMA looks at her for an answer.

ARNIE
She lives with her friends from secondary.
(to Aurelie)
You do those... pictures?

AURELIE immediately stands up and storms out the room.

ARNIE
Aurelie! Aurelie!

MONIQUE
Arnie, why did you say that? Why?

SIENNA
Dad?

AMMA
Aurelie?

ANA, NINA, IRIS, OLIVIA
Aurelie?

SIENNA walks out the room.

SIENNA(O.S.)
Aurelie! Aurelie!

AMMA
What happened, what's wrong?

ARNIE stands up.

ARNIE
Would you like more?

AMMA sees AURELIE with her stuff. She storms out the front door, SIENNA following.

AMMA stands and walks to SIENNA.

AMMA
Where's she gone.

SIENNA
Home probably.

INT. ENTRYWAY, ARNIE'S HOUSE – EVENING – CONTINUOUS.

AMMA grabs her coat and walks out the front door.

GERALD
Amma!

EXT. BUS STOP – EVENING

AURELIE sits at the bus stop on her phone.

AMMA sits beside her.

AMMA
Aurelie. What happened?

AURELIE
I'm getting the bus.

AMMA
You can talk to me, Aurelie. What's happened.

A bus approaches. It stops, AURELIE gets on. AMMA follows.

INT. BUS – EVENING – CONTINUOUS

AURELIE scans her card, so does AMMA. She sits, AMMA sits beside.

AURELIE
What are you doing?

AMMA
I'm not leaving until you tell me.

AURELIE
Why don't you ask them?

AMMA
I don't want to know what they have to say.

AURELIE
It's none of your business.

There is a silence.

AMMA
Where do you live?

AURELIE
Southwark.

AMMA
Southwark? That's bloody miles away, you take the bus?

AURELIE
To the station.

Another silence. AURELIE takes a deep breath.

AMMA
You can tell me what the matter is. I'm a lonely woman, not a gossiper.

AURELIE
I... I make paid videos, for people. I only told Sienna, she told mum and dad.

Another, thicker silence.

AMMA
I assume they haven't accepted it.

AURELIE
I don't know. I don't care. They never liked me, that's what I know.

AMMA
That's not true.

AURELIE
It's true.

AMMA
Have you come to a compromise with them maybe? Finding common ground is important.

AURELIE
(teary)

There's no point. They love Sienna the best. Then the youngest, Ana, probably because she makes them feel young; then Nina, then me.

AMMA
Why do you think that?

AURELIE shrugs her shoulders.

AURELIE
They don't like their kids. I don't know why they had so many.

AMMA
Aurelie. That's bullshit. They love all of you.

AURELIE
I'd know more than you.

AMMA
Do you... go to therapy or something.

AURELIE shakes her head.

AMMA
You have to have... something to help you... get through it. People to talk to? Hobbies? Because the way you describe it; a child's worst nightmare.

AURELIE
I. Sometimes, I do this thing.

AMMA
What is it? Come on. Tell me.

AURELIE
Astral projection.

AMMA
What's astral projection?

AURELIE
It's where like, you're in a state of... like between sleep and awareness, and you can go to like different worlds.

AMMA
Like an out-of-body experience?

AURELIE
Yeah.

AMMA
Is it dangerous?

AURELIE
I don't know yet.

AMMA
How do you do it?

AURELIE
Well, when I was I would do this thing called scripting, where I write down, before I went to bed, I'd write down everything or any place I'd want to be. Then that night, I would be there. In my sleep.

AMMA
Yeah, but how do you enter that like... whatsit?

AURELIE
Just... meditate until you reach a certain frequency, then kind of vibrate or shift yourself in that frequency. Then you have to visualize yourself moving from third person or just how you are, completely still, but you can't physically move, then you've broken that frequency, that zen. Then, you just... rise.

AMMA
Rise?

AURELIE
Hm. It's easy once you've done all the stuff before. It came naturally to me.

There is a silence. AURELIE looks out the window.

AMMA
I should get off the next stop.

AMMA presses the button.

The bus starts to stop shortly after.

AMMA
Take care of yourself, Aurelie. If you need to talk just text me or phone me. I want to know.

AURELIE
Yeah.

The bus stops. AMMA waits a second, contemplating if she should kiss her niece. She doesn't, and walks off the bus.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

AMMA steps off the bus into a desolate, residential street. She rings GERALD. No one picks up.

She walks back in the night.

INT. STUDY, AMMA'S HOUSE – MORNING

The sky is grey outside, the row of identical houses adds to the conformity.

Traditional Thai music plays on a little speaker by her desk.

AMMA brushes the Moroccan teapot with a small brush, a little lamp shines onto it. She uses the other end to get into the crevices. A large Apple PC sits before her.

The RING doorbell plays from her phone on her desk. She opens it to see that same EVRI driver delivering a parcel.

She waits for GERALD to answer the door, which he does.

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – MORNING

AMMA and GERALD sit on armchairs, sipping a cup of tea. The parcel sits before them.

AMMA writes in a journal.

GERALD
Anything interesting?

AMMA
Bog standard. We talked about Brazil yesterday didn't we? The forests.

GERALD
Hm.

AMMA
Yeah, bog standard.

GERALD
You hadn't written in there for a long time.

AMMA
Hm. I always dream on my birthday.

Gerald sips his tea. He looks at the package.

GERALD
What is it?

Amma stops writing and places her journal down.

AMMA
The second part to the tea-ware I assume. Tea cups.

GERALD
Exhilarating.

AMMA
It's not that boring. What do you do all day?

GERALD
Soak in sweat.

AMMA
I'm scared the final piece will come when I've left.

GERALD
Well when is it due to arrive?

AMMA
You know how those people are, totally unreliable.

GERALD
Well must you leave so soon?

AMMA
Yes. It's my job Gerald.

GERALD
Well, you're travelling all over the world and you're leaving...

AMMA
Gerald, we've spoken.

GERALD
Leaving me in this rut.

AMMA
You retired early.

GERALD
There's little magic in Pinball construction.

AMMA
I might ask Aurelie to come with me.

She sips.

GERALD
How is Aurelie? You spoke to her, rudely stormed from your own party. We didn't even sing happy birthday.

AMMA
Oh I've had enough happy birthdays sung to me and she was vulnerable! You didn't question it?

GERALD
No, we just sang karaoke.

AMMA
You sang karaoke?

GERALD
Yeah. She's an adult for Christ sakes! You talked to her?

AMMA
I did.

GERALD
And what was wrong?

AMMA
Do you even care what was wrong?

GERALD
Amma, I'm sorry I bloody asked.

(beat)

It's a strange family, overly strange. I mean I don't know what all these things are that they talk about.

AMMA
That's why you engage, Gerald.

GERALD
I'm engaging! They're my nieces and brothers, sisters-in-laws I engage, we sang karaoke.

AMMA
What did you sing?

GERALD
Bit of Pulp, Presley.

AMMA
What did everyone else sing?

GERALD
Queen, some dad rock crap. You know Juliana didn't know we met to Common People? It's one of her favourite songs.

AMMA
I thought she knew.

GERALD
No. She didn't.

There is a silence. AMMA notices hostility.

AMMA
They're our family Gerald.

GERALD
I know!

AMMA
You can't be hostile, they're odd but you know.

GERALD
I know.

They both sip, wait in silence.

AMMA
I'm meeting the girls at Sushi Samba, 8'O clock, you'll be alright?

GERALD
As ever.

AMMA
A package may come later today.

GERALD
I thought you said it may come when you've left.

AMMA
I leave in two days, Gerald, it's not a large window. I told you they're heinously unreliable.

GERALD
Hm.

AMMA stands holding her tea and takes the package upstairs.

GERALD stares out the window as he hears the footsteps. He sips his tea.

INT. SUSHI SAMBA – NIGHT

AMMA sits in a booth with her four middle-aged friends having drinks; TARA, ELOWIN, PAULA.

ELOWIN
Nothing is simply immaterial in that era.

TARA
Well if you'd've caught sight of my 15th century Sawankhalok urn, dear God.

PAULA
Was it poor?

TARA
Oh God the thing, look I am deeply enamoured I would say with antiques from the northern districts of ancient Thailand but my God it was simply a lump of clay moulded into an urn. Totally unremarkable.

ELOWIN
And I believe many think that old things specifically ancient foreign items must be somewhat treasured.

TARA
Well they should just not this fucking urn! 800 pounds for this thing, I didn't even bother trying to sell it to the south-east Asia exhibit at the British museum back in 2019, and-

AMMA
It may have been worn, the artistic intent is still there probably.

TARA
Amma seriously this thing... let me see if I can find a photo.

TARA reaches into her bag.

AMMA
No it's fine, it's fine.

TARA takes out her phone.

TARA
No but as I was saying, you know Marie? My cousin Marie, she lives out in Lampang with her husband and two kids, well she was the one who sent it to me.

ELOWIN
You have a cousin in Thailand?

TARA
Oh yes, she's amazing, you met her Elowin? In Bath, the Museum of East Asian Art, 2000... 14 was it?

ELOWIN
Can't remember.

TARA
Well she's been on the phone asking for it back, this urn as well as all the stuff she sent me for the exhibits years back. I said well you sent me the items, I give you a cut, it's win-win why should I send them back, also it's the museum's property now, I can't do anything!

PAULA
Hm.

TARA
She said that she's been getting threats from people in the village angry with her about people nicking artefacts that, I'm sorry I know this is going to sound horrible but it's stuff that they would'nt've found anyway, they want it returned. Which you know fair enough it's theirs but you know I'm under the impression that if you have something for long period of time it's basically yours, you know? No one's cared for it, you took care of it, it's yours.

PAULA
You've given it a new home.

TARA
Exactly, that's what it is a new home! So I said I'm sorry but you're gonna have to take this up with the UNESCO, because I can't do anything, um, and if I'm honest, it's pointless, you know it's education I think it's beautiful that people in England get to explore the history of a culture that's what 8000 miles away, long way away.

AMMA gets a RING notification on her phone. She leaves it.

TARA
(to AMMA)
You're going to Thailand aren't you?

AMMA
Yes,

TARA
Will you return this God-ugly thing?

ELOWIN
Where else are you going? Just there?

AMMA
I'm going to Morocco first, then Thailand, then northern Brazil, Guyana and fly home.

PAULA
Bloody strange places.

TARA
How many times have you been to Thailand?

AMMA
Probably, I'd say nine times.

TARA
Jesus.

AMMA
First time on a gap year. When I was young, pale, blonde. Now I'm old, pale, grey.

TARA
You've not got grey hairs, have you?

AMMA
Not physically no, I've been dying.

ELOWIN
Oh my, remember the slick-back hair, she had. Hundreds of cans of spray gel littered all over the acom.

AMMA laughs.

ELOWIN
She'd bring boys round, they'd get petrified she were a druggie!

TARA
Isn't Thailand boring to you, Amma?

AMMA
Hopefully not. It'll be worth it, work's been terribly dry as of recent.

TARA
Yes, this is what I'm saying, it's the woke disease, all these people wanting museums relics to be returned, it's bloody detachment from the world! And you've got people there waiting?

AMMA
Oh yeah of course. I'm travelling to the desert, Saharan villages, somewhat isolated from the west. Then um... Bhutan mountain tops, then the Amazon.

ELOWIN
Trying to regain your youth? A 52 year old on her gap year.

They laugh.

ELOWIN
You could probably get all those things shipped to your doorstep, no?

AMMA
There's little magic in that don't you think?

TARA
Not now I'm a lazy bastard. You're going alone?

AMMA
Yeah.

They all drink.

TARA
All the undergrads would be awaiting a menopausal wilderbeast. You're just what they're looking for!

AMMA
Hush.

They all laugh.

TARA
I'm not joking! They'll want to meet someone older, with experience. They'll love that!

AMMA
Hm.

Through the window, AMMA sees a figure standing still on the roof of the building opposite. They are a shadow, it is unknown where they are looking.

AMMA
Look over there, a person.

The girls turn to look at a man by the window, sitting at a table by himself with a briefcase beside him.

TARA
Poor guy.

PAULA
Divorce.

TARA
Hm.

The man sitting at the table picks up his briefcase.

The figure at the window flies away, almost dissolving. AMMA thinks nothing of it.

They all continue chatting.

INT. TUBE - NIGHT

AMMA sits on an empty tube. A sleeping man lies further down the carriage. She thinks nothing of it.

The sleeping man awakes abruptly and walks over to AMMA, we do not see his face. She looks down.

He sits beside her, flashing a grin.

SLEEPING MAN
Pleasure. You remember me?

AMMA
No, sorry.

SLEEPING MAN
Come on? I remember you. When you were small.

AMMA
Sorry, no.

SLEEPING MAN
Have you heard of the mummys?
(beat)
They roam.
(beat)
You're getting off soon. A shame.

The tube stops at Golders Green. AMMA rushes off.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

AMMA power walks through the dark streets. She looks behind frequently, no one there.

Cars drive past, giving light to the dim street she walks down.

She looks behind once more, then looks ahead. A man stands far in the distance, still. She stands still watching.

It's the sleeping man.

SLEEPING MAN
Excuse me!

AMMA turns around and begins to run. She looks back. He is running.

AMMA
Ahhh!

She runs back to her house.

EXT. AMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She dashes to the door, looks around, opens it, slams it shut. A package is by the doorstep, which she didn't see.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

AMMA storms into her bedroom, where GERALD is sleeping. She takes off her high heels and jewellery, placing them on her dresser.

She looks outside her window. Nothing.

GERALD
(sluggish)
Alright, dear?

AMMA
Hm.

She begins to take off her dress.

GERALD
(sluggish)
You had a good night.

AMMA
Great. Did you get the package?

GERALD
Package?

AMMA
You didn't?

GERALD
I had an early one.

AMMA
At eight?

GERALD
I'm an old man.

She gets a RING notification on her phone. Her phone lights up; 'THERE IS MOTION AT YOUR FRONT DOOR'.

She freezes and walks to the window. She looks out. Nothing.

Then she looks up to the sky and sees a faint line of light cross the sky. It flashes slightly.

GERALD
It was probably a motorbike, come to bed.

She gets into bed and falls asleep, almost instantly, mouth open.

She begins snoring.

EXT. SMALLEST CHURCH IN ENGLAND - DAY

SISTRE and a few male backpackers approach a small church in an English hamlet, laughing and drinking.

They speak in an unknown language to each other, whilst tumbling over each other.

SISTRE departs and looks inside the tiny church. We don't see inside.

She walks away.

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S STUDY - MORNING

AMMA sits in her living room with a cup of tea, watching the video feeds from her doorbell.

She watches a video of the DRIVER at 7:43pm delivering a package. He presses the doorbell and waits some time. He places it by the front door and leaves.

She exits that video and plays another from 10:25pm. A man wearing a dark green hoodie and a face mask and glasses quickly takes that package and runs off.

AMMA
There was a man yesterday, he was on the tube, he followed me.

GERALD
You were stalked?

AMMA
Yeah out the train station. I ran away, scared the innocence out of me.

GERALD
And you didn't call the police?

AMMA
I'm not going to call the police for a stalker! I haven't seen one for some time to be fair.

GERALD
Well does it look like him?

AMMA
I'm not sure. I purposefully didn't catch his face.

GERALD
Well then it's probably him, isn't it. What was in the package.

AMMA
The third part to my-

GERALD
Yes I know but what was it?

AMMA
More Moroccan tea cups.

GERALD
Are they precious?

AMMA
Well yes, relatively.

GERALD
We can tell the police, they'll find this man. He was a mugger.

AMMA opens the second video and keeps pausing it at times where the man's face is present.

GERALD
It was probably that man.

She notices his forehead. It is red.

She opens the first video. The DRIVER's forehead is red.

AMMA
Look. Their foreheads.

She shows GERALD the DRIVER's forehead, then the thief's forehead.

AMMA
The poor sod's got rosacea.

GERALD
There's no way. What a dense bugger, he knew we had a camera on our door.

AMMA
Which is why we came with the mask.

GERALD
Dense bugger. Should I go down to the parcel drop off?

AMMA
Would he be there?

GERALD
I could try.

GERALD puts his shoes on, then his coat.

AMMA
What will you do? Beat him up? Call the police, you twat.

GERALD
I'll show the manager the footage. He's a kid, we'll find it.

He leaves.

EXT. CORNER SHOP – MORNING

GERALD drives to a little corner shop in a residential area. He parks.

INT. CORNER SHOP – MORNING

GERALD shows a video of the DRIVER to the SHOPKEEPER.

GERALD
This guy, he always delivers our parcels, I don't know his name.

SHOPKEEPER
Hm. That's George.

GERALD
Yeah and look. Later that night, just as my wife gets home.

The SHOPKEEPER focuses.

GERALD
He steals it. It's the same bloke, he stole the parcel he left there.

SHOPKEEPER
That's George?

GERALD
That's George.

SHOPKEEPER
George left yesterday.

GERALD
What do you mean he left.

SHOPKEEPER
Yesterday was his last shift, he was moving.

GERALD
Well I'm sorry but that package was very valuable I'll need you to pass this on to the police.

SHOPKEEPER
He's moved the Lithuania.

GERALD
Lithuania? What do you mean?

SHOPKEEPER
Well he left early this morning.

GERALD
He went to Lithuania?

SHOPKEEPER
Hm. Look I suggest you call Evri support and they can reimburse.

GERALD
They can't reimburse.

SHOPKEEPER
How far apart were those videos taken?

GERALD
Around three hours.

SHOPKEEPER
You didn't take the package?

GERALD
No I was asleep. It's not my fault, this George bloke nicked it!

SHOPKEEPER
I can't do anything.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE — MORNING

AMMA empties her wardrobe and places some clothes into a large, damaged suitcase on her bed.

She takes a box of jewellery from her dresser and places it in her suitcase.

Her phone rings, she picks up.

AMMA
Arnold.
(beat)
What?

She sits on her bed, confused.

AMMA
How do you mean?
(beat)
Well, she's an adult...
(beat)
Right.
(beat)
I'll come over.
(beat)
No, no, I'll come over. Gerald has the car. Have you called the police?
(beat)
Right. Are the girls alright?
(beat)
Alright. Well, I'll come over.

AMMA stands up and walks to the window. GERALD has returned.

INT. SECOND STORY LANDING, ARNIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

AMMA stands in the landing with ARNIE, looking at a door with a broken lock, leading to a bedroom.

A police officer walks around inside the bedroom.

ARNIE
It was 9'O clock, 9:30. She said she was going to bed, she was downstairs with all the girls watching a show or something, I was in the kitchen. Monique was in her bedroom, about to go to sleep so she heard Aurelie rush into her room and lock the door, as did I. We wake up this morning, it's around 11, all the girls are downstairs eating breakfast, Aurelie's stuck in her room, doesn't come out. I try, I try, I boot the door open, she'd vanished. It was locked from the inside, so was the window. I called her like fucking 4000 times, it said the number didn't exist she must've destroyed her SIM or something, I have no idea.

AMMA
Why was she staying here?

ARNIE
Well her friends, did you know where she lives?

AMMA
Southwark.

ARNIE
Yeah, she's a squatter.

AMMA
What?

ARNIE
Yeah, she hasn't got a job. Nothing. She squats, her mates and their mates and so on were squatting in this one in Southwark for nearly a decade, so of course they could apply for ownership if it reached 10 years. It didn't, she almost got arrested, she came here.
(beat)
She was always rampant.

INT. AURELIE'S ROOM, ARNIE'S HOUSE – MORNING

The police officer looks around the room. There is an imprint in the bed where Aurelie was laying down; a perfect imprint of a resting body.

INT. KITCHEN, ARNIE'S HOUSE – MORNING

ARNIE and AMMA sit in the kitchen, both with a cup of tea. Children are heard playing in the living room.

AMMA
Where's Monique?

ARNIE
Her and all the mums from Hampstead Garden Suburb are trying to find her. Ted and Juliana went with them, I'm looking after Iris and Olivia.
(beat)
I don't know why she left. She was happy, I think.

AMMA
She was very unhappy the last time I saw her.

ARNIE
She's always been tricky.

AMMA
She said you didn't like her, or any of her sisters really.

ARNIE
That's silly, just silly.

They sit in silence as the children scream in the next room.

ARNIE
I think of dad.

AMMA looks up.

AMMA
Arnold.

ARNIE
Mum couldn't take care of us any more. Remember? Ted crying every time mum would dissolve into space, stare at bugger all.

AMMA
She was scaring us.

ARNIE
She went bonkers.

AMMA
Why are you saying this?

ARNIE
Because it's not my fault. I love my girls. I loved dad.

AMMA
Well he obviously didn't love us, did he? He lied all the time. Not to keep us safe but to keep us ignorant. Remember? He told me, 12 years old, there were little people in the traffic lights, pulling levers to change the lights. I found out a year later when I saw one open and it was just cables.

ARNIE laughs a bit.

ARNIE
It's easy to vanish. Too easy.

AMMA looks out the window.

AMMA
I have to get going.

AMMA stands and walks to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM, ARNIE'S HOUSE – MORNING

GERALD sits on the sofa, to the far end is NINA and ANA on their phone.

AMMA enters.

AMMA
Gerald we should we go. Hi girls.

NINA and ANA
Hi.

AMMA
Where's Sienna?

GERALD
She went with Monique.

AMMA
We have to go, come on.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

AMMA packs while GERALD lies on the bed.

GERALD
You're not being too abrupt?

AMMA
No.

GERALD
You're not going to help?

AMMA
No.
(beat)
I told you, this trip is vital.

GERALD
With everything going on?

AMMA
Some kid nicked my package and an adult girl has gone missing.

GERALD
I thought you cared for her?

AMMA
I do... I do.
(beat)
I'll get an early night tonight. Flight's at ten. We'll leave early in the morning.

GERALD
Right.

AMMA leaves.

INT. STUDY, AMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

AMMA struts into the room. She cleans the workstation, placing tools into drawers and such.

She notices the tea-pot with two tea cups. She turns off the lights, leaves the room and locks the door.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

AMMA sorts through a stack of documents and places them into a leather document file. GERALD lies on the bed, looking at his phone.

GERALD
Here dear, 'EVRI will be issuing you with full compensation of £892.20, in light of this situation. A full investigation will be carried out. We apologize for the inconvenience caused'

AMMA
I don't care.

GERALD
Amma are you alright?

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – EVENING

AMMA reads with her reading glasses on her armchair. GERALD sits beside her on his phone.

Two plates of finished dinner sit before them on the table.

AMMA places her book down.

AMMA
Gerald?

GERALD
Hm?

AMMA
I was looking through the medicine box and I found snore-eaze.

She reaches into her pocket and takes it out.

GERALD
Is it bad? I thought it'd gone.

AMMA
I need a long night's sleep. Can you take it?

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

GERALD sleeps in bed. AMMA walks into the room, having applied cream to her face. She sees her journal on the dresser.

She picks it up and writes a sentence in it, then stopping and thinking for a while, then closing it and putting it down.

She walks to the window and looks out to the sky. She sees that line of light once more. Thinking nothing of it, she shuts the curtains and gets into bed.

She applies hand cream, then falls back onto her pillow, eyes wide open, and gets into bed. Her right leg in uncovered by the duvet.

She lies on her back and focuses on her breathing. A heart beat grows louder from the silence. A car drives past, silence again.

A heart beat grows as AMMA lies with her eyes shut. A subtle humming is introduced, so subtle almost inaudible.

The heart beat turns less like a heart beat, more digital-like. The buzzing grows louder.

The frequency of the buzzing grows shorter, the heart beat becomes even less analogue.

These two sounds change until they both meld as one, moving in synchronization with one another.

The sounds then get quieter, becoming background noise, moving in the air.

We see AMMA's right leg peeking from the duvet. It is still, but then twitches (a transparent overlay, like her soul); her physical leg remains unmoved.

Her arms twitch but only a transparent overlay (her soul) does, her physical body remains still.

She stands up and looks down at her resting body. She looks around and moves swiftly to the door.

INT. SECOND STORY LANDING, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

AMMA walks swiftly, like someone who can't accidentally trip, onto the landing. She examines the walls and the carpet.

A glow emanates through the house, coming from a room. She walks over to it.

INT. STUDY, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

AMMA walks in. Her tea-pot is emanating a colourful glow, with vibrant rays of rainbow.

She walks toward it with trepidation.
She kneels down and looks at it's details. The patterns move. She touches it, and the patterns return to how they were.

INT. SECOND STORY LANDING, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

AMMA walks gracefully back to her bedroom, lights still beaming from her study.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

AMMA walks into her bedroom. She is not there.

She looks back to the landing, the lights have vanished. Darkness.

GERALD reaches his arm over to where she'd be sleeping.

GERALD
(drowsy)
Amma, come to bed.

AMMA seems confused. She walks back and gets into bed.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – MORNING

AMMA sleeps, sweating. A clock beside her reads 4:46.

A bird is heard singing outside, the another joins in. More join in to create a coalescence of sound.

AMMA awakes to the birds, chirping chaotically and loudly.

AMMA
Gerald? Gerald?

He is fast asleep. She gets up, covering her ears.

EXT. AMMA'S HOUSE – MORNING

The rays of a sun creeps through the demise of the night sky over the still residential street. The birds continue chirping loudly.

AMMA leaves her house with a suitcase and a backpack. She walks down the street.

INT. TUBE – MORNING

AMMA sits on an empty tube with her luggage.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL – MORNING

AMMA rests laying down as the sun rises over the airport, the sounds of the intercom and general public wade by.

She gets a call from GERALD. She doesn't answer, instead turns the phone off fully.

INT. ARRIVAL GATE, MARRAKESH – DAY

Many wait with signs as travellers arrive. ZAYNAB (30s) is among them holding a sign reading 'AMMA ARMISTEAD'.

ZAYNAB
Amma!

AMMA sees her and smiles. She walks to her and hugs her.

AMMA
Zaynah! Oh it's great to see you.

ZAYNAB
You had a good flight?

AMMA
Good a flight as any.

INT. CAR, MARRAKESH ROADS - DAY

ZAYNAB drives, AMMA rides shotgun, looking at the streets of Marrakesh.

AMMA
I've missed Marrakesh, you know?

ZAYNAB
I've got many stories to tell.

AMMA
Yes?

ZAYNAB
Oh yes, well for one I lost my home.

AMMA
Oh no. You lost it or you moved?

ZAYNAB
I've not told you over the phone, I wanted to say in person. It's a... tight community here. They found out about my job here.

AMMA
They didn't know?

ZAYNAB
No.

AMMA
But you send me stuff they sell to tourists anyway?

ZAYNAB
Yes, exactly. You're not a tourist.

AMMA
That's a shame.

ZAYNAB
It's not a problem. I've got a little house by Chaibate. Away from the chaos of people.

AMMA notices the car behind.

ZAYNAB
How's your work?

AMMA
Dry, I've got that tea-ware you sent me, Ahmad al-Mansur's.

ZAYNAB
Oh did you? Any offers?

ZAYNAB turns. AMMA sees the car behind her turns.

AMMA
No, not yet. I'm thinking of opening a shop. Museums, exhibitions don't want anything. I'm thinking of prioritising private collectors.

ZAYNAB
You should. You've got an eye for it.

AMMA
That's why I'm here.

EXT. GARDEN, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE – DAY

ZAYNAB and AMMA sit on the ground sipping tea beneath the glazing sun. Crickets make noise, birds tweet, nature triumphs.

Cats surround them, roaming free.

AMMA
It's a fabulous place you've got. I've been here before, no?

ZAYNAB
No, a new house.

AMMA
Well it's fabulous. Away from others.

ZAYNAB
Oh yes, Marrakesh is not dangerous but it's deafening.
AMMA looks inside. She looks back and sips her tea.

AMMA
Whatever happened to your husband? His name slipped me.

ZAYNAB
He passed.

AMMA
I'm so sorry, you never told me.

ZAYNAB
No, because you never knew him.

AMMA
I met briefly.

ZAYNAB
No enough for him to stay vibrant in memory.

A cat approaches AMMA. She strokes it. More join.

ZAYNAB
They are all female. Some come with me into town. Into shops, the Mosque.

AMMA
I had a cat. She was died of a heat stroke at six years old, poor thing.

ZAYNAB
They sense it on you.

AMMA pets them all.

AMMA
Can I have a little look inside, do you mind?

ZAYNAB
Not at all.

INT. LIVING ROOM, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY

AMMA walks into the living room from the garden. Traditional Moroccan designs with the doorways and furniture, but feels trapped in time.

Cats roam the interior, sitting on sofas and mantles.

INT. HALLWAY, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY

ZAYNAB walks through looking at the walls with nostalgia. She tries to open a door. It is locked. She tries another door, locked.

AMMA
Why did you lock all the doors?

ZAYNAB
They serve no purpose.

AMMA
The rooms inside?

ZAYNAB
Yes.

AMMA
Are they empty?

ZAYNAB
They don't even exist.

EXT. ZAYNAB'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Crickets chirp by the empty one story house, the moonlight shining bright, all internal lights off.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE – NIGHT

AMMA lies on her back on the clean bed. She forces her eyes shut, but opens them.

She takes deep breaths, rests for a while, then opens her eyes in frustration.

INT. HALLWAY, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE – NIGHT

AMMA walks into the hallway in her night gown. She walks to a door and tries to open it. It is locked, she keeps trying.

The cats hear her and watch her from a distance. More and more gather as AMMA attempts to open the door.

She moves to the next door and tries to open it. It is locked as well. More and more cats gather watching her.

The door opens... AMMA is thrown in.

INT. TOY SHOP – EVENING

AMMA opens the door into a cramped toy shop, circa 1970s/80s. She has to duck slightly. Old dolls, trains, cars line the shelves.

A clock ticks loudly, it is the only sound other than her breathing.

She looks through the window to the street. It is a simple English town street.

As she looks around the shop, creaking the floorboards, she notices some parts of it are fragmented; some toys seem off and

totally unintelligible, some sections are blurred out, like a memory.

AMMA looks to the till, an elderly woman sits and reads, her face partially blurred out but not in a scary way, in a way that makes her seem forgotten.

The phone rings, the elderly lady answers.

ELDERLY SHOPKEEPER
Tabitha's Toys.
(beat)
What are you talking about?
(beat)
Well where?
(beat)
I haven't seen him, no. I've been here all day!
(beat)
Has he not gone to the supermarket or... no.
(beat)
Well no I hadn't seen him.

The shopkeeper looks out the window.

ELDERLY SHOPKEEPER
It's quiet, it's midday. Would you like me to come over?
(beat)
What child?

AMMA's face grows concerned.

ELDERLY SHOPKEEPER
You're not making any sense. I've seen no one, no. Mind you I'm much too old to be travelling around the village at these times.

AMMA creeps back to the door she came in from. The shopkeeper does not see her.

ELDERLY SHOPKEEPER
No.
(beat)
Well, I'll be on my way, now.
(beat)
Okay, petal, see you soon.

The shopkeeper hangs up.

ELDERLY SHOPKEEPER
It's bloody scorching.

She walks right past AMMA, who towers over her, and leaves the shop.

She looks on a shelf filled with objects that don't make sense.

She walks past a Moroccan teapot, like the one she had at home, back through the door.

EXT. SAHARAN DESERT – DAY

The blistering sun shines on the grand dunes.

Three camels walk in line. AMMA is riding the middle one, ZAYNAB rides the one at the back and ZAYNAB's friend, USMAN (30s)

USMAN holds a radio and fiddles with it, holding it to his ear.

RADIO PRESENTER
تقرير حالة الطقس ليوم السابع من شهر آب. موجة حر وشيكة ، حيث تصل درجات الحرارة إلى 50 درجة حول مراكش والمناطق الجنوبية من المغرب. يرجى اتخاذ احتياطات إضافية عند مغادرة منزلك.

The signal cuts out.

USMAN
We are disconnected.

He hangs the radio on the side of the camel.

EXT. SREDERAT MALLAS - DAY

The three enter a small village where the buildings are made from sandstone. People commute, children run around.

A man dressed in the most colourful and fanciful dress plays the sintir and sings a Gwana song.

AMMA dismounts her camel and runs straight to a water well nearby.

She drinks and as she does, many children run up to her. USMAN runs toward them, then to AMMA who lies by the well.

USMAN
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Stay back!
(to AMMA, back in English)
Do you have anything to give them? A pen or...?

AMMA searches through her pockets.

AMMA
I completely forgot. I usually remember.

She takes out her phone and gives it to one child, who goes ballistic.

USMAN
Was that a phone?

AMMA stands, out of breath.

USMAN
Come, we need to get out of the sun.

EXT. AROLUFFR PIT, SREDERAT MALLAS - DAY

A small hut stands before a large pit of cellphones (late 90s, early 2000s). Thousands of these cellphones lie in the pit.

A man with a spade digs through the phones, mixes them.

INT. AROLUFFR HUT, SREDERAT MALLAS - DAY

AMMA, USMAN and ZAYNAB enter the small hut, they are greeted by the phone salesman, ARO, dressed in fabulous robes and sort of resembling AMMA's father.

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Usman! Peace be unto you!

USMAN
(in Moroccan Arabic)
And upon you be peace. How are things?

They hug.

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Grand, grand. For a millenia of the my business.

They laugh.

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Zaynab, peace be unto you.

ZAYNAB
(in Moroccan Arabic)
And upon you be peace, Aro.

They shake hands.

USMAN
Amma, this is Aro.
(to ARO, in Moroccan Arabic)
This is Amma, white woman come to gawk.

They laugh, subtly. ARO and AMMA shakes hands.

AMMA
How do you do? Salam Alykum.

ARO
Wa alaikum assalam, Amma.

ARO does a slight bow.

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Tea! For this great occasion!

EXT. AROLUFFR PIT, SREDERAT MALLAS – DAY

The four sit, drinking a green tea, watching a man, tanned and wrinkled, digging through the pit of phones.

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Along the golden dunes lines. A great focus came. One cellphone. I picked it up and kept trotting. Another, picked up, trotted. It became a past time on my journeys.

USMAN
(to AMMA)
Aro would travel from here to neighbouring villages and towns. He'd frequently find mobile phones, cellphones, on the ground discarded.

AMMA
In the desert?

USMAN
In the desert, he grew a collection.

USMAN
AMMA
Who's dropping their phones in the desert?

USMAN
(to ARO, in Moroccan Arabic)
Who's dropping their phones in the desert, she says.

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
We all have phones, some people simply lose them.

USMAN
Everyone here has a phone, some simply lose theirs.

AMMA
Do they work?

USMAN
Yes but you can't call anyone.

AMMA
So ,is it just for show?

USMAN
Wealthy people take day long trips all the way here, to purchase one. The phones have music on them. Music no one's ever heard before, well at least no one has claimed so.

AMMA
It seems like a miracle, no? Music no one's ever heard? In the desert.

USMAN
There's music everywhere. No one's heard all of it.

AMMA
How much is one, do you know?

USMAN bursts into laughter.

USMAN
(to ARO, in Moroccan Arabic)
She asked a price.

ARO starts laughing.

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
She wouldn't sell her backpack for one, or her nail vanish.

They both burst into laughter.

USMAN
(in Moroccan Arabic)
The white woman's in her own world.

ZAYNAB
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Should I take her to look?

ARO
(in Moroccan Arabic)
Go, show her. Make sure she doesn't steal.

ZAYNAB
(to AMMA, in English)
Come, I'll show you.

She takes her arm and walks her over to the pit. She looks into the pit, many many phones.

She sees one and points to it.

AMMA
I had that one in my twenties. Nokia 3210. Looks exactly like my one.

ZAYNAB
Ah.

AMMA
Is there a price?

ZAYNAB
Amma, I'm sorry to tell you but they won't sell it to you. A white woman, little nobility.

AMMA
Nobility? They're over 20 years old you know that?

ZAYNAB
Yes. They are sacred, however. They are apart of the community. The members are already being very generous.

AMMA
I'm ever so sorry Zaynab but I came here to purchase items that people back home won't ever be able to witness. I need something to bring back with me.

ZAYNAB
Where is home to you?

AMMA
England.

ZAYNAB
If you desire a phone. Your home must be here.

AMMA scoffs.

AMMA
But I want one! Please?

ZAYNAB
I can't help you. Come.

ZAYNAB holds AMMA's arm and leads her back to USMAN and ARO, both laughing.

INT. HUT, SREDERAT MALLAS - NIGHT

AMMA lies on her back on the floor in a hut, sweating. She struggles to sleep and climbs out the window.

INT. AROLUFFR HUT, SREDERAT MALLAS – DAY

She creeps to the pit holding a flashlight. There is a tarp covering it.

She reaches under the tarp and takes a cellphone, a Nokia. She runs back.

EXT. SAHARA DESERT - DAY

AMMA, ZAYNAB and USMAN journey through the golden dunes mounted on camels.

USMAN holds a radio to his ear. It is silent, but signal grows stronger.

RADIO PRESENTER
موجة حر شديدة تضرب مناطق جنوب الرباط. يرجى اتخاذ الاحتياطات للظروف القاسية.

He turns off the radio and places it on his camel.

EXT. AREA OUTSIDE DESERT - DAY

AMMA hugs USMAN on a street.

AMMA
Thank you, Usman. It was great, really.

USMAN
Great.

AMMA
Can you get back from here?

USMAN
Oh it's a simple walk down this street.

AMMA
Great. I'm hoping I'll come back.

USMAN
Yes.

ZAYNAB hugs USMAN.

ZAYNAB
Bisalama, Usman.

INT. ZAYNAB'S CAR - DAY

AMMA sits shotgun, looking out the window at the more rural areas of Morocco. ZAYNAB drives.

EXT. ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY

ZAYNAB and AMMA walk to the front door, both sweating and panting. AMMA is drinking a bottle of water.

ZAYNAB stops.

ZAYNAB
Listen.

AMMA
To what?

ZAYNAB
Nothing. It's silent.

ZAYNAB opens the front door.. They both walk in.

We hear a SCREAM.

They both run out. ZAYNAB falls back into AMMA's arms, crying profusely. She tries to get ZAYNAB off her.

AMMA
Oh God. Zay I have to go. I'm sorry. Oh God. I have to go, please. Let me get my stuff.

INT. HALLWAY, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY

AMMA walks into the house and straight into the hallway, covering her eyes, then into her bedroom. ZAYNAB cries in the background.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

AMMA quickly takes all her belongings and packs them. She hasn't brought much.

We hear ZAYNAB's screams still.

INT. HALLWAY, ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She takes her suitcase and backpack as she tries to hold back tears.

EXT. ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY

ZAYNAB cries outside her house on the steps, painfully. There is a puddle of sick close to where she sits.

AMMA places her things down sits next to her.

AMMA
Please, Zaynab.

ZAYNAB
(crying)
No, no, no, please.

ZAYNAB cries into AMMA's cheek. AMMA starts to tear up.

AMMA
(quavering)
I need to go, can you take me please, it's not-

ZAYNAB
(crying)
Why, why? Oh my. Oh my!

AMMA
(quavering)
Please take me, I'll give you all the money I have.

ZAYNAB sobs into her shoulder.

AMMA
(crying)
Please.

They cry into each other.

INT. LIVING ROOM ZAYNAB'S HOUSE - DAY

We hear the cries of AMMA and ZAYNAB from outside.

All of the many cats that roamed the house, dead. They lie lifeless in different positions in the living room.

AMMA's cries die out.

ZAYNAB walks into the room and looks at the scene, all while we hear her cries in the background.

Her cry then dies out. She is suspended in silence, simply observing.

INT. MARRAKESH MENARA AIRPORT - DAY

AMMA sits in the terminal waiting. People walk by, announcments play.

A man, nicely dressed, sits beside her.

MAN IN AIRPORT
Hey.

AMMA
Morning.

MAN IN AIRPORT
I know you from your hotel.

AMMA
I didn't stay at a hotel.

MAN IN AIRPORT
No, the hotel.

AMMA
I've been approached by people like you before, it's not gonna work.

MAN IN AIRPORT
What?

AMMA
You say you're from my hotel, then you coerce me into buying things your mates are selling. I know it.

MAN IN AIRPORT
It's an airport, I don't work at Duty Free.

AMMA looks at him, snarkingly.

AMMA
That is strange. Shouldn't you be at the souks?

MAN IN AIRPORT
Your hotel, I'm from your hotel.

AMMA looks down, not paying attention. She waits a bit, he is still there.

AMMA
I'm gonna call security.

She looks down for a bit, then waits.

She finally gets up and walks away.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

AMMA sits in her economy seat, awake. Everyone around her sleeping.

The soft lights that line the floor and overhead lockers change subtly.

AMMA picks up her bag and takes out the Nokia. She tries to turn it on, it doesn't work.

INT. AIRPORT, ISTANBUL - NIGHT

AMMA rests in the terminal, lying across three seats, as the sun rises.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

AMMA sits in a different plane, semi-rested. A trolley is moved down the aisle, the trolleyman asks people if they want beverages.

The plane is loud; babies crying, people talking, slight turbulence.

AMMA is playing with the Nokia and it turns on, miraculously. It is dusty, the buttons barely work. When the phone starts, she navigates to the media player, where she finds one song named,'غابة معروفة بالفعل'

She plays it, but can't hear anything. She holds the phone to her ear, the noise around her silences it.

INT. ARRIVAL GATE, BANKOK AIRPORT - DAY

The airport is busy, AMMA walks among the many people, tired and her face red.

An eastern-European man holds a sign with 'AMMA ARMISTEAD' written on it. AMMA walks toward the stubborn-looking man.

AMMA
Hi.

The man looks at his sign.

MAN WITH SIGN
Amma Armistead?

AMMA
That's me.

MAN WITH SIGN
Your travel guide is unwell. She cannot attend to your service and travel with you to Chiang Mai.

AMMA
Oh. Is there someone else you can send? Does Charoensamee still work there?

MAN WITH SIGN
Charoensamee ending her life four years ago.

AMMA
What? That's awful.

MAN WITH SIGN
A full refund will be sent your account in the next two-to-three business days.

The man walks off. AMMA is stood still.

EXT. HUA LAMPHONG RAILWAY STATION - DAY

AMMA waits at the platform, on a bench.

She looks to her right and sees a group of kids laughing and chatting, presumably on a gap year, speaking a foreign language. The only face she sees is a pale-looking girl's, who laughs within the group.

A train comes by and stops.

INT. SLEEPER TRAIN – DAY

The monotonous train passes the gorgeous greenery of northern Thailand. AMMA sits on her seat.

A man walks past, relatively young, and heads into the toilet. AMMA hears the chatters of the group of kids, speaking a language she doesn't understand.

The man exits the toilet in disgust.

BACKPACKER
(in Russian)
What a disgrace! I'm not shitting like an animal. Where's the normal toilets?

He walks back to his group of friends to continue complaining.

AMMA stands and walks to the toilet.

INT. TOILET, SLEEPER TRAIN – DAY

AMMA is presented with a squat toilet. She bends down and urinates in the hole, with relative ease.

INT. SLEEPER TRAIN – NIGHT

A worker turns AMMA's seat into a bed, while AMMA stands there in her lounge wear.

The group of kids continue chatting and laughing behind her further down the carriage. She looks over. The pale-faced girl looks at her, stops laughing, then looks to her friends and continues laughing. They are drinking.

The worker has finished AMMA's bed.

AMMA
Khob Khun.

The worker walks away. AMMA gets into bed and looks out the window at the pitch black night. The laughs of the group of kids grow louder. She watches out the window, then stands up.

She walks down the carriage to the group of kids and stands before them. They don't see her.

AMMA
Excuse me. Do any of you speak English?

The pale-faced girl with slicked back blonde hair, named SISTRE, speaks with a strong Russian accent and holds a notepad with a pen.

SISTRE
I speak English, a bit.

AMMA
I'm sorry to ask but do you have a spare toothbrush?

SISTRE
Toothbrush?

AMMA
Hm.

BACKPACKER
(in Russian)
What did she say?

SISTRE
Spare toothbrush.

SISTRE looks through a bag on her bed and takes out a toothbrush and gives it to AMMA.

SISTRE
Toothpaste?

They look at each other in the eyes.

AMMA
No, I should be fine, thank you.

AMMA walks off.

INT. TOILET, SLEEPER TRAIN – NIGHT

AMMA enters holding the toothbrush. She stands still with it, and looks at it. It looks sort of new. She spits on it and brushes her teeth.

INT. SLEEPER TRAIN – NIGHT

AMMA returns to the group of kids with the toothbrush. She hands it to SISTRE.

AMMA
Thank you ever so much. I've cleaned it as best as I could.

SISTRE
Sit with us. We're drawing.

The other kids have a piece of paper each and are drawing. SISTRE still has the notepad.

AMMA sits on the bed opposite her, next to a boy who we don't see clearly.

SISTRE
What is your name?

AMMA
Amma. Yours?

SISTRE
Sistre.

BACKPACKER 2
(In Russian)
Where is she from?

SISTRE
Where are you from?

AMMA
London.

SISTRE seems shocked.

SISTRE
London!
(In Russian)
She's from England!

BACKPACKER
(In Russian)
I love English women. I love ugly women.

SISTRE
(In Russian)
Shut up!

They laugh. SISTRE picks up a bottle of Thai vodka and hands it to AMMA.

SISTRE
Have some.

AMMA
I can't, I...

SISTRE
Please have some with us. Let me draw you a picture.

AMMA takes the bottle. SISTRE begins drawing.

AMMA finishes it. Everyone cheers.

SISTRE draws a rough telephone box. AMMA takes the drawing.

AMMA
A telephone box, nice(!)

SISTRE
Something from London. You draw.

She gives her the pen. The backpackers continue to talk.

Beneath her drawing, AMMA begins to draw carelessly; connecting spirals, like tentacles, strange shapes, an impressionist artwork.

She gives it to SISTRE.

SISTRE
What is it? I love it.

She stares at it.

Quickly, she rips the paper in half; her drawing on one half and AMMA's on the other. She gives AMMA her drawing and keeps AMMA's.

SISTRE
Keep it.

AMMA looks at it, deeply. A backpacker gives AMMA a piece of paper.

BACKPACKER
(In Russian)
This is what I drew.

She looks at it. It is a naked woman from the back. He laughs. AMMA laughs.

AMMA
Very fine lines you've got there, you do sign painting?

They all laugh.

INT. SLEEPER TRAIN – NIGHT – LATER

AMMA rests on her back, forcing her eyes closed.

She hears someone walk past. It is SISTRE.

SISTRE
(Singing, In Russian)
We build an air-plane.
We'll soar above the forests,
We'll soar above the forests,
And then we'll come back to mama!

She goes into the toilet.

AMMA stands and leaves her bed through the small curtain. There is silence except for the sound of the train, metal.

AMMA walks to the toilet, the door wide open. SISTRE stands over the hole, brushing her teeth with the toothbrush she gave AMMA.

She doesn't see her. AMMA loses opacity slightly.

SISTRE finishes and leaves the bathroom, brushing past AMMA as if she wasn't there, and walks back to her seat/bed.

AMMA follows her, where she is laying with the curtain wide open, and watches her checking her phone.

She stands for a while watching SISTRE, on an empty train, everyone sleeping.

SISTRE
I can see you.

AMMA doesn't move.

AMMA
Can you astral project?

SISTRE
No.

AMMA
I can't do it. I think I did it once, but I've been trying, and when I think I project, it doesn't feel real. It's just a dream.

(beat)

Do you not want to?

SISTRE
I don't need to.

BACKPACKER(O.C.)
(In Russian)
Shut it!

SISTRE
Go to bed.

SISTRE turns off her phone and shuts the curtains. AMMA walks dolefully back to her bed.

CUT TO:

AMMA sleeps peacefully on her back, before the night sky, the rails of the train rattling.

The outside begins to melt/dissolve, only leaving light, which soon evaporates. AMMA's surroundings are vapid.

INT. HOSTEL ROOM, CHIANG MAI - DAY

Birds tweet, few cars drive past, AMMA sits in an empty hostel room on her bed, with the Nokia in hand.

We hear people outside, a group of people, playing table tennis.

The phone turns on. She navigates to the media player and plays the song.

The music is a low quality, fast Khaleeji pop song, with a distorted child's voice singing the lyrics in an unknown language.

The song ends abruptly. AMMA sits absorbing the ambience.

She then looks in a mirror that sits on the dresser; her face red. She touches it.

INT. MARKET, CHIANG MAI - DAY

AMMA enters a busy market, sticking out like a sore thumb.

She walks among the fruit stalls and other foods until she finds a small pharmacist.

INT. PHARMACIST, CHIANG MAI - DAY

AMMA speaks with the pharmacist.

AMMA
Calamine, you know?

PHARMACIST
(in Thai)
I don't understand.

AMMA
Lotion. For...

She points to her red cheeks.

AMMA
Lotion.

PHARMACIST
(in Thai)
For skin irritation?

AMMA
Lotion for skin?

The pharmacist goes into a back room. AMMA stands there awkwardly.

He enters with a tube of lotion.

PHARMACIST
(in Thai)
A herbal anti-redness treatment.

He hands it to AMMA, who reads.

AMMA
Is this...? I don't know. Okay, I'll buy it, yes.

PHARMACIST
Buy?

AMMA
Buy yes.

AMMA looks through her bag for cash. After taking out some cash, she looks at a shelf by her head and sees a can of Spam. She picks it up.

EXT. TEMPLE – DAY

AMMA stumbles upon a temple. Traditional Thai music plays on speakers.

Many people gather around it, some locals, other tourists, who are being lead by a tour guide.

As AMMA looks at the designs and architecture of the small temple, the traditional Thai music is interrupted by an advert.

ADVERTISEMENT(FROM SPEAKERS)
(in Thai)
For a gleam that persists in your everyday life, Karskrit facial cream is an affordable alternative to-

The advert stops, the Thai music continues playing. Everyone goes about their business.

INT. HOSTEL RECEPTION – SUNSET

A pamphlet stand sits there, filled. AMMA approaches it with another woman, the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST
These are all the guided tours that we recommend. Are you travelling alone?

AMMA looks at the pamphlets. She picks one up.

RECEPTIONIST
This one is a three day trip to a village of the Karen Hill Tribe. Are you below the age of 25?

AMMA
No.

RECEPTIONIST
People below the age of 25 are given discounts.

AMMA
Is there any private tours by local guides?

RECEPTIONIST
Yes, yes. I can have one arranged for you by tomorrow.

AMMA
Oh really? That's be perfect.

RECEPTIONIST
Hm it can be done.

AMMA
Yes, do that please.

She puts the pamphlet back and the receptionist walks away.

AMMA looks outside to the streets, which are filled with people.

EXT. CHIANG MAI STREETS - SUNSET

AMMA roams the streets. They are bustling, with vendors selling things from stalls and people cluttered all over.

She comes across a bar not far from the hostel. She walks into it.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - SUNSET

AMMA walks into a semi-packed bar and sits at the back. There is a stage, where people sing karaoke in front of a small screen with the lyrics.

A man walks off stage having just sung a song, speaking Russian, laughing.

People chatter and laugh waiting for the next performer. SISTRE stands from the crowd, like an angel from the future, wearing Goddess-like garments with an abundance of vibrancy.

She stands on stage looking at everyone, but not AMMA, who watches.

A song starts playing, it is Pulp's 'Common People'

SISTRE starts moving to the song.

SISTRE
(singing, into microphone)
She came from Greece she had a thirst for knowledge
She studied sculpture at Saint Martin's College
That's where I
Caught her eye
She told me that her dad was loaded
I said, in that case I'll have rum and Coca-Cola
She said fine
And then in thirty seconds time she said
I wanna live like common people
I wanna do whatever common people do
Wanna sleep with common people
I wanna sleep with common people
Like you

SISTRE looks at AMMA. AMMA is taken back, subtly.

SISTRE(CONT'D)

(singing, into microphone)
Oh what else could I do
I said I'll, I'll see what I can do.
I took her to a supermarket
I don't know why
But I had to start it somewhere
So it started there
I said pretend you've got no money
She just laughed and said
Oh you're so funny
I said; yeah
I can't see anyone else smiling in here
Are you sure?
You wanna live like common people
You wanna see whatever common people see
Wanna sleep with common people
You wanna sleep with common people
Like me
But she didn't understand
She just smiled and held my hand

Rent a flat above a shop
Cut your hair and get a job
Smoke some fags and play some pool
Pretend you never went to school
But still you'll never get it right
'Cause when you're laid in bed at night
Watching roaches climb the wall
If you called your dad he could stop it all, yeah

You'll never live like common people
You'll never do whatever common people do
You'll never fail like common people
You'll never watch your life slide out of view
And you dance and drink and screw
Because there's nothing else to do

Sing along with the common people
Sing along and it might just get you through
Laugh along with the common people
Laugh along even though they're really laughing at you
And the stupid things that you do
Because you think that poor is cool

AMMA rushes out of the bar.

EXT. CHIANG MAI STREETS - NIGHT

AMMA runs into the bustling crowds that line the streets. Music, shouting, cheering, laughing, singing. Kids run around, people shop and roam.

AMMA takes a deep breath, then stands up and runs off.

INT. HOSTEL ROOM, CHIANG MAI – NIGHT

AMMA rushes into the room, a person is sleeping on a bunk.

She opens her bag and rummages through, taking out the drawing she was given on the train.

She runs back.

EXT. CHIANG MAI STREETS – NIGHT

The Velvet Underground's 'I'll Be Your Mirror' starts playing, as AMMA runs through the street back to the karaoke bar.

INT. KARAOKE BAR – NIGHT

A woman sings 'I'll Be Your Mirror' on stage to the instrumental, as AMMA traverses the people inside.

She looks at the group of Russians sitting by the front, searching. She moves on.

EXT. CHIANG MAI STREETS – NIGHT

AMMA runs out of the bar, almost tearing. She looks across the street, SISTRE stands there, looking at her.

They stand there looking, 'I'll Be Your Mirror' still playing from inside. AMMA steps her foot out, then retracts. SISTRE steps her foot out, then retracts.

They both then start walking to each other at the same time and meet in the middle of the street, face to face.

AMMA
I know you.

SISTRE giggles.

SISTRE
We met on the train.

AMMA looks down at SISTRE, SISTRE copies her.

They both gradually bend down into a stance as if they were going to fight like lions, looking deep into each other's eyes.

They stand back up and run back to the pavement.

AMMA breaks into tears, SISTRE holds her.

AMMA
(sobbing)
What's happening? I don't know what's going on.

SISTRE
It's okay. You're tired.

AMMA sobs into her chest.

INT. HOSTEL ROOM, CHIANG MAI - NIGHT

SISTRE places AMMA to bed in the room, now more packed with sleeping backpackers, who all snore in unison. Crickets are heard chirping outside.

AMMA takes out the telephone box drawing and looks at it. She peaks over the paper and sees SISTRE standing there watching.

SISTRE
(whispering)
I'm still here.

AMMA
(tired, whispering)
Where are you staying?

SISTRE
(whispering)
Here.

(beat)

In another room.

AMMA
(whispering)
I'm terrified if I'm honest. It's just as I remembered.

SISTRE
What is?

SISTRE moves closer.

AMMA
Chiang Mai, the villages of the Saharan desert, that's where I was before.

SISTRE sits on AMMA's bed.

AMMA
Why did you sing that song?

SISTRE
Why not, I like it.

AMMA
When did you first hear it?

SISTRE
I don't know, I couldn't tell you.

AMMA
Cuddle me.

AMMA pulls off the sheets.

SISTRE
Huh?

AMMA
I'm tired. Cuddle me... if you want.

SISTRE gets into bed, AMMA wraps her arms around her.

AMMA
Just for a couple of minutes. Cuddle.

They both fall asleep under the moonlight.

The people snoring begin to stop, the night dissolves into rays of natural light.

INT. HALLWAY, HOSTEL – MORNING

A gleaming warmth enters through the windows of a right hallway.

AMMA(O.S.)
Sistre! Sistre!

AMMA stumbles out of a room, wearing casual clothes. She walks off in terror.

EXT. FOREST – MORNING

AMMA treks through a forest, all the sounds lingering, the sun peeking through the trees.

She stumbles across an old Thai telephone box sitting in front of a small bungalow.

SISTRE sits on the porch scoffing a bowl of porridge. AMMA walks to her and sits beside her.

AMMA
Good morning.

SISTRE
Good morning.

AMMA
I didn't know they served breakfast.

SISTRE
It's a small room by the reception, it's easy to miss.

AMMA
Oh.

AMMA
Do you know Chiang Mai much?

SISTRE
(muffled)
Hm.
(swallows)
I know a lot of places very well.

AMMA
Oh yeah?

SISTRE
I hate Thailand, I prefer more south, south-east.

AMMA
Do you know more, unknown places around? Free of tourists or anything.

SISTRE
Hm.

AMMA
Could you take me?

SISTRE
I can. But what can you do for me?

AMMA
What do you want?

SISTRE throws the empty bowl away.

SISTRE
You still have my picture.

AMMA
Hm.

SISTRE
I have yours.

SISTRE reaches into her sock and retracts the piece of paper, folded. She unfolds it and shows it to AMMA.

SISTRE
I love it.

AMMA
What do you want for you to take me?

SISTRE
I'll think what you'll have to give me.

EXT. LUKSAW KHUNKHEY - DAY

A village engulfed in forest breathes like a picturesque holiday card.

Laced around are mounds like mini volcanoes, with bubbles emanating from them.

SISTRE(O.C.)
They say, all of them say, nothing here you have ever seen before.

Sitting on the ground surrounded by the leaves is AMMA, SISTRE and village native, SUMATRA. They watch people from the village from a distance.

SISTRE
(in Thai, to SUMATRA)
When are we entering?

SUMATRA
(in Thai)
We are getting close.

SISTRE
We are entering soon.

AMMA
How do you know this place?

SISTRE
Disposed from NYU, I lived here for half a decade.

AMMA
Half a decade?

SISTRE
Hm, some here, some other rural places in Eastern Asia.

AMMA
Half a decade?

SISTRE
Hm-

AMMA
How old are you?

SISTRE laughs.

SISTRE
(in Thai)
She asks how old I am.

SUMATRA laughs.

SISTRE
(in Thai)
So amusing.

AMMA
NO STOP.

They both stop laughing.

AMMA
I don't know what you're saying. I don't know where I am.

SISTRE
I don't either. Only Sumatra knows. And I know Sumatra.

AMMA
How?

SISTRE
I told you, I stayed here for a while.

AMMA
You speak Thai as well, what's with that?

SISTRE
I speak every language.
(beat)
What?

There is a silence as AMMA stares at SISTRE, bewildered. SUMATRA glances at AMMA.

SUMATRA
(in Thai)
She is much too tense.

SISTRE looks at AMMA, begins staring as well.

SISTRE
He says you're too tense.

AMMA
What languages can you speak?

SISTRE
Everyone.

SISTRE laughs.

AMMA
Stop.

She stops laughing.

INT. HUT, LUKSAW KHUNKHEY - DAY

AMMA, SISTRE and SUMATRA enter a low ceiling hut, with two yaksha outside.

SUMATRA removes a large shrine from the wall, where there is a hole.

SUMATRA
(in Thai)
If there are any problems, issues, please alert the ghosts.

SISTRE
(in Thai)
Thank you.

AMMA
What did he say?

SISTRE
If there's any issues, tell the ghosts.

She bends down and begins to enter the small hole in the wall.

AMMA
What ghosts?

SISTRE
They're like the staff members of the cavity. Come.

She crawls through the hole. AMMA looks around at the miscellaneous items on the wall; mystic imagery.

She follows SISTRE and crawls through the hole.

EXT. HUT, LUKSAW KHUNKHEY – DAY

SUMATRA sits with a lady of the village, in front of the two yaksha.

The door is open, we can see inside.

They sit blankly, staring into dead space. They stare for a short while.

INT. HUT, LUKSAW KHUNKHEY – DAY

AMMA and SISTRE emerge from the hole, SISTRE first.

SISTRE
You need help?

AMMA
I'm fine, I'm fine.

AMMA seems distraught, slightly so.

SISTRE
Take a deep breath. In... out...

AMMA looks to the wall and sees a sign:

"คุณไม่เคยมาที่นี่มาก่อน
ถ้าจำอะไรได้
โปรดติดต่อผีโดยด่วน

لم تكن هنا من قبل
إذا كنت تتذكر أي شيء
الرجاء الاتصال بالشبح على الفور.

YOU HAVE NOT BEEN HERE BEFORE
IF YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING
PLEASE CONTACT A GHOST IMMEDIATELY."

AMMA
Sistre!

SISTRE
Hm?

EXT. HUT, LUKSAW KHUNKHEY – DAY

AMMA sits before a man covered in colourful clothing like the yaksha, the GHOST, with a clipboard. We don't see his face.

GHOST
What is your name?

AMMA
Amma Armistead, sorry do you know where my friend is?

GHOST
She is waiting.

AMMA looks around.

GHOST
An American?

AMMA
English.

GHOST
England. You know you have never been into the cavity before?

AMMA
Yes.

GHOST
Nothing you see is meant to be familiar.

AMMA
I know, I saw the sign.

GHOST
What did you see?

CUT TO:

INSERT – TOY SHOP FROM AMMA'S MEMORY, EMPTY.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. HUT, LUKSAW KHUNKHEY – DAY

AMMA thinks deeply.

AMMA
My grandmother's shop. It was empty.

GHOST
Grandmother? Maternal or paternal?

AMMA
Paternal.

The GHOST notes it down.

GHOST
Was there any aberration?

AMMA
It was empty. When I went there as a girl it was filled with various old toys and things.

GHOST
You've never seen it empty?

AMMA
...no? That's odd.

AMMA looks to the yaksha standing outside, then to the GHOST.

AMMA
I'd never seen it empty.

GHOST
That's a positive sign.

AMMA
Why? What is this thing?

GHOST
The cavity.

AMMA
What is the cavity?

GHOST
I'm not a history teacher.

AMMA
I was not even told. My tour guide hadn't told me what this was, I just followed.

GHOST
It's a spawn point.

AMMA
For what?

GHOST
The dreams of those who never born. A precept is to abstain from intoxication. Many of the most pious will arrive here when their lives are too think with mud, too dull.

AMMA
For enlightenment?

GHOST
No. Desperation, boredom.

AMMA
Why is it important if I remember something?

GHOST
If you do, you shouldn't. You are alive, they present the dreams that don't exist. Or can't exist. It must mean that you shouldn't exist, you're a logical error, or metaphysical flaw.

AMMA
Well I'm here.

The GHOST looks at AMMA, as if she were an alien. He takes a deep breath then looks to the sky. His eyes widen, as if he had achieved enlightenment.

GHOST
What is your name, again?

AMMA
Amma Armistead.

GHOST
Don't I know you?

AMMA shakes her head.

GHOST
I know you.

AMMA
I don't know you.

GHOST
You do. It's me.

AMMA
SISTRE!

AMMA stands and walks away, the GHOST follows.

GHOST
Amma.

AMMA turns back.

AMMA
What are you?

(beat)

I want you to tell me who you are.

GHOST
I'm a ghost. I'm here to bring you comfort.

AMMA
Why?

GHOST
For your transition.

The GHOST walks back to his chair and sits. AMMA joins.

GHOST
I can leave.

AMMA
Do so then please. You've been pestering me ever since my birthday.

The GHOST starts crying.

GHOST
(crying)
I'm sorry.

AMMA
I don't know you. Unless you're someone I know trapped in different bodies or whatever bullshit you're pulling.

The GHOST'S cries grow louder.

GHOST
(crying)
I can leave.

AMMA
THEN GO!

GHOST
(crying)
You must do something first.

AMMA
Hm?

GHOST
Accept it.

The GHOST begins breathing rapidly accompanied by the most ghastly, sickly heaving.

AMMA
Are you alright? Hello?

After his final loud gasp, The GHOST begins to melt into an oily, rainbow liquid.

AMMA gasps, standing and walks backwards as the GHOST begins to drip onto the floor. She looks to the village, they don't hear her.

AMMA
SISTRE! SISTRE!

(beat)

SISTREEEEE!

SISTRE comes running.

SISTRE
Yes?

The GHOST is now simply a puddle.

AMMA
Look.

AMMA points. Both her and SISTRE approach the liquid.

AMMA
That was a man, the ghost.

SISTRE
He turned into a puddle.

AMMA
Yes, just now... I need to go.

SISTRE
No, no. I'll ask someone.

AMMA
Ask someone, the man just melted!

SISTRE runs to the village. AMMA waits.

She brings a farmer to view the puddle. He stands over it, pokes his finger in it.

FARMER
(in Thai)
It's zinc oil. Good for skin. It's a shame you dropped it everywhere it costs a fortune!

SISTRE seems confused.

SISTRE
It's zinc oil. Good for skin he says. It cost a lot of money.

AMMA
Did you tell him that was just a man?

SISTRE
(in Thai)
She says that was once a man. He turned into it.

The farmer chuckles.

FARMER
(in Thai)
Your pronunciation's good, work on your vocabulary.

He walks away, chuckling. SISTRE and AMMA stare at the puddle.

INT. BATHHOUSE - DAY

A woman of the village empties a bucket of the liquid into two baths, and fills them with hot water.

CUT TO:

AMMA and SISTRE sit in their own baths. SISTRE rubs the water on her arms and legs.

SISTRE
Good for skin they said.

AMMA sits and stares blankly.

SISTRE
Fixes wounds, fortifies hair, can't remember what else they said.

AMMA
Where are you from?

SISTRE
I didn't have a mother, a father. I don't know.

AMMA
Where did you grow up?

SISTRE
All over.

AMMA
That's how you know every language?

SISTRE
No. Someone told them to me when I was very young.

AMMA
Every language?

SISTRE
A boy, when I was very young.

AMMA
Who was this boy?

SISTRE
Why don't you tell me about you? You ask a lot of questions.

AMMA
What should I tell you?

SISTRE
Anything.

SISTRE props her head up on the side of the bath, looking at AMMA. She stays silent.

SISTRE
What's your biggest fear?

AMMA
That's a funny question that.

SISTRE
Oh yeah, why?

AMMA
My father always used to tell us his fear, me and my brothers. Every New Years where he'd drink himself to desolation. He'd shout with cogency, 'I fear a life without knowledge, therefore a life lived lone'.

SISTRE
That's your fear?

AMMA
It rubbed off on me.

SISTRE
I don't need knowledge. Ever since I was young, I hated knowing. I could guess, you know? Then leave it at that.

AMMA
Yeah?

SISTRE
Yeah. I guessed loads of things and they came true, obviously it may be coincidence. Childlike things, you know. In my town, when I was around eight or nine or ten, they were given a large amount of money to install asphalt roads, because we only had dirt. With roads they had to dig, they had to put up more road signs, traffic

lights. Traffic lights were interested. I used to think that there were little people controlling them. After the construction was completed, I stood by one, threw rocks and things at it, asking the person inside to show themself. After a while, I got bored and climbed it, and I pried it open and there it was. A little person pulling levers.

SISTRE laughs.

SISTRE
I got so scared I fell off, was like seven foot drop, twisted my ankle.

She laughs.

AMMA
There was a person inside?

SISTRE
A whole person. Didn't seem very happy.

She laughs some more, AMMA joins in.

EXT. BATHHOUSE - DAY

AMMA walks out and sits on the porch outside, with a towel wrapped around her. She watches the village carry on with their day, nature tweeting around her.

She looks behind her, SISTRE is drying her hair inside. She walks outside to sit next to AMMA, also with a towel wrapped around her.

She begins to massage AMMA's head.

SISTRE
You're very interesting. Why do you seem so sad?

AMMA
I'm not sad. I'm not sad.

They sit in silence, SISTRE massaging.

AMMA
Do you have a family?

SISTRE
Yeah.

AMMA
Who?

SISTRE
A father, a brother. My father went missing for ages, when I was

twelve he came back. Until then it was just me and my brother. Do you have a family?

AMMA
My father disappeared when I was young. It's an odd story, many people I tell it to don't really understand, some more than others. Late one night, January, it was strangely warm. A boy comes speaking only in Portuguese. He comes to our door, my father lets him in, my mother fed him, he's sitting at the dinner table he says, 'one of you is my parent' in Portuguese. It was obviously a mistranslation, we all thought that. Dad goes to phone the police or someone to pick him up, I don't know. He vanishes. We all to try and find him, we come to the dinner table, the boy's gone. The boy, okay he left, my father had no reason to leave, never expressed to do so, just gone.

SISTRE
That's strange.

AMMA
Hm. Never saw him again.

SISTRE
What about the boy?

AMMA loses her expressions in contemplation.

AMMA
I saw the boy again. A while after that day, my mother became unstable. During the summer holidays my two brothers went to stay with my paternal uncle and aunt in Dorset, I was sent to my maternal aunt's Wanda house up in Hull. She lived with a friend, also a woman called I think it was Doris, in large house on the Humber, a big estuary. Wanda never married, she just lived with Doris her whole life. She adopted a child shortly before I came, whom my family had never met, Hull was so far away. I remember them showing me to my room and seeing that boy waiting on my bed, cross-legged, smiling happy as a sandboy. They adopted him from a centre in Hull, they said that he came from Brazil, he spoke no English. For the next couple of weeks, we'd play outside, in the woods, board games with Aunt Wanda and Doris, television, toys.

SISTRE
You didn't say anything?

AMMA
Well, one day near to the end of the holidays, we'd just been playing hide and seek for ages it seemed. I found him hiding in Doris' wardrobe. He seemed happy that I found him. I was confused, that whole holiday I was confused. I just mustered up the courage and asked, 'What did you do with my day?' I knew he wouldn't understand, but he did. I sat in the wardrobe with him. He laughed. He said in broken broken English, 'I've known you long,

you're now my mother.' I felt nauseous, ill. I threw him out of the wardrobe onto the floor, beat him badly. Stupid bloody bugger, I beat him bloody. I can't remember it well, but he runs off out into the garden, into the trees, into the forest. No one sees him again. Most of the days after, at the end of my prayers I'd pray he crawled off to die. Painfully. Scum he was. I told aunt Wanda, we were playing hide and seek and I couldn't find him. I went to boarding school when the term started, aunt Wanda never wanted to speak with me again. What's strange is that from then on, my dreams had gotten extremely vivid, to the point where I would visit psychiatrists. I'd move, I'd sleepwalk, I'd be stuck in weeks of depression because I'd had a nightmare, or I had something in the dream that I wanted but couldn't have, you know? I'd wake up and it wasn't there. My brothers suffered from it too, not as badly. It sort of died down as I grew older. I still journal them, although I had left it in England, I'm not sure why, I was in a rush. I always write the dream and then write why I think I had it, maybe from a minor thought or conversation in the day, it was mostly that.

(beat)

The fickle doctors thought it was trauma from our parents. I think it was deeper than that. Much, much deeper.

SISTRE stops massaging AMMA's hair and hugs her.

INT. HOSTEL ROOM – EVENING

AMMA sits on her bed in an empty room, holding the Nokia. She hears conversation in Russian in the room next to hers.

SISTRE enters, carrying a bag on her back. She sits beside AMMA.

AMMA
Here.

AMMA plays the song on the phone. SISTRE listens closer.

When the short song finishes, SISTRE sits back in puzzlement.

AMMA
Do you know it?

SISTRE
I think. I'm not sure.

AMMA
Should I play it again?

SISTRE
No.

AMMA
Any idea?

SISTRE
What... what would you like it to say?

AMMA
What would I like it say?

SISTRE
Yeah.

SISTRE smiles.

AMMA
I don't know, I just want to know what it says.

SISTRE
Anything. It could say anything.

AMMA
Something interesting. Something I could take home, tell everyone. Something about the person who owned it. Something that could teach others something new, something unseen by most.

SISTRE
That's your job, isn't it?

AMMA
It is.

SISTRE
I don't know what it says. It could be anything. Make it up. What is this anyway? You stole someone's ancient phone?

AMMA
It's from the Sahara, you see. A strange man collects them, he finds them scattered around, and they have songs on them, songs apparently no one has ever heard.

SISTRE
Exactly. Make it up. No one's ever heard of it.

SISTRE laughs.

SISTRE
You can't even call people on it?

She takes the phone from AMMA and analyses it.

AMMA
Careful. No you can't, there's no SIM.

SISTRE
Why don't you try?

AMMA
Because there's no SIM. Silly.

SISTRE
Try it. Try to call someone.

AMMA
Why?

SISTRE
It's a phone?

She gives the phone to AMMA, stands up and walks to the door.

SISTRE
I'm leaving.

AMMA
Where to?

SISTRE
Pai.

AMMA looks up in concern.

AMMA
You're leaving Chiang Mai?

SISTRE
Yeah. It's ubiquitous. We're travelling around south-east Asia, then travelling north.

AMMA
You were only here for a couple of days.

SISTRE
Yeah.

AMMA
You're leaving.

SISTRE
Yeah.

AMMA
Why? I thought...

AMMA sits in terrifying silence. SISTRE goes back to sit beside her, taking her arm.

SISTRE
Don't carve ants into your bag. Nor a rabbit nor a dog. Just take one look, at the fires of Babylon in the sky.

AMMA
What does that mean?

SISTRE
Someone said it in a dream I had. Around eleven years ago.

She gets up and walks back to the door.

SISTRE
Goodbye.

SISTRE waits as AMMA is frozen in shock. She leaves swiftly, AMMA remains in disbelief.

We hear chatters in Russian in the hallway, laughing, youthful. AMMA is still frozen.

We hear them outside, moving away, until there is subtle silence.

AMMA picks up the phone and enters random numbers into the keypad, then holds it up to her ear. It rings.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
Hello?

AMMA's eyes widen. She stops breathing momentarily, then begin rapidly.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)(CONT'D)
Hello? Who is this?

AMMA
It's me.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
Yeah?

AMMA
Amma. Aunt Amma.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
Amma! Oh hi Amma. You called me!

AMMA
I did.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
Amma! I'm so happy you called!

AMMA
Where are you?

(beat)

Do you know where you are?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
I've never known this well.

AMMA
Really?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
Hm. Did you hear the birds as well?

AMMA
The birds, the birds. Oh yes, I did. They woke me up, back in England.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
I'm so happy you called.

AMMA begins tearing up.

AMMA
Have you seen anyone you know?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
I saw you, actually.

AMMA
Oh yeah? Where?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
In Brazil. I'm in Brazil.

AMMA
You're in Brazil? Where in Brazil?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
Tapiraí. Remember the waterfall? When Ana was baptised. We all went to the waterfall.

AMMA
(laughing)
Oh yes.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
That was a fun day. Nina was thought she was a grown-up and tried to climb it. She was only- what- three? Can you hear the waterfall?

AMMA
I can't no-

A waterfall is heard over the phone.

AMMA
Do you miss your sisters, Aurelie?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
If I did, they would be here. And I do.

AMMA
So they are there with you?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
They are. They don't know it though but they are. It's weird.

AMMA begins full-on crying.

AMMA
I'm going to Brazil. In a couple of days. Not Tapiraí, but Brazil nevertheless.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, DISTORTED)
Maybe, I'll see you there. I don't know though.
(unintelligible, crackled)
I'm only natural light to you.

AMMA
Sorry?

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, UNINTELLIGIBLE)
I'm only natural light to you.

AMMA
I can't hear you. It's cutting out.

AURELIE(ON PHONE, CRACKLED, UNINTELLIGIBLE)
I'M ONLY NATURAL LIGHT-

The phone call ends. Everything is uncomfortably silent. She places the phone down.

She stands and walks to the window, looking out at the street. Everything outside is still, not unnaturally.

She tilts her chin up and a car drives past, then a man, then a group of people. The street is now busy, almost suddenly.

She lies on her bed and falls to sleep.

Coloured lights shine through the window and all around. Soon the frame begins to be corrupted by the light, AMMA's figure however is untouched.

The light overwhelms the screen and fades to a bright yellow.

INSERT SHOTS – VIEWS FROM A WINDOW OF A MOVING CAR (1980s), DRIVING THROUGH THE TREES OF A BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE ON A SUNNY MORNING. THE SUN POKES THROUGH THE TREES, THE WARMTH PRESENTED BY THE COLOUR.

INSERT SHOTS – A SMALL CEMETERY SURROUNDS ENGLAND'S SMALLEST CHURCH, WHICH IS SURROUNDED BY THE WOODS. THE MORNING SUN PIERCES THROUGH THE TREES AND SHINES UPON THE CHURCH.

INSERT SHOTS – A WOODED AREA, FOREST-LIKE. THERE ARE SIGNS ABOUT IT'S HISTORY, WARNING SIGNS AND PROHIBITION SIGNS.

FATHER(V.O.)
My uncle had bought these woods. They were going to be turned into factories.

EXT. WOODS – SUNNY DAY

FATHER and MOTHER stands there with young AMMA, ARNIE and TED.

FATHER(V.O.)(CONT'D)
He bought the woods and turned it into a park. And he's buried, just up there. We can go see him.

They all walk away.

EXT. SMALLEST CHURCH IN ENGLAND – SUNNY DAY

The family enter the cemetery. FATHER looks at each gravestone and finds the right one. He points to it.

FATHER
Here, look.

They all rush to see it.

FATHER
That's your uncle.

INSERT SHOTS – VIEWS FROM A WINDOW OF A MOVING CAR, DRIVING THROUGH A BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE. THE SUN HAS DIED DOWN, BUT IT'S REMNANTS STILL PERMEATE.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE SYLZISTRE HOUSE – EVENING

The fire is on, the stockings and Christmas tree are up. Young AMMA, ARNIE and TED are in their pyjamas. Their GRANDMOTHER

(previously named SHOPKEEPER) sits with them on the sofa, as well as a cat which strolls around.

GRANDMOTHER
He was a selfless man, my brother. When everyone had gone to bed, he'd still be in the shop, even when it was closed, just so no thieves could come. It was a tiny village there were no thieves anyway, but he'd stay there. A book and telephone by his side.

AMMA
Where did he die?

GRANDMOTHER
Oh...uh... close to where he was buried. Did your father take you there?

AMMA
I don't think so.

ARNIE
Yeah he did! Remember that house with the plants on the walls?

AMMA
No.

ARNIE
She's losing her memory! We were there!

The cat sits on AMMA's lap.

INSERT SHOTS – VIEWS FROM A WINDOW OF A MOVING CAR, DRIVING THROUGH A BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE. THE SUN IS SETTING.

INT. CAR, WOODS – EVENING

A teenage AMMA, ARNIE and TED sit in a car. ARNIE is smoking.

ARNIE
Of course it's not stupid.

AMMA
It is, you're twenty! Ted is eighteen!

ARNIE
And? Me and Ted want to do this, we've been wanting to do this for years.

AMMA
It's fucking stupid. So ridiculous.

TED
Amma, we might not find anyone, it doesn't matter, it's a gap year.

ARNIE
And I've been waiting for two years to go with Ted.

AMMA
That's so insane. You're in university.

ARNIE
This is more important, it's so much more important. You don't even-

AMMA
It's not!

ARNIE
You don't even know.

AMMA
You're twenty. Most people wait a bit before they get bloody married.

ARNIE
We're not getting bloody married! We're not getting married, we're just going, we might not get married.

AMMA
You're going with the intention of getting married

ARNIE
Amma, please.

AMMA
It's fine to go away, but...

ARNIE
But what?

AMMA
Why Brazil?

ARNIE throws away the cigarette and leaves the car.

AMMA
ARNIE!

ARNIE
Hang on!

ARNIE walks away.

TED
Where are we?

AMMA
Come, Ted.

She leaves the car, Ted does too.

EXT. SMALLEST CHURCH IN ENGLAND – EVENING

ARNIE, AMMA and TED stand in the graveyard, looking at their uncle's gravestone, which is more destroyed.

ARNIE
I remember here.

AMMA
I thought I was gonna die here.

TED
What? Why?

AMMA
I don't know, I just... I don't know. I think when I'm old, I'll come here to die.

ARNIE
Why do you think you're gonna die here?

AMMA
I think just like the circumstances. I just felt full, when I came here, remember before Christmas Eve?

ARNIE starts laughing.

ARNIE
What are you talking about? The fumes got to you, come let's go.

TED
You're not gonna die here, Amma.

They all walk away.

INSERT SHOTS – VIEWS FROM A WINDOW OF A MOVING CAR, DRIVING ON THE MOTORWAY. IT IS NIGHT.

INT. STAIRS, HOUSE – DREAM DAY

FROM YOUNG AMMA'S POV:

AMMA walks up the stairs slowly. The lights flicker in her vision, like a memory. She hears a joyous laugh and chattering, which is unintelligible and gurgled.

When she makes it to a door on the second story, she opens it. AUNT WANDA and DORIS sit, observing the boy as he dances to music.

Everyone ignores AMMA as she moves closer to the boy. She gets close, he doesn't see her. AUNT WANDA and DORIS do not see her.

The BOY then turns his head to her... and smiles.

The screen dissolves into subtle rays of light, amalgamating into complex shapes of many colours, as if one was rubbing their eyes.

INT. TOY SHOP – DAY

FROM YOUNG AMMA'S POV:

AMMA traverses the cramped toy shop and sees on a shelf the Moroccan teapot, with eight teacups.

She attempts to grab the pot and cups, failing, causing some to fall to the ground. She attempts to pick them up but they keep falling.

GRANDMOTHER
Amma?

INT. FARMHOUSE, BRAZIL – MORNING

A present-day AMMA sleeps on a creaky mattress, the sun shining from the window. She is awoken by the sun, sweating profusely.

After she adjusts her eyes she looks to a bedside table and sees the Moroccan teapot, with eight teacups. She picks them up, looks at their detail then places them back.

She falls back onto the bed. Someone is sleeping beside her. She looks... it is SISTRE, sleeping with her back to AMMA.

AMMA seems disoriented. She nudges SISTRE awake.

SISTRE
(half-asleep)
What...?

INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE, BRAZIL – MORNING

AMMA and SISTRE sit at a table in silence, drinking coffee from see-through mugs. AMMA has crusty eyes and a croaky voice. Birds sing outside.

SISTRE
I think if we drive like 2 hours we can get to Bambuí, there might be some big supermarket there, we can look for Spam.

AMMA
Spam?

SISTRE
Yeah. You said you wanted some.

She drinks her coffee.

AMMA
When?

SISTRE
Yesterday. You can't remember?

AMMA shakes her head.

SISTRE
Well what do you want to do today?

AMMA
Weren't we just in Chiang Mai?

SISTRE
I know, we came fast didn't we?

AMMA
No. I've lost my memory. You left me.

(beat)

To go to Pai.

SISTRE laughs.

SISTRE
What?

AMMA
What happened after? Can you tell me please?

SISTRE
You can't remember? I'd never seen you so happy all the week I've known you for.

AMMA
Tell me.

SISTRE
You ran to get me, from the train station. Said you were going to Brazil straight away. I came with you.

The shine from the morning sun dulls a bit.

AMMA
I don't remember.

SISTRE
You don't need to remember.

AMMA
What?

SISTRE
You don't need to remember, do you? I just told you to make your comfortable.

AMMA looks at her coffee and takes a sip.

AMMA
We're in like the south-east of Brazil though. You said Bambuí?

SISTRE
Hm.

AMMA
Yeah we're in the south-east. I was meant to be going north, close to Guyana. To the Amazon.

SISTRE
Well we're here, aren't we?

AMMA starts breathing heavily. She looks out the window; a gorgeous, fruitful farm with many trees and some animals.

AMMA
You said something before you left. To me. Something about the fires of Babylon or some shit.

(beat)

You said you heard it in a dream. How do you know that saying from a dream? You are a dream!

SISTRE is taken back. MORNING turns to DAY outside.

SISTRE
A dream?

AMMA
Isn't that what you are? How can you have a dream? And more specifically, hear something from a dream, something that you did not hear anywhere else because if you did you would've said you heard the saying from that said place?

(beat)

You're not real.

SISTRE
Don't say that. You don't know anything.

AMMA
No I don't! But you do. What is it? You speak every language, you know every place in Thailand, every place in any place you've ever been, a man melted before my eyes and you had no reaction, and you saw a little man in a traffic light? A little man! What little man controls a traffic light, it is WIRES! WHO ARE YOU?

The sun dampens even more, DAY transitions to EVENING. SISTRE sits there in silence.

AMMA
This is where you say it.

SISTRE
Who are you?

AMMA
What?

SISTRE
I KNOW WHO I AM. MY YOUNGER SELF KNEW, I KNOW AND I WILL KNOW FOREVER. WHO ARE YOU?

SISTRE begins tearing.

SISTRE
(teary)
You used me. I'm a tour guide for your insanity, your self-loathing. That's what I am to you, that's all that I am to you. You want more.

AMMA
What do you want of me? You wanted something for me to give you. What do you want?

They sit in silence.

SISTRE
Why did you come to Thailand? And Brazil. And Morocco.

AMMA
To find something to take back, I've told you, I've told you.

SISTRE
You've told me nothing! That's not true, THAT'S NOT TRUE!

SISTRE stands, distressed, tears streaming down her face, her voice worn out.

AMMA

I don't want to see you like this.

SISTRE sits back down and bursts into tears. AMMA watches.

SISTRE
(crying)
I'm real. I'm so real. Please.

AMMA continues watching her bawl her eyes out, then reaches her arm out and holds SISTRE's.

AMMA
I know. I know... Thank you.

EVENING turns to NIGHT. AMMA looks outside and sees the moon.

AMMA
Look, it's night already!

SISTRE stops crying and looks at AMMA.

SISTRE
I'm sorry I brought you here.

AMMA
No.

SISTRE
What have we benefited? Is there really a compromise? I've brought you here.

AMMA
And I've brought you here too. I've made you real. Whatever my real is.

SISTRE
Shut up. I hate dreams. Too much self-indulgence.

AMMA looks outside. The stars in the sky align into a long line that stretches across the whole sky.

AMMA stands and walks outside.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

AMMA looks up at the line of light in the sky. SISTRE follows.

AMMA
I think tomorrow, we should head toward the waterfall. It's not far from here.

SISTRE
There's a waterfall?

AMMA
Hm. It's very secluded. No one'll be there. It'd be nice.

AMMA looks at SISTRE deep into the eyes. They kiss under the line in the sky, as crickets chirp around them; a long, wet kiss.

We ZOOM into the line of light.

As we get closer, the white from the light breaks apart into rays of light ranging from all across the visible light spectrum. These lights turn into array of patterns turning, moving and changing into different shapes and patterns.

We then collect back to white light and focus on the night-sky, this time in London, on the street where AMMA lived.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT – CONTINUOUS

We zoom out into AMMA's house, where GERALD sleeps on the bed, beside an imprint.

INT. KITCHEN, AMMA'S HOUSE – MORNING

GERALD, looking much more grungier, pours himself a tea. He looks outside at the day. Average.

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – MORNING

GERALD sits sipping his tea, a blanket wrapped around him. It is silent except for the eerie sound of the wind blowing inside the house.

A RING doorbell is on the coffee table.

INT. AMMA'S STUDY, AMMA'S HOUSE – DAY

GERALD clears away boxes. Most of AMMA's stuff is gone, probably packaged. There is a knock at the door.

INT. HALLWAY, AMMA'S HOUSE – DAY

GERALD answers the door. It is TED, JULIANA, IRIS and OLIVIA.

GERALD
Hello!

TED
Alright, Gez!

JULIANA
Hello, Gerald!

They all come in. GERALD kisses JULIANA on each cheek and shakes TED's hand.

GERALD
Hello Iris, Olivia!

JULIANA
Say hello, girls.

IRIS
Hi.

OLIVIA walks away.

JULIANA
Olivia! Sorry

GERALD
It's okay.

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – DAY

IRIS and OLIVIA play with a Wii on TV; a new system.

INT. KITCHEN, AMMA'S HOUSE – DAY

GERALD, TED and JULIANA sit in the kitchen sipping tea.

TED
It's so annoying, every day-

JULIANA
Oh yes.

TED
At six in the morning, sometimes even five. Drilling intensely. Wakes the kids up every time, barely get any sleep now.

GERALD
God.

TED
Yeah, and it's been happening for a week. Just constant work.

GERALD
Well it's the end of the month so the council-

TED
Exactly the council decides to redo everything. It's probably gonna get to your street at some point, I won't be surprised.

GERALD
Hm.

TED
It's not even roads they're digging up, they're adding all new fancy-

JULIANA
Zebra crossings-

TED
Yeah zebra crossings, lampposts.

GERALD
Well at some point it's got to be done.

TED
Yeah it's just such a nuisance. Such a nuisance. I have to park the car two roads down. It's quicker to walk the girls to school than to walk to the car; well it's not but it's bloody more annoying. It's not even our company doing! It's like they're rubbing it in our faces.

GERALD
How is the company?

TED
It's okay. Obviously could've been better.

GERALD
Yeah.

TED
But okay. I don't really care for it as long as I'm paid. The council has been excluding us for a while, pay's not as great as it was.

TED laughs.

TED
Complaining like an old man. I would've hated myself as a kid.

JULIANA
Really?

TED
Yeah. I don't know. It's fine really.

GERALD
Hm. Road works aren't such magical sights.

TED
No certainly not.

The kids scream in the background.

TED
God, the kids are driving me mental today.

GERALD
What happened?

TED
Arnie came round last night, told the kids Aurelie tucked Ana into bed the night before.

GERALD
Eh?

TED
Well, they think she's back as like a ghost or something.

GERALD
Ah.
(beat)
Are they alright or?

TED
Oh they're so happy. They're over the moon. Just been screaming all day. It's nice to think isn't it?

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – EVENING

GERALD sits reading the paper. Wii controllers are left on the floor, the TV still on.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE – NIGHT

GERALD sleeps beside the imprint.

While still focusing on GERALD, we see a subtle shadow that makes a slight noise. GERALD twitches, then opens one eye.

INT. POLICE STATION – DAY

GERALD, looking much more grungier, sits talking to an officer.

OFFICER(O.C.)
You didn't know how he entered? Through the window, or?

GERALD
Yeah I don't know.

OFFICER(O.C.)
And he just sat there?

GERALD
He just sat there for about around five minutes.

OFFICER(O.C.)
You didn't say anything? Didn't move?

GERALD
I couldn't. I couldn't move.

(beat)

I think they came through the front door. They didn't leave from my window.

OFFICER(O.C.)
Right. He didn't steal anything or...?

GERALD
No.
OFFICER(O.C.)
Does anyone else have keys to the house.

GERALD
No.

The OFFICER flips through some pages.

OFFICER(O.C.)
You have no clue who it could've been.

GERALD
Look he came in, sat there, and left. It was a... creep, whatever.

OFFICER(O.C.)
Right.

GERALD
No one I knew.

OFFICER(O.C.)
Could it be your wife?

GERALD's face drops.

GERALD
No. It was a man, a big man, it couldn't've been.

OFFICER(O.C.)
She left...

GERALD
Two days after her birthday, I know. It's not-

OFFICER(O.C.)
Four months ago. Gerald, it's probably her. Did she have an incentive to leave?

GERALD
No.

(beat)

Look I've been through this.

OFFICER(O.C.)
She was meant to leave for Heathrow. But she never checked in, she wasn't on any cameras. She's still in England.

GERALD
Look mate, it's not her. I could hear him breathing, it was heavy.

(beat)

She vanished. It happened with her niece, with her father. Me and her family are trying to figure out what it is, you know maybe it's some condition, mental condition, where they leave, find an incentive to just wander off, I don't know. She's not coming back.

OFFICER(O.C.)
Look Gerald with all due respect, if it wasn't a thief or anyone trying to get anything out of you, it's probably not some creep, I mean it's very rare we get people like that.

GERALD
I know, I know, but he was there you know.

OFFICER(O.C.)
We can check the perimeter, look for a man that fits the description. What'd he look like?

GERALD
I didn't see. I didn't see properly.

GERALD looks down.

INT. AMMA'S STUDY, AMMA'S HOUSE - EVENING

GERALD stands in Amma's study, everything boxed up. He looks at the different boxes, a hint of melancholy in his eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE - EVENING

GERALD assembles his RING doorbell, unplugging it from it's charge.

EXT. FRONT DOOR, AMMA'S HOUSE - EVENING

GERALD places the doorbell on the wall, looking at his phone to check the live feed.

INT. STAIRS, AMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

GERALD walks up the creaky stairs, like an old man.

INT. BEDROOM, AMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

GERALD walks from the bathroom into the bedroom. He climbs into bed, putting his phone on charge.

He sits thinking, then opens his bed side table and takes out Amma's journal. He flips to a page with a bright tag in it. He seems melancholic, and places the journal back, closing the drawer.

He lies on his back, facing the ceiling, eyes wide open. His breaths are conservative but loud, the subtle noise from outside interfering.

He closes his eyes, still on his back.

We see a shadow enter and sit on a chair by the dresser. GERALD opens his eyes.

GERALD
Who are you?

(beat)

Why are you here?

SHADOW(O.C.)
Are you safe?

GERALD
I am. Although I don't feel so now.

SHADOW(O.C.)
You should. I am here to comfort you. How are you?

GERALD
I'm doing okay.

SHADOW(O.C.)
Good. No troubles? Stable? Financially so? Mentally so? Physically so?

GERALD
I can't really sleep that well at the moment.

SHADOW(O.C.)
What's happening?

GERALD
I haven't had a deep sleep for a long time. I can only sleep very lightly.

SHADOW(O.C.)
It's why you saw me yesterday. I didn't make a sound.

GERALD
I could feel you.

SHADOW(O.C.)
If you were asleep you wouldn't've been able to.

GERALD
Exactly.

SHADOW(O.C.)
So you are suffering with light sleeps.

A small silence.

GERALD
Where is my wife?

SHADOW(O.C.)
Your wife?

GERALD
Where is Amma?

SHADOW(O.C.)
I don't know. I don't know where Amma is.

GERALD
Do you know what she meant in her journal? The last dream she had before she left.

SHADOW(O.C.)
What was the dream?

GERALD
Nothing extraordinary. Bog standard. Except, she didn't write why she thought she had it. What it meant.

SHADOW(O.C.)
Maybe she didn't have to.

GERALD
Will I see her again?

SHADOW(O.C.)
Why shouldn't you? If you do want that deeply-rooted. But you now. What do you want the most right now?

There is a longer silence.

SHADOW(O.C.)
You want to sleep. Go to sleep. Rest your eyes. Let yourself unfetter.

GERALD relaxes back.

SHADOW(O.C.)
Unfetter yourself. Doze to a deep, deep slumber. Go to sleep, now.

He lies on his side and gets comfortable. He closes his eyes and falls asleep in an awkward and unflattering position.

The shadow vanishes.

GERALD sleeps deeply, lightly snoring. We ZOOM into his face until the screen is black.

THE END.