

DANCE WITH ME

by

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EXT. PLAYGROUND DAY

A typical late summer's night in a multicolored neighborhood of Amsterdam.

It's clear that it's the end of a hot day. The Moroccan men, in traditional djellaba stand around talking in front of their doorsteps. Some of them smoking a cigarette, others eating some fruit.

From the playground in the distance we hear the sound of children playing. As we come closer we see women, all from different nationalities, sitting on the benches on the edge of the playground, keeping an eye on their playing children.

The rhythmic sound of a ball being bounced repeatedly. In the middle of the playground SAID, a handsome charismatic Moroccan guy is giving a virtuoso performance with the ball. From his foot to his chest, from his chest to his head and back to his foot again. His athletic body bounces up and down, his eyes focused on the ball, like a juggler keeping his objects in play.

He is watched by SUZIE, who barely audible counts every kick of the ball. In the meantime Suzie is giving her girlfriend NICKY (18) a manicure. With her colorful make up and hairdo, sitting cross-legged on the ground, quietly mumbling, Suzie looks like a weird kind of monk chanting a whole new kind of prayer.

ISSA (18), sitting on the edge of the bench is giving Nicky something that has to pass for a back rub, working her neck more with his tongue than his hands. Nicky can't keep her body from moving around in spastics.

SUZIE  
(to Nicky)  
Sit still. Eighteen..Nineteen...

SAID  
How much?

SUZIE  
..twenty...  
(to Said)  
Twenty!...twenty one...

Next to Nicky lays RASHID (17), smoking a joint. With his eyes closed, he tries to pass it on to MO (19), who paces up and down impatiently.

MO  
Oh come on El Kattabi...nock it  
off! Let's play, asshole.

Issa taking his tongue out of Nicky for a brief moment:

ISSA  
Practice, practice, practice...

As Said grabs the ball with a swift movement, holding it in front of Mo's face:

SAID  
Makes the master! Don't call me asshole, will ya? I'm not in the mood.  
(to Issa)  
I'm working tonight. You Issa?

Mo grabs the ball.

MO  
What is it with you today, huh?  
Cranky motherfucker...You ready?

Issa takes out a horrendous shirt from Steak House 'The Raging Cow' and waves it at Said, in the meantime he doesn't stop kissing Nicky.

SAID  
(irritated)  
You definitely lost your tongue, now haven't you Issa? I'm ready, alright.

MO  
You timing Issa?

SAID  
No, let Suzie do the timing. Suze?

As Mo hands her his watch, Suzie gets up reluctantly.

SUZIE  
Oh alright...Fuck, it's too hot for this crap...Okay? Ready? Go!

Suzie's eyes move frantically from the game to the watch. Eventhough Mo is an excellent panna player, he doesn't have the magic that Said has with the ball.

Totally in control, focused only on winning the game, he has that touch of genius that only star players have. With a grim look on his face he dazzles Mo with his tricks.

SUZIE (CONT'D)  
..Ten seconds..

As Said looks at the ball rolling between Mo's legs, he cries out and tears his shirt over his head.

SAID  
It's a panna! It's a fucking panna!

While he makes a round through 'the stadium' he asks for more applause and cheers from his virtual audience. On his way he kisses SUZIE. MO watches them frustrated.

ISSA gives Said 'a high five' and signals to Mo, that it's too bad, but that his friend Said is a better player.

ISSA  
What can I say, Mo?

MO  
Yeah, right! Is this guy born with a golden dick, or what? Lets play again, Mini Maus!

Mo's cell is ringing, but in the heap of coats, sweaters and bags he can't find it.

MO (CONT'D)  
Fuck! Where the fuck..We play again, El Kattabi..

SAID  
Gotta work, Mo.. gotta work...but I promise I'll beat you again tomorrow, okay?

Mo finally finds his cell.

MO  
..Where are you? Yeah, ten minutes, bye..

ISSA  
(ironically)  
Mo's gotta work as well guys!

They all laugh.

MO  
You're coming Rashid?

Rashid is embarrassed as he gets up and mumbles.

RASHID  
Sure...Later!

Mo, followed closely by Rashid, leaves the playground and gets in his Mercedes. On top of the car there is a taxi sign.

SAID  
Like that taxi would take you anywhere...

ISSA  
Yeah. Straight to drug rehab maybe?

Said gives Suzie a quick kiss.

SAID  
Gotta go babe.

As Said wants to run off, Suzie stops him while grabbing his shirt.

SUZIE  
Hold it Mister!

Suzie kisses him full on the mouth.

SUZIE (CONT'D)  
You're coming after work tonight?  
My mother is working the night  
shift...

ISSA  
This guy is born with a golden  
dick! I'm telling, ya..

As Said runs off:

SAID  
It depends..If it's not too late.  
The presentation of the diploma's  
is tomorrow remember...I'll call  
you, okay?

ISSA  
(to Said running off)  
Let's all go together, tomorrow  
man!

SAID  
Yeah great! Later!

As the car drives away, Mo shouts through the open window at Said running:

MO  
Bye now motherfucker!

Mo takes out an invisible gun and aims at Said, who starts running faster pretending he's followed by Mo.

Mo shoots him.

MO (CONT'D)  
I'll get you, asshole..I'll get  
you..

TITELS AND MUSIC  
OVER:

We hear Elvis Presley's: ' Don't step on my blue suede shoes' as SAID runs through the streets of Amsterdam. He enters a community centre.

MUSIC CONTINUES  
OVER:

A class of Amsterdam 'older' ladies and gentlemen dancing the jive. It's obvious, that these people are all Amsterdam locals and everybody knows everybody from the neighborhood.

Mr. CARERRA, an Argentinean man in his late fifties is correcting them enthusiastically. Even though, it's very clear that the people dancing here will never win any price, Mr. Carerra shouts with a straight face:

MR. CARERRA  
We are going for that Golden Medal  
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Said runs in, greets briefly as he disappears behind the bar. He puts some water in the coffeepot, puts in the coffee and starts cleaning up the bar.

Mrs. Carerra, an Amsterdam woman in her fifties, with a flossy blond hairdo and a serious face, grabs her husband and they immediately start swinging together.

MRS. CARERRA  
Ignore the feet, people! Never  
look at your feet! Projection!

On the side AUNTIE JANIE (70) is watching the dancing. Every now and then she tries to practice a little by herself.

As Said sees Auntie Janie dancing by herself he walks up to her and dances with her.

Mrs. Carrera winks at him and nods in approval.

Auntie Janie, who is a rather big Amsterdam lady, almost crushes SAID between her big bosom. The boy doesn't seem to mind. He makes her laugh by acting, he is in love with her. It's obvious she adores Said.

Mr. & Mrs. CARERRA continue the class.

THE MUSIC STOPS.

INT. DANCE SCHOOL LATER

Class is leaving. Auntie Janie walks up to Said who is cleaning the bar.

AUNTIE JANIE  
Thanks sweet boy...Dancing with the  
old fart again.  
(MORE)

AUNTIE JANIE (cont'd)  
It's hard to go out when your all  
by yourself, you know?

AUNTIE JANIE takes out her wallet and gives SAID some money.

AUNTIE JANIE (CONT'D)  
But..what do you know about  
loneliness, huh? I bet the girls  
are screaming for ya...There you  
go...For your graduation,  
sweetheart. Bye now...

SAID  
Thanks auntie Janie...

Said puts back a couple of chairs and tables. With a smile  
on his face he watches auntie Janie leave.

SAID (CONT'D)  
Bye auntie Janie!

MRS. CARERRA  
Jorge? Get the thingy!  
(to auntie Janie)  
Don't forget the bingo on Thursday,  
auntie Janie?!

AUNTIE JANIE  
(mumbles)  
...Like I've got a million things  
to do...I won't forget! Bye!

MRS. CARERRA  
Bye now! Jorge...get the thingy!

MR. CARERRA  
Yeah, yeah, yeah...Said?

Carerra goes behind the bar and takes out a present and gives  
it to Said.

MRS. CARERRA  
You might not be able to go study  
in London this year...

Said opens his present: it's a globe.

MR. CARERRA  
But we wish for you to travel a lot  
in the future, so..

His eyes glow. He is shy, but genuinly happy with his  
present.

SAID  
This is so cool...! It's  
beautifull...Thanks...! That's..

The Carerra's are touched by Said's enthusiastic reaction. They both have a tear in the eye. Mrs. Carerra grabs Said and kisses him.

MRS. CARERRA

Well don't just stand there like you've just swallowed a stick. Give us a kiss...

As Mrs. Carrera notices her husband has a tear in his eye as well:

MRS. CARERRA (CONT'D)

Oh for God's sakes..nock it of, Jorge. Sentimental Argentinean fool..let's crack open a bottle and celebrate the boys graduation, now will ya?

Said looks at the Carerra's in amusement. Apparently he's used to the couple having a slightly hostile, but harmless way of dealing with eachother. Carrera gives them both a glass.

MR. CARERRA

To a bright and shining future!

EXT. SUZIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Through the open window upstairs we hear: Jewel's ' Foolish Games '.

In the windowsill sits Suzie, all dolled up. Every now and than she looks impatiently to the corner of the street. She takes one last look in the mirror and ads some more lip gloss to her already too colorful lips.

INT. DANCE SCHOOL -- NIGHT

Said and the Carrera's are drinking at the bar. They cheers.

MR. CARERRA

Salut Y force canut...Exited?

SAID

You bet ya! Little nervous, though. All the fuss the're making.

Mr. and Mrs Carerra laugh.

MRS. CARERRA

Yeah, that's the price you gotta pay for being a smart ass.

MR. CARERRA

Enjoy it son. You worked hard for it.

(MORE)

MR. CARERRA (cont'd)  
 (he pauses)  
 So you're not going...period?

Said just nods.

MRS. CARERRA  
 Strange man this father of yours.  
 You're the best student. You  
 earned that scholarship for Christ  
 sakes.

We can see Carerra agrees with her, but tries to soften her comment.

MR. CARERRA  
 Annie! I'm sure his father does  
 what he thinks is best for Said.

SAID  
 Yeah.. He's alright..My father  
 wants me here, you know? It's  
 okay, Mrs. Carerra. Honestly.

MR. CARERRA  
 Drink up, lad! Anyways...You're a  
 good kid. And don't let anyone  
 tell you otherwise.

Said's gives him a surreptitious look. He's not sure he understands what Mr. Carerra means. They cheers.

INT. SUZIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Suzie impatiently looks at her watch. Than she gets up, closes the window and goes inside. We can see she has made an effort to make the shabby room look romantic. The candles are burning and girlie romantic music is playing. Suzie takes off her lip gloss with the back of her sleeve. As she sits down on the couch as tears well up in her eyes.

EXT. SAID'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Said, carrying the globe enters the house.

INT. SAID'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

IBRAHIM and FATIMAH EL KATTABI are watching Moroc Television. There is a news show going on. We hear Said take off his shoes and wash his hands in the kitchen. Said is still exited as he enters the room.

SAID  
 Look what I've got! From Mr. and  
 Mr. Carerra...Isn't that nice?

As his father looks at the present:

FATHER

That's very nice, son! Very nice...well you've worked hard for it...

FATIMAH

They're good people. Allah gave them no children, though...It's a shame.. You want food? Nana?

FATHER

Carerra alright?

Fatimah shakes her head as she leaves the room.

FATIMAH

Allah, Allah, Allah...No children, it's a shame...

SAID

(as he points at the television)

Hey look! That's Oudja! I was there with uncle Khalid, when I...

Said grabs the remote control and turns up the volume of the television. The face of Imam El Moumni appears in close up.

VOICE OVER TELEVISION

...in his former domicile Oudja...where Imam El Moumni was born..

SAID

...When I went to the dentist there..remember?

IBRAHIM

Yeah, I remember.

VOICE OVER TELEVISION

..El Moumni is under attack for his statements about homosexuality during his sermons in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Said's face turns white, but he tries to keep his cool. Ibrahim's face tightens as well.

EL MOUMNI

...Homosexuality won't be confined to the people who suffer from this illness, but can spread it self. The Dutch society is multi cultural, so everybody can be contaminated. That's what we're afraid of.

VOICE OVER TELEVISION

The association for homosexuals and lesbians are considering legal steps against Imam Sheik El Mounni.

Without looking at Said, his eyes pointed straight at the television:

IBRAHIM

It's a crying shame that they want to take that man to court.

Said is obviously shaken, but keeps his eyes on the television.

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)

As a good Muslim, you can't speak your mind anymore nowadays..

SAID

Yeah...

As the news flash jumps to another subject, Fatimah enters the room with tea.

FATIMAH

Show me where London is on that thing...

Ibrahim gets a bad fit of coughing. Fatimah pats him on the back.

IBRAHIM

Where do you wanna know that for? Amsterdam has as good a University as anywhere else in the world..

SAID

It's okay, baba...

With not much enthusiasm he shows his mother London on the globe.

SAID (CONT'D)

Here it is, see?

FATIMAH

It's not far at all.

SAID

No, it's not far.

As Said walks over to the door:

SAID (CONT'D)

I'm gonna see Issa briefly...

IBRAHIM

What you wanna see Issa for? At  
this time a night.

We hear Said slam the door. Ibrahim shakes his head.

EXT. SAID'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Said looks angry as he walks away. He crosses the street and leaves the neighborhood. As he walks the streets aimlessly he finds a can and kicks it aggressively, a long way into the street. As it lands with a lot of noise, we hear a voice from the open window say:

VOICE FROM OPEN WINDOW

Hey! Nock it of!

As he kicks the can again:

SAID

Fuck you!

EXT. CITY PARK -- NIGHT

The sound of rustling leaves. The entrance of a park in the city. Said is just standing there; looking. He can't seem to decide whether to go in or not. There is a strange tension visible on his face. He looks around frantically. No one to be seen. He finally enters the park.

Out of the bushes, in the distance the sound of men talking, whispering. Said's tension heightens. He looks around as if he's looking for someone. He walks further into the park towards the place where the voices come from.

WE SEE:

Gay men cruising in the park. Some are talking, some disappear in the bushes to make out, some are just checking the merchandise.

Said now is totally focused. He spots a dark haired guy. They exchange glances and walk up to each other.

Said drags him towards a tree. An explosion of lust. The sound of skin to skin. Hands touching, opening buttons and zippers. Their white skin light up in the dark night. SAID breaths heavily. He closes his eyes. Everything turns black. Just the sound of his breathing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM ?? NIGHT

The sound of heavy breathing. SAID is running like a madman. He crosses the busy street before he enters his neighborhood.

A police car turns the corner and starts following him. The car speeds up a little to catch up with him.

The Moroccan looking police man (22), sitting on the passengers seat, opens the window and shouts:

ALI  
Hey! You!

Said freezes. He stops running but as he turns around he makes an effort to look relaxed.

ALI (CONT'D)  
(grins)  
Where are you coming from?

SAID  
What business is that to you?

ALI  
Dad called me. He said you went out late.

As he turns to his colleague:

ALI (CONT'D)  
I'll be right back. Gotta talk to my little brother here.

Ali gets out off the car. A tall muscular man. Seemingly gently he puts his arm around Said and walks away with him. From a distance it looks like he's having a friendly conversation with his little brother.

ALI (CONT'D)  
Look. You and I have an agreement. You are not gonna fuck up my fathers live. I know this poor simple man thinks very highly of you, with your University and your fucking high grades and everything...And he believes you..

As he pushes Said to the wall.

ALI (CONT'D)  
But I still think you're a fucking faggot.

Said is obviously scared.

SAID  
Oh yeah? Because of what? You piece of shit! Because of what?

Said has tears in his eyes.

ALI  
Oh...cry baby...

As Said grabs his brother by the throat.

SAID  
What's your problem, huh? Where  
you happy to find that porn, so you  
could rat on me, huh? I found that  
shit on the street, okay? I found  
it. And for your satisfaction:  
Because of this I'm not going to  
London. Now let go of me.

Said walks away.

INT. SAID'S HOUSE SHOWER -- NIGHT

Said is taking a shower. He just stands there motionless,  
his eyes closed as he lets the water stream over his face.

INT. HOUSE SAID - BEDROOM SAID -- NIGHT

SAID shaved and showered enters the room and sits down on his  
bed.

SAID's bed room is covered with little things from all over  
the world. On the wall there is a map of the world.  
Obviously Said wants to visit certain places, since there  
have been pins stuck in certain areas.

Something is ticking against the window. For a moment Said  
is startled. Than his face regains it's normal expression.  
He walks over to the window, throws out an improvised ladder.  
Downstairs stands Issa. As he climbs up the ladder, he  
whispers, obviously a little stoned:

ISSA  
Hey man! Wazzup?? The good old  
dad didn't let me in again...

As he climbs inside:

ISSA (CONT'D)  
Oops. Too late. Sorry daddy, I  
was out with my Dutch girlfriend.  
Oops. Mistake!

Said shows a little smile.

ISSA (CONT'D)  
(to Said)  
Hey man..you look like shit.

SAID  
Ssst...I tell ya tomorrow....

In the meantime Said mechanically, puts a pillow at the foot of the bed. This is obviously not the first time ISSA sleeps over. They crawl into bed and turn off the light.

ISSA  
(in a whisper)  
Did you fuck Suzie?

SAID  
...almost...

ISSA  
(cracks up)  
Isn't that the same as being a  
little bit pregnant?

For a while they lay there in silence staring at the sealing.

ISSA (CONT'D)  
Father will never let me take Nicky  
home.

SAID  
You love her don't you? You should  
try and convince him then.

ISSA  
Thanks, man...but that 'll never  
happen. You know that.

Said stares at the sealing, far away in his thoughts.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK ALONG THE WATER -- MORNING

SAID runs along the water. It's obvious he ran for quite a while, for his shirt is soaked. He crosses a busy street before he enters his neighborhood. He passes a garage where Rashid is looking into the hood of a car. As SAID passes:

RASHID  
At what time is the graduation?

Without stopping:

SAID  
At four!

As he watches Said run passed like a madman:

RASHID  
(with a smile)  
Over achiever..

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- MORNING

Said stops at the playground, where MO and ISSA are playing panna. They exchange their 'handshake' finished with a hand on the heart.

There are also a couple of black and Dutch boys standing around watching the game. SAID stretches. He watches Mo and ISSA play. When the game is over, Mo challenges SAID, but Said has got to run.

The graduation starts at four. Will they all be there? Mo and Issa will be there.

EXT. HOUSE SAID - THE ENTRANCE OF THE BAKERY

SAID waves at his father, who is standing in the bakery shop. SAID enters the house next door.

IBRAHIM comes out of the bakery and follows his son into the house.

INT. HOUSE SAID - KITCHEN -- DAY

SAID enters the hallway followed by his father. El Kattabi is covered with flower. He takes off his shoes.

Said sneaks up on his mother, who bends forward to put on her house slippers. He grabs her round her waist and starts dancing with her.

His father looks at it with a raised eyebrow.

IBRAHIM

(mutters)

You learn that shit at that Carrera's Party place? I hope you only serve coffee there. We should have gone back to Morocco when it was still possible...A Moroccan dancing the tango, that'll be the day...

SAID

Oh baba! Lighten up. It's my graduation...It's party time!

In the meantime Fatimah, still holding her slippers in her hands, tries to free herself from Said's firm grasp. When she does, she follows Said through the hallway up the stairs, hitting him with her slipper.

NAZHA (16), KARIMA (15) AND MILOUDA (14) stick their heads round the door of their bedroom and laugh.

KARIMA

Hit him real good, ma..

Said walks up to the girls bed room and fakes as if he wants to go in. The girls scream.

MILOUDA

..Go away! We're not dressed!

SAID  
 (laughs)  
 So?? What is there to see? Three  
 ugly girls.

Fatimah goes back downstairs laughing.

FATIMAH  
 Allah, Allah..

SAID  
 Thank God for internet and virtual  
 love affairs. You ugly girls will  
 never find a guy crazy enough to  
 date you..

NAZHA  
 Speak for yourself! You dwarf!

Said threatens to really come in now. The girls scream and  
 close the door.

INT. SCHOOL -- DAY

GRADUATION. Said and his three younger sisters are sitting on  
 the front row. Mr. and Mrs. CARRERA sit next to Said's  
 father.

In the back are SUZIE, MO, ISSA, NICKY and RASHID. MO is  
 obviously stoned and giggling all the time.

THE PRINCIPAL  
 ...being the two students with the  
 highest grades..an applause for  
 Connie Smid and Said El Kattabi.

A blond preppy girl, Connie Smid and Said walk up to the  
 pedestal.

THE PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
 As part of the student exchange  
 program they are both offered the  
 opportunity to study in London.

Big applause from 'the gang' as SAID gets his diploma. His  
 father lowers his eyes.

THE PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
 Congratulations Said. Well done,  
 boy. Connie...congratulations...

MO, still giggling, gets an angry look from SUZIE.

SAID's father is glowing with pride as Said walks back and  
 sits down next to him. A little awkward, not used to much  
 physicality, he pats his son on the back.

EXT. SCHOOL -- LATER

SAID's father and sisters are leaving. SAID, SUZIE, MO, ISSA, NICKY and RASHID stay behind. Said kisses Suzie.

SAID  
..sorry I couldn't make it  
yesterday..

As she tries to sound cheerful:

SUZIE  
..That's okay..we'll party tonight  
won't we?..

Suzie's face changes as she sees Connie Smid walking up to Said. She obviously feels threatened by this preppy girl.

SAID  
Hey Connie! You're going already?

CONNIE  
Yeah, got a million things to do,  
you know?  
(to Suzie)  
Hi...

As Connie shakes Suzie's hand

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
I'm Connie...

Suzie and Mo exchange a glance. Connie's mature attitude makes them feel insecure. They giggle and try to hide the fact they're cracking up. Said, embarrassed by their behavior, gives them a warning look.

As Mo signals to the pedestal where Connie was handed out her diploma:

MO  
Yeah..we noticed..you're Connie..

As Connie sticks out her hand to Mo:

CONNIE  
Oh, yes off course..you saw me up  
there...and you are?

Mo doesn't know how to act.

MO  
Uhm..yeah..I'm Mo..

He looks at Suzie and they crack up again. As Connie shakes hands with Issa and Nicky as well:

CONNIE

Hi, Connie..Hi...

(to Said)

So, you didn't apply after all?  
What a pity. It would have been  
great fun if you would have been  
there as well..

SAID

Oh well...you know..I'm pretty  
happy...

He looks angry at Mo and Suzie. Suzie pulls a face at Mo,  
who now totally cracks up.

SAID (CONT'D)

..going to University here in  
Amsterdam you know.. never thought  
I would make it that far..so..

Connie starts to notice that these people are laughing at  
her. Said is getting angry now.

CONNIE

Hey..

As she gives him a piece of paper:

CONNIE (CONT'D)

If you're ever in the  
neighborhood..Don't be a stranger,  
okay?

SAID

Thanks Connie. Have a good time  
out there, huh? Knock 'm dead!

Connie smiles and walks away.

CONNIE

Bye!

They all laugh now.

SAID

Hey! Nock it off. Respect, okay?  
Fucking hell! Can't take you guys  
anywhere...

MO

Ooh...touchy..Mr. University.  
Suddenly your homies ain't good  
enough, huh?

SUZIE

What are you defending that bitch  
for, huh? Goddamn attitude...

SAID  
Nock it off, Suze...

Suzie is agitated and acts like she totally doesn't understand that's she is crossing a line here.

SUZIE  
What?!

Suzie walks away, with Nicky following her. Said looks at his group of friends and suddenly it seems he's the odd one out. Issa tries to save the situation:

ISSA  
(to Said)  
Let's go man. I walk ya home..

SAID  
It's okay, Iss..

Said walks up to Suzie.

SAID (CONT'D)  
Can we go now? See you guys  
tonight..at the club..okay? Bye.

Suzie and Said walk away together.

MO  
(to Rashid)  
Respect, my ass. Like he shows  
respect.

It's clear Rashid doesn't want to turn on Said, but just wants to please Mo as he softly says:

RASHID  
Yeah right..

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM -- DAY

For a while they just walk next to each other. Closed off. Unable to speak.

SUZIE  
..you weird, El Kattabi! The  
mystery man..Can't figure you  
out...I mean..of course I was  
waiting for you last night...

SAID  
It's..Fuck...I don't know what to  
say. Honestly I don't...My father  
is fucking busting my chops...You  
are not gonna do this, you're not  
gonna do that...my brother: don't  
do this, don't do that....All these  
people, you know?

SUZIE

Well, I'm not all these people.  
I'm Suze the Muze, remember?

SAID

I just try to earn some money to  
pay for my own stuff when I get to  
university...

SUZIE

Yeah, right..And trade me for some  
fucking college chick, or what?

As they stop in front of Suzie's door:

SAID

Oh, come on Suze. Don't be like  
that..

As he hides his face in her hair:

SAID (CONT'D)

I like you a lot Suus..You know  
that don't you...

In a frolic she hits Said on the head:

SUZIE

Yak..you can be such a creep  
sometimes..Yeah I know you like me  
a lot..Now go..See ya tonight,  
okay?

INT. HOUSE SAID -- EVENING

After dinner. The whole family is sitting round the table.  
Mother, Father, his elder sisters, LATIFAH, FATIMAH, AISCHA  
and their husbands, ABDUL, LOETFI and KHALID.

Through the open door we can see their children running  
around in the little back garden. The three younger sisters,  
NAZHA, KARIMA, MILOUDA are upstairs. We hear music coming out  
of their room.

Said's brother, ALI, in civil cloths now, keeps his distance  
as Said gets a pair of running shoes from his family. Said  
ignores him totally as he kisses ALI's wife, who has a baby  
on her lap, to thank her for the shoes.

SAID

Wicked! These are the best! I'm  
saving for over a year to bye  
these..Thanks.

LATIFAH gets up to go upstairs.

INT. HOUSE SAID - GIRLS ROOM -- EVENING

LATIFAH takes of her shawl and lights up a cigarette. The three girls look at her like she is a movie star. They think she is a woman of the world, wearing lipstick and all...

Said, who has put on another shirt, comes in to say goodbye. He has to go work at Carrera's. Quickly LATIFAH throws the cigarette out of the window.

SAID

Don't smoke here, Latifah! Don't do that! Mom gets a heart attack..I'm off to work..See ya..

LATIFAH

Love your shirt, Said...By the way....What's with Ali? He's acting weird, isn't he? He's looking at ya, like he wants to eat you alive.

MILOUDA

I think he's just jealous..

Latifah and Said look at each other and crack up. So much wisdom from a fourteen year old. Said playfully pulls his little sisters hair.

SAID

You might just be right here, miss El Kattabi, smart ass...

Said goes down stairs with a smile on his face. He bumps into Ali, who wants to go upstairs. He looks at Said's tight colorful shirt with raised eyebrows. As they pass eachother:

ALI

Nice shirt.

Said doesn't react and passes without looking at him.

ALI (CONT'D)

Pufter.

Without turning around:

SAID

Illiterate...

Said leaves the house.

INT. DANCE SCHOOL -- EVENING

The same group of seniors are dancing the fox-trot. Said is dancing with auntie Janie again. A group of people outside the class room try to get a glimpse of this corny spectacle.

Class is over. Everyone is greeting everyone and leaving the class room. In the meantime the new group is coming in.

Said and Carerra hurry to clean up the bar.

SAID

It's that special group, huh?

MR. CARERRA

Yeah..bachelors party. Boys and girls, though..The girl is marrying in London. To an Argentinean.

(jokingly)

Smart girl. An Argentinean..Excellent choice.

Said smiles.

SAID

How long are they scheduled for?

The new group is rather loud as they enter the room. Said looks at Carerra with a raised eyebrow as he starts cleaning the dirty glasses.

MR. CARERRA

Only an hour..It's kind of a joke, really...The brother wants his sister to learn to dance the tango before she marries an Argentinean! I believe they're Corps Diplomatic kind of people..good money, though..

We hear the door shut with a bang. As Said looks up he sees ALEX (29) coming in. A gorgeous blond guy.

Carrying presents, flowers, congratulation cards etc, Alex is struggling not to drop everything on the floor.

When they exchange a glance as Alex walks over to the bar, Said immediately lowers his eyes.

Alex is accompanying LORETTA, his sister and soon to be bride. She doesn't seem to notice that Alex is in the middle of a slapstick act.

ALEX

Oh, you relax, Loretta..No need to help me..I'm doing great here...

(to Said)

Hi..could I put these over here please..

As Said helps Alex with the presents:

SAID

Sure..Let me..

ALEX

Is this your first bachelors?

SAID

Yes..I suppose..

ALEX

I've had many with this lot..They're my friends, but..One word of advice: ignore these people. I've done it for years and it works perfectly.

Said grins as he watches Alex join the group. He obviously can't help but being charmed by this overwhelmingly friendly man.

INT. DANCE CLASS - LATER

The group is learning the tango. Carerra is giving some instructions, but the atmosphere is up and not too serious. The class is more about drinking than dancing. Said watches Alex from behind the bar, dancing like a klutz with Loretta, his sister. Everybody laughs at Alex, who can't seem to get the left foot in front of the right.

Alex himself doesn't seem to care. He dances with total commitment.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, yeah...you laugh..Fred Astaire would definitely have eaten his heart out if he'd seen me dance...

MR. CARERRA

Oh Man! Hombre! Pobre cita! This is impossible. It's: one, two and...turn. Your sister can't marry an Argentinean if she can't dance the tango!

(to Said)

Said! Por favor! Help this poor woman.

Said walks over to Loretta and dances with her. Lead by Said, they give a stunning performance. Alex watches this with growing interest in Said.

INT. DANCE SCHOOL -- LATER

Class is over. The group now has gathered round the bar, all a little louder and more drunk as when they came in.

Said is serving the group another drink, while Mr. Carerra, is adding the bill for the party.

ALEX

(addressing the group)

I know you guys can't get enough of watching me dance, but the restaurant is booked for nine thirty..so get a move on, okay?

The crowd is getting ready to leave. Alex walks over to Carerra to pay the bill. Obviously there is something on the bill they both don't quite get. Carerra looks around for Said.

MR. CARERRA

Said! Come here for a moment, will ya..

(as he points at the bill)

What's this here? The whisky's?

Said now stands next to Alex, who points at the figure on the bill.

ALEX

I suppose these are the whiskies, huh?

His hand touches Said's hand and for a brief moment we can feel there is a certain chemistry going on here.

LORETTA is struggling with her presents.

LORETTA

Alex...

Carerra walks over to help Loretta, putting a present on top of the other.

Alex and Said are standing next to each other awkwardly.

Alex, finally lost for words, writes down an address on a card.

ALEX

Do you know this bar? I'll be there later tonight..Will you come and have a drink with me?

LORETTA

Alex! The taxis are here...

Quickly Alex pays Mr. Carerra, who has joined them again at the bar. Carerra turns around and puts the money in the cash register.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

Alex!

Alex runs off, giving Said a last smile as he looks over his shoulder. SAID looks at the card. It's obvious Said is confused. Quickly he puts away the card.

Even though Carerra has not seen the interaction between Alex and Said, he notices Said's change of mood.

MR. CARERRA

Hey you! You go party! I'll clean up. Go celebrate. You only graduate once..

EXT. DANCE SCHOOL NIGHT

Said takes out the card Alex gave him and looks at it for a long moment. He then puts it back in his pocket and walks away.

INT. NIGHTCLUB NIGHT

ISSA, NICKY, SUZIE, MO and RASHID are dancing. When Said walks in they all cheer. Said joins them. They all dance together. But soon after he started dancing Said wants to sit down. Suzie won't let him and drags him back onto the dance floor. Said manages to sit down. Mo takes over and dances with Suzie. As Said walks away, Suzie follows him with her eyes.

INT. NIGHTCLUB TOILETS -- NIGHT

Said leans against the wall in the toilet room. He takes out the card Alex gave him. He looks at it for a moment then crumbles it and throws it away.

INT. NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT

Mo and Suzie are dancing a little too close, a little too sexual. Said looks at them from a distance.

INT. NIGHTCLUB -- LATER

Issa, Rashid and Said are chilling in a little corner of the club. All a little drunk, a little stoned, a little sexually loaded, they watch Suzie and Nicky dance. Said seems absent minded, though. Restless. Unable to concentrate on the conversation.

ISSA

Next year I'm the one sitting here with a diploma...

SAID

Huh? Yeah definitely man! I drink to that!

Mo, in a corner is talking on his cell. Rashid pretends he doesn't overhear the conversation Issa and Said have, but he obviously is increasingly embarrassed as he hears what they got to say about his friend Mo.

ISSA  
(looking at Mo)  
Your brother Ali and Mo used to be friends, huh?

SAID  
Huh, who?

ISSA  
..your brother and Mo..

As Rashid gets up:

RASHID  
You guys want a drink?

ISSA  
I'm alright..

SAID  
Huh?

ISSA  
Are you listening at all? Mo and your brother Ali..Are you on drugs? Man!

SAID  
I'm sorry. I'm tired, man!  
Yeah..they used to be friends, but my brother got a warning from his superior...Mo is not the kind you wanna hang out with as a cop...

Issa laughs. Suzie and Nicky come back from the dance floor. Suzie lands on Said's lap.

SUZIE  
Why you not dancing, huh?

As she kisses him and is almost forcing him to touch her:

SUZIE (CONT'D)  
Because you're boring, now aren't you?

NICKY  
Yeah, Sa..you're kinda boring for someone who's having a party..

ISSA  
 (kisses her)  
 Hey! Leave my friend in peace,  
 okay?

Issa can't keep his hands off of Nicky. As they make out, Suzie looks at them with envy.

She pokes Said a little.

SUZIE  
 Hey You?!

Said doesn't move. Politely avoiding her 'harassment'. Mo, who's watching this spectacle from a distance, walks up to them.

As Suzie puts her face right in front of Said's:

SUZIE (CONT'D)  
 (jokingly)  
 I can see dead people....

MO  
 You guys wanna go to another club?  
 Suze?

SUZIE  
 Yeah! Let's go! I'm bored out of  
 my skull here..

EXT. INT. CAR MO ?? NIGHT

They are all in Mo's car. Issa and Nicky, Said and Suzie in the back. Issa and Nicky, constantly kissing each other.

Mo and Rashid are in the front. Mo's phone rings.

MO  
 ...Yeah..okay. Ten minutes..

As he turns around:

MO (CONT'D)  
 I gotta stop at a friends place  
 first, okay?

EXT. APT BUILDING NIGHT

Mo stops the car in front of the apartment building of 'the friend', and gets out of the car, followed by Rashid.

Mo whispers something to Rashid before he enters the apartment building. Rashid stays behind.

INT. CAR MO -- NIGHT

Suzie is a little drunk. And looks at Said with a pout. As if she wants to say: Now what?

SAID  
 (irritated to Issa)  
 Oh, please..nock it off for a brief moment Iss..What game are you guys playing? How long can I keep my tongue in your mouth?

As he looks at the apartment building:

SAID (CONT'D)  
 Asshole..bringing us along to one of his stupid deals..

SUZIE  
 Oh, man...Lighten up!

Suzie gets out of the car. Said follows her.

EXT. APT BUILDING -- NIGHT

From a short distance we can see Rashid pacing up and down impatiently. As Said gets out of the car:

SUZIE  
 We're not a normal couple, Said!  
 You don't really want to be with me. Is it your parents?

RASHID  
 He should have been back already...

SUZIE  
 Are you allowed at all to go out with me? Is that it?

SAID  
 No, Suze..I don't know..

SUZIE  
 ..look at Issa and Nicky..now that's normal..

SAID  
 Oh, Suze, please...What do you want from me, huh?

Rashid is getting really nervous now.

RASHID  
 Fuck, Said..He stays away too long..

SAID

Man...what do I care about his  
shit..

SUZIE

Yeah, you don't care anymore..about  
anybody..Do you want to break up  
with me? It's this Connie chick,  
huh?

SAID

I don't believe this! Are you  
drunk? Did Mo give you something?

SUZIE

Yeah! He gave me something,  
alright! He understands when a  
person wants to have a good time!  
That's something you haven't heard  
of..

Rashid calls Issa, who gets out of the car.

RASHID

We should go have a look, Issa!  
Something's not good, I'm telling  
ya...

SUZIE

What does he care? He doesn't care  
about his friends anymore. He only  
cares about himself and his stupid  
University!

As Said walks away with Issa and Rashid:

SAID

Oh, just shut up, Suzie! Why are  
you always have to fuck things up,  
huh..?

INT. APT BUILDING NIGHT

Said is still fucked up as they enter the scarcely lit  
rundown hallway.

SAID

..Bitch!

They hear the sound of a rumble coming out of the apartment  
at the end of the hall. Said walks on in a straight line, a  
grim look on his face. Issa and Rashid follow.

INT. APARTMENT DRUG DEALER NIGHT

Through the wide open door we see:

The dealer pulling Mo's head back by his hair, holding a knife to his throat.

Mo is sitting on his knees with his back towards the door, screams from the top of his lungs:

MO

I haven't got it! I swear! I haven't got it..I will bring it tomorrow...I swear..respect man..

Like a predator jumping his prey Said makes a quick calculation and knocks the guy to the ground. The knife flies across the room. Said is loosing it completely. They have to drag Said off of the guy to prevent Said to do him some serious damage.

INT. CAR MO -- NIGHT

Said looks dangerously angry.

SAID

Why put me in this situation? You and your fucking drugs! Find a fucking job!

MO

Hey man..respect..

SAID

Don't you fucking talk to me about respect..You're crossing the line Mo...you're fucking crossing the line..

MO

Oh come on...don't you lecture me! I'm a good Muslim. I take care of my family..Your father has to work his fingers to the bone..while you go study..

Said explodes. As he grabs Mo by the throat.

SAID

Stop the fucking car asshole..

As he stops the car:

MO

Hey man..I'm sorry..Lets go party, Okay? Whatta you say, Suze?

SUZIE

Yeah, Said. Let's go. Don't be a party pooper..

ISSA

Take it easy, man. You're stressed out...

SAID

Go fuck yourself, Mo!

Said gets out of the car and walks away.

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM -- NIGHT

We see SAID wander through the city. He sits down on a bench next to the canal. Then with a brisk movement he gets up and walks away.

EXT. GAY BAR NIGHT

Said slows down as he passes the gay bar "Queen of Hearts" from the other side of the road. We can see there is still a party going on.

SAID crosses the street. He looks in and sees Alex standing at the bar. The moment Said turns around to walk away, Alex spots him and runs out.

ALEX

Hey You! Aren't you coming in?

SAID

No. It's not my scene.

ALEX

Okay...

(he pauses)

You know what? Come with me. I want to show you something.

Reluctantly Said walks away with Alex.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- NIGHT

They enter the restaurant that is still under construction. As Alex opens the door, he flips on a light especially used for building. The light is bright and if it weren't for the tools and equipment laying around, one would think these two handsome guys were walking around on a movie set.

Said and Alex are carefully stepping around the sacks of cement, empty coffee cups and cloths of the workers that are laying around.

Said is careful in every way. His whole body signals: what's gonna happen to me here? Uncomfortable he walks through this huge space like he just stepped out of a space shuttle onto the moon. This in contrast to Alex, who talks with great enthusiasm and with a lot of arm movement.

ALEX

So they will eventually construct a very high window here...

As he tries to uncover a big hole in the wall:

ALEX (CONT'D)

Overlooking the..You can't see it now, but the view is magnificent..you know...the boats that sail through the canals at night..and the light..you know it's just...

Said watches every move and every gesture Alex makes. He looks utterly uncomfortable now, his arms crossed over his chest and shoulders.

Alex rubs Said's bare arms.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Are you cold or something?

Like this friendly gesture was the starting signal, out of nowhere Said grabs Alex' crotch. Kisses him. Rough. Like the sex in the park. Alex is completely taken by surprise. Startled, he pushes Said away.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey, hey, hey...Do you think I took you up here...This is..I like you...

As if he was stung by a bee Said runs to the door.

SAID

Look..I'm not gay! Just that you know.

ALEX

Well, congratulations. I can't say the same for myself, I'm afraid. Now sit your ass down and have a beer. Jesus Christ. You scare me.

He takes a couple of beers from the fridge, a plate with some olives etc. and puts it on the little table at the window.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Relax..

Said just stands there, too embarrassed to move.

ALEX (CONT'D)

So..tell me? How did a Moroccan guy end up dancing the fox-trot at a Party Centre?

Said still doesn't move.

SAID

Yeah..well..The Carrera's used to live next door and..I don't know..I helped him since I was fourteen and I always watched the dancing, you know...?

ALEX

So..now you're probably the only Moroccan in the world who knows how to dance the fox-trot, the tango and the jive..

They laugh. Alex points at the chair opposite to him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sit...

Said loosens up a little and sits down.

SAID

Yeah..I suppose so...Not that anyone knows..My father would get a heart attack..he thinks I'm just tending bar..A Moroccan dancing the tango: that 'll be the day..

Alex looks at him in understanding.

ALEX

I understand...it's that tough, huh? You gotta be the macho macho man...Secret sex okay. Gay not okay.

(like he suddenly understands)

Okay!

Said face tightens. As Alex gives him a penetrating look, he toasts with Said's bottle of beer:

ALEX (CONT'D)

Cheers!

Alex signals that it's Said's move now. But it's obvious Said not willing to open up. A long silence. The tension between them is tangible, when all of a sudden, out of nowhere, a Polaroid salesman enters the restaurant. A smile from ear to ear, wearing a hat with flickering Christmas lights, he looks rather surreal in this particular setting, at this particular point in time.

POLAROID SALES MAN

(utterly happy)

Photo? Photo?

Alex and Said look at this strange creature, and back at each other. They can't help but crack up.

ALEX  
(laughs)  
Does it look like we're open?

As if they are happy that the guy has broken the tension between them, Said and Alex are in stitches.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Are you nuts? Have you got any  
idea what time it is?

POLAROID SALES MAN  
Yes? Okay? Photo?

As Alex gets up and sits down close to Said, the guy takes the picture.

ALEX  
Oh, what the hell. Take a  
picture..

Alex pays the guy, but stays sitting close to Said as the Polaroid salesman leaves. They are on kissing distance now. They look each other in the eye.

SAID  
(in a whisper)  
I gotta go.

ALEX  
Yeah...Sure...

SAID  
I see you around, okay?

Alex is disappointed but keeps his cool.

ALEX  
Sure...Uhm..Why don't you leave  
your name and number? And I'll  
.....send you an invitation for the  
opening of the restaurant.

SAID  
Okay...

As he scribbles down his name and number.

SAID (CONT'D)  
I'll be happy to come...

Alex gives him the Polaroid.

ALEX  
 (smiles)  
 A souvenir...

Said takes the picture hesitantly, with half a smile.

EXT. PLAYGROUND DAY

ISSA, MO, RASHID are playing socker as SAID enters the playground.

He has been running, his shirt soaking wet. As he catches his breath and stretches, ISSA walks up to him.

ISSA  
 Where were you, man? I was at your house last night. I slept over at MO's instead. Come. I need to talk to you.

MO  
 (to Said)  
 Hey sunshine..

SAID  
 I was out of it..I guess I didn't hear you..

MO  
 By the way, I took your lady home, Mr. El Kattabi..Thought you might wanna know? You're sure you slept in your own bed last night? Suzie was pretty pissed off.....?

Everyone laughs, except Said. His phone rings.

SAID  
 Yeah?

INT. HOUSE ALEX -- DAY

Alex is still in bed.

ALEX  
 Hi..uhm...just wanted to see how you're doing, and...

EXT. PLAYGROUND DAY

Said is shocked. The boys notice his change of attitude.

MO  
 Look! His face! He's all red!  
 Give me that phone!

Mo tries to grab his phone.

MO (CONT'D)  
 Let me say hello to your new  
 girlfriend...

Said manages to hold on to his phone.

SAID  
 I'll call you back..

INT. HOUSE ALEX MORNING

Alex hangs up the phone puzzled.

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

MO  
 You lying son of a bitch! Why you  
 wanna hurt Suzie for, huh?

SAID  
 Let's save the lying for you Mo!

Changing the subject.

ISSA  
 You're coming Iss?

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM -- MORNING

As they leave the playground:

ISSA  
 ..Is there someone else?

SAID  
 Of course not.

ISSA  
 Man, I'm in trouble. Nicky went to  
 the doctor this morning..she's  
 pregnant.

SAID  
 What!?! Fuck. So? What are you  
 gonna do?

ISSA  
 I don't know man..I'm not even  
 allowed to date her let alone..

SAID  
 What does Nicky want? I  
 mean..you're still at school man..

ISSA  
 I know...If my father finds  
 out..he'll kill me..I told him I  
 broke up with her.

SAID

And Nicky?

ISSA

She still thinks I'm gonna introduce her to my parents...fuck..We're going to Morocco with the family in two weeks time..If he finds out, I'm afraid he won't let me come back for some time, you know?

SAID

Yeah...

ISSA

They want me to marry a Moroccan girl..I don't wanna disappoint them..and at the same time..

Said understands.

INT. HOUSE SAID -- MORNING

SAID sits on his bed, shaved and showered.

He's looking at the picture with Alex. After a long moment he lights a lighter and makes a move to burn the picture.

As he hears his father running up the stairs, he quickly hides it under the mattress.

Ibrahim bursts into his room.

FATHER

Are you finished, all right?!  
Where were you last night? What time did you come home this morning?

Ibrahim looks rather tired as he tries to catch his breath.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Do you want to end up like this Mo, huh? A disgrace for the family?

Ibrahim has a bad fit of coughing.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Is that what you want?

SAID

No baba. I don't want that. Go lay down for a while. You look tired.

FATHER

You wanna be the talk of the town?  
Huh?

Said lowers his eyes. It's clear he's ashamed of telling his father a lie.

SAID

Baba I didn't do anything wrong. I was at Issa's. I fell asleep. That's all.

Said looks at his father. It's clear he loves this man very much.

SAID (CONT'D)

Shall I come with you to the mosque later?

Ibrahim is surprised.

FATHER

Why would you wanna come to the mosque for? You never come.

SAID

Well I might not be getting married sometime soon..with my study and all, but it is time to be more serious..I'm almost 21...be more responsible...so I wanna come..

We can tell Ibrahim is pleased, even though he hides it very well.

FATHER

(mutters)

Oh well..if you wanna come..you come..but come right away..cause I don't wanna be late..

Said gets up and follows his father downstairs.

FATHER (CONT'D)

(mutters barely audible)

..I know the youth don't care about coming late..but I do.

Said smiles, he finds his fathers grumpiness endearing.

EXT. MOSQUE -- DAY

SAID, his father and a couple of other older man are standing around talking in front of the mosque. From a distance we see a man walking up to them. It's Mo's father, ALI BOUDOU.

IBRAHIM

Ah, there's Boudou! You see how this man carries around the worries of his son?

MAN 1

It's a disgrace. He can't keep this Mo in line. I wouldn't dare to show my face if I where him..

IBRAHIM

One should be lucky if all your children live a good live..Insha Allah..

MAN 2

Well..you have no complaints El Kattabi. Your son going to University.

Ibrahim glows with pride. BOUDOU joins the other men.

IBRAHIM

Yes. I've got a good son. Two good sons.

They shake hands. Ibrahim not entirely without a trace of smugness:

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)

How is your son Mo, Boudou?

Mo's father is embarrassed.

MO'S FATHER

(stutters)

He's doing fine...

Said lowers his eyes.

There are a few men stopping to congratulate Ibrahim with his sons success. Ibrahim grows. Mo's father tries to smile but we can see he feels humiliated.

Said's phone rings. He walks away until he's out of hearing distance and picks up his phone.

SAID

Yeah?

He looks around nervously.

SAID (CONT'D)

Look. I don't want you to call me anymore.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- DAY

There are workers running around everywhere. Someone is drilling a hole in the floor. The noise is unbearable.

ALEX  
 (shouts)  
 What?! I can't hear you! Wait a second..  
 (to the workers)  
 Hey! Can you wait for a moment!?

The workers don't hear him.

EXT. MOSQUE -- DAY

Said is agitated, but with the man still standing around talking, he can't raise his voice.

SAID  
 I said: Don't call me anymore! Oh, fuck. I'll come over.

Said hangs up the phone.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- DAY

Alex is waving at the workers to be quiet.

ALEX  
 Sorry wait...

The workers stop the drilling.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 Hello?

One of the workers walks up to him with a drawing.

WORKER  
 Look. This is what it says here.  
 But there is no figure there.  
 Nothing tells me how deep that is exactly..

EXT STREETS OF AMSTERDAM -- DAY

Said is in a hurry. He looks determined.

EXT. RESTAURANT ALEX

He stops in front of the restaurant, takes a deep breath and walks in.

INT RESTAURANT ALEX DAY

Alex' face lights up as he sees Said. When he walks up to him, he realizes Said isn't a happy bunny at all.

But before Alex can ask what is wrong, there is a flood of water everywhere. The water is getting higher every second. The workers are panicking.

WORKER

Fucking hell! It's the fucking sewer! Alex! Give me that thing!

Alex doesn't know what 'thing' the worker means. Said is obviously more gifted in the construction department. He grabs the equipment, hands it to the worker and helps him, bending the pipeline in vertical direction.

SAID

Turn off the water Alex!

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- LATER

The restaurant looks peaceful again. The workers are gone. Alex and Said, both wet and dirty enter a door that leads to Alex' apartment. They laugh.

ALEX

That thing..how am I suppose to know..

SAID

Yeah right! Like...if he would have said: give me the bending iron, you would have known immediately!

ALEX

But of course!

INT. APARTMENT ALEX -- EVENING

Said and Alex come in laughing.

ALEX

Take a shower. If you give me your cloths, I'll put them in the machine right away..

Said hesitates. He looks at Alex taking off his clothes. Like the natural non sexual way Alex is behaving reassures him, he takes off his cloths as well. He watches Alex taking a shower.

Alex closing his eyes in delight:

ALEX (CONT'D)

(with his eyes closed)

Oh! This is sooo good...Thanks, huh? You were the best, Said! God..Have you saved my day!

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 (still with his eyes  
 closed)  
 Come in!

Said seems mesmerized by Alex, who is unaware of Said's struggle.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 (with his eyes closed)  
 Come in you fool!

As he joins Alex:

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 By the way..what was it, you came  
 to see me for?

For a brief moment Said freezes.

SAID  
 It wasn't important.

They're very close now. Alex gently strokes his face. Said, like he's copying his moves does the same. Hesitantly he kisses Alex. He smiles. Shy, but happy. Alex smiles back at him as if to say; it's alright. Said lets go. He goes under. With the water streaming over his face, washing away all the tension, he closes his eyes.

INT. ALEX BED ROOM LATER

Alex rests his head on Said's chest. Said stares at the ceiling unable to respond to Alex who gently caresses him.

As Said frees himself as gently as possible from Alex's embrace:

SAID  
 I gotta go..

ALEX  
 Why don't you stay for dinner..I'd  
 like you to..

As Said sits down on the edge of the bed, his back towards Alex, tears well up in his eyes.

SAID  
 I can't.

Alex is obviously hurt by the wall Said has built between them. As he jumps out of bed and throws Said some underwear:

ALEX  
 Look, if this is the way you want  
 to deal with me...

He takes Said cloths out of the dryer.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Come and go as you please.

He throws them in front of him.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Have sex and bye bye..

He gets back to bed.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Well don't bother. Don't come  
back, okay?

Said just sits there. A heap of cloths in his hands.  
Powerless. Unable speak.

SAID  
I'm sorry, Alex..I'm..I'm so tired  
of feeling this way...I'm so  
ashamed..It's not possible.  
(he pauses)  
I've been thinking about you from  
the moment I saw you....

ALEX  
I understand...

SAID  
No Alex...you don't. I'm a  
Muslim..I can't live a gay live..

ALEX  
But you are gay..

Alex strokes his back. As they lay down together:

SAID  
Yes. Sometimes I'm so ashamed that  
I can't even pray, because I feel  
I'm not worthy...because I'm scum..

ALEX  
Stop saying that..

SAID  
My brother found some gay porn in  
my room a couple of month's ago.  
He doesn't speak to me anymore..He  
told my father..

ALEX  
Did you tell your father you're  
gay?

SAID

And being send to Morocco, come  
back married? Or basically..Being  
an outcast for the rest of my live?  
No thanks.

INT. HAIR SALON SUZIE -- DAY

Suzie is cutting a customer's hair when Nicky comes in.  
Nicky has a bruise on her face. Suzie takes off the  
customers apron. As she gives a finishing touch to the girls  
elaborate hairdo:

SUZIE

There you go! You look absolutely  
cool!  
(to Nicky)  
Hey Nick..I'll be right with you.

As she walks over to the cash register with the girl, she  
notices Nicky is pretty upset:

SUZIE (CONT'D)

You spoke to him, yet?

NICKY

Not since this morning. He's gotta  
think he says...

The girl pays the bill and leaves.

SUZIE

Bye. And thanks, huh? You look  
absolutely gorgeous..

THE GIRL

Thanks. Bye.

SUZIE

Maybe he could have done some  
thinking as he was fucking you..

NICKY

Said call you at all?

SUZIE

Noop. I guess we're pretty  
pathetic in the relation  
department, girlfriend! What's  
with the bruise, sweetie? The  
wicked step dad from hell? Drunk  
again?

As she embraces Nicky:

SUZIE (CONT'D)

You gotta get out of that place.

NICKY

I know..he's been on a drinking  
binch for three days now..just a  
matter of time before he goes nuts  
again..

SUZIE

Come stay with me for a while, my  
mother won't mind..

NICKY

Let's go out. Forget about these  
fucking guys..

SUZIE

That's my girl...Said can go fuck  
himself..he sure wasn't fuckin me..

NICKY

He wasn't?

SUZIE

Noop!

The girls crack up.

INT. HOUSE ALEX -- NIGHT

Alex has cooked them dinner. They both look relaxed and  
comfortable together.

ALEX

...No..they would totally ignore  
the fact that I'm gay....They have  
a policy: if it's not in our face,  
it's not there..I mean, why would  
you think I can open a restaurant  
in Amsterdam? They are safe and  
sound in London. So..daddy pays  
for the fact that Alex is not  
hanging around with his puffer  
friends! Simple no?

SAID

I'm very close to my family.  
Except for my brother Ali..and even  
him I love, you know? Family is so  
important to us.

ALEX

But so is love. You simply can't  
be who you are not. Wouldn't that  
be lying? In a way lying to Allah  
as well? He has created you the  
way you are..Only to say to you: I  
created you this way BUT you can't  
live that way..

Said smiles.

SAID  
I wish it were that simple. So all  
of your family is in London?

ALEX  
Yes..  
(he pauses)  
Hey..crazy idea all of a sudden..my  
sister is getting married coming  
weekend..you wanna come?

Said laughs.

SAID  
Are you kidding?  
((sadly)  
I won a scholarship for London and  
I can't go, because my father..he  
believed me when I told him I found  
that porn shit on the street, but  
nevertheless he wants to keep an  
eye on me...

ALEX  
Yeah, like that helps....You know  
what?

As Alex gets up, walks around the table and kneels down in  
front of Said.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
We just go there. Pretend  
everything is possible..For two  
days we just pretend we can be  
exactly who we want to be..

SAID  
And your family?

ALEX  
They better be nice to you..

Said smiles. The thought of London is alluring.

SAID  
I can't, Alex. It's impossible.

EXT. RESTAURANT ALEX EVENING

Said has a troubled look on his face as he leaves the  
restaurant. He is startled when suddenly Issa stands right  
in front of him.

ISSA  
You were far away man!

As he peaks through the window to look inside:

ISSA (CONT'D)  
What are you doing here?

SAID  
...Uhm..what?..Uhm...The owner is a friend of Mr. Carrera...I'm helping him out...

Said looks nervous.

SAID (CONT'D)  
You're coming?

As they walk away:

ISSA  
Where were you, man? I needed to talk to you. You weren't picking up your phone at all..I'm breaking up with Nicky, man. I can't deal with the pressure of my family anymore..

SAID  
I thought you were in love with her...

ISSA  
I am, man. I am. But...you know..Hey..Mo told me Suzie is unhappy about how things are going between you guys..Is that true?

SAID  
Yeah, things are not too good..

ISSA  
..I guess it's different for you..you guys always looked like good friends..Me and Nicky..

SAID  
Well...than do the right thing, man..  
(sadly)  
You can't be who you're not..

When they enter their neighborhood, Issa embraces Said, who is rather uncomfortable with this physicality.

ISSA  
Hey man...you look worried..you okay?

SAID

I'm alright..Go see Nicky, Issa..You guys gotta do something. Make a decision..

ISSA

I will..I will..I'm hanging out with Mo and Rashid tonight.. you're coming?..Take care..

Said has a guilty look in his eye as he watches his friend walk away.

EXT. SUZIE'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Nicky and Suzie are sitting in the windowsill as they see Said walking into the street. He looks tense as he tries to wave at the girls cheerfully.

SAID

Hey girls..wazzup..You coming down Suze?

SUZIE

Okay.

The two girls go inside and close the window.

Said kicks against a piece of rubbish that is laying around on the street. His hands hidden deep in his pockets.

When the girls come outside, he looks at Suzie apologetically.

SAID

Weird night, last night, huh?

SUZIE

It sure was...

SAID

How are you, Nick? You're coping?

NICKY

I'm alright..it's just...Issa hasn't called, you know..He..I don't know..

SAID

Lets go look for him..I think he's with Mo..

EXT. STREET WITH BARS -- NIGHT

Mo, Rashid and Issa are hanging out on the boardwalk outside the cafe. They act utterly macho. Girls are passing by. Mo offers Issa a bit of coke.

ISSA

No man..I don't do that shit...

Mo, invisibly for the other people standing around, takes a sniff from a handy little bottle, before he gives it to Rashid.

MO

I hope you won't get to be such an over achiever as Said, man! That guy is boring..Lying son of a bitch..

ISSA

Whatta you mean..

MO

He's cheating on Suzie, that's for sure.

A police car drives by. It's Ali and his partner. As the car drives by he greets Mo and sticks his head out of the window.

ALI

Seen my little brother, Mo?

MO

No, man. I totally don't know what he's up to lately..It's the mystery man..

As he drives away slowly:

ALI

He sure is, man. He sure is. Now watch your step, big guy.

MO

Later.

ISSA

He your friend again?

MO

Of course he's still my friend. He just can't..you know..with my uh..He had to take some distance you know?

In the distance they see the car stop next to Said, Suzie and Nicky.

EXT. POLICE CAR -- NIGHT

As he sticks his head out of the window:

ALI  
Are you planning to go home at all  
today?

As he looks at his brother beneath contempt:

SAID  
And you? Are you?

He walks on. From a distance we see Issa walking up to them.

NICKY  
..Oh my God..there's Issa..

Issa walks faster. Nicky starts walking faster as well. When they meet, they just stand there for a moment. They embrace.

Suzie looks at Said. Said tries to avoid her glance.

SAID  
So, is Nicky gonna have an  
abortion?

SUZIE  
I don't know. I suppose it depends  
on Issa. I think he wants to break  
up with her. And you? You wanna  
break up with me?

As he looks at her and tries to be honest with her:

SAID  
I don't know, Suze...I..I'm going  
through a lot of stuff  
lately..I...try..honest I do...I  
like you a lot Suze..

Only half assured, she looks at him inquisitively. As she kisses him briefly:

SUZIE  
Okay..

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM -- NIGHT

'The gang' is walking the streets how adolescents sometimes walk the street. Hormones are obviously bothering them.

SAID  
Okay, we're off..

As he looks at Suzie:

MO  
Oh come on, El Kattabi. Suze wants  
to party, man!

Suzie smiles at Mo. Rashid, a little stoned:

RASHID

Yeah..Suze wants to party, man!

MO

You gotta make it up to her, man!

RASHID

Yeay, you gotta make it up to her,  
man..

Mo gives Rashid an annoyed look, but Rashid is totally unaware of the fact, he's copying his friend.

ISSA and Nicky are leaving as well.

ISSA

We'll come with you guys...

MO

Oh well..party poopers!

We follow MO and RASHID. They are very loud. MO jumps up and hits against a bus shelter.

INT. HALLWAY SUZIE'S HOUSE

Said and Suzie are fooling around. Said is touching her too rough, too desperate. Suzie stops him.

SUZIE

Hey! What's the matter with you?!

SAID

I'm sorry.

SUZIE

What's wrong Said..you can trust  
me..tell me..

For a moment it seems he wants to tell Suzie what's on his mind, but he stops himself.

SAID

It's nothing.  
(very tender)  
You're sweet, Suze..

SUZIE

You're a weirdo..

SAID

I know...Suze?

SUZIE

Yeah?

SAID  
I think we gotta stop seeing each other..

Suzie covers her face with her hands. As she sobs:

SUZIE  
I know. Is it because I'm Dutch?

SAID  
No sweetie. It's not you. It's me.

SUZIE  
Is it that Connie chick. There is someone else, isn't there?

As he comforts her:

SAID  
No Suze. Oh Suze..Sweet Suze the muze..it don't matter anymore..but there isn't another girl..wasn't and isn't.. I swear.

SUZIE  
Than why? Why? Why have I got the feeling that you've been lying to me ever since we met? Now go.

She cries as she slams the door in his face.

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM NIGHT

Said is shaken. He just walks aimlessly.

EXT. HOUSE ALEX -- NIGHT

Said rings the bell. As he sees Alex' face in front of the window he relaxes and smiles as he raises his hand.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK -- MORNING

Said is running. We can see he needs to let off some steam.

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- MORNING

MO, RASHID, ISSA and NICKY and SUZIE hang out.

MO  
Than ask him yourself...He's a lying son of a bitch, I'm telling ya

ISSA  
If there would be another girl, he would have told me..he's my best friend..

MO

Oh yeah? So, where was he the other day, huh? Not in his own bed as you know...

We can see Issa is in doubt.

ISSA

He probably didn't hear me.

SUZIE is obviously hurt. Nicky looks at ISSA with a worried look in her eyes.

INT. HOUSE SAID -- DAY

SAID enters the house. He walks over to the kitchen where his mother is cooking. He sinks down on a kitchen chair exhausted as he takes off his running shoes.

FATIMAH

I would appreciate it when you would run a little less and eat a little more. Look how skinny you are. How will you ever find a nice girl to marry you. They'll think you're sick.

SAID

Maybe I'll never marry...

Fatimah cries out like she's been stung by a bee. As she gives him a slap to the back of his head.

FATIMAH

May Allah forbid. Don't say such horrible things. Everybody gets married.

Said listens to his mother with his eyes pointed to the floor.

FATIMAH

There is no one who doesn't get married. Allah, Allah, Allah. Why am I punished with a son who says such horrible things...

As she gives him another slap to the back of his head:

FATIMAH

Now eat! Skinny bones, eat!

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

Issa and Nicky are talking separately from the others, while Mo and Rashid are playing panna.

NICKY  
When will you go?

ISSA  
In two weeks time.

NICKY  
So, what do you want? I don't know anymore..The only thing I know is that I won't go back living with my parents. That's for sure. What about your family? Do they know about me yet?

ISSA  
...I kinda let them know..but not really straight...like bam bam bam..no..

NICKY  
(with tears in her eyes)  
You will leave without telling me, now won't you?

With a sad look in his eyes.

ISSA  
Off course I won't. I won't, okay?

Nicky cries. As she walks away:

NICKY  
I'll be at Suzie's if you're looking for me.

INT. DANCE SCHOOL -- EVENING

There is a bingo going on. The classroom now is filled with little tables with people doing a serious job on their bingo cards. SAID is calling out the numbers.

SAID  
..number 44..

AUNTIE JANIE  
..Bingo!

MR. CARERRA  
And we have a bingo for auntie Janie!

As auntie Janie walks up to him and gives her bingo card, Said grabs a beach towel from the table, where the prizes are laying around.

As Carerra checks her card:

MR. CARERRA (CONT'D)  
 And its a good Bingo! And it's the  
 last bingo! We call it a day  
 ladies and gentlemen...

Said gives auntie Janie her price. She acts like she's  
 utterly happy with her beach towel.

AUNTIE JANIE  
 Oh my God! A beach towel!  
 (to Said)  
 Now I finally get to wear my snake  
 print thong again!

They laugh. As the crowd is leaving the class room, MRS.  
 CARERRA walks up to Said and her husband.

MRS. CARERRA  
 Oh Said, sweetie! Before I  
 forget..someone dropped off an  
 envelope for you..

The Carerra's exchange a glance of understanding.

MR. CARERRA  
 It was that guy from the bachelors  
 party, remember?

As she winks at her husband. They obviously know there is  
 something going on between the two of them.

MRS. CARERRA  
 Good looking!

Said blushes as he opens the envelope. It's a ticket to  
 London. Quickly he puts the ticket back in and puts away the  
 envelope.

SAID  
 Oh yeah..I might wanna go have a  
 look at that University after  
 all..Just to see, what I haven't  
 won, you know?

MR. CARERRA  
 You know what son? As Annie was  
 saying to me the other day...It's  
 about...

As he taps his chest close to his heart:

MR. CARERRA (CONT'D)  
 It's about...corason..That's all  
 that matters. If your red, white  
 black, blue...  
 (taps his chest again)  
 If this is true..

As she looks him in the eye with her piercing eyes:

MRS. CARERRA

And there ain't nothing wrong with  
your heart, that's for  
sure...You're a good kid..and don't  
let anybody tell you differently..

MR. CARERRA

(seriously)  
And you know what son? You can't  
please everybody...

Said has listened to them, trying to avoid their eyes.  
Thankful for the support, but unable to speak his mind.

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM -- NIGHT

Said runs through the streets with a smile on his face. He  
stops in front of Alex' house. He looks up, there is a light  
on. He looks around. The street is empty. He whistles.  
Alex appears in front of the open window.

ALEX

(grins)  
Hey You!

With a smile from ear to ear as he looks around if the street  
is still empty:

SAID

I'm going to London this weekend!  
Isn't that great?!

ALEX

With whom?

He turns around and runs off. As he looks around one last  
time:

SAID

With you!!

Alex smiles happily.

INT. LIVING ROOM HOUSE SAID -- NIGHT

IBRAHIM and Fatimah are watching television as Said enters  
the room.

SAID

Hi...

As he sits down, his eyes glued to the television.

SAID (CONT'D)

Is it alright with you when I go to  
Eindhoven this weekend? See uncle  
Rashid and my cousins?

IBRAHIM

Sure...you can go...

SAID

I'm off to bed.

FATIMAH

..Yeah...have some sleep...good  
night..

EXT. BAKERY MORNING

Said and his father are baking the bread. His father hands  
him a tray. Said puts it in the oven. Ibrahim lights up a  
cigarette and gets a bad fit of coughing.

Said who is molding the dough, looks at his father with a  
worried look in his eyes.

SAID

You should stop smoking, baba..

IBRAHIM

I know..bad habit. We all started  
smoking when we first came  
here..the loneliness...This cold  
country. No wife, no family..For  
ten years.

SAID

But now we're all here, baba. So,  
go see a doctor...He'll tell ya you  
gotta stop..This constant coughing.  
It's not good, baba..

IBRAHIM

I have an appointment...

A knock on the window. It's Issa looking through the window  
of the bakery. He waves at Said, who washes his hands and  
goes outside.

EXT. BAKERY -- MORNING

ISSA

Is there anything you wanna tell  
me?

SAID

What do you mean?

ISSA

Oh, come on man..I'm your best friend. Don't lie to me...You're seeing someone?

As he lowers his eyes:

SAID

Nothing serious yet. I want to keep it cool for a while, not to upset Suzie. We broke up, you know?

ISSA

I know. Is it that blond girl from your class. That Connie chick?

SAID

..Uhm..yeah..She's leaving to London tomorrow. She's gonna study there. I'm going with her for the weekend.

We can see Issa is disappointed that Said was lying to him. It's obvious there is a growing distance between the two boys.

In an attempt to recreate the intimate atmosphere between the two of them:

SAID (CONT'D)

So, what are you guys gonna do...

ISSA

(reluctantly)

We're too young, man. To have babies and all that..My father wants me to marry my cousin in Morocco.

SAID

And? Are you gonna do it?

Issa shrugs.

ISSA

I dunno. We'll see.

SAID

Follow your heart, man. You're not in love with your cousin. You're in love with Nicky..

They seem to be in two separate worlds as Issa looks at him in disbelief.

ISSA

Yeah, right. Dream on...I could never refuse my parents, You know that.

As Said watches Issa walk away, the intimacy between the two boys seems totally gone.

EXT. AIRPORT -- MORNING

SAID and ALEX are leaving. They look exited.

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON -- DAY

SAID and ALEX in a taxi. They look like two kids on a school outing.

SAID

Oh my God! It's so beautiful!  
Look! That's the tower bridge!

Alex is sucking up Said's happy and exited face, like a father watching his kid play.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- DAY

They enter the room. Said is utterly exited about everything. It's clear it's his first time in a hotel. He sits on the bed. Opens and closes the curtains. Looks inside the refrigerator. As Alex embraces Said:

ALEX

So..how do you feel?

SAID

Nervous. Nauseous. Funny. Fuck, I don't know what I feel...I've never felt this way before..

They kiss.

ALEX

Look we are totally anonymous now. I want you to enjoy every minute of it..

(solemnly)

Said El Kattabi, stranger in London, would you be my lover for this weekend?

Said smiles uncomfortably.

SAID

..Okay...But your parents and your friends and all..what would they say..

ALEX

Nice things. And if not, we'll just have to shoot them....So, busy program: dinner tonight with the family and friends. Wedding tomorrow. Reception. Party. Death. Yeah, come to think of it...we'll definitely be dead the end of the weekend.

(he pauses as he looks  
Said in the eye)

You know? I'm so happy you came..

(laughs)

Can you imagine go through all this shit all by myself!

As he gives Said a bag:

ALEX (CONT'D)

And....I've got a present for you!

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- LATER

Music, a wine cooler, glasses, food...The boys are obviously having a good time.

Said and Alex are both wearing a smart suit. They look very handsome. As Said poses for Alex, utterly insecure:

SAID

You don't think I look like a dressed monkey in it..

ALEX

You look like a monkey, alright..but the suit is fab! Oh sweetie, you could wear a grey sack and still look gorgeous.

As Said puts on his shoes:

SAID

Would you think, there is still time to go and see Connie at that University?

ALEX

Sure. We'll make time.

Suddenly Said walks over to Alex and kisses him. Still somewhat ill at ease:

SAID

You're a sweet man, you know that?

Alex radiates.

INT. BAR -- EVENING

Mo is standing at the bar drinking as Suzie and Nicky walk in.

MO  
You look nice tonight, Suze.

SUZIE  
Well, I feel like shit, so that's odd!

MO  
Oh, come on Suzie. Forget about that guy.

SUZIE  
Mo, for your information...Even though we broke up..Said and I still happen to like each other..

Mo is frustrated as he turns to the barman:

MO  
Can I have some drinks here, already?  
(without looking at Suzie)  
Well for Mr. Nice guy, he sure moves fast. He's in London for the weekend with that Connie chick.

As tears well up in her eyes.

SUZIE  
I don't believe it...he said...

MO  
Yeah, sweetie..Said says a lot of things. He plays it very well.

SUZIE  
That fucking Connie chick!

INT. CAFE UNIVERSITY BUILDING -- NIGHT

Alex and Said are sitting at a table as Connie walks in. They wave at each other enthusiastically. As she walks up to the table:

SUZIE  
What a pleasant surprise, that you called...! Hi, Connie Cantara.

ALEX  
(as he gets up)  
Alex Loneman, nice meeting you.

Said watches Alex being a gentleman, while Connie clearly draws her conclusions.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Can I get you anything to drink? A glass of wine?

CONNIE

Thank you. White please..

As she watches Alex walk over to the bar and than back to Said, who is utterly uncomfortable:

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Relax. I don't know....I guess, I kinda knew....

SAID

It's that obvious, huh?

CONNIE

Not really, no..

(suddenly)

You know who always knew? John! He's gay himself, you know? He would always say: Said is on my team.

SAID

He did?!

Alex is back with Connies drink.

ALEX

(to Connie)

So, you like it here?

Said looks increasingly sad as he watches Connie being so exited about her stay in London.

CONNIE

It's fantastic!

ALEX

When do you start?

CONNIE

Oh, not until September, but I'm looking for a room and stuff you know? Get to know the city a little before the big move.

ALEX

I'll ask around. Maybe my family can help you..

(to Said)

Hey you? Are you okay?

CONNIE

It's such a pity you can't come,  
Said.

SAID

Yeah..

CONNIE

(smiles)  
..Shall I show you the University  
tomorrow..just in case..?

ALEX

Of course! You'll never know you  
never can tell...

INT. BAR -- EVENING

Nicky and Suzie both look sad. As Mo puts his arm around both girls:

MO

I'm telling you girls: Moroccan  
guys..

(grins)

There are a few good men..

(looks at Suzie)

But you girls wouldn't recognize  
them if they were sitting right  
next to you..Wink, wink! Notch,  
notch!

Suzie gives him half a smile:

SUZIE

Yeah...You know what, Mo? It ain't  
over till it's over.

Mo does his utmost best not to show his frustration.

MO

Well, I suppose some guys get all  
the credit.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY LONDON -- NIGHT

People are standing around having cocktails. Loretta and her husband are talking animatedly with all the guest. Said and Alex are having a conversation with two older people, obviously Alex' parents.

MOTHER ALEX

..but that's absolutely marvelous,  
Said..I wished Alex did so well at  
school...We basically had to  
threaten to kill him before he  
would do any school work..

ALEX  
 (a little too sharp)  
 Yes, but fortunately I was lucky  
 enough to be send away to boarding  
 school, so there was little  
 opportunity to kill me, now was  
 there..

In an attempt to break it up between mother and son:

FATHER ALEX  
 So..how's the restaurant? Do you  
 like it, Said?

SAID  
 Uhm..oh yes..it's great. I  
 mean..the view and all..

ALEX  
 It's getting there. It's getting  
 there..

Loretta's husband is asking for attention.

HUSBAND LORETTA  
 ..If we could all move to the  
 dining room..

INT. DINING ROOM -- LATER

Dinner is served. Said watches every move Alex makes and  
 perfectly imitates him. Alex winks at him as if to say:  
 you're doing fine. Said smiles.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- MORNING

Said is putting on his running gear, while Alex is still in  
 bed.

ALEX  
 (grins)  
 You do have kind of a neurotic  
 personality, now don't you?

SAID  
 (jokingly)  
 You watch it, huh?

ALEX  
 This compulsive running while you  
 can be in bed with the most  
 handsome man of Western Europe..

SAID  
 I said: watch it. I might be small,  
 but I'm very strong..

ALEX

No, I mean..You are sooo  
disciplined! Are you sure you're  
not German?

He laughs. Said throws his rolled up socks at him and jumps  
on top of him.

SAID

I said: you watch it...

They fight and kiss.

SAID (CONT'D)

I feel so..

As he starts to undress Said:

ALEX

What? Happy? It does exist, you  
know?

They make love passionately.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- LATER

As they are getting dressed:

SAID

So, what do your parents think, you  
would say?

ALEX

About what? Oh...they usually  
don't think too much of anything, I  
suppose. I don't know what is  
worse: resentment or indifference.  
Yeah, I guess my parents are  
indifferent.

SAID

Don't you love your parents.

ALEX

Of course I do, but I love myself  
too..They have an expiration date,  
you know? I can handle them for  
three days in a row and than they  
get sour....

Said's upset.

SAID

It seems so cold. In our culture  
it's different. We love and respect  
our parents beyond anything..

ALEX

Even if they don't respect you? I mean, my parents did a great job raising me. Having me raised, by others, that means.

SAID

But they're your parents!

ALEX

Oh sweetie, lets not talk about my fucked up childhood. Of course they're okay people..give us a kiss..My parents have spoiled a lot of moments in my live, so I don't want them to spoil this, okay?

EXT. STREETS OF LONDON -- MORNING

Alex and Said are sight seeing. They are sitting in an open bus, driving through the city. It's clear they're having a great time.

EXT. UNIVERSITY BUILDING -- DAY

Alex and Said walk up the steps of the University building. Said looks around in awe as they run up the steps:

SAID

I mean, the fact I'm walking here makes me nervous..let alone studying here...

ALEX

Oh, you would get used to it easily, I'm sure..

INT. UNIVERSITY BUILDING -- LATER

Alex, Connie and Said are sitting on a bench in one of the niches of the main hall. It's a coming and going of students teachers etc.

CONNIE

...pretty impressive, huh?

SAID

Yeah..

As she grabs Said jokingly:

CONNIE

Oh, please come anyway? So I don't have to be here by myself??

They laugh.

ALEX

We gotta go, sweetie..We still have  
to get changed...

They get up and say good bye.

CONNIE

Let's keep in touch, okay?

SAID

We will...

INT. CHURCH LONDON -- DAY

Loretta and her husband are standing in front of the altar.  
The wedding vows are said.

Said and Alex are sitting next to Alex' parents. Said is  
sucking in every little detail.

PRIEST

To love and to hold..till death do  
us part..Loretta Angelica Consuela  
Loneman, will you take this man  
Jaume Antonio Bandolera to your  
lawful wedded husband?

LORETTA

Yes I do.

Alex is touched, he looks at Said as he squeezes his hand.

PRIEST

Than I now pronounce you man and  
wife..you may kiss the bride..

INT. RECEPTION ROOM -- HOTEL LONDON

The wedding party.

It's an international crowd. Said and Alex are sitting at a  
small table as his mother walks up to them, Said gets up like  
he has seen Alex do before.

SAID

Hello Mrs. Loneman. Can I get you  
anything to drink. A glass of  
wine?

Alex looks at him with amusement.

Alex' mother is stiff upper lip, but utterly friendly. As  
she sits down:

MOTHER ALEX

No, thank you, Said...that's very  
kind of you..

There is tango music playing. The bride and groom dance. More people are joining them on the dance floor.

MOTHER ALEX (CONT'D)  
Oh..I love that dance..It's so..

Alex and Said exchange glances.

SAID  
(shyly)  
Would you like to dance, Mrs.  
Loneman?

MOTHER ALEX  
Can you? I mean..nowadays the  
younger people..

As they get up to dance:

ALEX  
Yes mother, Said is the only  
Moroccan in the world who can dance  
the fox-trot, the jive and the  
tango!

They laugh.

Said and Mrs. Loneman are dancing. Mrs. Loneman obviously enjoys herself. An Arab looking man walks up to Alex.

IMAD EL KAKA  
Alex, old chump! How are you?  
Still the naked chef?

ALEX  
Yes. As often as I can! Still  
cooking. And you? Still working on  
the Palestinian problem, Imad?

IMAD EL KAKA  
Yep. That's the only good thing  
about this irreconcilable  
differences of my people and the  
Israelis...it keeps me off the  
streets..

As he watches Said dance with Alex' mother:

IMAD EL KAKA (CONT'D)  
..your boyfriend?

ALEX  
..Sort off. It's all rather new.

IMAD EL KAKA  
Is he out yet?

ALEX

No.

IMAD EL KAKA

Oops.

IMAD EL KAKA (CONT'D)

Muslim and gay...not a good combination. You know I've been there Alex!

Alex nods.

IMAD EL KAKA (CONT'D)

Want some advice from an old fart:  
Get the fuck out, while you still can.

Said passes by, dancing. He gives Alex an endearing smile. Alex looks at him proudly.

ALEX

Well Imad, what can I say...I think I'm in love...

IMAD EL KAKA

(grins)

Yeah. I guess your lost.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM BALCONY -- NIGHT

Alex and Said, still in their evening cloths are having a glass of wine on the balcony. They dance a little, close together, hardly moving, like lovers do.

ALEX

(whispers)

I was so proud you were with me tonight...You looked so stunning..I felt we were so close..

SAID

We're going home tomorrow.

ALEX

Don't say that, please?

As he lifts him up:

ALEX (CONT'D)

You're so wonderful, beautiful, sexy, sweet, extraordinary....

(suddenly serious)

Don't leave me, okay?

Said smiles at him utterly happy.

SAID  
You are crazy, you know that, huh?

ALEX  
Yes!

They kiss.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM LONDON ?? AFTERNOON

Their bags are packed.

SAID  
Are you okay?

ALEX  
I'm fine. Scared. Scared that  
you'll leave me. That's all..

As Said takes him in his arms:

SAID  
Why would I do that?

ALEX  
I know...  
(grins)  
Classic case of fear of  
abandonment, I suppose...

SAID  
(grins)  
Nut case!

INT. DOCTORS OFFICE -- DAY

Suzie and Nicky wait in silence. Nicky's eyes are swollen  
from crying.

NICKY  
..you know Suze..it may sound  
crazy, but I still believe in him,  
you know?

SUZIE  
Oh come on, Nicky..You haven't  
heard from him in three days..How  
long does he need to get his act  
together?

NICKY  
Suze. I wanna go. I can't do this  
all by myself. I think I should  
wait for Issa.

We can see this is beyond believe for Suzie, but as she looks  
at her friend being such a mess, she embraces her.

SUZIE

Okay, sweetie. I'll put you to bed. You need some sleep.

EXT. AIRPORT AMSTERDAM -- AFTERNOON

As Alex and Said want to get into a cab, Said freezes. He looks at the cab driver as he draws Alex behind a pillar. As he takes his bag from the trolley.

SAID

I'm sorry. You take that taxi.  
I'll take the train. I know that  
guy. I call you later, okay..

This sudden move has taken Alex by surprise. Before he can say a word, Said is walking into the train station, leaving Alex in utter disappointment.

INT. HOUSE SAID - BEDROOM SAID -- AFTERNOON

EL KATTABI, assisted by his son ALI is looking through all SAID'S belongings. FATIMAH is standing in the doorway crying.

FATIMAH

...Maybe he carries his passport with him all the time. The fact you can't find his passport doesn't mean he's using it!

ALI

Oh, come on! Mo told me himself! He heard it from Issa his best friend. He's off to London with a girl! A Dutch girl!

IBRAHIM

(to Fatimah)

It's all your fault... you have been too soft on him...

As he lifts up the mattress:

ALI

Did you reach aunt Milouda in Eindhoven yet?

FATIMAH

No. They do not pick up the phone and normally she's always there. I don't understand...I hope there is nothing wrong..

Ibrahim looks at his wife, annoyed by her talking so much.

INT. HOUSE SAID - GIRLS ROOM -- AFTERNOON

The girls listen to the door what their parents are saying as they hear a scream of terror. Total silence.

A soft moan from their father. The girls are getting curious now.

As they open the door, they see their mother has fainted. She fell on top of their father. The girls are cracking up.

EL KATTABI takes off one of his slippers and throws it at the girls. They go back into their room immediately.

In his other hand we see the picture of SAID and ALEX taken in the restaurant by the Polaroid salesman.

IBRAHIM

Oh, woman..don't be so hysterical.  
It's only a picture. Let's wait  
what he has to say.

ALI

Like he would tell the truth..

Fatimah is inconsolable.

FATIMAH

The other day he was talking about  
that maybe he would never get  
married. What kind of person would  
say such a horrible thing? Huh?

Ibrahim sighs as he rolls his eyes, but we can see he's in doubt.

INT. HOUSE SAID -- DAY

The family, FATHER, MOTHER, ALI and the three younger girls eat in silence.

We hear the front door open and close. We hear SAID take off his shoes and go into the kitchen, We hear water running. He washes his hands.

As SAID walks into the room smiling, EL KATTABI gets up.

SAID

What's happening here? Why is  
everybody so quiet?

Ibrahim hits him hard in the face. So hard that SAID falls to the floor. As EL KATTABI sits down again:

IBRAHIM

Where have you been this weekend?

SAID  
 (mumbles)  
 In Eindhoven...

His father gets up and hits him hard in the face again.

IBRAHIM  
 You where in London. Don't lie to  
 me.

Said is in shock. Ibrahim throws the picture at Said.

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)  
 What does this mean? Who is that  
 man?

Second shock for Said.

His sisters try to get a glimpse of what's on the picture,  
 but their father yells:

IBRAHIM (CONT'D)  
 Keep your eyes to yourselves..there  
 is nothing to see...

With both fear and respect Said answers:

SAID  
 It's a student from Carrera's dance  
 class, baba. Mr. Carerra was there  
 as well. We had dinner. I didn't  
 want to tell you that I went,  
 because there were people drinking  
 and all...

ALI  
 Oh come on and you believe  
 that..give me a break..

IBRAHIM  
 Shut up, Ali!  
 (to Said as he raises his  
 hand)  
 So with whom were you in London,  
 huh?

SAID  
 I was with a girl. A Dutch girl.  
 From my class. She's gonna study in  
 London. I'm sorry, baba..

As Ibrahim gets up and walks over to the window and looks  
 outside:

IBRAHIM

You're breaking up with that girl.  
You're getting married as soon as  
possible. Now go! I can't stand the  
look of you for a while.

Said leaves the room. Shocked with their eyes wide open, the  
three girls listen to Said's footsteps on the stairs.

ALI

Your to soft on him, baba...

IBRAHIM

Don't tell me what to do, Ali! In  
this house I'm still the boss.

ALI

But baba..he will be the talk of  
the town..How can you let him ruin  
the family name?

INT. BED ROOM SAID -- DAY

Said, sitting on his bed, his room totally in disorder,  
listens to the loud voice of his brother Ali.

ALI

(of screen)

Why do you still believe him? He  
can't fool me...low down dirty  
shame..

Said covers his face with his hands.

INT. HOUSE SAID LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Ali gets up as well. Fatimah signals the girls to go  
upstairs. They leave the room.

FATIMAH

What are you talking about, Ali?

ALI

Nothing Mama..It's okay.

Ibrahim gets a bad fit of coughing.

ALI (CONT'D)

Can we get some tea, mama?

Fatimah gets up and leaves the room, shaking her head.

FATIMAH

Allah, Allah, Allah...

As soon as his mother has left the room:

ALI

(in a whisper)

If you want to believe him...fine.  
You know he's a disgrace. You know  
it. But you don't care that the  
whole family will be spit upon.  
You don't care about me. Mr Student  
boy needs to be protected..

Ali leaves the room. We hear the door slam. Ibrahim's face  
looks worried.

INT. BED ROOM SAID -- DAY

Said is cleaning up his bed room. He cries. Suddenly the  
faces of his three sisters appear round the door. They look  
shaken.

MILOUDA

What did you do, Said?

NAZHA

Did you do something illegal?  
Steal something?

KARIMA

Ali says that you are the talk of  
the town...what did you do?

SAID

Don't worry girls, nothing will  
happen. It's okay really..I will  
make it right.

Milouda cries:

MILOUDA

You heard about, baba? He's sick..

Said is shocked.

NAZHA

He has emphysema...He has to stop  
smoking.

MILOUDA

Supposedly it's not very serious  
yet, but he has it and he has to  
stop smoking...

NAZHA

But that's good...

SAID

(as he tries to sound  
confident)

Yes. That's a good thing.

(MORE)

SAID (cont'd)  
 Now go do your homework and stop  
 worrying, okay?

INT. BAKERY MORNING

Said and his father fold the bread in silence. Said looks at his father. It's clear he loves this man very much.

SAID  
 Baba?

FATHER  
 ..what?

SAID  
 I won't lie to you again. I  
 promise.

IBRAHIM  
 (mumbles)  
 It's okay.

While his father washes his hands, Said puts the bread in the oven.

SAID  
 How bad is it?

IBRAHIM  
 Don't exaggerate. It's not my  
 funeral yet. I gave up smoking.  
 (grins)  
 I won't live to be a hundred  
 perhaps, but long enough to keep an  
 eye on you...I've worked my fingers  
 to the bone so that you children  
 would do better. Now do better..

Said lowers his eyes.

EXT. HOUSE SAID -- AFTERNOON

Ali walks into the street and stops in front of the bakery. Through the shop window, he can see Said and his father work together in the back. They look peaceful together as they hand each other stuff in silence.

As Said comes out of the bakery, Ali drags him with him, so they are out of their fathers sight.

ALI  
 Your boyfriend on that picture,  
 huh?!

SAID  
 Stop it! Leave me alone! You're  
 pathetic, you know that?

ALI

The apple of his eye, that's what you are, huh? The apple of his eye likes to fuck men...

SAID

Shut up!

ALI

If I find out you're fucking a guy..I'm telling ya, you fucking faggot. Your dead. You hear me? You're dead.

As he walks away:

ALI (CONT'D)

I won't have you disgrace my name, you unnatural piece of shit!

INT. HOUSE SAID BED ROOM -- EVENING

Said, wearing a white djellaba as he rolls out his prayer mat. His face looks angelic as he sits down closes his eyes and prays.

SAID

Bismi-illahi....Arrahma..arrahim...

Holding his hands up to receive Allah's blessing, he looks utterly helpless and lost. As he pleads for forgiveness tears roll down his face.

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN -- EVENING

Alex is working hard. He's schlepping around with boxes. Putting stuff in place in the kitchen. Every now and than he looks at his phone if there are any messages.

The phone rings. He cuts his finger. He's bleeding. Instead of putting a bandage on, he runs to the phone.

ALEX

(disappointed)

Oh..hi, Loretta..hold on I put you on speaker..

He puts the phone on speaker, takes out a band aide and puts it on his finger.

LORETTA

(O.S.)

....And?

ALEX

He hasn't called, yet...

LORETTA  
Let it go, Alex...

ALEX  
(cries)  
Why? Why does this happen all the  
time...

LORETTA  
I don't know, Alex...but...you sure  
know how to pick 'm...

ALEX  
(grins)  
At least one of us is able to pick  
the right guy..

LORETTA  
Well I'm just married for one  
day...Do you want me to come over?

ALEX  
Hell no. You stop worrying about  
me. It's your honeymoon, you fool..

Said walks into the restaurant.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Oh...hang on Lor...He's here...I'll  
call ya back.

Alex hangs up the phone.

INT. HOUSE ALEX -- LATER

Alex is pacing up and down the room. He smokes constantly.

ALEX  
I can't believe you mean  
this...fuck Said..

SAID  
I can't do it, Alex...I'll go  
insane. I can't lie anymore. I  
can't tell my family. That is out  
of the question. I have to stop  
seeing you.

Alex sinks down on a chair.

ALEX  
(cries)  
You promised...How can you be so..  
I believed in you...I trusted  
you...you said you wouldn't leave  
me..

As he gets up again and tries to sound convincingly:

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 You're confused. I'm sure you...

SAID  
 I'm not confused Alex...Look at me!  
 Look at me! I have to be  
 realistic...Where I come from I  
 don't deserve to live...  
 (cries)  
 I am who I am. I'm a Moroccan, a  
 Muslim and my task in life is to  
 serve Allah and my parents...

Alex wants to hold him, but Said is totally out of control.

SAID (CONT'D)  
 I'm not normal...I'm a fucking  
 faggot...an unnatural piece of  
 shit...I can understand that you  
 hate me now...I hate myself too. I  
 fucking hate myself..

Said runs off.

Alex wants to run after him, but he realizes it's useless.  
 He won't change Said's mind.

He sits down and takes out a pack of pictures made in London.  
 He's smiling sadly as he sees a picture of Said smiling into  
 the camera utterly happy.

INT. PARTY CENTRE -- EVENING

Said's dancing with auntie Janie. His face shows no emotion.  
 He's not sad, not angry. He doesn't seem to feel anything.  
 When the dance is over mechanically he walks over to the bar  
 and starts cleaning.

INT. SUZIE'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Suzie and Nicky are watching television as the door bell  
 rings. Suzie opens the door.

SUZIE  
 It's Issa, Nick..

Nicky jumps up and runs downstairs.

INT. HALLWAY SUZIE'S HOUSE -- EVENING

ISSA  
 How are you?

NICKY  
 I'm okay. Why didn't you answer the  
 phone..

ISSA

Nick, I think we should have an abortion..You should go back home and tell your mother.

Nicky shakes her head.

NICKY

I can't go home.

ISSA

Well, you should. This is too much for us to handle. Go home. I'm leaving to Morocco. I won't be here for a while. So go home.

Nicky in tears now:

NICKY

I can't.

ISSA

Why not?

NICKY

Because.

ISSA

Oh come on. Don't be like that. Tell your mother. Why not go home?

NICKY

Because!

ISSA

(impatiently)

For fuck sakes, why not?

NICKY

Because...I didn't fall off the fucking stairs! I didn't walked into a fucking door! Because my fucking stepfather is beating the shit out of me! That's why! You fucking bastard!

She slams the door in his face and runs up the stairs. Issa looks pretty desperate as he walks away.

INT. SUZIE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Nicky looks numbed as she walks into the room.

SUZIE

Oh sweetie...

NICKY

He broke up with me.

As she takes a sleeping pill from her mother's richly filled medicine cabinet.

SUZIE

Come...I'll put you to bed..I'll give you one of my mothers sleeping pills, doll...That's one positive thing about your mother being a nurse. Free drugs for everyone..

Nicky looks at her blankly as she takes the pill.

INT. KITCHEN HOUSE SAID -- NIGHT

Fatimah is preparing some food as the girls are imitating Britney Spears in the hall way next to the kitchen. The words of the song and the movements contrast heavily with the traditional way they are dressed.

When Said enters the kitchen Fatimah gives Said some tea and bread. They eat in silence. Than finally:

FATHIMA

I have got some pictures of some girls who's families are interested in you to marry them.

SAID

(softly)  
Thanks mama.

Said gets up and kisses his mother good night. She tries to smile at her son, but as she watches him leave, she shakes her head and covers her face with her hands.

The girls loudly sing:

THE GIRLS

I'm a slave for you!!!

Fatimah throws one of her slippers to the girls and shouts:

FATHIMA

Put out that horrible music! Can I have some peace and quiet?? Allah, Allah, Allah... Why has he punished me with such children?

INT. HOUSE SAID - BEDROOM SAID -- NIGHT

We hear the call of the Moeddzin from the minaret over:

Said preparing for his prayers. He rolls out a prayer matt. The ritual cleansing of his body. He gets up, bows, kneels and sits down as he raises his hands to Allah:

SAID

Allaoe Ahkbar...

Inaudible for us, he prays: concentrated, profound and deeply in touch with Allah.

INT. BATH ROOM -- DAY

Suzie walks into the bath room in her pee jees. By the look of her sleepy head, she has just woken up. The medicine cabinet is open. There are empty pots of pills laying around. Suzie, startled runs to the living room.

Nicky's sleeping on the couch. She looks unconscious. Empty bottles of pills laying around. A letter on the table. As Suzie grabs the letter and reads it real quick:

SUZIE

You stupid..oh my God..

She runs to the phone.

EXT. SUZIE'S HOUSE -- MORNING

As SUZIE'S MOTHER, still in her nurses uniform runs into the street, the ambulance is already there. Suzie is standing next to the stretcher and watches Nicky been taken into the ambulance.

SUZIE'S MOTHER

And?

AMBULANCE PERSON

She's gonna be fine..

SUZIE'S MOTHER

Fuck Suze!  
The ambulance drives away.

SUZIE

I gotta go look for Issa, mom.

Suzie runs off.

EXT. PLAYGROUND DAY

Suzie is walking onto the playground where Mo and Rashid hang out.

SUZIE

Does anyone know where Issa is?

MO

I guess he's leaving for Morocco today.

SUZIE

That fucking asshole!

MO  
 (tries to hold her)  
 Hey, come on Suze. Lighten up.  
 Give us a kiss, hey?

SUZIE  
 You fuck off you shit for brains!  
 Nicky is in the hospital! Get your  
 hands off of me!

She walks away.

EXT. BAKERY MORNING

Said is sitting in the windowsill outside the bakery shop as his phone rings.

SAID  
 Hey! Suzie..No, I haven't seen  
 Issa for a while. What's wrong?  
 You sound upset. Where is she? I  
 come right over..

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM ?? DAY

Nicky is in bed as Said comes in. Suzie sits next to the bed. Said sits down on the other side. He gently strokes her hair.

NICKY  
 (sobs)  
 I've lost the baby...

SAID  
 Oh sweetheart...  
 (as he holds her in his  
 arms)  
 I'm so sorry..

They sit with Nicky for a while. Suzie can't help but smile at Said as she sees him being very tender with Nicky.

The door opens. It's Issa. Said gets up and makes way for Issa to hold Nicky. As he takes her in his arms:

ISSA  
 I'm such an asshole..I'm such..I'm  
 not going to Morocco, Nick...I'm  
 not going..I stay here with you,  
 okay?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

Suzie and Said enter the hallway.

SAID  
 I miss you, Suze...I never meant to  
 hurt you, you, know?  
 (MORE)

SAID (cont'd)  
I still like you a lot...Can we  
still be friends? I sure need  
one..

SUZIE  
You've got Connie...

SAID  
No, Suze. I haven't got Connie.

As Suzie looks at Said, she realizes he's telling the truth.  
As they sit down on the bench together:

SUZIE  
(without looking at him)  
Are you gay, Said?

Said is in shock.

SUZIE (CONT'D)  
It's all right. You can trust me.

He puts his hand on her hand on her lap. Suzie gets up and  
walks into Nicky's room. Leaving Said dumbfounded.

EXT. HOSPITAL ?? DAY

We see Said, Issa, Nicky and Suzie leave the hospital. Nicky  
and Issa look happy together despite everything. Said looks  
at them smiling sadly.

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

Said, Rashid, Mo and Issa are hanging out as Said passes by  
the playground. He looks depressed.

MO  
Hey man, what's up?

SAID  
When I take a look at you,  
nothing's 'up', Mo!...Nothing's  
fucking 'up'! Did you have to go  
tell everybody I was in London, Mo?

ISSA  
..I'm sorry, man..It's the last  
time I'm telling him shit...Old  
hag!

SAID  
Yeah right. That's too late now,  
Iss.

As he walks away.

SAID (CONT'D)  
Later.

ISSA  
 (with a guilty look in his  
 eye)  
 You're working?!

Without turning around:

SAID  
 Yeah.

They watch him walk away.

ISSA  
 Fuck, Mo..Why did you have to go  
 tell your father for? He's my best  
 friend, you know? Now look at him!

MO  
 I didn't tell him. I told his  
 brother Ali. He's busting my chops  
 all the time, you know? Keep an  
 eye on my little brother....Tell me  
 everything..

As Rashid walks away angry:

RASHID  
 Yeah..so he keeps you informed  
 about the stuff that's going on at  
 the station...So your business'' is  
 safe...I think it's sick!

Mo is flabbergasted. He hasn't seen Rashid like this before.  
 As he stops him in utter surprise:

MO  
 Hey, man?! What's that all about?  
 You know Ali! He's a mean  
 motherfucker!

RASHID  
 It's just...I think you owe Said.  
 He fucking saved your ass. He  
 don't deserve this..

ISSA  
 Yeah. I guess your right. We  
 should take better care of him.  
 He's our friend.

MO  
 Oh, alright already...We'll think  
 of something to cheer him up...

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- DAY

Alex is running around taking chairs out of the packaging and  
 putting tables in their right place.

The workers are still painting and drilling holes to hang up lamps etc. rings. As suddenly Loretta and her husband walk into the restaurant. They're carrying a couple of suitcases.

ALEX

Lor! Jaime!

As he looks at his watch. You guys suppose to leave tonight!

JAUME

Well, we thought...We make a short stopover in Amsterdam. See how you're doing...

ALEX

Oh, there was no need...Oh damn..you know me! Drama queen! I'm fine, darlings...

LORETTA

We've got three hours!

INT. HOUSE ALEX -- EVENING

Alex and Loretta are smoking a cigarette after dinner, while Jaime is cleaning the table. Alex takes out a pack of pictures from a drawer.

ALEX

There great! There is one of the ceremony that's so sweet!

As he shows her the pictures:

LORETTA

Oh, can I take this one with us? Jaime look!

Jaime walks over and has a look at a picture of him and Loretta looking at each other, overly happy, during the wedding ceremony.

JAUME

We look like two mad kittens...

Loretta is looking at some more pictures.

LORETTA

Aunt Margaret...sore as ever..

A picture of Said, smiling happily in the camera. Silence. Almost in a whisper:

ALEX

Do you think I should go see him?...

LORETTA

No.

ALEX

I don't know, Loretta..I feel sorry for him...I'm worried, you know..He was so upset...You should have seen him....

LORETTA

Have you've been taking a good look at yourself, lately?

ALEX

Oh, I'm a mess, I know....But fortunately the restaurant takes up all my time..

(suddenly with tears in his eyes)

I do think, I should go and see him...

LORETTA

I wouldn't go. You don't need this, Alex...Stop being so dependent!

ALEX

But I want to, Lor! I just want to see if he's alright...

Loretta gives her Jaume the 'I give up' look.

JAUME

Focus on the restaurant. You're stressed out as it is already...

(to Loretta as he takes a look at his watch)

Sweetie? We gotta go..

ALEX

Yeah, I call you guys a cab...

INT. APARTMENT ALEX -- NIGHT

Alex watches Loretta and Jaume get in the cab and waves them goodbye from behind the window. As he lights up a cigarette, he takes a look at Said picture, than with a brisk movement, he puts out his cigarette, takes his coat and leaves the house.

EXT. DANCE CLASS ?? NIGHT

Alex enters the party centre in a hurry. He looks through the window of the class room.

INT. PARTY CENTRE -- NIGHT

Said is standing at the bar as Alex walks in. Said is shocked. Carrera is alarmed. Quickly Said walks up to Alex and takes him by the arm.

SAID  
Lets go outside!

EXT. DANCE CLASS ?? NIGHT

For a moment they stand opposite each other without speaking. Both equally desperate. As if they have planned this all, they walk to the door automatically. They go outside.

EXT. EXT PARTY CENTRE NIGHT

Alex lights a cigarette. They sit down on the doorstep together.

ALEX  
How are you?

SAID  
What do you think..It's hell..

ALEX  
I just don't understand. That's all. And I just miss you. That's all.

SAID  
I miss you too. But it's impossible. I can't do it.

Tears well up in his eyes. As he gets up:

SAID (CONT'D)  
You can tell me I'm a coward!...  
Not to be who I am.

As he sits down again:

SAID (CONT'D)  
I don't know anymore. Sometimes I think if Allah is that good, why has he created me the way I am? But it is no use to have all these thoughts....

Alex embraces him, wants to kiss him.

OVER ALEX'  
SHOULDER SAID  
SEES:

MO, ISSA and RASHID, cross the street towards the Dance School. They are close enough to register what is going on.

Reactions of Mo, Issa, and Rashid.

In a split second SAID makes a decision. As he drags Alex to his feet:

SAID (CONT'D)  
 (mumbles)  
 Run as fast as you can! Alex! Run  
 as fast as you can!

Alex doesn't understand, but he wakes up when SAID hits him hard in the face. Because of the sudden blow, he almost slips as he runs off.

MO, ISSA and RASHID are getting closer now.

As he watches Alex run away:

SAID (CONT'D)  
 Fucking faggot! Keep your dirty  
 hands to yourself!

MO wants to run after ALEX, but Mr. CARRERA who has joined them outside stops him. He gives Said a warning look as he calms the rest of the guys down.

As he turns around to go back inside:

MR. CARERRA  
 Are you coming in? You gotta  
 finish that bar, son..

SAID  
 Yes Mr. Carerra..I'm coming..

MO  
 What was that all about?

SAID  
 Oh well...he's a creep...used to  
 take dance classes here...Came to  
 pick up his stuff. Thought he  
 could have a quick feel.

MO  
 Hey man! That's gross! Let those  
 stupid queers keep it underground a  
 little..Where does he live?

We should go to his house and teach that pig a lesson.

A little too fast and to desperate Said says:

SAID  
 No!..thats not necessary..

Mo is furious.

MO

This stinking fag dishonored you,  
man! You should do something! Are  
you a man or what?

RASHID tries to calm Mo down.

RASHID

Oh come on, Mo..were not in the  
movies, man..

Mo just looks at Rashid in surprise as if to say: ' Are we  
barking at the boss?' Mo laughs.

MO

You know..? There is an Islamic  
rule, that states: To prove that  
someone has broken the Islamic law  
concerning homosexuality, you have  
to find 4 trustworthy witnesses  
that actually see the act of  
penetration.

They all laugh. SAID can't really join them in their  
laughter.

MO (CONT'D)

(counts)

One, two, three, four...yeah El  
Kattabi..you have to come too  
than..

They laugh.

ISSA

Yeah right..I'm not gonna watch a  
guy fuck a guy in the ass...shut  
that dirty mouth of yours...

SAID

I gotto finish up inside...See you  
guys later..

MO

What do you mean, dirty mouth..It's  
true..it's in the Koran..fuck..I  
know these things, you know..

( to Said)

Hey El Kattabi! We came to pick  
you up..Go have a party tonight,  
okay?

SAID

Not tonight guys. I'm tired.

The guys leave. Said goes inside, but as soon as they are  
out of sight he starts running like a mad man.

EXT. HOUSE ALEX NIGHT

We see Said enter the restaurant.

INT. HOUSE ALEX NIGHT

ALEX is holding a cloth with ice cubes against his face.

SAID

Oh Alex..I'm sorry, I'm so sorry..I  
had to do it..They would have..

ALEX

Lunatic! Are you out of your  
fucking Moroccan mind?

SAID

You don't understand, Alex..

ALEX

Oh..and what exactly is it I don't  
understand?

SAID

I'm scared Alex..I'm just  
scared..they gonna hurt you..much  
more than I've hurt you....

(embraces Alex)

I'll loose everything..my friends,  
my family..

They embrace.

INT. ALEX BED ROOM LATER

Alex and Said are in bed.

ALEX

You have to go..we have to say good  
bye..

SAID

I know...

EXT. HOUSE ALEX -- NIGHT

Said leaves Alex house. He looks devastated. For a moment  
he leans against the wall. Than we see him disappear, a  
lonely figure in the still of the night.

INT. HOUSE CARRERA -- NIGHT

Carrera is listening to melancholic tango music, smoking a  
cigar, drinking a glass of wine. He looks utterly tranquil  
reading his book. His small glasses on the tip of his nose,  
as the door bell rings.

EXT. HOUSE CARRERA -- NIGHT

It's Said standing there. Without a word Casrerra lets him in.

INT. HOUSE CARRERA -- LATER

Said's face shows a certain equanimity as he looks at Mr. Carerra putting on an old record.

MR. CARERRA

You may wanna reconsider the offer to go to London..Take a little distance..

SAID

With my father sick and all..No..I'll stay..be a good son, be a good Muslim..

MR. CARERRA

But you already are all those things my sweet boy, you already are...

EXT. HOUSE CARRERA -- NIGHT

Said is leaving.

MR. CARERRA

Be good to yourself, Said...

Mr. Carerra looks sad as he watches Said disappear in the night.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK ALONG THE WATER -- MORNING

Said runs like a madman. He crosses the busy street that leads to his neighborhood.

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

Said enters the playground and stops to stretch. Mo, Rashid and Issa are there. They wave at him. Issa from a distance:

ISSA

You're coming tonight? Watch the panna game in Paradiso?

SAID

Yeah, I'll come..

Mo walks up to him with a jewelry box in his hands. As he opens it in front of Said's face.

MO

And? What da ya say, huh?

Diamond ear rings. Do you think Suzie will like them..

SAID

She'll like them alright..but I don't think she likes where the money to buy them came from..

MO

Fuck El kattabi..you little snake! Don't play the god damned good guy all the time..Like you're always such a nice guy..cheating on Suzie, huh..

SAID

(grins)

Oh Mo..forget it..you'll never date her...you know that...I know that..She's way out of your league..

We can feel the tension underneath the jokingly way the guys talk to each other.

MO

(grins)

You mean, I'm way out of your league, huh El Kattabi? You should start coming off of that high horse of yours..your brother even asked me to keep an eye on you..

Said is startled, but keeps his cool.

SAID

Who Ali?

MO

Yes. Ali. In return, he lets me know if there is anything going on at the station I should know..So much for the credibility of the El Kattabi's..

As he tries to laugh:

SAID

Oh go fuck yourself, Mo...

As he runs off.

ISSA

Will you come tonight to that game?

SAID

(without any enthusiasm)

Yeah..I'll come..

EXT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- DAY

The painters are taking away the scaffolds from the front. Alex looks at the paint work in appreciation.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- LATER

Alex installs the cash register. There are still workers running around though.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- LATER

Alex is working in the kitchen. He turns on the light and looks around.

INT. BAKERY EVENING

Said and his father wash their hands. They're all white with flour.

SAID

I'm gonna take a shower and go see  
the boys, okay? I won't have  
dinner.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX ?? EVENING

The restaurant is almost ready. People are running around making the last preparations. Alex walks outside.

EXT. RESTAURANT ALEX EVENING

The work men are finishing the Logo on the window. Alex takes a few steps back towards the curb to see the result. He bumps up to a guy who is busy to put some money in the parking meter.

ALEX

(smiles)  
Oh..I'm sorry..excuse me..I didn't  
see you..

He looks right into Mo's face. Alex doesn't recognize Mo and smiles at him. Mo definitely recognizes Alex. He smiles back at him.

EXT. PLAYGROUND NIGHT

Said, Issa and Rashid are hanging out as Mo comes running onto the playground.

MO

Get in the car!

ISSA

What?!

SAID  
Yeah Mo, what!?

MO  
I'll tell you later. It's a  
surprise! A real surprise!

RASHID  
Typical Mo..

INT. CAR MO -- NIGHT

They're all in the car. Said laughs.

SAID  
You're not gonna tell me Suze  
excepted your present? Because  
than I'll have to eat my baseball  
cap...

Said looks outside as he sees where he's going, a worried  
look appears on his face.

ISSA  
Yeah..and I'll have to swallow my  
panna ball..And I guess that won't  
feel good..

The others laugh. As Mo stops the car:

MO  
You guys wait and see..this is a  
blast, I'm telling ya..

Said face looks terrified as he realizes where he is.

EXT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- NIGHT

Everything is dark in the restaurant when Mo's car parks in  
front

MO  
Surprise! This is the restaurant  
of that faggot that was feeling you  
up, Said..Lets go have some fun,  
guys..

ISSA  
(laughs)  
Fucking hell..

Issa suddenly realizes that he has seen Said here before. He  
looks at him inquisitively.

ISSA (CONT'D)  
I've seen you here before...

Said lowers his eyes.

Mo takes a crow bar from the trunk and walks toward the door. Said runs after him. Followed by Rashid and Issa.

SAID

What are you up to?

Said is too late. Mo has opened the door with a crowbar like a real professional.

MO

What am I up to? What does it look like?

Said protests.

MO (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Or did you like that faggot touching you, you Homo!

(to the others)

He fucking liked it I'm telling you.

Said is nailed to the floor. Issa just looks at him in anger.

INT. HOUSE ALEX - BED ROOM -- NIGHT

Alex wakes up. Voices. The sound of things being knocked over. He freezes. We can see he's scared as he picks up the phone to call the police.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- NIGHT

Mo and Rashid empty the drawers with cutlery.

Demonstrative, constantly looking Said in the eye, Issa starts breaking things. With every move he makes, it's like he's paying Said back for lying to him.

They all laugh except Said who tries to keep them from breaking things.

They hear someone coming from upstairs. Alex walks in. Issa looks at Said. Now he knows for sure. He's almost in tears as he shouts at Said:

ISSA

Now get him! You fucking asshole!  
Hit him!

(as he grabs Said by the  
shoulders)

Do it! I said: do it!

MO

Come on Issa..lets get the faggot ourselves..

Mo approaches Alex. When he makes a move to hit Alex, Said jumps him. They fight. Said is besides himself.

MO (CONT'D)

You fucking queer, you..I knew it!  
I always knew it! You're a fucking  
faggot you..

The final game between Mo and Said. Said hits him hard.

SAID

Oh yeah?! I'll show you who is a  
fucking faggot! You..Keep your  
hands off of him you animal!

The sound of a police siren. Two police cars stop in front of the restaurant. Four policemen run into the restaurant and break up the fight.

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX -- LATER

Rashid, Mo, Issa and Said are all being arrested.

POLICEMAN

(to Alex)

I have to ask you to come to the  
station to make a statement, sir..

As Said is been taken away by one of the policemen, he gives Alex a pleading look.

SAID

Alex....

Alex just looks at him with cold eyes.

INT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Ali sits behind his desk as Alex comes in, accompanied by two of the policemen who came to his rescue in the restaurant. Ali, vaguely has a sense of recognition as he gets up and opens the door to the interrogation room.

POLICEMAN 1

Ali? Could you open the door  
please, so we can take Mr.  
Loneman's statement?

ALI

Sure...

POLICEMAN 2

Ali? Can I talk to you for one  
second?

As Alex and the other policeman enter the interrogation room:

POLICEMAN 2 (CONT'D)  
 Uhm..it's your brother Ali..he's  
 has been arrested with a couple of  
 friends for harassing this man.

Ali is puzzled.

ALI  
 Can I be there when you take his  
 statement? I wanna know..

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM -- NIGHT

Ali leans to the door as the other two policemen take Alex'  
 statement. He looks at Alex inquisitively.

ALEX  
 ..so I wanna drop all charges  
 against Said El Kattabi..actually  
 he saved my ass...

As the policemen give Ali a surreptitious look:

POLICEMAN 1  
 And what exactly is your relation  
 to Mr. El Kattabi?

Ali's face tightens. The two policemen look at him, trying  
 to hide their surprise.

ALEX  
 He is my..was my boyfriend..We were  
 seeing each other. He kept it a  
 secret though and apparently his  
 friends found out and wanted to  
 teach me a lesson. I knew it was  
 bad in the Muslim community, but...  
 (as he looks at Ali)  
 Oh, I'm sorry..no offense..I'm  
 kinda shaken...

ALI  
 No offense taken. If you'll excuse  
 me..I gotta..

POLICEMAN 1  
 (with a smile)  
 Sure....Go ahead, Ali..

POLICEMAN 2  
 Well I think we have about  
 enough..They'll be staying here for  
 the night and...they'll be  
 charged..

ALEX  
 Thank you.

EXT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Alex leaves the police station.

INT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

As the two policemen come out of the interrogation room and see Ali's face, they totally crack up.

POLICEMAN 2  
If you'd seen that look on your  
face, man!

POLICEMAN 1  
I nearly peed my pants.....

ALI  
Hey! Knock it off will ya?! Knock  
it off!

The two guys look at him in disbelief.

POLICEMAN 1  
Relax, man..It's a joke..

POLICEMAN 2  
Yeah..lighten up..

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- DAY

Mo and Suzie are standing next to Mo's car.

MO  
You like 'M?

Suzie rolls her eyes:

SUZIE  
I'm not for sale Mo..I'm not going  
out with you..I told you before..

Mo is obviously hurt.

MO  
You rather date faggots like Said,  
now don't you? Well, yesterday we  
gave that fucking faggot friend of  
yours a good spanking!

Suzie is startled.

SUZIE  
What did you do to him? You leave  
him alone you hear?

MO

We gave him and his friggin faggot  
boyfriend a lesson..He had it  
coming..

As she throws the earrings away:

SUZIE

You keep your dirty hands off of  
him, you hear?! And these you can  
stuff up your ass.....

She walks away.

EXT. PARTY CENTRE MORNING

Said enters the party centre.

INT. PARTY CENTRE OFFICE CARRERA MORNING

Mr. Carerra listens to his favorite tango music while doing  
his administration as Said walks in. His face bruised, a  
bandage around his hand. Mrs. Carrera knows, by the bruises  
on Said's face there is something utterly wrong.

SAID

..It's not gonna take a long before  
the word is out...They know..

MRS. CARERRA

Well..we have a room for you in the  
party centre for the time being, if  
necessary...

Suzie walks in.

SUZIE

I knew I could find you here..Are  
you, okay?

Said just nods.

EXT. HOUSE SAID -- MORNING

Said enters the house.

INT. SAID'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM DAY

Ibrahim is sitting in his chair as Said comes in. Ali is  
standing beside the window, looking through the curtain.

ALI

There he is..

Ibrahim is holding the Koran as Said enters the room.

IBRAHIM

Swear on the Koran in the name of Allah, that you haven't been with a man..

SAID

(tranquil)

No baba.

IBRAHIM

Have I deserved this, Said? Haven't I worked and worked to make a good live for my children? Now swear.

SAID

No baba. I don't want to be part of a community...

(looking Ali straight in the face)

Or a family that threatens and humiliates me for who I am.

IBRAHIM

You will be an outcast..You've ruined the family name. You've ruined me. Now swear...

SAID

No. I'm a good Muslim, baba... I love Allah. He's the only one that can judge me. I'm a good son. I love you...

In silence Ibrahim holds on the Koran real tight.

IBRAHIM

(softly)

Now leave...

INT. HOUSE SAID ?? BED ROOM SAID

We see Said pack his bag.

INT. HOUSE SAID BEDROOM PARENTS DAY

SAID'S father stands there, tears roll over his face. His body shakes. Ali just stands there, not knowing what to do.

INT. HOUSE SAID KITCHEN DAY

FATIMAH is sitting on a kitchen chair and cries. Said enters the kitchen. She turns her head away as he leaves the house.

EXT. SAID'S HOUSE DAY

From a distance we see Said walk away with his suitcase in his hand.

EXT. STREETS OF AMSTERDAM ?? DAY

Said passes the garage. Rashid, who's fixing a car, sticks his head out of the hood. He walks up to Said. He tries to act like nothing has happened.

RASHID  
Hey man what's up?

SAID  
I'm gonna stay at Carrera's for a while.

RASHID  
Tonight's the finals of the panna competition..You wanna come...

SAID  
Mo's coming? Issa?

RASHID  
Noop!

Said fully understands the magnitude of Rashid's gesture.

SAID  
Thanks man. I appreciate it...

INT. PARTY CENTRE DAY

Said is sitting behind a cup of tea in his improvised room. It's obvious some time has past. Suzie is cutting his hair.

SUZIE  
Why not? You owe that to him, you know? Jesus! Men! I can't believe you guys..Off course he'll be happy to hear from you!

SAID  
(grins)  
You sure? I wouldn't be happy to hear from me.

SUZIE  
Now your so smart..but in the love department you're a dork, Said! Go there!

From a distance we hear girly giggling. Mrs. Carerra sticks her head round the door.

MRS. CARERRA  
There are a couple of girls, who desperately want to see you Said!

Nazha, Milouda and Karima walk in. They embrace. The girls cry a little.

MILOUDA

Mama told us to give you this..

SAID

Does baba know about this?

NAZHA

They were arguing about it, but you know mama..if she wants it..it's gonna happen..

They laugh.

KARIMA

He'll get over it...he misses you, that's for sure...

Said opens the envelope. There is money in it. A tear in his eye.

Milouda stretches her neck to read what her mother has to say to Said.

MILOUDA

What does she write? She didn't want to tell us!

SAID

(jokingly)

Well, you nosy little creature...that's because it's a letter to me...

(seriously)

She wishes me all the best. And if I need more money she'll send it to me..She loves me, she says..One day everything will be better, Inshallah...

EXT. PARTY CENTRE MORNING

As Suzie and Said wave the girls good bye:

SAID

Oh Suzie..I miss them so much...

SUZIE

..I know...

INT. RESTAURANT ALEX EVENING

The opening reception. Alex is proudly walking through the crowd, stopping every now and then to chat, show the new menu. There are a few people whom we have seen at the wedding in London. Loretta, his sister, his parents, the Arab man and Loretta's husband.

All of a sudden there is Said. He looks tense and uneasy. It takes a while before Alex notices his glance. For a brief moment there is only Said and Alex. Than Alex walks up to him.

SAID

I wanted to congratulate you..it's beautiful..really..

ALEX

Thanks..

SAID

I also came to say goodbye. I'm gonna study in London after all..

ALEX

Good for you..

SAID

Will you come and visit me sometime?

ALEX

I will..

SAID

You promise?

ALEX

I promise...

Said holds out his hand. Alex takes it hesitantly . It's obvious the chemistry hasn't disappeared. Alex walks him to the door and watches Said walk away. Said turns around one more time. Alex winks at him as if he says: you'll be fine. For a long moment we hold on Said's smiling face.

FADE OUT: