

LOST

Written by

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A five-page excerpt from a feature-length drama.

Main Characters:

Ishwar (late 20s) : A teacher in a tribal residential school.

Lakhma (25) : A helper at the military camp.

T. K. Chand (45) : An assistant commandant of  
special police squad.

Jamlo (10): A tribal kid

Time:

The present

Setting:

A tribal village in the Niyamgiri mountain range of Eastern India.

Short Synopsis

Lost is a journey into the clash between shining India and the residual world of its pre-modern cultures, centering on the fate of the tribal people whose territory is being exploited by the a Bauxite Mining Company called *Shakti*.

At its heart is a likable but elusive figure of Ishwar, a school teacher in his late 20s, who goes in search of his missing pupil Malvi. We follow his quest and head into a world of political violence and corruption populated by characters who feed off this system. His quest becomes a personal investigation when Ishwar finds out that there is a high possibility that she has been allegedly killed in an encounter between rebels and the police squad.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Birds eye view of a thick forest engulfed in the morning mist. As the CAMERA GLIDES DOWN SLOWLY twinkling lights of a military camp become visible.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - DAWN

It's still dark outside. An indistinct figure walks from one of the tents towards a cemented building in the middle. There is slight movement around the camp as everyone is waking up.

INT. DINING AREA, MILITARY CAMP - DAWN

ISHWAR (late 20s, something very strict and arrogant about him) walks inside wearing perfectly ironed trousers and a tucked-in shirt.

ISHWAR's POV - The building is actually an abandoned school. Thousands of bullet holes have pierced through the study charts hanging on the walls and the blackboard.

T.K. CHAND (O.S.)  
These are the scars of victory.

Ishwar breaks out of his trance and looks towards voice. T.K CHAND (45, cunning and careless in his body language) sits at at the end of a long table, eating a banana.

T. K. CHAND  
I'm assistant commandant T. K.  
CHAND. Welcome to Niyamgiri.

ISHWAR  
I'm Ishwar. Assistant teacher Shakti  
English Medium School in the city.

They shake hands. Chand gestures him to sit. LAKHMA (25 but looks a lot grown for his age) enters with plate full of boiled eggs and keeps it in front of Chand. Ishwar keeps looking at the plate, astonished.

Chand notices and gestures to Ishwar asking 'you want?'

ISHWAR (CONT'D)  
I'm a vegetarian.

T.K. CHAND  
Thought so.

An awkward silence dawns as Chand begins peeling the eggs. Ishwar is getting restless.

ISHWAR  
When do we leave?

T.K. CHAND  
Where are we going?

Ishwar is now confused.

ISHWAR  
To find the girl - Malvi. Her  
village is closest from this camp.  
I thought you knew.

T.K. CHAND  
I know - she ran away from the  
school under your watch.

ISHWAR  
(defensive)  
These kids take time to adjust in  
the city. Sometimes they don't. She  
is a good kid. I'm just here on  
orders - it wasn't my duty..I mean  
I was there but/

Chand puts his hand up and Ishwar stops talking.

T.K. CHAND  
You don't have to convince - I know  
these jungle people are difficult.

ISHWAR  
It's not their fault.

T.K. CHAND  
It's no one's fault.

ISHWAR  
(Impatient, arrogance)  
Are we waiting for someone? Because  
we're getting late.

T.K. CHAND  
Your escort.

ISHWAR  
Why are they late?

T.K. CHAND  
Why did she run away?

ISHWAR  
I don't know.

T.K. CHAND  
Same. I don't know.

Chand has finished all the eggs and pushes his plate away. Ishwar watches Chand walk just outside - Lakhma pours water on Chand's hand from a plastic mug.

I/E. MILITARY CAMP - LATER

They all wait. Just plain wait. The sky has begun turning blue.

CU of Chand - he tries to get right frequency on his radio.

CU of Lakhma - he looks dazed and is dozing off.

CU of Ishwar - he paces, looking at the main gate.

CU of a SOLDIER - Cleans his rifle.

A faint sound of a Bollywood melody is heard. Ishwar walks inside the dining hall.

INT. DINING ARE, MILITARY CAMP - CONTINUOUS

The song plays on the radio. Eyes closed, Chand is engrossed in the song. Ishwar sits on a chair next to him. Chand frowns. Eyes still closed.

ISHWAR  
How long have you been posted here?

T.K. CHAND  
(opens his eyes)  
A little after your birth may be.

ISHWAR  
It must be nice here. Fresh air.  
Trees. No hustle of the city.  
People are nice. I've heard that  
local rebels have been wiped out  
completely. No threat!

Chand lowers the volume and pays attention to Ishwar.

T.K. CHAND  
It's lovely. Like a holiday!

Ishwar doesn't get his tone and quiets down. Chand increases the volume.

Just then Lakhma comes in and gestures something to Chand. Chand gets up. He taps Ishwar, asking to follow.

EXT. DINING AREA, MILITARY CAMP - LATER

JAMLO (10 year-old-boy, innocent but confident) stands in front of Ishwar. He is holding a stick and at the end of which there is some machine like object.

ISHWAR  
Really? Is he going to..He's  
Malvi's age/

Ishwar looses words as he's unable to believe.

T.K. CHAND  
Why are you late?

JAMLO  
I was on time but I had to take the  
long route. There were landmines.

ISHWAR  
Landmines?

Jamlo and Chand nod (yes) in unison. Jamlo lifts up his machine. Ishwar is suspicious of it.

ISHWAR (CONT'D)  
Are you sure this works?

T.K. CHAND  
Show him!

JAMLO  
I just came from this road and it  
doesn't have land mines.

Jamlo points at the forest behind the military camp. Ishwar looks - he sees no road but just tall trees. He keeps staring into the abyss when suddenly a hen clucks deafeningly followed by fluttering of wings.

Ishwar looks - Jamlo has caught a hen.

JAMLO (CONT'D)  
I'll show you.

Jamlo walks towards the forest. Ishwar looks at Chand, confused.

ISHWAR  
Why a hen?

T.K. CHAND

Because it never walks straight in  
one line. Landmines are placed  
randomly.

Jamlo goes ahead and throws the hen on the path - a path that  
probably only his eyes can see.

The hen flies a little and then settles on the ground. It  
begins to peck around the ground and walking in all random  
directions.

Everyone watches holding their breaths. The hen walks. It  
goes further away in the jungle. Everyone's eyes are tracking  
the hen carefully.

There is pin-drop silence. The hen now far in the forest.

Jamlo turns to Ishwar, smiling wide. Ishwar is about let go  
of his cloistered breath AND -

BOOM!

There is an explosion. The hen is nowhere to be seen.

BEAT.

Jamlo keeps holding his smile. Chand is sniggering. Ishwar  
looks at the machine and then at the smoke that's coming from  
the explosion.

T.K. CHAND (CONT'D)

These are the memories of the  
rebels.

Chand looks at Ishwar and smiles. Then looks at his watch.

T.K. CHAND (CONT'D)

You should leave. You're getting  
late.

Ishwar is trying to maintain a poker face but he looks pale  
with fear.