

BLACKSTAR

MOVIE-LIKE, MUSICAL AND MAGICALLY REAL

NAMEER KHAN

TAKE ONE... ACTION!

EXT. The street outside The Greasy Compound, *night*

A storm is gathering. Dry leaves are carried around by swirling winds. There are two moons visible in the night sky. One is white, the other raging pink. The Greasy Compound is a bright spark in an otherwise dead and buried city, a spot where aspiring musicians perform and defeated men and women indulge in bouts of heavy drinking.

INT. The Greasy Compound, *the same night*

A young man, shabbily dressed in jeans and jacket sits on a stool. He's holding his coal-coloured guitar. There's a dim spotlight shining on him.

Wersaan - This song is a personal one. Hope you find something to relate to.

He shuffles in the stool and braces. He strikes the chords. He sings.

"Whenever I sit with my head,
Trying too hard to be me.
These claws come clawing back,
Reminding, I am not free.
There's today, yesterday, tomorrow,
Locked in my little room.
The next day is bulging,
Like a heart shaped balloon.
The sun is going down, it won't be back any soon,
Nocturnals! Time to bloom.

You, walls are breathing in air,
Please leave some for me.
I am not a wall like you,
But we have an ancient friendship.
In fact, I'm like you in a way,
I hide the inside smoke.
But you four freaks are like men,
Ignoring my moans.
My haven is under the ground and

I have eaten up my phone,
How can I here, be alone?

The judge has summoned me in,
My crime is not in his books.
I think I used a sledgehammer,
To murder the man, I should.
He was the son of my mother,
Who gave me creepy looks.
It is the only sin of mine,
I don't regret.

Took the hammer and dropped it down upon his empty, hollow chest,
Music soars, what an end.

Standing high on the precipice,
I feel like kissing the ground.
The dry wind keeps slapping me,
So, I jump never to be found.
I jump and I fly away,
Spreading the wings, singing out loud.
"This earth was never for me,
I own a place among the clouds."
Gravity doesn't work the way your textbooks try and teach you,
Ask aloud, if you're allowed.

Only a tiny fraction of listeners is engaged. Few enjoy their drink, few comment on his morbid demeanour, even fewer care to comment on the song.

Someone in the crowd - Why so miserable, Bow Tie?

Someone else - Can someone turn off his guitar!

Someone's girlfriend - I will do so with pleasure.

Bow Tie happens to be Wersaan's stage name. Unfazed by the taunts, he carries on with the song.

"Come on, you shallow everyone,
Go jive, your stupid way.
In hell or in a raving cell,
Do I ever slightly care.

I'm burning myself out
Cause only cowards fade away.
Mirages 'neath the desert skies,
Are caught in cactus zones.
There's something 'bout life, write down if you don't know?
Never repent, never atone!

Ever went out for shopping,
To buy your coffin.
Ever loved somebody so much, only
To have them laughing.
Look at you, dressed like an astronaut,
White suit and airtight helmet.
In which the water keeps on rising,
As you battle for your breath.
Dreams will confiscate you, as you suffocate yourself,
Isn't this, a beautiful death?"

Wersaan carries on with his adlibs before putting his pick to rest.

Wersaan - Seasons cycle unfazed, so do the hours and days. My song remains the same. Thank You!

A handful of people give him a hand, an old man with a cigar in his hand looks impressed. He believes that he has heard this music before. Meanwhile, a couple of friends have taken the table next to him. They order a couple pints and peanuts.

Wersaan packs his guitar and prepares to leave stage. A young girl, just seventeen steps on stage and takes away the mic.

She was just seventeen - Hello boys! And their ladies. I'd like to see some cheerful faces.

Wersaan would normally not let anyone take the stage while he's still on. But today he lets it pass.

INT. The bar, The Greasy Compound, *later that night*

Wersaan leans over the bar, tired and visibly dejected. The bar is looked after by a grey-haired hippie, the locals call Mr. Sippy.

Wersaan - One more beer, please?

Mr Sippy - Let it be your last?

Wersaan - I shall be asking for one more.

Mr Sippy - When?

Wersaan - When that bitch falls off stage.

Mr Sippy - She's hot, isn't she?

Wersaan - Mr Sippy, you're an old man! Stay in line.

Mr Sippy is offended. Normally Wersaan won't say such a thing to him, out of respect of course but he's drunk and he slips up.

Mr Sippy – You owe the bar three thousand, eight hundred and ninety-seven rupees.

Wersaan – After discount?

Mr Sippy maintains a silence. His eyebrows furrow.

Wersaan - I'll pay back, all of it.

Mr Sippy - You have to or I won't serve you.

Wersaan - I'll be paying back in time and right now, another beer would be swell.

Much to Wersaan's dismay, Mr Sippy steps away. He picks up a towel and busies himself in cleaning up the bar. Meanwhile, the seventeen-year-old singer has fallen off stage. The owner of the place, Mr Raj Kapoor accidentally bumped into her while stepping on. Mr Kapoor is a healthy chap and she is, for the time being, the laughing stock of the room.

Raj laughs helplessly as he helps the girl back to her feet, she finds amusement in her embarrassment and laughs too. Even Mr Sippy laughs since he's reminded of the earlier comment Wersaan made. He drops the towel and picks up a bottle of cold beer, locks the bottle-opener and pulls the cap off. He turns to serve Wersaan. The smile on his face vanishes in a moment, as if he was

never laughing. At the same time, Wersaan is excited about his second treat of icy lager.

Mr Sippy – This is the last one and you leave.

Wersaan – Fuck you, you old fuck!

Mr Sippy – What did you say?!

Wersaan – I'm sorry.

Mr Sippy – I'll kick you out if you don't straighten up, kid.

Wersaan – Mr Kapoor won't let that happen.

Mr Sippy – You bet.

Wersaan sweeps his beer off the table and steps out, out of the bar and out of The Greasy Compound.

... The scene ends...

RITIKA IS A BITCH!

EXT. The street outside The Greasy Compound, *midnight*

He is ringing someone up. The call takes forever to be picked up but is picked up eventually. A shivering Wersaan is now engaged in a conversation.

Wersaan - Is Evi there? She's not answering her phone.

INT. The tiny living room at Genevieve's apartment

Genevieve is seated on a sofa by a low-height wooden table. Ritika is managing Wersaan on the phone. The call is on speaker.

Ritika - Your calls? She's not picking up your calls?!

Wersaan - Yes. I've tried so many times, I'm running out of fingers.

Ritika - Evi had an audition, I guess.

Genevieve is affectionately referred to as Evi by her comrades.

Wersaan - It's almost twelve.

Ritika - Yes... it was far from here and she got late too. So...

Genevieve (*whispers*) – Ask why he called?

Ritika - Why... why did you call? Any message you want me to deliver for you?

Wersaan - Umm, nothing really. Nothing that cannot wait. I was just... I felt like talking to her, that's all.

Ritika - Okay, I'll make sure she calls you back.

Something strikes Genevieve. She has asked Ritika to hand her the phone. Ritika avoids, a move that seems deliberate.

Wersaan - Don't forget. Okay?

Genevieve is about to throw the only cushion she has at Ritika. She is aiming the cushion. She really wants the phone.

Ritika - I won't. Bye!

*Stunning silence falls over the room.
The cushion is thrown with tremendous force.*

Genevieve – Bitch!

Ritika - Sorry.

Genevieve - Give me your phone.

Ritika - Why?

Genevieve - I want to talk to him.

Ritika - You were ignoring his calls until now.

Genevieve - Give me your phone or I'll call Arham over and fuck him in your bed.

Ritika - I dare you!

Genevieve - Best believe, I will. He's into me.

Ritika - No, he isn't.

And in the midst of the commotion, Genevieve succeeds in snatching away her phone

Ritika - He's not coming over.

Genevieve rapidly dials Wersaan's number.

Ritika - He's not coming over!

She waits impatiently, the phone rings.

Genevieve - Hey! Babe. It's me. I just walked in... Ritika told me to call you.

EXT. The street, *minutes over midnight*

Wersaan - You were not picking my calls.

Genevieve - Oh, I'm sorry. I left my phone with a friend and it somehow slipped my mind. I don't know how.

Wersaan - It's alright. So how did it go?

Genevieve - What?

Wersaan - The audition?

Genevieve - Ah, the audition. Not that great to be honest. I was late and panicked so that kind of affected my performance. It's fine. I have another one coming up.

Wersaan - When?

Genevieve - Tomorrow. For Stage4 Theatre. I'm preparing... I will be preparing for it, tonight.

Wersaan - Good luck for tomorrow then.

Genevieve - Yes. What are you doing?

Wersaan - Nothing. I'm just standing.

Genevieve – Just standing?

Wersaan - Yes, standing on a cold, desolate street.

Genevieve - What are you doing on a desolate street?

Wersaan - I got off from a show.

Genevieve - Oh your show. Right. How was it?

Wersaan - More of the same, I would say.

Genevieve - More of the same?

Wersaan - Yes. I'm actually, more intent than ever, on quitting this weekly gig thing. I want to make my album.

Genevieve gets up to go to the bathroom to talk to his boyfriend in private.

She shuts the bathroom door behind her, pulls the seat down, and settles herself.

Genevieve - Why, kid?

Wersaan - I don't know. I can't explain why.

Genevieve - How are you feeling?

Wersaan - Like I said, I'm falling out of love with this, performing every week.

Genevieve - No. How are you feeling?

Wersaan - I'm fine.

Genevieve - Really? Are you?

Wersaan shuffles his feet. He stares at his guitar. He looks down the darkened street.

Wersaan - I was wondering if I could come over? Spend some time?

Genevieve - Of course you can.

Wersaan - You sure about this?

Genevieve - I am. In fact, I'm going to fix myself some coffee. I'll make some for you.

Wersaan - Okay then. I'll be there in five or fifteen.

Genevieve - I'll be waiting. Bye.

Genevieve hangs up the call, she hangs around before stepping out. She finds Ritika standing right next to the door. She hands back her phone.

Genevieve - He's coming.

Ritika - Evi!

Genevieve - I can't help it. He sounds too innocent at times.

Ritika - Even I sound innocent when I ask you to finger me. But do you?

Genevieve - The two aren't similar at all.

Ritika - You know what you're doing?

Genevieve - What?

Ritika - He'll come here and rip you off your hours.

Genevieve - I know what I'm doing.

Ritika - Hours, you could have used to prepare for your role.

Genevieve - I've been working on it all day.

Ritika - So you should be resting now.

Genevieve - Stop being my mother.

Ritika - Alright. Do whatever you want. Don't come crying to me in case you end up sleeping on stage.

Ritika storms out of the scene. She goes to her bedroom and slams the door behind her.

Genevieve slumps on the sofa, she has gotten weepy. Barely a moment has passed when she hears the door open again.

She quickly wipes away her tears and adds composure to her tone.

Ritika - Wake him up before you leave!

Genevieve - I will!

INT. The tiny living room at Genevieve's apartment, *late night*

The doorbell rings. Guess who's here.

Genevieve hides her phone in a drawer and rushes to welcome Wersaan.

He enters, takes off his guitar and places it by the wall. The couple share a brief yet warm embrace.

Genevieve - Your hands are cold... I'll get you some coffee.

She heads to the kitchen... Wersaan lingers... the scene ends...

LATER!

INT. The tiny living room

Both are lying on the sofa now. Wersaan has placed his head by her hip, he scribbles in his notebook. Genevieve is engrossed in a script.

Wersaan - A word that rhymes with 'away'.

Genevieve - 'way'?

Wersaan - Try harder.

Genevieve - 'gay'?

Wersaan - Something that would fit in a song?

Genevieve - Would fit in a song about gay couples.

Wersaan - This is not a song about gay couples. Something colourful?

Genevieve - May?

Wersaan - May!

Genevieve - May is a colourful month.

Wersaan - It is.

And time goes crawling by, the couple carry on with their respective assignments.

Wersaan - Like to hear it?

Genevieve - Sure.

Wersaan clears his throat and take a deep breath.

Wersaan - 'Fate has tricky ways, as luck backs away from you, people fray away. I walk down that lonely boulevard, where warm is December, chilling is May.'

Genevieve - Indulge me in its meaning.

Wersaan - It means I'm in Australia. Summer falls in December and May has winter.

Genevieve – Shut up.

Wersaan – Come on, don't you believe me?

Genevieve – Not for a moment.

Wersaan – Come on Evi. Show me what you're up to?

Genevieve - Want to know about the role?

Wersaan - Of course.

Genevieve picks up her copy of the script and scrolls through the pages

Wersaan – Are you prepared for tomorrow?

Genevieve – You want a piece of me.

Wersaan – I always want a piece of you.

Wersaan doubles down on his words. He slides over to her side and closes in on her lips. Genevieve delivers a soft slap on his cheek.

Genevieve - Later.

Wersaan - Got it.

Genevieve - This play is titled 'The Eraser'.

Wersaan - The stationery?

Genevieve – Spot on! The stationery and I'm playing a girl who gets kinky about erasers.

Wersaan – This really grabs my attention.

Genevieve - You wanna know about the role or not?

Wersaan - Of course.

Genevieve - This might be a joke to you but not to me.

Wersaan - This isn't a joke to me either. Carry on.

Genevieve - A social worker named Maira Ahana who's based on a real-life person works for her local NGO. She finds something fishy going on in her village, fringe elements are hijacking trucks loaded with supplies for the village folks. Therefore, she takes it upon herself to blow the lid off on the group behind all this. The group is dubbed "The Eraser".

Wersaan – Oh no, does she die?

Genevieve – No! But I will if I have to put up with you a second more!

... the scene ends...

SO, IT WAS ONLY REHEARSAL...

Wersaan holds a bunch of pages. Genevieve has assumed an attacking posture.

Genevieve - How can you not notice?

Wersaan - You're blowing it out of proportions.

Genevieve - And does this surprise you?!

Wersaan - Guess what, it doesn't. You have been on about this for weeks now and honestly, I'm sick of it.

Genevieve - That's because you refuse to let me in.

Wersaan - And for good reason. You know what I'm talking about?

Genevieve - No, I don't know. Tell me, tell me everything.

Wersaan - I'm sorry. You're too naive for this conversation.

Genevieve - Oh, no, no, you're confusing my concern with naivety here. You cannot be more wrong.

The arrow of time cascades. The moonlight fluctuates. The tension in the air has evaporated. Genevieve, seated by the table, has her aggression greatly reduced. Wersaan hasn't budged an inch.

Wersaan - I'm just saying there's no point in going on.

Genevieve - Why?

Wersaan - Because we are getting nowhere.

Genevieve - You really think so.

Wersaan - Yes.

Genevieve - After all the time and effort that has gone into this.

Wersaan - It was a waste. I warned you.

Genevieve - Get out! Get out of my house.

Wersaan - You're letting your anger get the better of you.

Genevieve - Stop agonizing me. Just get out. Out!

Wersaan still hasn't moved an inch. By now, Genevieve has run several rounds of the room. Finally, she falls beside him, weary and short of breath.

Genevieve - I'm going to the court of the state, tomorrow. With everything I have.

Wersaan - It's not enough.

Genevieve - Even if it's not enough. These people need this. The state doesn't owe them the money, they deserve it.

Wersaan - The verdict won't favour us.

Genevieve - Then we'll do something else.

Wersaan - There's nothing we can do.

Genevieve - No. There's always something that you can do. I need to find out what it is.

Silence engulfs the room. Genevieve relaxes. She drops the character of 'Maira Ahana' and picks up the script that is lying on top of the music player. She goes and occupies the space next to Wersaan whose face is wrapped in amazement.

Genevieve - How was it?

Wersaan - Where's the Academy Award I had? I feel intimidated, overwhelmed, subdued.

Genevieve - You like it?

Wersaan - Yes, I do.

She's hopping on the sofa with excitement. Wersaan grabs her.

He drops a kiss on her forehead, then on her triangle of sadness and is planning to go down till he feels her lips. He's between the nose and her upper lip when she decides to draw her face away.

Wersaan - Don't dismiss me again.

Genevieve - I'm not dismissing you.

Wersaan - You seem well prepared.

Genevieve - Yes, but I want to go through the entire script.

Wersaan - Don't they give you a definite part of the script to enact?

Genevieve - And here it is.

Wersaan - Should I sleep?

Genevieve - You should.

With the wind having been taken out of his sails, he lays back. He doesn't sleep. However, he picks up his notebook and indulges himself in passion poetry. Meanwhile, Genevieve decides to go to the kitchen. She fetches herself a cup of ice-cream and a chocolate bar. She tosses the bar at Wersaan, opens her cup.

Wersaan - A word that rhymes with your name?

Genevieve - Eve... leave.

Wersaan - Weave...

Genevieve - Weave... grieve and believe!

Wersaan gets up and sits by her side. He extends his neck out, eats one spoonful of ice-cream, then another spoon, and then asks for a third spoon. Once the third lump of vanilla falls down his food pipe, he kicks his lecherous plan into action. Wersaan delicately takes the spoon from her hand, puts it on the table and grabs her palm. He wraps his lips around her index finger. He's getting carried away but Genevieve is having none of it. Her eyes are sharp, her face nonchalant. Her eyebrows furrow, she stares him out until he has to stop. With a sly grin, she picks up her spoon and continues eating her ice-cream.

Wersaan - Strike two?

Genevieve - Stop swinging your bat.

Wersaan - My bat is hard.

Genevieve - I bought some new music, go check it out.

... the scene ends...

HE GETS WHAT HE WANTS

Wersaan is going through her collection of music CDs. He pulls out a disc and plays it.

Genevieve begins to sing along because she loves the song. Wersaan eggs her on to dance with him. She has to dance, and she does dance. Wersaan holds her waist, they waltz around in uncontrolled and unrefined pivots. A couple minutes into the impromptu duet, they come together really close to each other embracing and kissing. Genevieve is giggling. Her temporal facade of stiffness erodes.

Genevieve - Why?!

Wersaan - Why not?

Genevieve smiles. He looks at her, slightly confused.

Wersaan - Strike three?

Genevieve - It's a home run, asshole.

Genevieve caves in. The lovers fuck. They sleep.

Three hours have passed when she wakes up. Ritika is beside her. She passes her a joint. Genevieve draws a puff.

Ritika and Genevieve exit the living room.

INT. Ritika's bedroom, *the middle of the night*

Genevieve - Why would you tell me now?

Ritika - Baby, I didn't want to burden you with concerns.

Genevieve - You're telling me now, aren't you?

Ritika - Because I had to. Eventually.

Genevieve - You didn't even ask me!

Ritika - Look, Evi you have to understand. It's tough keeping hold of the place while you're without a job.

Genevieve - Without a job 'for now'!

Ritika - How long is 'for now'?

Genevieve - It won't be long. I might land a role tomorrow.

Ritika - What if you don't?

Genevieve - You're a bitch!

Genevieve gets up to walk out of the room. She opens the door but Ritika steps in her way. She slams the door.

Genevieve - Wersaan's sleeping.

Ritika - Fuck him.

Genevieve - Fuck you! Fuck you and your boyfriend. You go ahead and move your ass into his stinky flat because I'm getting the role tomorrow. And I'll hold my place.

Ritika - Good for you.

Genevieve - It is.

Ritika - See, I motivated you.

Genevieve - I was already.

Genevieve exits.

Ritika - Good luck!

... the scene ends...

LET'S CALL IT A DAY

INT. The bathroom, *early morning*

Genevieve splashes cold water to mitigate the redness of her bloodshot eyes. She was up all-night practicing in her room. She applies slight makeup. Now, she is ready to roll.

INT. The tiny living room, *a few minutes later*

Genevieve - Wake up. Wes?

Wersaan – Hmm...

Genevieve - Wake up!

Wersaan - What time is it?

Genevieve - Five minutes before I throw you out.

Wersaan picks up his weary frame. He heads to the bathroom. Meanwhile, Genevieve walks over to a nearby shelf, picks up her thrifted tote bag, packs some breakfast, utilities, her pack of smokes and makeup paraphernalia. She takes her phone out from the drawer and keeps it in her bag. Then she looks for her purse. Once she has found it, she opens it. She's not filthy rich either. There are a couple ₹500 and some ₹100 notes. She pulls out two and quietly slips them into his wallet.

A flush is heard. Wersaan enters the living room.

Genevieve - I'm headed home after my audition.

Wersaan - Any reason?

Genevieve - Should there be one? I want to spend some time with my family.

Wersaan - When will you come back?

Genevieve - By this weekend. You should visit your parents too.

Wersaan - They're dead.

Genevieve - For once, be fair to them.

She looks at Wersaan with disdain. He can't help but wryly smile albeit he keeps quiet.

They exit the living room.

INT. The corridor outside her apartment

Genevieve closes the door and turns around. She takes a step to her right, Wersaan takes a step her way, she takes a step left, he follows suit. This gets on her nerves and she pushes him towards the wall, thereby clearing her way. A pent-up Genevieve walks past Wersaan and down the spiralling stairs.

Wersaan - Just loosen up, Evi.

Genevieve - I'm about to be put to trial by a jury of three, hostile and despicable prima donnas. The last thing on my mind right now is loosening up.

EXT. The street outside Genevieve's apartment tower, *overcast morning*

Wersaan - You'll be great. Hear me.

Genevieve scampers, oblivious to him and what he's saying. Yet, Wersaan toils and catches up with her.

Wersaan - You'll be great. I believe in you, Genevieve Halwarez.

Genevieve - Alvarez.

Wersaan - You should too.

Genevieve - Genevieve Alvarez.

Wersaan - That's not my point. My point is I know Genevieve is an exceptional performer, and what makes her as a performer exceptional is her confidence and self-belief. You'll floor the auditioners.

Genevieve - If these are the last words you ever get to say to me, please have them written on my tombstone.

Genevieve gives him a long, unrelenting kiss, to a point where even Wersaan is flattered by the prolonged nature of the kiss. She then turns away and leaves without uttering another word.

Wersaan - Call me after the audition.

Wersaan stands there looking at her, then proceeds to go his own way. The opposite direction!

He looks delighted, rarely does he feel so lively. Even the sun coming up is fresh and new.

The two moons from last night have grown dim due to the excessively brightening sunshine.

... the scene ends...

LIGHTS, CAMERA... CAMERA?! CAMERA! AND ACTION!

EXT. The street next to the apartment tower, *brighter morning*

MUSICAL BEGINS

Wersaan is walking down the sidewalk, next to a line of stores, opening up. A middle-aged man is unloading vegetable crates from a truck. He looks at Wersaan with a smile. Wersaan smiles back.

Guy with the crates –

Give my Love to Genevieve, the girl as bright as Meryl Streep.

Wersaan stops and turns his head. He can sense the musical notes in the air.

Wersaan / Guy with crates –

The girl, who shines, with sunny eyes.

A woman with an empty grocery bag pops out from behind Wersaan, she's a fractured segment of his anima.

Woman with empty –

She kills me with her glossy lips.

Woman with empty bag / Wersaan –

She kills me with her sassy aerobic thighs.

Wersaan unzips the guitar cover and holds up his guitar. He starts tuning his acoustic.

People continue to pop out from behind him. They gather around.

*Wersaan teases **The Beatles'** 'Help' riff and then snaps into his own Rock n Roll like medley.*

All singers –

Oh Genevieve, your foxy hot, red hair dyes, Oh Genevieve, your smile, your vanilla vibe, Oh Genevieve, your laser touch makes me write, Oh Genevieve, I love you like, my own life, Oh Genevieve!

Guy with crates –

The day you leave.

Wersaan –
I'll cry and grieve.

Woman with empty bag –
To these fingers of yours, tie and weave me please.

Wersaan / Woman / Guy –
Oh Genevieve.

Wersaan –
Your foxy hot, red hair dyes, Oh Genevieve, you always blow my mind. Oh
Genevieve, my heavy head's sleepy smile, Oh Genevieve, I kiss you like my own
wife, Oh Genevieve!

All singers –
Oh Genevieve.

Wersaan –
Oh Genevieve!

All singers –
Oh Genevieve!

The syncopated clapping halts

MUSICAL ENDS

Wersaan freezes in an accomplished posture, smiling and gesturing farewell to the segments of his musical soul. The singers circle around him and pass into oblivion once they slide behind his back.

... the scene ends...

THE UNDERGROUND MUSICIANS

INT. A train compartment, *underground*

Wersaan jots down the lyrics to some song.

INT. Bebe's apartment, *afternoon*

Bebe is a sound engineer. He is seated behind his technical setup, a make-shift studio in his 2BHK apartment.

Wersaan is looking at some graphs and statistics on the monitor screen. Bebe is pouring wine and smoking a cigarette.

Bebe - Good news. There's been a rise in numbers.

Wersaan - So subtle that I barely notice.

Bebe - Still better than Sapphire's band.

Wersaan - She fell off stage last night.

Bebe - Ouch... Why would you do it?

Wersaan - I had a sudden urge to faceplant her.

Bebe - The Glitches are planning to record an album.

Wersaan - They took my idea. I asked them to record an album with me.

Bebe - Maybe you suck at convincing people.

Wersaan - And maybe you suck at your job.

Bebe - Don't be hysterical. Work on your music. Make better songs.

Wersaan - You know what time it is.

Bebe - 11AM, 11:15...

Wersaan - Yes! Don't make me lose my shit at 11 in the morning. I listen to the songs and it seems only one of us has put heart into it. Me!

Bebe - What do you want me to do? Turn into George Martin. Are you The Beatles?

Wersaan - I can be in the same conversation as them in a few years' time.

Bebe - That kind of glory is gone, you're smoking the wrong pot, Wes. Tell me exactly what you want.

Wersaan - I want you to tell me to fuck off.

Bebe - Why?

Wersaan - I'll find someone else.

Bebe - You'll find someone else?

Wersaan - Yes. He, she might not be George Martin but they'll be someone with a heart for my work.

Bebe shuffles in his stool.

Bebe - See! You're not the only guy I work with, are you?

Enter Bebe's wife with her pot belly and exceptional timing.

Bebe - Now. I'm not saying that I do what I do for money but, at times, like these, money does tend to be a factor.

Wersaan thinks before delivering his next sentence.

Wersaan - Seventeen percent.

Bebe - She's six months along.

Wersaan - Six?

Bebe - Yes.

Wersaan - How come I never noticed?

Bebe - Because you're always lost.

Wersaan - Eighteen then. I want my song by tonight.

Bebe – I will shuffle my priorities right away.

Wersaan – You have eight hours.

Bebe - See you at the coffee shop.

Wersaan - The one on the corner?

Bebe - Yes, the one on the corner. I dislike traveling.

Wersaan - As if I'm in love.

Bebe slams the door in his face

Wersaan - At eight!

Bebe - Alright.

Wersaan shakes his head, amused and confused. He goes down the stairs.

... the scene ends...

THE DREAM OF AN ALBUM

EXT. Outside Bebe's apartment tower, *afternoon*

Wersaan lights a cigarette.

The sunny skies have turned overcast.

The pink moon is developing a brighter complexion.

INT. Reyan Gill's apartment, *later that afternoon*

Wersaan closes the door behind him. Reyan Gill is a fellow musician, some years his senior, mentor and a good friend. He's a stoner and one who takes pride in calling himself a Bohemian. He's in the twilight of his career, the weed eases the conflict and confusion.

As Wersaan probes into the apartment he can hear the famous guitar solo of Led Zeppelin's 'Whole Lotta Love'. The music is ruling the living room.

Wersaan walks in, without making a sound. He spots the cover of Led Zeppelin's II vinyl on the table and picks it up.

Reyan (voice) - How are you, man?

Reyan sneaks up on Wersaan, he's surprised.

Reyan - How are you?

Wersaan - Being blessed by the Rock Gods.

The two friends embrace.

Reyan - Yeah, Yeah, man. My producer returned from London. Got this for me. Look at you, you need a drink?

Wersaan - Not right now.

Reyan - Oh come on. It will raise you from the dead.

Reyan places two immaculate glasses on the table, he gets down to fixing a drink for Wersaan and one for himself.

Reyan - Rum or vodka?

Wersaan - Anything.

Wersaan lays back, he is admiring the record.

Reyan pours vodka in both and drops a large cube of ice in either glass.

Wersaan - With something.

Reyan - With something!

Reyan sticks his head into the refrigerator. He is looking for 'something' to top the drink off.

Reyan - You should see my producer, Wes.

Wersaan - Is he a sight to behold?

Reyan - Not really but he's the kind of person who can help you with your raison d'etre.

With his head still in the refrigerator, Reyan stumbles upon a box of juice.

Reyan – How about orange juice?

Wersaan – Works... I'm still working on my material.

Reyan - Oh Major Tom, you have enough material, go out and give it to the people. You know what happens to songwriters who keep their songs to themselves?

Wersaan - They are cast away.

Reyan - And where?

Wersaan - To the Dark Side of The Moon.

Reyan - Exactly my friend and you are, you are no 'Burning Barrett', you are the 'Piper Barrett'! Bright and Blue. Shiny and New.

Wersaan - Syd Barrett wanted to give everything away. But Floyd needed his bones.

Reyan - 'Upon his rocks we build our church', Waters never said it but he always implicitly meant it. "We only played instruments; Syd was the poet".

Wersaan is eyeballing the Zeppelin II cover. As for context for the ongoing conversation, one has to be aware of the psychedelic band Pink Floyd and their deranged founder Syd Barret who was in constant combat with his mental demons.

Reyan - You can take it if you want to. Give it a good listen.

Wersaan - I stream songs. What's the difference?

Reyan - What... What's the difference? What's the difference between listening to vinyl divinity and streaming on a tin can. Sir, you're out of order.

Wersaan - I mean it's the same thing.

Reyan - What do streamers know? Same thing! You have a girl, don't you?

Wersaan - Luckily.

Reyan – Smoke a joint, turn the lights off and bend her over, take her on a ride. That's how vinyl feels. Now, pull your pants up, belt in and ask her to give you a hand job with the lights 'On'! That's the streaming shit. That's the streaming services you use. Giving you the song after chewing and spitting out the nuance.

Wersaan - You know I have a title for your album.

Reyan has a large collection of vinyl records. He keeps them on the shelf nearby. Wersaan has always admired his collection.

Reyan - Go ahead, make my day.

Wersaan - Baffle, Bootleg, Bullshit, Buffoon.

Reyan - Are you firing shots at me?

Wersaan pulls out the vinyl record of David Bowie's 'Heroes' from the prestigious shelf.

Wersaan - This one?

Reyan - You like Bowie?

Wersaan - Not initially. His music is like liquor, once you acquire a taste, everything else seems pale in comparison.

Wersaan gulps his remaining drink and pulls out a batch of paper from inside his jacket.

He places them on the round wooden table between himself and Reyan.

Wersaan - I have a few songs for your next album.

Reyan - Mmm... my pieces of jigsaw.

Reyan picks them up and reads.

Reyan –

"Have you ever found yourself in,
An urban life, a suburban mansion.
He looks at you, like you have done his wife,
They look fantastic, bloody, famous five.
I feel raped, they fuck me like a friend,
Vampires thirsty, sucking on my veins.
Who's to blame when the place is wrong and, so is time,
They carry knives for gouging out my eyes".

Reyan - What has life done to you, Sweet Child O'Mine?

Wersaan - Life has given me a ruse...

Reyan - Sanity powers success.

Wersaan - ... and now I am someone else.

Reyan - You have your life before you. Remember that!

Wersaan - Duly noted.

Reyan - No, we have to talk about this. I've seen so many guys, you know, trying to emulate or pen their own Ghost Song, their hurdy gurdy song, hundreds of them including me but you, my friend, you're the only thing I've seen come close. You wanna know why?

Wersaan - No!

Reyan (*interrupts*) - Because you are, for lack of a better word, a deranged poet. Poetry cannot be copied, poetry cannot be taught but your lines, they teach me poetry. Don't throw it away.

Wersaan - Please talk to your producer.

Reyan - I'll talk to my producer. We'll record your album.

Reyan leaves. He goes to the bedroom to cough up some rupees to pay for the songs Wersaan wrote. All along, he is humming the lyrics with an infusion of excitement.

Reyan –

"Who's to blame, the wrong place or the wrong time,
They carry knives for gouging out my eyes".
"I feel raped, they fuck me like a friend,
Vampires thirsty, sucking on my veins".

Wersaan stands there contemplating. A ray of sunshine is breaking through a window. The sunshine casts a bright silhouette around Wersaan. The overcast weather clears.

... the scene ends...

HE'S TORN AT THE SEAMS

INT. The coffee shop on the corner, *evening*

Bebe, unsurprisingly is late. It's shivering cold. His ragged coat cannot keep the chill out.

Bebe enters.

Bebe - Sorry, dude. Wifey had a problem. Needed my attention.

Wersaan - How's she feeling now?

Bebe - I dropped her at her doctor's.

Wersaan - You should be with her.

Bebe - Of course, I will be.

Bebe pulls a disc out from his bag and hands it to him. Wersaan respectfully receives it.

Wersaan - Is she with someone?

Bebe - No! I had to leave her for you.

Wersaan - You could have called; I do own a phone.

Bebe - But you were flipping out for your song in the morning.

Wersaan - I'm not as insensitive as you think.

Bebe - I'll go and grab something for her. You listen to the tape.

Wersaan - Okay.

Bebe exits.

MUSICAL BEGINS

Wersaan takes out a player from inside his jacket, places the disc, wears his headphones and presses 'Play'.

The song –

"Hey there, I am the one, burnt out and washed up at twenty-one. I feed on nerves, it makes me shiver, putting to noose, all my rhythm. Forging the bars of my own confine, the stars are out but they don't align. Stars are out, out of my sight, bleak sunset sky kisses the night, kisses the night!"

This is followed by an acoustic guitar solo

"I'm rattling, this cocoon of mine, trying to speak, trying to tie my broken ends, to the girl I like, she heals my bruises, bloody and slime, from time to time. She burns my skin, time to time."

"The stars are out, they've marked my life, why do I look away, all the time. The stars are out, out of my life, 'So long' my friends who miss my smile. I miss my smile, like you miss my smile. I too miss my smile."

Wersaan listens to the song with utmost attention. He looks for segments of the song he wishes to improve upon.

Bebe enters. He carries a brown bag in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other.

Bebe - How is it?

Wersaan - Decent.

Bebe - A finesse?

Wersaan - You have held your end up.

Bebe - I've uploaded the song on the internet and it's up for streaming too. Twenty percent of the revenue!

Wersaan - I do remember.

Bebe - No one would do it for you with such urgency.

Wersaan - That too with his wife at the doctor's.

Bebe - Yes... yes... and one day I'll have you repay the favor.

Wersaan - You do me so many favours. I'm grateful.

Bebe - Don't mention.

Wersaan - No, really. How about you do me one more favor and stop bullshitting.

Bebe - What are you on about?

Wersaan - Stop lying to my face, Cabbage Face!

And all of a sudden, Bebe has a cabbage where his head was and loses all his hair. Wersaan has cast some kind of transfiguration spell on him.

... the scene ends and instantaneously, the next one shall begin...

THE UNREAL FRIEND

INT. Bebe's apartment, *rainy night*

Wersaan storms into Bebe's apartment. He heads straight for the bedroom. Bebe is right behind him.

Heavy rain and thunder outside, curtains are ripped and flying.

Wersaan - I know for a fact... for a fucking fact.

Wersaan finds Bebe's wife in the bedroom sneaking in a pillow under her cardigan.

Wersaan (contd.) - There you are! Your woman isn't pregnant.

Wersaan punches her in the belly. She falls to the floor, she looks sick. Bebe intervenes, he tries to help her out.

Wersaan - Tucks in a different sized cushion everytime I'm here.

Bebe - She is pregnant, you fool!

Wersaan - She isn't. Just a fucking bait to compel me into hiking your share.

Bebe (to her) - Are you alright?

Wife - Ah! Oh my God!

Bebe - What are you doing here? Get an ambulance. *(To her)* Oh, hold on girl. Hold on! *(To Wersaan)* Do something! Why are you just standing there?!

Wersaan is unmoved. He's looking at the plight of the couple.

Wife - Make him bear the hospital expenses... Ah!

Bebe - I'll make him pay for everything. Don't you worry.

The scene devolves into the dreamy paradigm of Wersaan's imagination.

INT. The café on the corner, *late evening*

Wersaan sits in front of Bebe with an expression of amusement on his face.

Bebe is drinking a large glass of milkshake.

Bebe - I even extended the guitar solo. It allows the emotion to sink in.

Wersaan - I noticed.

Bebe - Of course you did.

A short span of boring silence prevails. Bebe loudly slurps his drink.

Bebe - I should go now.

Wersaan - Bye.

Bebe - Bye.

Wersaan - Convey me best to your wife.

Bebe exits without a reply

Wersaan - Fucker!

Wersaan keeps his notebook back in his pocket. He picks up the menu. His eyes carefully follow the column where the prices are listed.

... the scene ends...

VENUS IN FUR

EXT. A traditional tea stall, *dusk*

Wersaan sips tea with brief, cautious sips. Simultaneously, he eats the chocolate bar Genevieve gave him the night before. He's humming the tune of his song, 'Stars Are Out'.

He takes a fleeting look at the chocolate bar and he takes out his phone to call Genevieve. The phone rings. She doesn't pick up. He tries again. She still fails to answer. He keeps the phone beside him. Moments pass before the phone, all of a sudden, rings. He thinks it's Genevieve but it's his mother. He abstains from picking up. His shoulders fall.

A girl dressed in suspicious black with her hair dyed red passes by. He lifts his head and catches her sight. The dramatic synapses in his head deliver an almost divine presence of a woman. Carefree, she walks through a crowd of drab unknowns. He finishes his bar. He gets up and follows her trail.

MUSICAL BEGINS

Wersaan –

“I can see Venus, unpin herself and fall from the sky,
To kiss the sidewalk you walk along, are you my girl of mine?
The one who talks with love, taps my cheek like no one,
Lock me and lay me down in your cotton touch.

Favour me, and meet these tired eyes,
Else, it won't be a Good Night.

Your scarlet hair rains around, like sailing embers in perfume wind,
The cowlick gives away the skin, I think I have seldom kissed.
The perfect crossover between brown and peanut brown,
The smile on your cheek, the frown on your brow, always has me aroused.

Favor me, and meet these tired eyes,
Else, it won't be a Good Night.

The android cannot love, he has removed those wires,
Your care makes me love, or maybe I'm a liar.”

Wersaan has lost sight of the woman. He, himself, has lost his way in a deluge of people rushing home after a tedious day at work.

INT. The Greasy Compound, *next evening*

Wersaan is seated on a stool singing a melodious yet eerie tune to his evening audience.

Wersaan –

"I have died in your arms, I have burnt all bridges of yesteryears,
I climb the walls, to kiss your lip, only you make me feel real.

Favor me, and meet these tired eyes,
Else, it won't be, a Good Night."

Even the audience joins in for the last lines. An applause, louder than usual, follows.

A guy with a hat - Wow, this wasn't so depressing.

A guy in a tank top - You don't catch the feeling, do you?

The guy with the hat - I do catch the feeling. It's supposed to be funny.

The guy in a tank top - Funny? Are you mad?

*The voices and applause waver. Wersaan gets off the stage.
Sapphire is not too pleased by the loud applause Wersaan is receiving. Sapphire is the young singer who fell off stage last night.*

MUSICAL ENDS

EXT. The balcony out back at the Greasy Compound, *evening*

*Wersaan makes a call that is never picked up.
Eventually Mr Kapoor walks in on him.*

Mr Kapoor – Wersaan! Will you come inside for a moment?

... the scene ends...

SHE ATTRACTS DRAMA

INT. The dressing room of The Greasy Compound, *evening*

He's in the dressing room now with Mr. Kapoor and Sapphire. She was already there.

Sapphire - Hey, Bow Tie.

Wersaan - Hey, Simran.

As it turns out, Sapphire is only a stage name. Wersaan uses 'Simran' instead of 'Sapphire' to display contempt for her music which he finds banal and obscene.

Mr Kapoor - Folks, we have a minor scheduling dilemma this Saturday. Sapphire's leaving the city.

Sapphire - My mother's not well.

Mr Kapoor - Her train leaves this Saturday at...

Sapphire - Midnight sharp.

Mr Kapoor (*contd.*) – Midnight... so asks me to switch your respective sets.

Sapphire - Yes.

Mr Kapoor - I hope you get it?

Wersaan - I don't.

Sapphire - My train leaves at midnight this Saturday, brain dead. Hence, the switching of sets.

Wersaan - I mean why don't you leave straight away after your gig tonight. Why bother to even perform this weekend?

Sapphire - Excuse me! Some of my fans wait an entire week to see me sing and you want me to disappoint them.

Wersaan (*to Simran*) - I can see through what you're doing here.

Mr Kapoor - It's only one Saturday, Wersaan.

Wersaan - Mr Kapoor, you look like a reasonable man to me, are you sure she's not lying?

Sapphire - Lying about what?

Wersaan - Lying to steal my primetime gig.

Sapphire - You're saying I would lie on my mother's health for your God forsaken miserable show.

Wersaan - You are that kind of person, Simran.

Sapphire - How can you?

Sapphire whimpers. Then she clings to Mr Kapoor. Then she begins to cry.

Sapphire - How can you say such a thing?

Mr Kapoor - Bail me out kid! It's only one night.

Wersaan - It's Saturday!

Sapphire (to Mr Kapoor) - Do you believe what he says? Do you think I'm making this up?

Mr Kapoor - No, Sim! I don't.

Sapphire - I do have a personal life, a family unlike you, Bow Tie.

Mr Kapoor - I give you till tonight to make your decision, Wersaan.

Wersaan - I don't think it would matter, since you've made yours. I'll switch.

Wersaan storms out of the dressing room.

Sapphire - You talk like you're doing a favor.

Wersaan - I am.

Sapphire - Your arrogance is breathtaking.

Mr Kapoor - Alright! Shush now. You got your wish.

INT. The bar at The Greasy Compound, *seconds later*

Mr Sippy is cleaning wine glasses with a napkin. Wersaan walks past him with rapid feet.

Mr Sippy - Stacked up to pay your dues?

Wersaan - You don't own the place! Think about your salary before you think about my dues.

Mr Sippy laughs out loud.

Mr Sippy – I like you kid.

Wersaan – Really?

Mr Sippy – I really do.

Wersaan – Well, thank you.

Mr Sippy – Are you gay?

Wersaan – No! No! What...

Wersaan storms out. He exits The Greasy Compound.

EXT. The street outside The Greasy Compound, *dusk*

Wersaan treads out of the building. He looks up at the sky. The sky is overcast. It's drizzling. Soft raindrops caress his face.

... the scene ends...

INSOMNIA CAFE

INT. The Rock n Roll Coffee Store, *early hours of the night*

Wersaan is trying to write a song. He scratches his head, he tears his hair, he scribbles his pen.

Enters a waitress with his cappuccino. She harmlessly places the cup at the table.

The Waitress - Bow Tie? Isn't it?

Bow Tie nods for affirmation

The Waitress - I've checked out your music, like a little bit.

Bow Tie - Did you like it?

The Waitress - You want an honest answer?

Bow Tie - You don't strike me as a dishonest girl.

The Waitress - Umm, I would say it didn't really ease my mood but it was good.

The waitress slips on the chair next to him with seamless movement.

Bow Tie – I write like I've always been, keen and misunderstood.

The Waitress – I don't think you should...

Bow Tie – Write about myself?

The Waitress – No! Think of yourself this way.

Bow Tie – Won't change how I am.

The Waitress – How about a change in perspective?

Bow Tie – Even nature knows how close autumn is.

The Waitress – The weather-beaten flowers do bloom again.

Bow Tie – In vain! Only to perish.

She slides the cup towards him.

The Waitress – Well, your coffee, plain.

Bow Tie – Do I sound lame?

The Waitress – In your lyrics?

Bow Tie – Yes.

The Waitress – Now I'm not a music critic.

Bow Tie – But you're a listener.

The Waitress – I am not the right judge. Writing a song?

Bow Tie – Trying to.

The Waitress – Is it taking too long?

She tries to catch a glimpse of the page. Bow Tie covers the page with his hand.

The Waitress – What's the name of the song?

Bow Tie – 'The Coffee That Wasn't Plain'.

The Waitress – You do have a way with words, don't you. Can I read some?

Bow Tie – I'm not yet done!

The Waitress – Okay.

Wersaan's obtuse nature discourages her from further dialogue.

Bow Tie – Can you please go away? I see you have a job to do.

The Waitress – Maybe there's a reason why people are mean to you.

Bow Tie – I'm sorry! I have to go.

Wersaan gets up to leave, he finds that everyone in the claustrophobia cafe is now looking at him.

A Woman Nearby – Cold winds will bite. I hear the crows.

Old Man – Runaway boy! You have no home.

The Waitress – Fate kisses me with dry lips!

Man At the Exit – Your music's not as good as you think!

Wersaan rushes out of the place.

EXT. A nocturnal, foggy street, night

Dogs are barking, crows are cawing, Wersaan has lost his way in the fog. His guitar that is always on his back isn't there. He has left it behind at the cafe.

Reyan's voice - Where's your guitar, Wes? You can't record an album without it.

He looks around into the thickening obscurity but can't find Reyan or his guitar or Genevieve. He runs like hell. Stopping isn't an option.

... the scene ends...

CLAUSTROPHOBIA

INT. Wersaan's place, *midnight*

He's lying in his bed, at his destitute one room apartment, shivering and tangled in a thin bedsheet. His guitar is by his bedside.

The coldness of his heart extrapolates into his environment. His eyes hurt and his brain freezes. The mortal body has forgone all movement. He wishes he was lying at the bottom of the sea with nothing to see and no air to breathe.

His phone rings. He takes one look at his phone, it's his mother calling again. He decides to silence the phone and tries to sleep, still shivering and sniffing.

TIME TO EAT UP THAT PHONE

INT. The Rock n Roll Coffee Store, *early morning*

Wersaan is calling Genevieve again and again but her phone's switched off. One wonders why he's dialling a switched-off number again and again. He reluctantly decides to call Ritika.

Wersaan - Hey.

Ritika - Hey, Wes.

Wersaan - Sorry to bother you at this hour.

Ritika - It's okay.

Wersaan - I wanted to know... how's Evi?

Ritika - Evi... Umm, I wish I knew.

Wersaan - Haven't you two been in touch, lately?

Ritika - Not exactly. Her phone's switched off, isn't it?

Wersaan - Yes and I wonder why.

Ritika - I'm planning to drop by her place tonight. I'll ask her to call you.

Wersaan - She's back?

Ritika - Yes...?

Wersaan - She didn't tell me she was back.

Ritika - Hold on, back from where?

Wersaan - Her parents' house.

Ritika - Her parents'?

Wersaan - Yes.

Ritika - Maybe she had plans to visit her parents but she didn't. She had a couple more auditions lined up.

Wersaan - Okay... did she get the one, on Wednesday... I think it was.

Ritika - We didn't talk about it. Her face said it all.

Wersaan - Alright. If she's around and she wants to talk... to me, tell her she can call me.

Ritika - I will.

Wersaan - Bye.

Ritika - Bye.

Wersaan's sits there with a blank expression on his already weary face. He contemplates. He feels unsafe.

Meanwhile his phone rings again. It's not Evi, it's Bebe!

Bebe - Where are you?

Wersaan - No clue. Let me ask someone.

Bebe - You didn't turn up to collect your material.

Wersaan - Hmm... Ah! it slipped my mind. I'm sorry.

Bebe - I waited for you, you know.

Wersaan - So now we are even.

Bebe - Even?

Wersaan - Can I get the songs from you, some time, today?

Bebe - Find me at the HOBs, around seven.

Wersaan - I'll be there.

Bebe - Don't forget.

Wersaan - I won't.

Bebe - I have a congested schedule.

Wersaan - I said I won't!

Wersaan has never been so pissed over nothing. He hangs up the call.

... the scene ends...

THE HOUSE OF BLUES

INT. The House of Blues, dining area, *evening*

Wersaan quietly sits at a table. He's with Bebe and two members of some other music group. One of the members carries a fedora hat and wears sunglasses. The other member has fashioned his hair into an unsubtle quiff.

Bebe – You know them, Wes, don't you?

Bow Tie (*to Bebe*) – Their reputation precedes them, Bebe... or does it?

Glitch One – If it doesn't, it soon will!

Bow Tie (*interrupts*) – The bitches call you The Glitches.

Bebe – You haven't lost your humour, Wes.

Glitch One – He has lost his mind though.

Glitch Two – Come on guys, we all know Bow Tie, he can be edgy sometimes.

Glitch One – Why doesn't he fuck off then?!

Glitch Two – Are you here to celebrate our success?

Bow Tie – I'm here to get my material from Bebe.

Bebe (*interrupts*) – Lets drink our beers while they are still cold.

The glasses are raised and lager is drunk. Wersaan finishes his beer in one go and belches loudly.

Bow Tie – It is one of your songs, isn't it, that goes like, "I'm a cold motherfucker who sucks other brothers" ...

And with this Wersaan breaks into loud laughter. Dead silence has fallen over The Glitches yet Bebe shamelessly giggles. They barely flinch. Wersaan is trying to get his laughter under control.

Bow Tie - So, to what do I owe the pleasure?

Bebe - The Glitches are recording a studio album and they want me to be their sound engineer.

Bow Tie - Wow! Really? Are you guys on budget constraints?

Bebe - I'm as good an engineer a musician of your calibre deserves.

Bow Tie - Come on, Bebe, I was breaking your balls.

Glitch One - We both have known Bebe, a long time. So, it felt reasonable to go with him.

Glitch Two - And he's aware of our musical temperament.

Bebe - See, this is what I call gratitude. Faith!

Bow Tie *(to Bebe)* – I keep coming back to you despite your shenanigans, Bebe, how's that for faith?

Glitch Two - Let's not bicker on a day like today, let's drink and celebrate.

Bow Tie - What else are we doing?

Glitch One picks up a bottle of whiskey and empties it into each one of their glasses. Bebe, Glitch One and Glitch Two raise their glasses, in this order, followed by Wersaan. He has refused to smile yet the others do. Their smiles seem natural but banality is the biological mother of this naturality.

Glitch Two - To our new album!

Bebe - And to our undying friendship!

Bow Tie - To our undying friendship.

Cheers, drinks and conversation is dragged on.

Bebe - Did you check my recent upload?

Glitch One - Yes, I did. It was gloomy.

Bebe – Midway through the song is a guitar solo, the recording he gave had barely twenty seconds of it yet I, performing acrobats with music as I often do, turned it into a forty-second robust guitar solo.

Bow Tie – And friends, that is the highlight of my three-minute song.

Bebe – It comes off like a continuous forty second recording. Doesn't it?

Glitch One – It doesn't, actually.

Bebe (*interrupts*) - I'm planning to do something similar with your percussions.

Glitch Two - We still need a drummer though, to do the overdubs.

Bebe - Don't worry. I have you covered.

Glitch One - You want to join in, Bow Tie?

Bow Tie - For what?

Glitch One - Vocals and writing. We give you credit. Of course.

Bow Tie - Thanks for the offer but I don't have a taste for your kind of music.

Glitch Two - We are even making music videos, will fetch you some much-needed popularity.

Bebe - I tied them up with a video director.

Bow Tie (*interrupts*) - No! But I appreciate you asking.

Bow Tie drinks his whiskey. The others too, from their respective glasses.

Glitch Two - I wonder why you haven't made an album yet.

Bebe - He dropped the idea.

Bow Tie - I haven't. I'm only waiting for a favourable support system.

Glitch One - As long as you're not recording one, try putting out some music videos.

Bow Tie - Is it necessary?

Glitch Two - How else will people know you exist.

Bow Tie - I believe my music is supposed to announce my existence.

Glitch One - What we are trying to say...

Bebe - Leave it, guys, it's not really his thing.

Bow Tie - I can speak for myself, my audio mixer.

Glitch One laughs out loud at Bebe's denigration.

Glitch Two - We mean to say there should be something controversial about a singer...

Glitch One - Or appealing that people feel like buying into. This is why we are making videos.

Bebe - And I do a lot more than just 'audio mixing', dude.

Bow Tie - Yeah, you beg for money.

Glitch One - I second that.

Glitch Two - Easy, people. Come on. Tonight's not the night to load our guns.

Bow Tie - I think it is. It is, Popsicle and Biscuit Abs. Videos that look obscene and controversial, why? To pull one over the audience. I'm not a model, who strips himself for people's flagellation, much to my own disappointment but I'm not. I'm a musician, rather, my music is supposed to do the talking, not my chest hair.

Glitch One - What's wrong, mate?

Bow Tie - The fact that I'm the only one here drunk, not on whiskey but on art. That is what's wrong!

Wersaan gets up and storms off the scene. Bebe is vexed.

Bebe - Unreasonable ego doesn't qualify as controversial!

Glitch Two - When doesn't he look worked up.

THE SECOND ACT

INT. The restroom at The House of Blues, *the night*

Wersaan is standing in front of a mirror, he's closely assessing his demeanour.

Bow Tie - Controversial. Appealing.

He lifts up his shirt, he's gauging his physical appeal.

Bow Tie - No one knows anything. Nobody.

His phone rings, Genevieve has called him.

Wersaan crawls behind the door of a toilet stall to talk to her.

Bow Tie - Remember me?

Genevieve - Don't be ridiculous.

Bow Tie - I have every right to be.

Genevieve - Have I called the right number, gentleman on the other end?

Bow Tie - Yes you have.

Genevieve - Am I talking to Wes?

Bow Tie - Yes.

Genevieve - No, I'm not. I'm talking to a gawky misanthrope who goes by Bow Tie. Will you fetch Wersaan for me, please. Will you?!

Bow Tie - Wersaan, the rightful heir to Glam Rock and Country Blues, I have a call for you.

Wersaan tries to switch up his voice to separately portray his musical persona, Bow Tie from himself. The difference is not much audible yet.

Wersaan - Who is it?

Bow Tie - The femme fatale who ghosted you.

Genevieve - Don't mislead him.

Bow Tie - He's a grown-up.

Genevieve - How have you been, Bow Tie?

Bow Tie - Ridiculous.

Genevieve - Good for you.

Bow Tie - Wersaan is here.

Wersaan - Hello, Evi?

Genevieve - Where are you?

Wersaan - In a restroom.

Genevieve - What are you doing there?

Wersaan - Escaping a lecture on industrial ethics and cannibal-like upsides of visual media.

Genevieve - Who's qualified enough to lecture you?

Wersaan - The hipsters.

Genevieve - Sapphire?

Wersaan - No.

Genevieve - Is it that duo?

Wersaan - The Glitches.

Genevieve - The bitches who call themselves the glitches.

Wersaan - They are offering me a place in their debut lineup.

Genevieve - Debut lineup?

Wersaan - They won a lottery and now they are recording an album.

Genevieve - Great.

Wersaan - Yes. Good for them.

Genevieve - Did you accept their offer?

Wersaan - Oh no, I turned them down.

Genevieve - Turned them down? Why?

Wersaan - They want to bait me into selling my soul and I'm not, I'm not taking it. I'm clever enough to see through it.

Genevieve - This could be your break, you know.

Wersaan - I don't care.

Genevieve - This is your response. 'I don't care'?

Wersaan - Yes.

Genevieve - I don't know, Wes. I would have suggested otherwise.

Wersaan - I'm delighted I didn't ask you then.

Genevieve - Look if you're not in the mood, I'd be more than happy to hang up.

Wersaan - Suit yourself.

Genevieve - This call now seems like a big mistake.

Wersaan - Perhaps because Ritika asked you to make this call.

Genevieve - What?

Wersaan - Even she answers my phone more often than you.

Genevieve - If I didn't know you well enough, I'd deem this attitude of yours as selfish and... and insensitive.

Wersaan - I'm not a liar at least.

Genevieve is taken aback by this statement of his. She has picked up the hint.

Genevieve - Good Christ, you're a child, Wes!

Wersaan - With you, maybe.

Genevieve - A crying, lost and foolish child. You live in a myopic world; you better get yourself out of it.

Genevieve hangs up the call. Wersaan sits there wondering how he shouldn't have said what he said.

He decides to call her again but she dismisses it. Wiping his eyes, he walks out of the bathroom stall.

INT. The dining area at The House of Blues, *night*

Wersaan walks to their table and picks up his guitar.

Bebe - Alright now?

Wersaan - So long.

Wersaan exits.

... the scene ends...

DYSMORPHIC AND BENT

INT. His one-room apartment, the bathroom, *nearing midnight*

He's washing his face at the basin. He's without a shirt and he's furious. He looks at himself in the mirror now, closely. The tapering, cold fingers move over the stretch marks that stretch across his shoulder, his petrified face and his shabby hair.

He goes inside and comes back with David Bowie's 'Heroes'. The image of David Bowie appeals to him and he has impulsively decided to give himself a similar haircut. His actions are incoherent. He picks up the clipper, uses a fine pair of scissors, some water and dips his fingers in hair wax. However, failing to replicate the hairdo, he smashes the clipper against the basin in disgust, a fragment of the plastic breaks, ricochets and hits him on his face. The right eye bleeds.

A look in the mirror, the sight of blood, splashes of water to clean the blood off his face, the sting of the wound, Wersaan is in disarray.

A fleeting look in the mirror while washing, he notices his right eye is changing its colour, it's green, peridot, beige, opal and now it is colourless, and the very next moment normality is restored but with one minor or arguably major difference, the right pupil is smaller than the left one. He's kind of impressed by the abnormal eye, not bothered at all. Is this the unconventional look he's looking for or the controversial one?

Wersaan throws his shirt on and walks out. He's probably delusional.

Wersaan is about to leave his apartment. He wears his ragged jacket, picks up his guitar and steps in front of the door. A brief rapture of footsteps is heard outside in the corridor, the footsteps fade away.

A bit hesitant, he turns the knob, to his amazement, the door is locked. He hassles to open it but it doesn't open. The number of footsteps outside is gradually increasing like a stampede ravaging the corridor.

Suddenly, his phone rings. It's his mother again. The footsteps outside pace away leaving behind a chilling quiet. He is going to answer the call.

Mother - Finally!

Wersaan winds up on his bed wiping cold sweat off his forehead.

Bow Tie - Hey, mum.

Mother - Where have you been?

Bow Tie - Where I always am.

Mother - It bothers me when you don't answer my calls. You should know that.

Bow Tie - Your timing isn't often the best one.

Mother - Do I need an appointment to talk with you now, Mr Rockstar?

Bow Tie - One day you will.

Mother - Your sister was absolutely clueless when I asked her about you.

Bow Tie - Makes sense. I don't see her anymore.

Mother - You don't see her anymore?

Bow Tie - No.

Mother - Why, little one?

Bow Tie - She is not very welcoming and she can't pretend either.

Mother - You have the wrong impression. She asked me to invite you over to her place. It's her anniversary next week.

Bow Tie - Tell her, I can't make it.

Mother - Why? What's the excuse now, Wersaan? Why can't you go then, it's her anniversary?

Bow Tie - I have an obligation to fulfil.

Mother - I thought musicians had a flexible time table.

Bow Tie - They do. And my music occupies most of it.

Mother - You won't be going then?

Bow Tie - Send her my apologies.

A brief silence follows. Wersaan shuffles into a cozy posture.

Bow Tie - Is this it?

Mother - Your father happened to look into your account, a few days back.

Bow Tie - Why would he?

Mother - I asked him to.

Bow Tie - You suffocate me.

Mother - You can ask us for help, you know that?

Bow Tie - I won't.

Mother - I'm worried for you.

Bow Tie - Great, but you both are a few years too late.

Mother - What do you mean?

Bow Tie - Nothing. Just keep yourself away from me.

Mother - What a hateful thing to say.

Bow Tie - Oh, come on now!

On the other end of the line, she is tearing up.

Mother - Come home for the new year, little one.

Bow Tie - I'll think about it.

Mother - I want to see you.

Bow Tie - And I'll think about it!

Mother - Forgive me if I said something wrong.

Bow Tie - You didn't.

Mother - I know I did. Your mother's growing old.

Bow Tie - It's alright, mummy. I'll call you again.

Mother - Please.

Bow Tie - I'll call you. Okay?

Mother (*contd.*) - Don't forget.

Bow Tie - I won't! Bye.

Mother - Don't forget to call me, please.

Wersaan wishes to say something but he doesn't, he hangs up on her. He tosses the phone by one side and falls back in bed. Unable to think anything positive about the life that lays before him, he hoarsely cries. He removes the pillow from under his bed and covers his mouth. The cries though muffled sound even louder now.

A knock is heard at the door. Wersaan is initially oblivious to the knocking. Crying is his number one priority for now.

A few seconds later, another knock is heard. This second knock is followed by a series of knocks. He is aggravated. Another knock proves to be his tipping point, he claws his nails into the pillow and rips it to shreds. The feathers levitate, his altered vision sharpens.

He puts on a composed demeanour, gets up and opens the door.

Delivery Man - Good evening, can you tell me which apartment does Mr Kishore live in?

Wersaan - How am I supposed to know, you're the delivery guy?

Delivery Man - It says room number 413, but there are no number plates on this floor.

Wersaan - 413?

Delivery Man - Yes.

Wersaan - The one over there.

Wersaan points with his index finger.

Wersaan - Next to the wall with the damp patches, 'BEWARE' written on it.

A gap in conversation ensues insinuating tension. The Delivery Man looks at Wersaan with a smouldering stare.

Delivery Man - Your name, sir?

The untimely question ushers in discomfort. Wersaan says nothing. He slowly shuts the door on him and waits behind it.

The man begins to walk away, the sound of his footsteps fizzle away. Wersaan who had his ears on the door until now opens it and looks out. He looks left and looks right. No one is spotted in the corridor. He shuts the door.

INT. The bathroom of his one room apartment, *blue dawn*

Magenta, yellow and bright blue lights illuminate him. He's in deep rumination under the shower. The water level keeps on rising. He's totally engulfed by his thoughts.

... the scene ends...

Inclined to know what happens to Wersaan from here onwards?

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