

WAITING FOR AZRAEL

**Written and directed by
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21/03/2010

SEQUENCE 1—Credits—
INT. DAY — (Nasser-Ali's bedroom)

Close up. In slow motion, a violin falls and breaks in pieces. Meanwhile, roll the credits.

SEQUENCE 2—INTRODUCTION—
EXT/INT. DAY — (Music store.)

The camera moves slowly towards to a music store. We enter in the store where we discover Nasser-Ali, playing violin. (We see his back.)

A couple of violins are on the counter of the store. (We understand he has already tried several violins.)

Close up of Nasser-Ali. He's trying a violin.

The salesman stares at Nasser-Ali, impressed.

NASSER-ALI (looking at the violin he was trying previously):
"I'll take this one."

MIRZA (the salesman):
« Excellent choice, Master! »

Fade to black

SEQUENCE 3—EXT. DAY - (Street, avenue, the year is 1958.)

Nasser-Ali has already left the music store.
He holds a violin case.

The camera moves down to focus on Nasser-Ali's legs as he walks along the street.

We see the legs of a woman, accompanied by a small boy. These are Irâne's and her grandson's legs.

Nasser-Ali's legs and those of Irâne and her grandson cross paths.

NASSER-ALI (voice-over):

"Irâne !?"

Irâne and her grandson stop and turn around.

IRÂNE:

"Erm... yes... Yes, it's me."

The camera shifts up as Nasser-Ali makes a step towards Irâne. (He has turned around.)

He has taken his hat off.

Irâne has her back to the camera, so we can't see her face.

NASSER-ALI:

"You don't remember me?"

IRÂNE:

"I'm sorry, no... Really no, not at all."

The camera shifts down to show Irâne's grandson (a boy some four years of age). He whimpers.

GRANDSON:

"Grandma, can we go? I'm hungry now !"

IRÂNE:

"Yes, alright, we're going, sweetheart."

After a few seconds' hesitation:

NASSER-ALI:

"I beg your pardon. I must have been mistaken."

IRÂNE:

"No harm done sir. Goodbye."

Nasser-Ali watches Irâne and the little boy walk away.
The boy turns his head towards Nasser-Ali.
He sticks his tongue out, watching Nasser-Ali angrily and intensely.

Nasser-Ali puts his hat on.
He walks out of shot.

Fade to black.

TITLE:

Waiting for Azrael

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 4—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Nasser-Ali tries the violin he just bought.
He stops after a few notes, disappointed.
He tries again.
He definitely stops playing.

SEQUENCE 5—EXT. Late afternoon— (Street to the music store.)

Nasser-Ali comes into shot.
He is walking very fast, heels drumming loudly on the pavement.
He is carrying a violin case.

SEQUENCE 6—INT. Late afternoon— (Music store)

The camera follows a flying violin case.

The salesman is astonished as the violin case is thrown at his face. He catches it the best he can.

Nasser-Ali red-faced with anger comes into the shot.

NASSER-ALI:

"Yet again you tried to fool me!"

MIRZA :

"But I..."

Nasser-Ali continues even more angrily:

NASSER-ALI:

"The sound is absolutely terrible!"

The salesman tries to calm Nasser-Ali down.

MIRZA :

« But... But it suited you perfectly yesterday... »

NASSER-ALI:

"Shut up!"

MIRZA :

"Please, don't be angry. The last thing I want to do is disappoint you. You are an absolute master. My late father worshipped you..."

The salesman shows another violin to Nasser-Ali.

MIRZA :

« Please! Take this one! I just received it. It's a really rare instrument! I'll exchange it... »

NASSER-ALI

"You take me for a fool? You cheap crook! I want my money back!"

**SEQUENCE 7—EXT. Late afternoon—
(Street—Outside the music store)**

Nasser-Ali leaves the shop.

A few people on the street are watching the scene with curiosity.
He is now standing on the street outside the shop.
He turns towards the salesman and shouts:

NASSER-ALI:

"You are a swine!! Just like your father!"

Nasser-Ali leaves with fury.

The salesman is downcast. He comes out of his store.
He looks left and right to see if people are watching him and also to make sure that Nasser-Ali has really left.

MIRZA :

"I won't allow you to insult my father! You hear?"

He takes a step forward as if he had summoned up a little courage, and pointing with his finger he adds:

MIRZA :

"Did you hear me? Huhh!?"

SEQUENCE 8—EXT.— Late afternoon— (Street, sunset.)

Nasser-Ali is walking along the street, face to the camera.

NASSER-ALI:

"Swine! Son of a bitch!"

He spits on the floor.

Cut.

SEQUENCE 9—INT.— Late afternoon— (Nasser-Ali's kitchen.)

General shot of the family: the mother (Faranguisse) is washing the dishes, the eight year-old girl (Lili) is slumped at the kitchen table, making her homework. The five year-old boy (Cyrus) is drawing.

Cyrus:

“Hey! I finished my homework!”

Lili:

“Pfff... You don’t even go to school! What homework?”

Cyrus:

“Look!”

Lili:

“What is this? A worm?”

Cyrus:

“No! This is the horse of John Wayne! “

Cyus moves his drawing like a running horse, imitating the sound at the same time.

Lili:

“No, it’s a worm.”

Cyrus:

“This is the horse of John Wayne!!”

Lili:

“It’s a worm.”

Cyrus: (almost crying)

“Mummy...”

Faranguisse:

“Oh! Lili, be nice to your brother.”

Lili:

“Yes mom.”

Then, after a while :

Lili: (whispering very silently moving her index as if it was a worm)

“It’s a worm.”

The door slams (off).

Faranguisse looks towards the door.

SEQUENCE 10—INT.— Late afternoon— (The entrance of Nasser-Ali's house.)

We see Nasser-Ali taking off his hat, scarf and coat .

Faranguisse turns her head towards the door.

Lili throws a glance.

Cyrus, content to know that his father is back, comes happily into the entrance.

Cyrus holds out his arms in enthusiasm when he sees his father.

He is holding a sheet of paper.

Cyrus (holding out his arms to his father) :

"Daddy! Look at my drawing! I made a worm!!"

Nasser-Ali strides angrily through the entrance, ignoring his son, and slams a door behind him. (Sound of door slamming, off).

Cyrus holds his arms outstretched, still clutching the drawing, then lets them fall to his sides.

Faranguisse is standing by the kitchen door.

She shakes her head in dismay.

SEQUENCE 11—INT. NIGHT— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Night. The only light in Nasser-Ali's bedroom is moonlight.

We see Nasser-Ali lying down on his bed. His arms behind his head, he is watching the ceiling. He’s pensive.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 12/A— EXT. DAY— (Street of Teheran.)

Abdi, Nasser-Ali's brother buys a newspaper.
He pays and then follows his road.
Dolly shot— Abdi is reading his newspaper while walking.
The camera leaves him and enters into café Naderi.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 12/B— INT. DAY— (Café Naderi.)

At the very end of the café where we discover a badly-shaven Nasser-Ali sitting alone, lost in his thoughts.
A waiter serves him some tea.

Suddenly off camera we hear somebody knocking at the window.
Through the window Nasser-Ali's brother, Abdi, a big smile on his face, asks with all kind of gesture if he can come join him for a tea.

Cut.

Abdi enters into the shot. He leans towards his brother and hugs him.

Abdi :

« No! No! Please sit! How are you? »

Abdi sits beside Nasser-Ali. He throws his newspaper on the table and with his index points the big title.

Abdi pointing his newspaper:

Abdi:

"Do you see that? ... When I think we were the first to nationalize our oil... "

Abid points a photo of the Shah of Iran accompanied by Eisenhower and Churchill.

Abdi sighs.

Abdi:

"I don't have any faith in the future any more. Do you remember the spring of '51? We were so enthusiastic! (He holds up two fingers). Two years of euphoria!"

Abdi returns to the charge.

Abdi:

"Hell, we almost succeeded and now what? Our Prime Minister is in exile and those bastard Americans and british own everything!"

A couple of people in the café turn towards Abdi. They seem amused.

The waiter comes to take abdi's order.

Abdi :

« A French coffee please. »

His expression turns serious.

Abdi:

“They think they're pumping our oil. In reality, it's our blood they're sucking.”

With his hand, Abdi imitates a leech on his neck.

Abdi looks at Nasser-Ali.

Nasser-Ali's thoughts are clearly elsewhere.

Abdi:

"Tell me if I'm boring you, ..."

NASSER-ALI (startled):

"What? No..."

Nasser-Ali gazes straight ahead for a few seconds and then, without looking at Abdi:

NASSER-ALI:

"My violin got broken."

Abdi:

"God in Heaven! What happened!!?"

NASSER-ALI:

"What does it matter?"

Both brothers remain silent for a while.

Nasser-Ali is in a world of his own.

The waiter comes back with the French coffee.

Abdi :

« Thank you.»

Abdi takes a sip of coffee.

Suddenly, Abdi has a brilliant idea.

Abdi:

"Have you been to see Mirza? He has some great instruments!"

NASSER-ALI:

"That crook? He tried to cheat me. Each violin worse than the rest: like father, like son... A family of degenerates!"

After a short moment :

NASSER-ALI:

"It's all ruined now. I can't play any more."

Abdi, taking a long draw on his cigarette, seems to have come up with another brilliant idea.

Abdi:

"Hey, that reminds me. One of my old friends lives in Mashad."

He takes another draw and continues:

Abdi:

"I was round at his place last month. You'll never guess what he had..."

Nasser-Ali and Abdi are in profile, face to face. They turn black and, in the space between them, appears Houshang. He has a salesman smile on his lips.

He holds a brightly glinting violin up to the camera.

HOUSHANG :

"Look at this! It's a Stradivarius! It once belonged to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart!"

Just after having presented the violin, Houshang disappears the same way he appeared.

The two brothers come to light.

Nasser-Ali seems a little interested.

Abdi:

"A unique instrument!"

And, whispering as if passing on state secrets:

At last Nasser-Ali's gaze clears. He looks as if he is about to say something, but is interrupted by his brother, Abdi:

Abdi:

"Ssshh! Don't say a word. I'll take care of it. I'll send him a telegram this very day. Tomorrow, you can go and see him from me."

SEQUENCE 13—INT. NIGHT— (Nasser-Ali's kitchen.)

Nasser-Ali and his family are sitting at the kitchen table, eating dinner in a heavy silence.

Nasser-Ali is not eating. He's playing with his food, drawing shapes with the spoon in his plate.

He stops suddenly and looks at his wife.

NASSER-ALI:

" I'm going to Rasht tomorrow."

Farangisse first casts a glance to Nasser-Ali and then continues eating as if she had not heard a word.

NASSER-ALI (off):

"I'm going to buy a violin."

Close up on Lili and then Cyrus' face.

The two children will follow the conversation like spectators at a tennis match.

Ils ont l'air inquiets.

NASSER-ALI (off):

"Did you hear what I said?"

Faranguisse:

"I'm not deaf like your mother!"

NASSER-ALI :

"Leave the dead where they are!"

Faranguisse :

"Whatever. Except that in the mean time you've forgotten I'll be working all day. Who's going to look after him?"

She points at Cyrus.

The camera pans to Cyrus who looks down, embarrassed at the being the centre of attention.

NASSER-ALI :

"How should I know? Ask the neighbour!"

Faranguisse:

"You know very well she's away this week!"

Faranguisse continues, more aggressively than ever:

Faranguisse (off):

"You want to go to Rasht? So take him with you!"

The two children, sensing the explosion to come, push back their chairs and disappear as the argument takes its course. We see them leaving one after another (first leaves Lili, followed by Cyrus).

NASSER-ALI (off):

"You know perfectly well I can't take him with me! It's not my problem! If you..."

Faranguisse (off):

"If I what? If I had a husband with a job, I could stay at home and look after my son. Like a real lady!"

Overview. Nasser-Ali and Faranguisse have come to their feet.

NASSER-ALI (shouting):

"All this is your fault!"

The kitchen table separates the two.

Faranguisse:

"It's always all my fault!"

NASSER-ALI:

" YOU BITCH!"

Faranguisse:

"BASTARD!"

Nasser-Ali raises a finger to the sky and yells.

NASSER-ALI:

"I'm going by myself, do you hear me? BY MYSELF!!!"

SEQUENCE 14—INT. DAY— Early morning, sunrise— (In the Bus.)

Nasser-Ali is sitting in the bus, behind a few rows of passengers.

Close-up on Nasser-Ali.

He doesn't seem happy.

He looks down to his right.

We discover Cyrus sitting next to him, as happy as can be.

The little boy looks at his father in an extremely charming and playful way.

Nasser-Ali casts a look of consternation at the boy.

He then turns his head and looks at the landscape scroll.

SEQUENCE 15—EXT. DAY— Early morning, sunrise—Bus.

An overhead shot of the bus leaving the city.
The bus wends its way through the scenery.

SEQUENCE 16—INT. DAY— 10.00 AM— (In the bus.)

Cyrus is humming songs and the expression on the faces of the other passengers shows they find this rather cute.

A passenger (an old lady) on the seat across the aisle (in the same row as Nasser-Ali and Cyrus) leans forward and sings along with the boy.

Cyrus :

« Raconte nous petit merle
Raconte nous jusqu'à demain
Raconte nous petit merle
Jusqu'à demain, jusqu'à demain, jusqu'à demain... » (French song.)

SEQUENCE 17—EXT. DAY— 1.00 PM—

View of the bus on the road to Rasht.
Cyrus continues to sing.

Cross-dissolve .

SEQUENCE 18—INT. AFTERNOON— 5.00 PM — (In the bus.)

Cyrus continues singing aloud, shouting and waving his arms around. He is in a frenzy of delight.

Cyrus (off):

« Mon ballon est rouge
La la la la la
Mon ballon est rouge
La la la la la la la ... » (French song.)

Close up on the passengers (the old lady on the seat across the aisle and some other people in the background). They look extremely tired (they can't bare Cyrus singing any more).

Then the camera shows a wider shot of Nasser-Ali and Cyrus (still singing). Behind them, we can see the angry face of an outraged passenger. Nasser-Ali casts a despairing look at Cyrus.

He appears behind people and pretend to shoot them, using his fingers as a gun.

Cyrus:

“ Pan ! Pan ! Pan ! Pan ! ”

He's now next to the driver, as happy as ever, pretending to play the bugle.

Cyrus :

“ Rio Grande ! Hee Haa !

We go to Messico! ”

Despite fatigue, the driver remains stoic.

SEQUENCE 19—EXT. EVENING— (Road.)

We see first the bus leaving from far away.

We still hear Cyrus singing.

Cyrus :

« Dooooors mon bébé dors dors

Dooooors doooooors... » (French song.)

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 20—EXT. EVENING— (In the Bus.)

In the night the bus continues its road in the mountains and Cyrus continues singing.

Cyrus :

« Le soleil brille

Moi je veux des billes... » (French song.)

SEQUENCE 21—EXT. NIGHT— 2.00 AM (Road.)

The camera films the interior of the bus from the outside. (Overview)

The camera comes closer to the bus windows, still from the exterior, tracking from the front to the back of the bus. We see passengers dead tired, mouths hanging open like corpses.

As the camera is moving, we see Cyrus, the only one really awake. He is gagged, but still singing. He can be heard from outside the bus (although the sound is muffled).

Cyrus :

« Et les mains
et les mains
et la tête
et la tête
A a a a
Alouette... » (French song.)

The bus gets out of shot.

The only thing we can see is a starry sky.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 22—EXT. DAY— (Bus Station. Rasht.)

View of the bus station, with a bit of the city of Rasht in the background.

The bus comes into the shot, then it stops at the station.

Nasser-Ali and Cyrus get off the bus.

Cyrus waves the hand to the passengers (still in the bus) in the most enthusiastic way.

Cyrus:

“Good-bye! Good-bye my friends! Good-bye!!!”

The bus leaves the station and continues its road while the rest of the passengers look daggers at them.

Nasser-Ali and Cyrus are on their way to the town.

SEQUENCE 23—INT. DAY— (Bazar of Rasht.)

Nasser-Ali and Cyrus come in the bazaar, face to camera.

Nasser-Ali consults a man.

NASSER-ALI:

"Excuse-me. Do you know where I can find Mr. Houshang?"

Man:

"Yes, yes, you go straight ahead, then you turn right, then left, then right again."

Cyrus seems to be attracted by something.

He suddenly leaves away his father who doesn't notice anything.

Nasser-Ali thanks the man for the information and continues on his way, leaving Cyrus behind.

After a while.

Suddenly, Nasser-Ali comes back into the shot. He seems worried. He looks left and right. The man who gave him the information, points his finger in a direction. Nasser-Ali rushes.

SEQUENCE 26—INT. DAY— (Toy store.)

The camera is inside the toy store. It films from inside what is happening outside.

Cyrus, his forehead glued to the showcase, is watching the toys. There are toy soldiers, an electric train, an airplane, ... the marvellous showcase captivates Cyrus. Nasser-Ali suddenly comes into the shot, he takes Cyrus by the hand and drags him along in his wake. Cyrus follows his father, twisting as much as he can his neck to watch the toys a little more.

SEQUENCE 27—INT. DAY— (Houshang's store.)

The camera is positioned inside the store. It truly is an Ali Baba's cave.

Nasser-Ali and Cyrus are inside the store.

Nasser-Ali looks around.

Cyrus touches everything he sets his eyes on.

Nasser-Ali coughs to announce his presence.

When there is no response, he ventures:

NASSER-ALI:

"Excuse me? Is anyone there? ... Mr. Houshang?"

On the right side of Nasser-Ali there is a couple of plastic heads with wigs on them. Suddenly one of the head starts talking. It's houshang's head.

(Houshang is Abdi's friend)

He looks high on something.

Houshang:

"Who's asking?"

Cyrus is clearly scared, and hides behind his father.

NASSER-ALI:

"I'm Nasser-Ali Ali Khan, Abdi's brother."

Houshang:

"Hooaaaaa!"

Houshang suddenly springs to his feet, like a conjuror.

Houshang stands facing Nasser-Ali.

Houshang:

"I've been expecting you!"

He clasps Nasser-Ali in a warm embrace. Nasser-Ali flinches and is visibly uncomfortable.

NASSER-ALI: (embarrassed)

"How do you do, sir!"

Houshang:

"Don't call me "sir"! Call me Houshang! I worship you, I adore you, I love you!"

Nasser-Ali notices that his son is playing with a pistol (something like a pirate's musket) he has found. Nasser-Ali discreetly removes the pistol and puts it on a high shelf.

NASSER-ALI:

"So, you are the man selling the Stradivarius I presume?"

Houshang grabs a small wooden donkey and presses on its ear.
A cigarette comes out from the donkey's ass.

Houshang:

"Among other things... Do you want a cigarette?"

NASSER-ALI:

"No thanks, not right away?"

In the meantime, Cyrus is walking around the shop with an oriental dancer's bra on his head.

Cyrus:

"Yeah! I am a John Wayne!!!"

Nasser-Ali notices the bra and removes it from his son's head.

Houshang plunges his hand in a small box filled with stones. We hear the sound of the twinkling stones.

Houshang:

"I also deal in stones, semi-precious and precious."

Houshang takes out a huge pink, transparent and shiny stone.

Houshang:

"Look at this! Real diamond! The second biggest in the world!!!"

Houshang turns the diamond and we see Nasser-Ali like in a kaleidoscope.

Houshang:

“As you can see my friend, I deal in almost everything: saffron, opium, furs, antics, magic wands, ...”

At that, he takes up a wand and taps it on one of the branches of a chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

Cyrus claps his hands.

A cloud of gold dust falls and covers the screen.

Fade to gold.

SEQUENCE 28—INT.— (In the back of the store.)

Houshang is preparing the opium (the charcoal, the opium pipe...) Bowls full of food are scattered around.

Houshang and Nasser-Ali are sitting cross-legged on the floor, on a magnificent carpet scattered with mounds of cushions. Cyrus is stuffing his face with the food while climbing on his father's back and tugging at his clothes.

Houshang:

"A cup of tea my friend?"

Cyrus:

"Daddy, I'm hungry!"

While accepting a cup of tea, Nasser-Ali responds to his son.

NASSER-ALI:

"But Cyrus, you're eating right now!"

Nasser-Ali to Houshang :

NASSER-ALI :

« Oh... Thank you. »

Cyrus wraps himself around his father (as children do) and, between mouthfuls, asks him questions.

Cyrus:

"Daddy! What are we doing now?"

Nasser-Ali takes a sugar cube and puts it in his mouth. (The Iranian way.)

Cyrus:

"Daddy! Are we going on the bus?"

Cyrus passes under the tea cup and almost reverses it.

NASSER-ALI:

"No! Not yet."

Nasser-Ali again to Houshang :

NASSER-ALI:

" I've come a long way for this violin. Naturally, I wouldn't want to offend you by my impatience... But if could I just see it?"

Houshang:

"Of course, my friend!"

Cyrus:

"Daddy! I'm thirsty!"

Houshang tend la pipe à opium qu'il vient de préparer à Nasser-Ali.

Houshang :

« But first, test this opium and relax! »

NASSER-ALI:

"I really do need to relax... The kid never stopped singing the whole trip."

Houshang:

"Hmm. A future artist, no doubt!"

Cyrus :

« Hiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii!! »

Shot of Cyrus running around the room on all fours, pretending to be a horse.

Cyrus:

"Look, Daddy, look! I am the horse of John Wayne!"

Shot of Houshang and Nasser-Ali.

Houshang:

"I've got just the thing to calm him down."

He clicks opens a shiny flick-knife. Nasser-Ali recoils, but Houshang instantly drives the knife into his block of opium and cuts off a tiny sliver.

Houshang:

"That (showing the opium in the palm of his hand) in a glass of milk will do the trick. It's what my grandmother used to give me when I was over-excited."

Cross-dissolve.

The shot opens with the half-emptied glass of milk. The camera zooms back and we discover Cyrus, sleeping under a blanket, beside his father. He is still holding the glass of milk in one hand. Nasser-Ali seems very calm.

Houshang finally brings the violin to Nasser-Ali.

Houshang:

"And here is the wonder of wonders."

Nasser-Ali watches the violin carefully.

Houshang:

"I remember, the first time I heard you playing, I said to myself, I've never heard anything so beautiful. Really! Just to think of it, I feel like crying. Look! Look at these tears!"

Houshang shows his tears to Nasser-Ali with insistence.

NASSER-ALI:

"Yes, yes, I can see... You're crying."

Houshang: (drying his tears with his hand)

"And this priceless marvel, I give it to you for free... Only one thousand toumans."

NASSER-ALI:

"One thousand!?"

Houshang:

"I paid it myself 1049 toumans. I pay 49 toumans from my own pocket. And why do I do that? Why? Because you are you my friend. Because you are you..."

Nasser-Ali takes a big wad of money in his pocket and starts counting.

NASSER-ALI:

“Umm ... It’s a shame! I only have 700 toumans on me.”

Houshang’s hand enters into the shot and takes smoothly the money from Nasser-Ali.

Houshang:

“700 alright... The deal is done.”

And shaking his head left and right :

Houshang:

“What wouldn’t I do for the master of the masters. ”

Houshang offers again the opium pipe to Nasser-Ali.

Houshang:

“Let’s celebrate now my friend.”

Nasser-Ali finally takes a long puff of opium.

We are now on Houshang (close-up), lying down on the ground.

He’s staring at a little Hawaiian doll. (A plastic doll, driven by a mechanism, which makes it does the belly dance).

Houshang:

“Look! Ha! Ha! ... She comes from Europe.

NASSER-ALI:

“Europe?”

Houshang:

“Yes Europe! Paris... You know, sexy!”

The two men, completely high on opium, make stupid laughter.

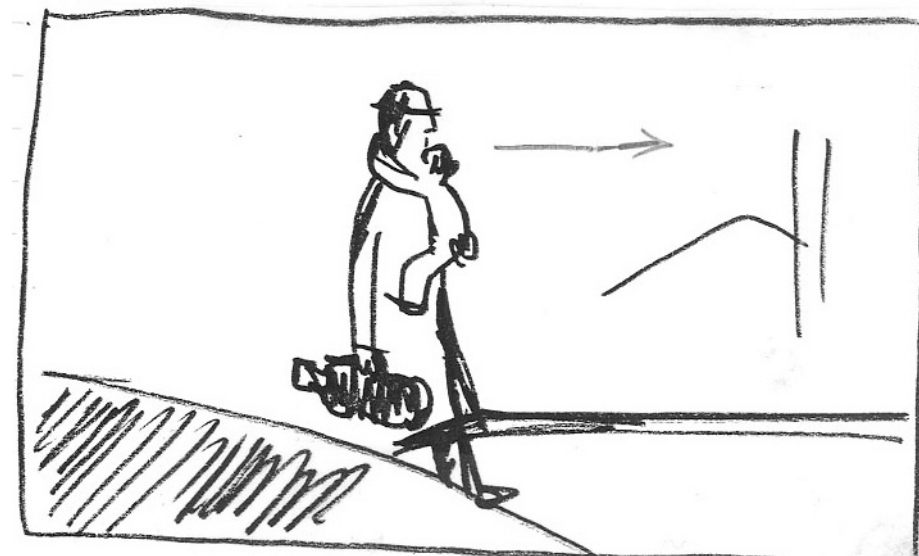
Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 29—EXT.— Sunset— (Street. Outside Houshang's store)

We see Nasser-Ali and Cyrus leaving Houshang's store.



Nasser-Ali and Cyrus in silhouette with the violin case.



SEQUENCE 30—INT. NIGHT— (Bus.)



We are in the bus.

Close up on Nasser-Ali and his reflection in the window.

He turns his head towards Cyrus and smiles.

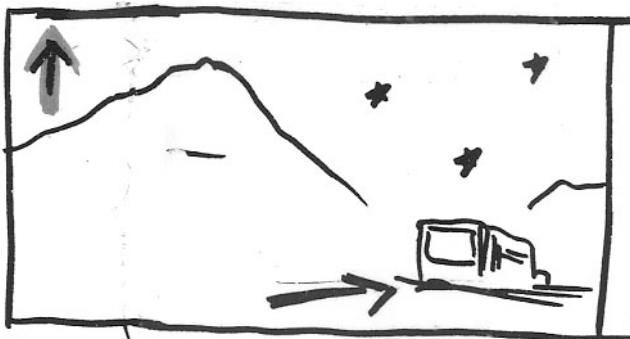
Wider shot of Nasser-Ali and Cyrus.

Cyrus is deeply sleeping.

Nasser-Ali is holding his son tenderly to him.

Through the window, we see a lovely night sky full of stars. Nasser-Ali gazes at it in wonder.

SEQUENCE 31—EXT. NIGHT— (Landscape.)



We see the bus receding into the distance until it disappears for good. The camera lifts to the starry sky, then fade to black.

During the transition, we hear the voice of the Azrael for the first time. It is a man's voice, beautiful, smooth and full of melancholy:

Azrael (off):

"My coming brought no prophet to the sky
Nor does my going swell its majesty
Coming and going put me to a stand
Ear never heard their wherefore nor their why. »

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 32/A—INT. NIGHT— (Hallway in Nasser-Ali's home.)

Azrael (off):

"They reached home the next night."

Nasser-Ali carries the sleeping Cyrus, walking across the hallway.

SEQUENCE 32/B—INT. NIGHT— (Cyrus 's bedroom, Nasser-Ali's home.)

Azrael (off):

" Nasser-Ali put his son Cyrus to bed."

The following actions take place during the voice-over:

We see Nasser-Ali putting his son in the bed, after having taken his shoes off. Cyrus is sleeping in his bed (POV of Nasser-Ali). Nasser-Ali quietly closes the door to Cyrus' bedroom (We don't see Nasser-Ali).

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 32/C—INT. NIGHT— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Azrael (off):

"He had only one desire: to play his violin. But he told himself it would be better to wait until morning."

In the shadow, we see the violin Nasser-Ali just bought.
In the foreground Nasser-Ali lies down on his bed.

SEQUENCE 33—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

The camera is first on the clock. (The clock he bought in his youth. See Sequence 87)

We will find Nasser-Ali in his bed in the exact same position as the night before.
He his lightens up by the glow of the morning.

The action illustrates the voice-over

We hear the carillon of the clock.

Azrael (off):

"He woke at 7 sharp the next morning..."

We see Nasser-Ali wake with a start and sit on the side of the bed.

SEQUENCE 34—INT. DAY— (At the barber's.)

Azrael (off):

"...He went to the barber's..."

We see the barber giving a last snip of the scissors to Nasser-Ali's moustache
before flicking the tips of the moustache upwards.



SEQUENCE 35—INT. DAY— (Hallway leading to Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Azrael (off):

"... Then he came home and put on his best clothes."

In the hallway, we see Nasser-Ali carefully adjusting his tie in the mirror-stand before leaning forward to check his teeth.

Faranguisse comes into the shot.

We see the reflection of two characters in the mirror.

Faranguisse (sarcastically):

"I didn't know you had an appointment with the Prime Minister in person!"

In the mirror, Nasser-Ali casts a disillusioned glance.

Azrael (off):

"Their twelve years together had left him completely immune to his wife's sarcasm. He did not even bother to answer."

SEQUENCE 36—INT. DAY— (In the neighbour's house.)

Azrael (off):

"After his wife and daughter left, Nasser-Ali went round to the neighbour's house to leave Cyrus with her."

The camera is inside the house belonging to the neighbour (an elderly lady). She and Cyrus are in the foreground (inside the house) and Nasser-Ali is in the background (at the door). Nasser-Ali leaves . As soon as he is alone with the elderly lady, Cyrus turns to her:

Cyrus:

" Do you have opium? "

The old lady is speechless.

SEQUENCE 37/A—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Close up on the violin case (The Stradivarius Nasser-Ali bought).

We see Nasser-Ali watching it. His hesitation is clear.

Nasser-Ali stubs out a last cigarette in the ashtray.

He opens the violin case, takes delicately the instrument and starts playing with his eyes closed.

After a few notes he stops playing and opens his eyes.

He is deeply sad.

He puts back the violin in its case and leave it on the table.

Then he undoes his tie, takes off his jacket.
Nasser-Ali's feet enter into the shot. The camera follows his feet.
He goes towards his bed.
He bends down on his knees and takes another violin case (the same as in sequence 10).
As he opens this violin case, the camera moves above him.
From up we see him removing a broken violin from a delicate fine cloth.
He takes the broken violin, caresses it and weeps in bitter tears.

SEQUENCE 37/B—INT. DAY— (Hallway leading to Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Off camera we hear Nasser-Ali closing his curtains. The scene becomes darker.
From the beginning to the end of the shot the camera slowly moves back.
Finally, the only thing that remains is the door of Nasser-Ali's bedroom, a small square with a little bit of light in an almost black screen. Nasser-Ali appears against the light and closes the door.

In the darkness, we hear:

Azrael (off):

"Since no violin could give him the joy of playing, Nasser-Ali took to his bed and decided to die."

Transition: the camera lifts and we see a cemetery.

SEQUENCE 38—EXT. DAY—Snowing— (Cemetery.)

Azrael (off):

"Eight days later, he was buried alongside his mother. All those who had loved him were present on that day."

In the cemetery. All the film's leading characters are standing around a gravestone. Among the principal characters, we note Farangisse (Nasser-Ali's wife), Cyrus and Lili (their two children), the two salesmen encountered earlier, his brother Abdi, his sister-in-law, a beggar, and his violin teacher.

In the foreground see Irâne, aged around 50.

Fade to black.

In white letters on a black background appear the words:

THE END

Iris dissolve.



Iris in.



SEQUENCE 39/A1—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Azrael (off):

"So Nasser-Ali had decided to die. He thought about all the different ways of putting an end to his life."

Nasser-Ali is in bed. The camera is above the bed. The Azrael begins as the camera pulls closer to Nasser-Ali.

We see different burlesque sketches of various forms of suicide, one after the other, on a black background. The sketches are interspersed with Nasser-Ali's reactions.

SEQUENCE 39/B

Sketch 01:

Nasser-Ali's is lying down, his head on the railway.

We hear a train approaching.

The lights of the locomotive light the scene.

A white flash.

The screen turns black.

SEQUENCE 39/A2—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Nasser-Ali makes a grimace of pain.

SEQUENCE 39/C

Sketch 02:

More romantic. Nasser-Ali comes on the top of a cliff, his hair in the wind. Suddenly, he jumps. The camera is at the foot of the cliff and Nasser-Ali falls towards the camera.

NASSER-ALI (shouting):

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!

SEQUENCE 39/A3—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

NASSER-ALI:

"Pfff!"

He seems relieved.

SEQUENCE 39/D

Sketch 03

He holds a revolver to his temple and fires. Blood pours as if from a tap.

SEQUENCE 39/A4—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Nasser-Ali's eyes roll upwards in his head.

SEQUENCE 39/E

Azrael (off):

"On reflection, all these solutions were too painful. Then he remembered a newspaper article he had read that suggested the least painful way of slipping off this mortal coil was to take an overdose of barbiturates and then put a plastic bag over the head."

Sketch 04

Subjective view of Nasser-Ali reading the newspaper article .
The door of a cabinet opens (in the cabinet we can see all sort of medicine).

Between the medicine: A vial of barbiturates.

Suddenly, Nasser-Ali swallows all the barbiturates, put a plastic bag over his head and faint out of shot.

Tight close-up of Nasser-Ali with a plastic bag over his head.

The camera pulls back and we see Nasser-Ali lying in an incongruous position. As the camera movement stops, we see people in silhouette, approaching the body.



SEQUENCE 39/A5—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Nasser-Ali looks sorry for himself.

Azrael (off):

"But the very idea of being found with an ugly plastic bag over his head was quite simply unconceivable. He was Nasser-Ali Ali Khan, after all, the best violin player of his time. How would he be remembered? The man in the plastic bag?"

Nasser-Ali shakes his head as for saying "NO".

Azrael (off):

"No, no and no! He would die with dignity. He would wait for death to come and take him in his bed."

SEQUENCE 40—EXT. DAY— (Garden of Nasser-Ali's house.)

The camera is in the garden of Nasser-Ali's house. We see a swing. Faranguisse and Lili walk in through the gate. Lili is carrying a heavy school bag, and Faranguisse her files, handbag and shopping.

Lili, hopping around, throws her school bag on the ground and runs towards the swing.

Lili:

"Mummy! Can I play on the swing?"

Faranguisse:

"You can play when you've finished your homework."

Lili obeys.

She picks up her school bag and follows her mother.

She looks really disappointed.

SEQUENCE 41—INT. DAY— (Afternoon, kitchen.)

Lili and Faranguisse are in the house. Faranguisse puts down the things she is carrying (files, handbag, shopping). Lili takes off her jacket and sits silently at the dining table.

Faranguisse looks around.

Faranguisse (loudly):

"Cyrus! Nasser-Ali!"

Receiving no answer, she will make for Nasser-Ali's bedroom but just before she turns towards Lili and says:

Faranguisse:

"You! You do your homework!"

Close up of Lili grabbing her book quickly in her school-bag.

Faranguisse leaves the dining room.

Lili watches her leaving.

SEQUENCE 42—INT. DAY— (Afternoon, Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Faranguisse half-opens the door to Nasser-Ali's bedroom. We cannot see Nasser-Ali.

Faranguisse:

"What the hell are you doing in bed at this time?"

NASSER-ALI (off):

"I have decided to die."

Faranguisse:

"And Cyrus! Where is he?"

NASSER-ALI (off):

"I left him with the neighbour."

Faranguisse:

"Again!? Is it too much to ask you to look after your son?"

The door slams.

She strides furiously back into the kitchen. The camera films her face-on.

SEQUENCE 43—INT. DAY— (Afternoon, kitchen.)

The camera is now on Lili, lost in her thoughts. As soon as she hears her mother's footsteps, she pretends she is doing her homework (she is facing the camera). Her mother, still angry, walks past her and is seen in profile.

Faranguisse:

"I'll be right back! I'm just going to get your brother. You get on with your homework!"

Off camera, we hear the front door close. As soon as it does, Lili puts down her book.

SEQUENCE 44—INT. DAY— (Afternoon, Nasser-Ali's bedroom. It is dark. The curtains are closed.)

We are inside Nasser-Ali's bedroom.

The camera is on Nasser-Ali (wide shot). He's sleeping.

The door opens, letting in a little light.

Nasser-Ali wakes up slowly.

Camera on Lili, standing at the half-open door.

Lili:

"Daddy, what's wrong? Are you ill?"

NASSER-ALI (off camera):

"Ah, is that you, sweetheart?"

The camera is now on Nasser-Ali.

NASSER-ALI:

"No, Daddy's just a bit tired."

Nasser-Ali sits on the bed and runs his fingers through his hair.

He goes over to the window and draws back the curtain. Daylight enters the room, and so does Lili.

Nasser-Ali sits down in his armchair.

Lili stands facing him

NASSER-ALI:

"So! How was your day today?"

Lili:

"I got an A in dictation."

NASSER-ALI:

"Well done! That's very good."

Lili:

"Mummy isn't pleased. She says that's not good enough."

He pulls an annoyed face.

Lili looks down at her feet.

Lili:

"She says in her class, there's a girl who always gets A+."

NASSER-ALI:

"Your mother talks too much."

Lili:

"She says that I have to work hard. She says if I want to be a doctor, I'll have to get all A+."

After a moment's hesitation:

NASSER-ALI:

"Yes, yes. Well, of course."

Lili raises her eyes and looks at her father. (Her eyes are wide open.)

Lili:

"Can I go and play on the swing now?"

NASSER-ALI (off):

"Of course you can, sweetie."

Lili runs out of the bedroom, joyfully.

Tight close-up of Nasser-Ali. We hear a brass band playing and in the background a children's theme park appears. The flashback begins.

SEQUENCE 45—EXT. NIGHT— (Summer night. The Boat Club, a theme park for children.)—Flashback.

Azrael (off):

"Of course nobody would or could say Nasser-Ali had strong paternal instincts... But he did his best to fulfil his role as a father."

Dolly shot.

We see Lili and Nasser-Ali strolling along in the children's theme park. Lili is holding a stick of candyfloss almost as big as she is.

Nasser-Ali and Lili are walking side by side.
They walk past the sign for the Boat Club (the name of the theme park).
They are face to camera, walking towards it.
The candyfloss covers the screen.
P.O.V of Lili: She pulls down her candyfloss and we discover a fakir sitting on a bed of nails, playing the flute to charm the Cobra.

We catch up with them a little further on.
Suddenly Lili turns her head to the right. She's obviously very interested in something.
We'll see a man performing with a small monkey.
Lili, extremely impressed, points at the monkey.

Lili:

"Daddy! I want one of those!"

Nasser-Ali puts his hand on his daughter's back and propels her gently along.

NASSER-ALI:

"Later!"

The camera is now on a puppet show.

Puppet 1:

"Where's my rabbit?"

Puppet 2:

"I ate it Mr Ashour ! And if you talk too much, I'll eat you too!"

Puppet 3:

"No, no, no! Don't eat him!"

Puppet 3 faces the audience moving her arms up and down.

Puppet 3:

"Don't eat him! Don't eat him!"

And all the kids together imitating puppet 3 :

Kids: (shouting)

"Don't eat him! Don't eat him! ..."

The show is over. Everyone claps.
Shot of the crowd of children with their parents.
The camera rises first and then moves forward.
We see Nasser-Ali hoisting Lili onto his shoulders so she could see.
Close up of Lili applauding with lots of enthusiasm.
Nasser-Ali puts Lili down.

Both Nasser-Ali and Lili are into shot.

Lili:

"Daddy, will you buy me one of those talking dolls?"

NASSER-ALI:

"But they don't talk, sweetheart."

Close up on Lili.

Lili:

"Yes, they do!"

Cut.

SEQUENCE 46—EXT. NIGHT— (summer night. The Boat Club, a theme park for children.)—Flashback.

We are behind the stage of the puppet theatre. The next show has started. We see the puppeteer speaking the puppets' lines. We hear the same dialogue:

Puppet 1:

"Where's my rabbit?"

Puppet 2:

"I ate it! And if you talk too much, I'll eat you too!"

The camera makes a dolly shot and we discover Lili and Nasser-Ali.

NASSER-ALI:

"You see? They're just bits of rag."

Close-up of Lili, risings up her head, looking at her father: All her illusions are destroyed.

Close-up of Nasser-Ali, who realises what he has done. He tries to calm down the situation.

NASSER-ALI:

“How about going to the merry-go-round?”

Lili: (very sad)

“No...”

Cut.

SEQUENCE 47—EXT. SUMMER NIGHT— (Theme park- Boat Club- by a merry-go-round) — Flashback.

Nasser-Ali and Lili are by the merry-go-round.

Lili is on the back of one of the horses and every time she passes her father:

Lili (first round):

"You see me, Daddy! You see me?"

Lili (second round):

"You see me?"

Lili (third round):

"Hey Daddy! You see me!"

We see Nasser-Ali waving hand.

Again we're on lili.

Lili (fourth round):

"See me?"

Lili (fifth round):

"Daddy! ..."

During this sequence, Lili's voice will slowly fade out.

SEQUENCE 48/A—INT. SALON—Flash-forward—

The turning of the merry-go-round acts as a transition between two periods of time; one the past that Nasser-Ali remembers, the other the future that Nasser-Ali will never know. Gradually the merry-go-round is replaced by scrolling images of a table of card players. All we can make out are silhouettes against a coloured background, blurred by the speed at which they pass.

The voice-over begins:

Azrael (off):

"Possessed by an unusual interest in morphopsychology, Nasser-Ali was convinced that his physical resemblance with his daughter proved the closeness of their souls. And he wasn't wrong: they were both intelligent, lively, spiritual beings... And both were desperately melancholy."

At the word "morphopsychology", the spinning stops on an adult Lili, aged around 40, cigarette between her lips. At first, we can't see what she is doing with her hands. The image is fixed. Then it comes to life, the cigarette smoke swirls, and we realise she is playing cards.

We see Lili, sometimes in full, sometimes just her hands, filmed in close-up, shuffling, dealing and playing cards. She lights cigarette after cigarette, crushing out the butts. We realise she is a professional card player.

With the sequence, the voice-over resumes.

Azrael (off):

"At the age of 23, Lili married a man her mother approved of and liked. The marriage did not last, however, and Lili got divorced eight months later. (We see a photograph of the marriage of Lili with her first husband. Suddenly lili disappear from the photograph. Her husband is shocked.) Return to the card game.

Malicious tongues wagged but Lili couldn't care less. Some time later, Lili fell passionately in love: he was an actor...

SEQUENCE 48/B—INT. SALON—Flash-forward, colour—

We see lili and the actor in a cabriolet red car, cruising on the French Riviera, happy, their hair in the wind. The car goes out of shot.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 48/C—INT. SALON—Flash-forward, colour—

Return to the card game.

Azrael (off):

“But, sadly, he died in a car accident four years later. And Lili never got over him. She drowned her sorrows in gambling, alcohol and cigarettes. Later, she had two heart attacks in close succession.

And inevitably, whenever somebody would tell her she had to cut back on her excesses, that she was putting her life in danger, she answered:”

Lili (aged 40, facing the camera, tight close-up):

"My life... If you only knew what I think of life..."

Lili takes a deep drag on her cigarette and blows the smoke at the camera. The smoke acts as the transition to the next sequence.

During this transition, the voice-over resumes:

Azrael (off):

"Her third heart attack was her last."

SEQUENCE 49—INT.—Afternoon— (Back in Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

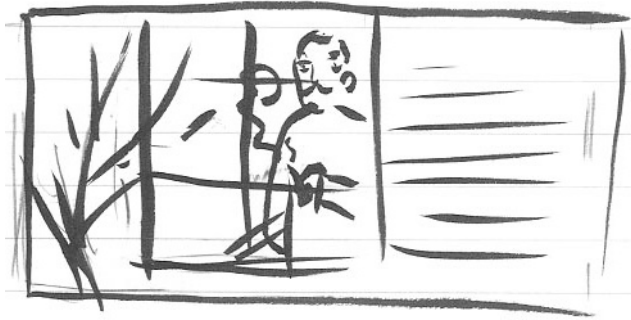
Through the smoke, Nasser-Ali appears, seated at his table. He is in profile, in exactly the same pose as Lili at 40 (except that she was filmed full-face). He is smoking a cigarette, just like his daughter. The smoke disperses. Suddenly, he gets up.

From the window, Nasser-Ali sees Lili playing on the swing.

Cut.

SEQUENCE 50—EXT.—Afternoon— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom seen from outside.)

We see Nasser-Ali standing at his window, smoking his cigarette, smiling. He is clearly watching Lili at play. (He is filmed from the outside.)



Shot of Lili on her swing in the garden.
She's in wonder.

Close up of Nasser-Ali who is still watching Lili on the swing. He's smiling.

Off camera we Suddenly hear Faranguisse, his wife Shouting at Lili (we understand she has come back with Cyrus after having collected him from the neighbour's. She's in the garden).

Faranguisse (off-very angry):

"What on earth do you think you're doing? I told you not to go out!"

Nasser-Ali draws an unhappy, almost angry face.

Wide shot of Faranguisse, Cyrus and Lili in the garden.
Lili is standing by the swing.

Lili :

"But Daddy said..."

Faranguisse doesn't even leave Lili time to finish her sentence. She slaps the girl roughly.

Lili bursts out crying.

Seeing his sister in tears, Cyrus starts crying too.

Faranguisse, at her wits' end, makes as if to go into the house but stumbles and falls. She cries out. In short, everyone is crying and wailing.

Close up of Nasser-Ali who is watching his family. He shakes his head in despair.

SEQUENCE 51—INT.—Afternoon— (Back in Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

We see Nasser-Ali indoors, as a black silhouette.
He's in front of the window and is filmed from behind.
Since the window is closed, the sound of what takes place outside is muffled.

He draws the curtain closed.

The sweep of the curtain turns into a black screen.
Fade to black.

On the black background is written:



✦ **SECOND DAY** ✦

SEQUENCE 52—INT. DAY— (Hallway, door to Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Faranguisse is standing in the hallway, outside the door to Nasser-Ali's bedroom.

She puts her ear to the door and listens: not a sound.

She wants to open the door but doesn't dare.

SEQUENCE 53—INT. Late Afternoon— (Abdi, Nasser-Ali's brother, in his living room.)

Transition on Abdi's hands, which are typing on a typewriter. (It's a leaflet.)
The phone rings. Abdi answers.

Abdi:

"Ah, Faranguisse... (With a contrite smile) It's you. To what do I owe this pleasure?"

...

"Really? Since when?"

...

"Yes, yes, I know."

...

"Alright, OK... stay right where you are. I'll come round and see him."

...
"Yes, yes... Alright."

Chack! He hangs up the phone.

Abdi's wife, Soudabeh, comes into the shot and puts her hand on her husband's shoulder. She throws him a quizzical look.

Abdi:

"Well, I have to go round to my brother's."

Soudabeh:

"What's going on? Nothing serious?"»

Abdi:

"Pah... I don't know. He hasn't come out of his room in the past two days."

Soudabeh:

"But what did Faranguisse say?"

Abdi (putting his hat on):

"Humph!... (Shrugging his shoulders) They probably had another fight, as usual, and now he's sulking. Anyway, what do you expect? She's a stupid cow."

Abdi puts his coat on.

Soudabeh ties his scarf around his neck tenderly.

Soudabeh:

"Abdi! You can't say such things! Do you think it's easy to be married to a man for whom the only thing that matters is his music?"

Abdi:

"Well that doesn't make her clever. She is a stupid cow! And a mean one! With her big nose of hers (he sketches a big nose with a movement of his hand) and her eyes (he squints to imitate her glasses) and her teeth..."

Soudabeh sniggering a little harder at each exclamation...

Soudabeh:

"Whose fault? If your mother didn't push him to marry her they would never have been together. Everybody knew he was not in love... "

Abdi:

"That is one hell of an ugly woman! Anyway, I was always against that marriage. He deserved better. What a waste!"

Soudabeh:

"Abdi, don't be so hard on her. You know what your brother's like... "

Cut.

SEQUENCE 54—EXT. AFTERNOON — (Abdi in the street. A cold, windy day.)

Soudabeh: (off - finishing what she has to say):

"... He's got quite a character too, though, hasn't he? He can't be easy to live with. Even between the two of you, things have always been complicated, not to say stormy!"

Azrael (off):

"His wife was right. Ever since they were children, they had been chalk and cheese. He was as conscientious and reliable as Nasser-Ali was absent-minded and irresponsible (It's a note of irony in Azrael's voice). As much as he gave his parents every reason to be proud of him, so Nasser-Ali gave them cause to worry."

During the voice-overs (Abdi's wife and Abdi himself), the following actions take place:

Close medium shot. Abdi is walking towards the camera. Dolly out. Abdi has a pensive air.

He turns a corner. The camera picks him up in profile. Follow pan. He walks past a large glass window. The camera stops on the window. Abdi moves out of shot.

Switch to black & white. Flashback.

At the end of the text spoken by Abdi , the window is suddenly shattered, revealing a school courtyard. The camera advances through the broken window.

We see a boy (the young Nasser-Ali) standing transfixed while all the other schoolchildren run away.

SEQUENCE 55—EXT. AFTERNOON — (School playground. 1918.)—Flashback.

We are in the school courtyard. In the background, the broken window can be seen. The camera is at the height of Nasser-Ali the child. The shadow of the headmaster comes into shot.

Headmaster:

"Now what have you done?"

He takes Nasser-Ali by the ear.

NASSER-ALI (as a child):

"I didn't do anything, Sir. It wasn't me!"

Cut.

We see a group of children filmed from behind.

Among the children, we recognise Abdi by his glasses. His hair is slicked down, with a centre parting.

We see the Headmaster standing by Nasser-Ali.

(All we ever see of the Headmaster are his legs or his mouth: neatly trimmed moustache, horribly stained teeth, spraying spittle).

Headmaster (legs only):

"Look at this imbecile! This bad seed! Held back a year because of his appalling results. This is unacceptable behaviour! Oh yes, our dear friend Mr. Nasser-Ali has no better idea than to break a school window."

The headmaster points the window with his index. (Close up of his hand with the broken window in the background).

NASSER-ALI (off):

"But, Sir, I didn't do anything!"

Close up on Nasser-Ali.

Headmaster:

"Shut up!"

Then he slaps Nasser-Ali across the back of the head.

Close medium shot of the schoolchildren watching Nasser-Ali.
The camera goes back to Nasser-Ali and the headmaster.

Headmaster: (Close-up of his mouth. Unpleasant smile.)

"Abdi, come here. Come here, my child."

Abdi leaves the group of pupils.

Headmaster (off):

"Come here! Don't be scared!"

Abdi moves to stand next to the Headmaster.

Nasser-Ali watches his brother come.

Headmaster (legs):

"Look here! Here is Abdi, his younger brother. Same family, same upbringing. Except that this boy (gently laying a hand on Abdi's back) is first in class in all his subjects, maths, history, discipline... So you see (waving a hand at each brother in turn), bad seed, good seed. Good seed, bad seed. Now I want you all to clap for Abdi. Come on children, let's hear you clap!"

All the school children clap. Nasser-Ali does not clap with the others. He receives another slap to the back of his head. He claps half-heartedly, tears standing in his eyes.

Another close-up of the Headmaster's mouth.

Headmaster:

"Silence! Enough! Now you will boo Nasser-Ali."

Successive close-ups of children's mouths, booing.

Headmaster's mouth.

Headmaster:

"Come on, louder."

He joins in the booing.

Close up of Nasser-Ali and Abdi. Abdi is booing half-heartedly. Nasser-Ali gives him a look of misery.

Abdi notices that his brother is watching him. He continues even more half-heartedly, lowering his eyes.

Wide shot: The Headmaster, Abdi and Nasser-Ali are filmed from behind. The schoolchildren, still booing, are facing the camera. It almost looks like a choir with the Headmaster as a conductor.

SEQUENCE 56—EXT. LATE AFTERNOON— (Garden of Nasser-Ali's house.)

Faranguisse is waiting for Abdi in the garden.

When he comes in, Faranguisse nods a greeting.

Abdi returns the gesture.

SEQUENCE 57—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Inside the bedroom. The door opens. Abdi's head appears, and then he knocks on the door.

Abdi:

"Nasser-Ali! It's me, Abdi. Can I come in?"

Nasser-Ali, lying with his back to the door, rolls over listlessly. The only answer he makes is a groan.

NASSER-ALI:

"Mmmh..."

Abdi enters the room.

Abdi:

"I was just passing and thought, why don't I drop in and see my brother?"

Nasser-Ali wakes up painfully.

NASSER-ALI (looking absolutely disillusioned):

"Well, there you are. You're seeing me now..."

Abdi (off):

"Is it okay if I open up a bit?"

Without waiting for an answer, Abdi draws back the curtain and opens the window a fraction. Nasser-Ali screws up his eyes and gives another groan.

NASSER-ALI:

"Mmmmmmmmmh..."

Nasser-Ali sits up and swings his feet to the floor.

Abdi sits on the bed next to Nasser-Ali.

Abdi:

"What's going on, Nasser-Ali?"

NASSER-ALI:

"Nothing! I've just decided to die."

Abdi is speechless. He manages just a small "Ah!" He knows Nasser-Ali is an artist. He remains motionless for a few moments, and then tries to change the subject.

Abdi:

"Listen, as I was coming over here, I saw they were showing "The River Girl" at the Odeon, and you know who plays the leading female role?"

His hands sketch out a voluptuous body in the air. Then he adds:

Abdi:

"Well?"

NASSER-ALI:

"Sophia Loren?"

Abdi, seeing that his ploy is working, becomes very motivated, adding:

Abdi:

"Yes indeed, the lovely Sophia! Remember how sexy she was in "The Gold of Naples"?"

Abdi and Nasser-Ali are facing forward. They seem to be following the movement of those magnificent hips. Their heads sway from side to side, a tiny smile on their lips, as if they are watching the film.

Abdi turns to his brother.

Abdi:

"Well! How about we go and see it later on?"

Nasser-Ali looks down at his feet as if thinking, and then looks at Abdi.

NASSER-ALI:

"No! I already told you, Abdi, I want to die!"

Abdi, ill at ease, gets to his feet and turns his back on Nasser-Ali.

Abdi:

"Your wife called me. You know, she's really worried."

NASSER-ALI:

"I knew you weren't here just by chance!"

Abdi turns back to Nasser-Ali. His back is now to the camera.

Abdi:

"What difference does it make? It doesn't change anything. Things aren't right with you, and so here I am. I'm your brother!"

Nasser-Ali doesn't answer. There is a moment of silence. Abdi, who has so far kept a check on him, suddenly gets on his high horse:

Abdi:

"Oh, come on, Nasser-Ali! You can't just lie there like that in your bed, waiting for death! This is ridiculous! I know you're depressed about you violin, but you have a wife! You have two children! You have a responsibility to them! You can't possibly be so... selfish!"

Nasser-Ali lifts his head and coldly looks Abdi up and down before, between gritted teeth, he snarls:

NASSER-ALI:

"Selfish! Selfish... You, to say that to me! You! Did you think for one moment about your wife and children when you decided to become a revolutionary communist? Did you think, even for a second, about what they went through while you were in prison?"

Nasser-Ali glares at his brother, a look that is cold and hate-filled.

NASSER-ALI:

"No! you, you are a righter of wrongs!!! The one who dared to say no!"

On the word "The one!", Nasser-Ali rises angrily to his feet. Abdi takes a step back.

NASSER-ALI:

"You wanted to change the world! Too bad about the rest of us..."

Abdi tries to regain the upper hand.

Abdi:

"Somebody had to react. Obviously, if everyone were like you..."

Nasser-Ali cuts him short.

NASSER-ALI (sadly):

"So what? If everyone were like me! Do you really think things would be so much worse? And you! What difference did it all make? Do you honestly think it's so much better now?"

Abdi remains speechless.

There is a silence.

Nasser-Ali presses on:

NASSER-ALI (hate-filled):

"And let me remind you of something. When you decided to play the hero, Mother had to squander our family's entire fortune to get you out of prison. Didn't she? So you know exactly what you can do with your moralising!"

Cut.

Abdi seen full-face, ashamed.

Cut.

Insert : see Sequence 55.

The children booing! (Now they are meant to be booing Abdi.)

Fade to black.

Nasser-Ali is sitting in the background, his head still between his hands.
In the foreground, Abdi is sitting on a chair.

Time passes. Then:

NASSER-ALI:

"Forgive me, Abdi."

Abdi:

"It's nothing."

NASSER-ALI (raising his head):

"Abdi!"

After a moment of hesitation:

NASSER-ALI:

"When I die, will you look after my children?"

Abdi:

"Don't talk nonsense!"

Abdi gazes at Nasser-Ali in silence.

Close-up of Nasser-Ali's face, imploring and desperate.

Abdi lowers his head:

Abdi:

"Yes. This I promise."

Cross-dissolve

**SEQUENCE 58—INT. NIGHT— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.
Almost entirely B&W, but impossible to say if filmed in B&W
or if there are no other colours present in the room.)**

Nasser-Ali is asleep. The light of a film projector plays on the walls as if a film were showing in his room.

The door opens. The silhouette of Sophia Loren appears in the doorframe. She sashays into the room with her trademark swaying hips.

The camera is on Nasser-Ali in a four-poster bed. He watches (clearly dreaming).

Sophia approaches.

The camera is on Sophia's chest. Her head is in shadow. Her lips can be made out.

Sophia Loren:
"Vieni piccolo!"

The camera comes back to Nasser-Ali. He smiles, and holds out his arms to Sophia's enormous breasts.

Sophia Loren's breasts advance and block out the camera.

Fade to breasts.

SEQUENCE 59—EXT. NIGHT— (City)

Azrael (off):

"At twilight of the second day, Nasser-Ali remembered what pleasure was. For that one night, his bitterness disappeared. He slept peacefully."

During the voice-over, the camera pulls back from the city and looks up at the sky. We see a magnificent starry sky.

Fade to black.



✧ THIRD DAY ✧

SEQUENCE 60—EXT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's garden. The children are playing.)—Back to colour—

From the sky, a snowflake falls from a cloud.

We follow its fall above the city.

The snowflake arrives to Nasser-Ali's garden.

We discover Lili who swallows the snowflake, her mouth wide open.

The little Cyrus, extremely impressed by his sister's performance imitates her.

Lili takes of course advantage of the situation and press a hand full of mud and dead leaves in her brother's mouth.

Cyrus starts crying but after a little while, as children do, he laughs and runs after his sister.

The camera follows the two children for a while before standing still in front of Nasser-Ali's bedroom's window.

Cyrus continues running after Lili. The two children pass the window a couple of times.

Then the camera moves to the window of Nasser-Ali's bedroom.

During this movement the narrator (Azrael) starts:

Azrael (off):

"On the third day, Nasser-Ali sank deep into world-weariness."

SEQUENCE 61—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom, in darkness. Only a hint of daylight makes its way through the blinds.)

Nasser-Ali is lying down on his bed, smoking. He makes some smoke rings. He tries to catch some rings with his hand.

The voice-over continues:

Azrael (off):

"As everyone knows, world-weariness offers fertile soil for the most absurd of thoughts. Between cigarettes, Nasser-Ali wondered about how he would be remembered, what legacy he would leave to the world, and so on and so on..."

NASSER-ALI (affirmatively):

"Mm."

Azrael (off):

"He thought about Socrates who, quite apart from his genius as a philosopher, left this world with elegance and style."

SEQUENCE 62—INT. DAY— (Greek theatre scene, with false colonnades.)

Socrates is lying on his deathbed, surrounded by his disciples. He has finished drinking the cup of hemlock. One of his disciples bursts out:

Pupil of Socrates:

"Socrates! Why did you drink the poison? Do not abandon us!"

Socrates:

"What does it matter? After this fleshly envelope is no more, my thought will continue to exist. It is my death that will make it eternal."

SEQUENCE 63—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom, in darkness. Only a hint of daylight makes its way through the blinds.)

Azrael (off):

"Nasser-Ali decided to summon his children, to pass on his last thoughts to them."

Nasser-Ali appears to have had an idea.

We see him posed like Socrates on his bed. He waves his hand in the same highly theatrical gesture as Socrates.

NASSER-ALI:

"Children!"

He waits.

Then, sitting up and calling a little louder:

NASSER-ALI:

"Children!"

Nasser-Ali suddenly gets up.

SEQUENCE 64—EXT. DAY— (Garden of Nasser-Ali's house.)

The children are still playing.

Lili is sitting over Cyrus trying to fill up again his mouth with some more mud.

In the background, we see Nasser-Ali shouting out of his bedroom window:

NASSER-ALI:

"CHILDREN!!!"

The two children are stunned into immobility.

SEQUENCE 65—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Now the curtains are open and the bedroom is half-lit by a ray of sunshine.

Nasser-Ali waves his hand elegantly.
He is seated majestically in his armchair.

NASSER-ALI (pompously):
"Children! I know I have often been absent."

The children are intimidated.

NASSER-ALI:
"Now my time has come. I have to go. We will soon be separated... It is my duty as a father to bequeath to you the precious treasure that will serve you throughout your lives and will guide you along the dark pathways of existence. This treasure is the very essence of creation, for it is through art that we understand life and through life that we..."

Off camera, his fine words are cut short by the sound of a fart.

The camera is on the two children.

Suddenly Lili bursts out laughing, pointing at Cyrus.

Lili:
"He farted!"

Cyrus:
"No, I didn't! It was you!"

Lili:
"No, YOU farted!"

The camera is on Nasser-Ali, frozen in his majestic attitude.

Off camera, the children continue to giggle.

Cyrus (off):
"Hug me!"

Lili (off):
"No! Eeeugh! You stink!"

SEQUENCE 66—INT. DAY— (Greek theatre scene, with false colonnades.)

We return to Socrates in the same position as in Sequence 73. Socrates gestures in exactly the same way as Nasser-Ali. He declaims his answer.

Socrates:

"What does it matter? After this fleshly envelope is no more, my thought will continue to exist..."

On the word "thought", the sound of a fart is heard, off camera. Socrates is frozen in his majestic attitude.

All the disciples turn around, to see young Cyrus in a toga.

The camera is now on Cyrus who is in the same position as in Sequence 76 and seems to be really embarrassed.

The camera returns to Socrates who gives up the ghost before finishing his sentence.

SEQUENCE 67—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)— Back to colour—

The camera comes back to Nasser-Ali and the voice off says:

Azrael (off):

"Nasser-Ali told himself that human being was as nothing, and Socrates was a hell of a lucky man."

We see the children playing. The camera leaves Lili to concentrate on Cyrus, red-cheeked and happy. He is running around madly.

Close-up of Nasser-Ali watching Cyrus. He follows his son with his eyes. The voice-over resumes:

Azrael (off):

"Anyway, what more could he expect from such a son? The child was his exact opposite: noisy, talkative, greedy and – horror of horrors – when asked what he wanted to be when he was grown up, the child had replied:

The camera is back on Cyrus playing.
He stops running, looks straight at the camera and says:

Cyrus:

"I want to be a salesman!"

Back to Nasser-Ali.

NASSER-ALI (muttering):

"But what will become of him?"

Azrael (off):

"In reality, it came as no surprise."

Opening in Iris.

SEQUENCE 68—INT.— (Theatre. The scenery changes. The characters are in silhouettes.) —Flash forward in colour—

Azrael (off):

"At the age of 23, after laborious years of study, Cyrus finally entered university to study business. His joy was short-lived, swiftly followed by the outbreak of a revolution... another one. A year later, it was war. Like so many others, Cyrus decided to leave for America. He managed to gain admission to a mediocre university in Wyoming.

It was on the university campus that he met Nancy. They kissed, she fell pregnant and they married."

Description of the set. One scene follows another. We see them changing.

—University in Iran: Cyrus is at a desk trying to hold a pen between his nose and his mouth without any success.

—Revolution scene: Cyrus is demonstrating.

—War scene: Explosions.

—Airplane: Cyrus is in an airplane with an American flag attached to the back.

—University in Wyoming, a grazing bison, a Stetson hat dropping onto Cyrus' head, cries of **"Heehaw!"**

—Meeting Nancy in her cheerleader's uniform. Cyrus is a basketball player.
—They kiss.
—Nancy's belly balloons instantly.

Fade to black.

—Opening in Iris. A car enters in the parking of a typical American house.

SEQUENCE 69—INT. DAY— (Living room in the adult Cyrus' house. Wyoming.)—Flash forward—

Opening shot of the family in the living room of Cyrus' house (the style of filming will be like in sitcoms).

We see overweight teenagers scoffing crisps in front of the TV, huge cups of soft drinks perched in front of them. (The teens are not really obese, but wearing latex "fat-suits".)

Cyrus, just back from work (carrying a briefcase), walks into the living room.

Cyrus (adult):

"Hi! I'm home!"

The children, in chorus:

"Hi Daddy!"

Nancy's head appears. She seems very happy.

Nancy:

"Oh, Cyrus, darling! Want a drink?"

Cyrus (adult) (pointing a finger at her):

"Yeah! You got it, sweetheart."

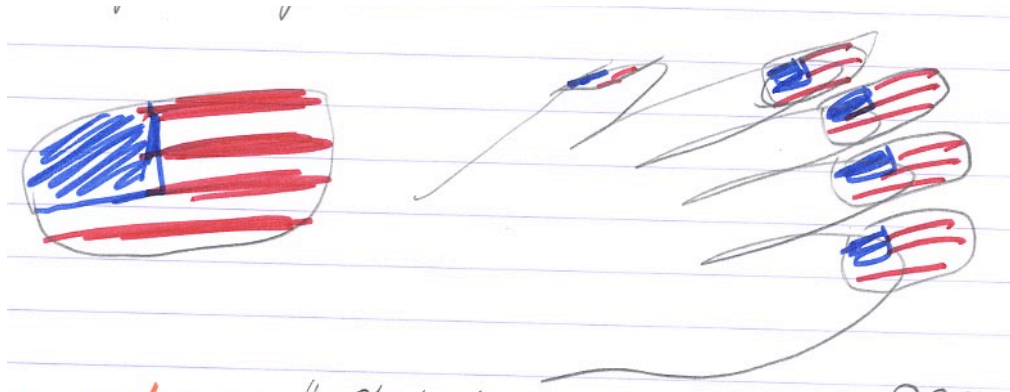
There are two small, ugly dogs in the room. They both bark and the family laughs heartily.

(During all this time, we hear a sports match playing on the TV, something like the Super Bowl.)

Cyrus' daughter:

"Hey, Daddy! Look at my nails, aren't they gorgeous?"

Close-up of a podgy hand, the nails painted like the American flag.



Cyrus (adult) (ecstatic):

"Oh! Isn't that just great?"

The two boys are waiting their turn to claim their father's attention:

Son 1:

"Hey! Dad! Ho! We've got a surprise for you!"

Son 2:

"Check this out!"

Son 2 does beat-box while his brother (Son 1) performs a jerky robot dance. He takes one step forward, pretends to hit a glass wall and then turns around into a smurf wave.

The two ugly dogs bark.

Cyrus is not quite sure what to say, having retained some vestiges of good taste, but faced with his wife Nancy's enthusiasm can only go along:

Nancy:

"Wow! That's great!"

Cyrus (adult) (clapping):

"Yeah! That's pretty amazing!"

The two dogs bark, and everyone laughs heartily.

Cyrus' daughter is suddenly seized with convulsions.
The others notice.
The girl utters a cry of pain.

Cyrus' daughter:
"Ooowwww!"

Cyrus (adult)
"What's wrong sweetie?"

Cyrus' daughter:
"I have a belly ache, I feel sick!"

Nancy:
"What did you eat?"

Cyrus' daughter:
"Nothing! Just a couple of pizzas! Ooohhh! Please help me! I can't stand it anymore!"

The girl points to a stack of a dozen pizza boxes stacked by the side of the sofa.

Nancy:
"Oh, Cyrus! We have to call 911!"

Cyrus (adult)
"Right away."

Cyrus makes as if to move and then suddenly freezes. (This is not a freeze-frame, but Cyrus playing at being a statue.)

SEQUENCE 70—INT. NIGHT — (Hospital, Wyoming)

Nancy, Cyrus and their two sons are sitting, waiting anxiously, in the hospital corridor. Nancy rests her head on Cyrus' shoulder. He puts his arms around her and says:

Cyrus (adult):
"It's gonna be okay!"

The doctor emerges, a kind of clone of George Clooney in ER.

Cyrus and Nancy pounce on the doctor.

Nancy:

"Doctor! Is she going to be OK?"

Cyrus (adult):

"We're her parents! We have the right to know!"

Doctor:

"Everything went perfectly well!"

Camera on Nancy and Cyrus, who look bewildered.

Doctor:

"It's a boy!"

Cyrus (adult):

"What boy?"

Doctor:

"9 pounds! A beautiful baby!"

Nancy and **Cyrus (adult)** in chorus:

"A baby!"

SEQUENCE 71—INT. NIGHT—Lili at 40— (Gaming table. See Sequence 48)—Flash forward—

Lili (adult – aged 40) is full face. In the foreground there is a silhouette of a man seen from behind.

Man:

"A baby?"

Lili (adult):

"Yep, a baby."

Man (off):

"But how come your niece didn't know she was pregnant?"

Lili (adult) (drawing on her cigarette):

"Try spotting a 9 pound baby in 500 pounds of meat, and you'll see! It isn't that easy!"

She takes another drag on her cigarette and adds:

Lili (adult):

"And would you believe they've chosen Nasser for his middle name? Jimmy Nasser! Can you believe that: Jimmy Nasser? Thank God my father died years back, or he'd have burst a blood vessel..."

She takes another drag.

Lili (adult):

"... Or maybe two."

Fade to black.



✦ FOURTH DAY ✦

SEQUENCE 72—EXT. LATE AFTERNOON— (Nasser-Ali and Faranguisse' home seen from outside.)

It is late afternoon. The camera is on a tree in Nasser-Ali's garden. The camera makes a pan and arrives on a window through which we will see Faranguisse cooking (in silhouette).

The voice over starts at Sequence-72 and continues on Sequence 73.

SEQUENCE 73—INT. LATE AFTERNOON— (Nasser-Ali and Faranguisse' kitchen.)

Azrael (off):

"By the evening of the fourth day, Faranguisse was beside herself with worry. In the hope of a possible reconciliation, she decided to prepare a chicken with plums, Nasser-Ali's favourite dish, naively believing she could reach his heart by way of his stomach."

During the voice-over, the following actions take place:

Close up of Faranguisse's hands cooking a chicken with plums. She prepares a beautiful plate, making it as attractive as she can. We discover Lili and Cyrus in the kitchen. They are busy. Lili is reading and Cyrus drawing. Faranguisse is in the background finishing her preparation.

SEQUENCE 74—INT. LATE AFTERNOON— (Nasser-Ali and Faranguisse' hallway.)

Close up of the tray that Faranguisse is taking to her husband.
In the hallway, we see her face-on. She walks past the mirror-stand and casts a quick glance into the mirror.
She takes one more step, then stops.
She takes a step back, places the tray on the stand and looks at herself in the mirror.

Faranguisse is facing the camera (the camera is the mirror). She loosens her hair from its severe style, runs her finger through it. She looks at her reflection for a moment. Then she undoes the top button of her dress, pushes up her breasts and pinches her cheeks to redden them. Finally, she takes off her glasses. She screws up her eyes several times in quick succession. (Clearly, she is very shortsighted and can't see much without them.)

She is transformed: almost pretty and quite appealing.
Subjective view of Faranguisse who advances towards her reflection and tries to focus. She moves forwards, backwards. As she retreats from the mirror, the reflection becomes blurred and we switch to a flashback.

SEQUENCE 75—EXT. DAY—(Street.)—Flashback—

Azrael (off):

"What you must understand is that, all appearances to the contrary, she still loved Nasser-Ali. Not many people knew it, but she had been secretly in love with him since her earliest childhood. And when he went off travelling the world, she patiently waited for his return.

She also turned down the handful of offers of marriage she received and decided to throw all her energy into her studies. It was a very long wait, but before she had turned into a real spinster, Nasser-Ali came back to Teheran. She was then 30 years of age, he was 41."

During the voice-over, the following actions take place:

We see Faranguisse at the age of 8. She is wearing glasses, and looking admiringly at Nasser-Ali (aged 19).

Nasser-Ali is leaning against a tree, playing a serenade for a young girl.

In the background, we see Faranguisse, 8 years of age, looking at him with her eyes full of love.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 76—INT. DAY—(Faranguisse's student lodging.) —Flashback—

Faranguisse is 10 years old. Books surround her. She opens a huge book which cover her face. When she closes the book it's 20 years later. (She's 30 years old.)

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 77—EXT. DAY—(Streets of Teheran) —Flashback—

A rapid succession of shots where different characters pass the information to one another: Nasser-Ali is back! In the last shot, we see Faranguisse, 30 years of age, hearing also the news.

SEQUENCE 78—TRANSITION—EXT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's mother's house. Faranguisse at the age of 30.)—Flashback—

We see Faranguisse at the age of 30.

She is carrying a box of cakes, facing a door. The door opens, and Nasser-Ali's mother appears.

Parvine (Nasser-Ali's mother) :

"Hello, Faranguisse."

SEQUENCE 79—EXT. DAY— (Garden of Nasser-Ali's mother's house. April. The garden is full of flowers.)—Flashback—

Shot of a cage of lovebirds rubbing beaks. We hear the trill of birds. We hear the following dialogue, in voice-over.

Parvine (off):

"Nasser-Ali! Did you know that Faranguisse is a maths teachers?"

A moment's silence. Then she continues.

Parvine (off):

"I find that admirable. I say this country needs women like you. Modern women!"

The camera pans to a table of guests sitting in the garden.



Around the table: Nasser-Ali, Faranguisse, Nasser-Ali's mother, Abdi and his wife. They are drinking tea.

Group shot.

The camera is on Nasser-Ali. He seems confused. It is hard to say whether he is uninterested or intimidated.

Parvine : (coming back to her theme):

"Go on, Nasser-Ali. Help yourself to a cake. Faranguisse brought them."

Nasser-Ali takes a cake, nibbles at it.

Abdi:

"Ah! Aren't they good, these cakes? Eh? They're good, aren't they?"

NASSER-ALI:

"Yes. Oh yes, they're delicious."

The camera is on Faranguisse who raises her shoulders and gives a silly laugh.

Parvine:

"But Faranguisse, tell him you graduated top of your class."

Then, turning to Nasser-Ali:

Parvine:

"Top of her class!"

Faranguisse:

"No, no. I was only second."

Parvine:

"Well, anyway, now you're a teacher."

Faranguisse:

"Yes."

Parvine:

"That's wonderful!"

She takes a sip of tea then adds:

Parvine:

"An intelligent, serious girl with character and a good head on her shoulders."

At this point Abdi, while still scoffing cakes, throws in:

Abdi:

" Yes! Good head on her shoulder!"

Abdi's wife gives him a repressive look.

Abdi pretends not to understand.

Faranguisse gazes adoringly at Nasser-Ali.

Parvine:

“So, I’ll go prepare some watermelon. Nasser-Ali, can you please come help me?”

SEQUENCE 80—INT. DAY—(Parvine’s kitchen.)—Flash-back—

Nasser-Ali and his mother are in the kitchen. From the window, in the background, we see Soudabeh and Faranguisse discussing.
Abdi leaves the garden table and walks towards the house.
Cutting the watermelon fiercely, Parvin is expressing her thoughts. We surprise them in the middle of their discussion.

We won’t hear it, but Parvine has just said to her son something like : “I think you to go very well together!”

NASSER-ALI:

« But mother! This is not the point. I’m not in love with this girl... »

She stabs the watermelon.

Parvine:

« Pfff... This girl as you say, I find her perfect. She’s nice, cultured ... »

Abdi bursts into the kitchen and completes his mother’s sentences.

Abdi:

« ... And single! »

Parvine:

« What the hell do you do here? »

Abdi:

« Nothing. I let the women discuss between them in the garden! »

Parvine turns towards Nasser-Ali.

Parvine:

« Listen to me my son. You're 41 years old. You have travelled around the world. Now it's time for you to install yourself. You are not gonna finish your life all alone. »

NASSER-ALI:

« But mother: why don't you listen to me? I am telling you I do not love her. »

Abdi snickers.

Abdi:

« And we all know why...»

Parvine pretends she has not heard Abdi.

Parvine:

« This is not a problem. First you get married, love will come with time! »

Like if he wanted to verify, Nasser-Ali turns towards the kitchen's window and look at Faranguisse. Faranguisse realizes Nasser-Ali is watching her. She waves hands and smiles shyly.

Azraël (off):

« And they got married... But love never came. »

Fade to black.

(No more sequence 81)

SEQUENCE 82—INT. LATE AFTERNOON— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

The camera is on Faranguisse who has half opened the door to Nasser-Ali's bedroom. The camera pans on Nasser-Ali, who is lying in bed, in shadow.

The bedroom is lighten by the light from the door.

Faranguisse:

"Nasser-Ali, it's me!"

Her voice is very soft.

NASSER-ALI:

"Mmmmmh..."

Faranguisse:

"I've made chicken with plums, your favourite dish."

Change of shot.

The camera is now on Faranguisse.

Receiving no answer, she goes on:

Faranguisse:

"You must be starving, my love. You haven't eaten for nearly three days. Do you want me to..."

Nasser-Ali cuts her short.

NASSER-ALI (off):

"No, I'm not hungry."

Change of shot.

The camera is behind Faranguisse. She places the tray on the table.

In the background we see Nasser-Ali lying in bed.

She adds timidly:

Faranguisse:

"Well, I'll just leave it here... If you change your mind..."

Shot of Nasser-Ali. He casts an angry look at Faranguisse.

Nasser-Ali, in voice-over:

NASSER-ALI (off):

"I've lost all taste, all savour, and all pleasure..."

Faranguisse looks at her shoes. She seems sad and ashamed at the same time.

The camera comes back to Nasser-Ali.

NASSER-ALI:

"All because of you."

SEQUENCE 83—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)— Flashback—

Description: Nasser-Ali is in his bedroom.

He's playing violin.

Faranguisse enters into the shot and stands beside him.

Faranguisse (furiously):

"I ask you to do just one thing: to take your son to the doctor's, and you can't even do that! ! For God sake! I've had it with always having to take care of everything! I wash, I iron, I clean the house... On top of it all, I have to work! You are the man, you should help support your family! "

NASSER-ALI:

"What in hell is wrong with you? You're married to a musician, not a labourer. You knew when you married me I was an artist!"

The camera makes a very slow dolly shot, leaving the couple (who is arguing), in order to film only their shadow on the wall .

Faranguisse (sarcastically):

"An artist! (She sneers.) Yeah, right! You couldn't even keep that job at the conservatory."

Nasser-Ali stands up.

NASSER-ALI:

"How cheap can you be!? You and your shitty little teacher's life!"

Nasser-Ali starts playing again, ignoring Faranguisse's presence.

Faranguisse remains speechless for a moment, but then her anger explodes.

She snatches the violin from the hands of her husband and throws it violently on the ground.

We hear a loud crack.

She rises up her head towards Nasser-Ali and we can read in her attitude that she's really sorry.

Nasser-Ali is gazing at his broken violin.
He looks at Faranguisse. He's disappointed, desperate and calm (the kind of calm that hides a huge anger).

Nasser-Ali's shadow raises the head and says:

NASSER-ALI:

"I'll never forgive you."

SEQUENCE 84 (back to Sequence 82) —INT. LATE AFTERNOON— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)—

Back to the present.

The camera leaves the flashback and comes back slowly on Nasser-Ali in his bed .

The camera is now on Faranguisse. She has exactly the same attitude as in the last scene of sequence-79 (She is really sorry).

The camera is now on Nasser-Ali who is looking at Faranguisse. As in the previous sequence, he is very desperate and angry. He repeats:

NASSER-ALI:

"I'll never forgive you!"

Faranguisse throws herself on Nasser-Ali, weeping.

Faranguisse:

"I'm sorry, my darling, so sorry! You know how much I love you! Nasser-Ali, I beg you, just say you love me too! Nasser-Ali, don't let a simple violin destroy our life together!"

NASSER-ALI:

"A violin? Is that what you think this is about? I never loved you, Faranguisse!"

Faranguisse pulls herself upright, stunned.

Nasser-Ali shoots her a black look.

NASSER-ALI:

"Get this into your tiny little head: I never loved you! Do you hear me? Never!"

On the last "Never!" he throws himself down onto the bed again, pulling the blanket over him and turning his back on Faranguisse. He is back facing the camera.

Faranguisse remains frozen for a moment. Then, bursting into sobs:

Faranguisse:

"You're a monster! I hate you!"

She rushes out, slamming the door behind her. We hear her receding footsteps along the hall.

The camera pans down.

Nasser-Ali closes his eyes.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 85/A—INT. DAY— (Shiraz. Far away, in the background, his master's stone shack)—Flashback—

Nasser-Ali is 21 years old. He contemplates Shiraz's landscape. Faraway, on the top of a hill, we see a stone shack. Nasser-Ali stands up and walks towards the shack.

SEQUENCE 85/B—EXT. DAY— (In front of the master's stone shack) —Flash-back—

The voice-over illustrates the image on screen:
Nasser-Ali and his violin teacher are rehearsing.

Azrael (off):

"So, as I said before, at the age of 21, Nasser-Ali left home to perfect his technique with the greatest master of the day. Lessons began at 5 a.m. and finished at 4 p.m. every day. Rain or shine, holiday or no holiday. Sometimes Nasser-Ali was disoriented by his master, who seemed to come out with some terribly obscure remarks."

Master:

"There is nothing to be said about your technique... It is excellent."

Nasser-Ali smiles.

Master:

"But your music is shit!"

NASSER-ALI (off):

"But Master..."

Master:

"Any fool can achieve technical. But it's not about technical. It's about art. The instrument exists to bring forth light. Your fingers move, sounds emerge, but it isn't music... It's empty... It's nothing."

The master rises to his feet.

Master:

"Life is a breath, a sigh."

The master looks left and right as if he was looking for the sigh and Nasser-Ali follows his movements, looking for the sigh that, of course, he cannot see. Suddenly the master sketches a gesture with his hand and pretend having caught it (the sigh).

Master:

"And it is that sigh you must capture."

The master brings the invisible thing he's holding to Nasser-Ali who doesn't quite understand what's going on.

Then he opens his hand letting the invisible thing fly away.

Nasser-Ali seems completely lost.

SEQUENCE 86—EXT. DAY— (Street. 1930.)—Flashback—

Nasser-Ali is sitting on a stairways, smoking a cigarette. He watches the smoke, almost certainly looking for the sigh.

A splendid pair of female legs strides past above his head, like if she was walking in the sky(this is the street the stairways leads to). He follows them with his gaze, clearly moved by the sight.

Cut.

Nasser-Ali follows the young girl with the lovely legs, with a burlesque action. (He hides clumsily behind a tree, a wall; he crosses the street and is almost hit by a car).

We do not see the girl's face. She goes into a shop, followed by Nasser-Ali.

SEQUENCE 87—INT. DAY— (Watchmaker's)— Flashback—

(Subjective camera: Nasser-Ali)

The girl, seen from behind, is talking to her father, the clockmaker, while Nasser-Ali feigns interest in a clock.

IRÂNE:

"But father, I absolutely must have a new dress!"

Irâne's father:

"Irâne, I bought you one only last week."

IRÂNE (off):

"Yes, but this is different, father! It's Malak's birthday. I need a real evening dress... Or what will people think?"

Irâne's father:

"Alright, alright! Just this once then."

He takes some money out of the cash register and gives them to her.

Irâne's father:

"But..."

Before he even starts his sentence, Irâne comes over and gives him a huge hug.

IRÂNE:

"Oh, thank you, the best father ever! Thank you!! See you tonight!"

Irâne's father:

"Yes! And don't be back too late!"

The girl turns around. She is splendid.
She walks past Nasser-Ali and makes him a little smile. Nasser-Ali almost faints at the sight of so much beauty.

The father comes over to Nasser-Ali, who is still in shock, holding a clock in nerveless fingers.

Irâne's father:

"Oh, well done! An excellent choice! The finest Swiss quality. Solid gold dial. Indescribable precise mechanism, the most pure carillon!"

Nasser-Ali doesn't seem to pay attention to Irâne's father. He looks over his shoulder seeking the magnificent girl with his eyes.

Irâne's father:

"And all that for the derisory sum of one hundred Touman!"

Nasser-Ali who is not in his normal state answers automatically :

NASSER-ALI:

« Yes... Yes... it's perfect! »

Irâne's father:

« Beautiful acquisition! I'll pack it for you right away! »

SEQUENCE 88—INT. NIGHT— (Nasser-Ali's student lodging. 1930.)—Flashback—

Close up of the watch on Nasser-Ali's desk.
Nasser-Ali is looking at his watch.

The room is sordid. He has a scarf wrapped around his neck. It is obvious he is far from rich. Music scores are scattered all over the place.

Azrael (off):

"Nasser-Ali's fate was turned on its head. He could no longer live without seeing the lovely Irâne again. But how was that to be?"

NASSER-ALI:

« Irâne... Irâne... Irâne... »

Nasser-Ali looks at his clock. We saw an idea dawn on him. He snatches up a penknife and starts prying the watch open (we won't see what he's doing with the penknife but we will guess it).

Cut.

SEQUENCE 89—INT. DAY— (Watchmaker's.)— Flashback—

The camera is on Nasser-Ali and Irâne's father.

Irâne's father:

"I am so sorry. I really don't understand. This has never happened before. I'll put it right straight away."

Irâne's father examines carefully at the watch, then adds:

Irâne's father:

"I'll just need five minutes..."

Nasser-Ali is looking around, obviously hoping to see Irâne.

SEQUENCE 90—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's student lodging.)—Flashback—

Close up of Nasser-Ali's eye through the clockwork. Once again sabotages the clock.

SEQUENCE 91—INT. DAY— (Watchmaker's.)— Flashback—

Irâne's father (inconsolable):

"This is beyond belief... And yet I'm sure I fixed the problem yesterday. (Drops his face in his hands.) Shame on me!"

Like in a silent film, the following words appear in white on a black background:

Finally, on the third day...

**SEQUENCE 92—INT. DAY— (Watchmaker's.)—
Flashback—**

Irâne and her father are in the shop.

IRÂNE:

"Right, I'm off then, father!"

Irâne leaves just as Nasser-Ali enters the shop. They cross paths.
Seeing Nasser-Ali, her father cries out as if in pain:

Irâne's father:

"Ohhh, noooooo!"

Having finally found Irâne, Nasser-Ali holds up the watch to her father from a distance and hurriedly exclaims:

NASSER-ALI:

"I just came to tell you it's working perfectly!"

And he rushes outside.

Close medium shot of Irâne's father. He seems very surprised.

SEQUENCE 93—EXT. DAY— (Street.)—Flashback—

Nasser-Ali is following Irâne (subjective view of Nasser-Ali).

He calls out to her.

NASSER-ALI (off):

"Miss! ... Irâne!"

IRÂNE (turning to him):

"Do I know you?"

NASSER-ALI:

"Yes, well, err, no, not really... I saw you in your father's shop. I wanted to ask you..."

The clock rings three time, interrupting Nasser-Ali in is momentum.

Irâne laughs heartily.

IRÂNE:

"You wanted to ask me...?"

Fade to black.



✧ FIFTH DAY ✧

SEQUENCE 94—EXT. DAWN— (Nasser-Ali's house.)

Shot of Nasser-Ali's house. Dawn. Flakes of snow are falling slowly. A wind is blowing.

SEQUENCE 95—INT. DAWN— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Azrael (off):

"At dawn on the fifth day a much-weakened Nasser-Ali felt that death was approaching. He felt he would soon be joining all those who had gone before him. He remembered his mother and the last days before her death."

Lying on the bed, Nasser-Ali has become weaker. There are dark circles under his eyes. He tries to sit up, but can't quite make it. He takes out a cigarette, lights it, then straight away stubs it out. The camera travels the length of his arm, from his shoulder to his hand.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 96—INT.— (Parvine's room.)—Flashback—

His mother is in bed, lying in the same position as Nasser-Ali previously. Nasser-Ali's hand lies gently on his mother's and caresses it softly. After a brief moment, his mother finally awakens.

Parvine:

"Nasser-Ali! It's you! Oh, no!"

NASSER-ALI:

"Mother! Are you alright?"

Parvine:

"No! I am not alright ! I'm angry. In fact, I'm very angry."

NASSER-ALI:

"Mother!"

Parvine:

"Shut up, you bad boy! There you go again, only thinking of yourself!"

NASSER-ALI:

"What?"

Parvine:

"You know exactly what I mean! I am suffering terribly! My time has come my son, and what do you do? You pray and pray, and pray some more!"

She sighs.

Parvine:

"It's your prayers that are stopping me from dying."

Then she speaks more tenderly.

Parvine:

"I know you love me and want to keep me with you! But I tell you again: I am suffering my son. I want it to end."

Pause. Nasser-Ali is speechless.

Parvine:

"So stop your prayers now, will you? Right this minute! Do you understand?"

Nasser-Ali nods his head like a child.

Parvine:

"Listen, light me a cigarette..."

NASSER-ALI:

"In your condition, I'm not sure..."

His mother gives him a black look. Nasser-Ali flinches and quickly goes to light a cigarette for her. Meanwhile, his mother says:

Parvine:

"In my condition, the only consolation I have left is a cigarette."

Nasser-Ali holds the lit cigarette to her, she takes a puff and adds:

Parvine:

"You know, as I've often said, smoke is food for the soul. Any way... I've already seen him..."

NASSER-ALI:

"You saw who?"

Parvine:

"Well Azrael, the angel of death... He's very close. I can feel him right in this room."

NASSER-ALI:

"Uhhhh... Okay..."

She continues smoking and after a little while,

Parvine:

"Nasser-Ali?"

NASSER-ALI:

"Yes, mother!"

Parvine:

"Go into the garden and play for me, my son. Your music is so beautiful."

SEQUENCE 98—EXT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's mother's garden)—Flashback—

Description. Nasser-Ali is sitting in the garden, playing the violin. He is facing the window, from which smoke trickles. The smoke is animated. He plays. From time to time, he looks up at the window. He continues playing. We see passers by standing stock still, traffic coming to a halt.

The smoke has followed the movement of the camera.

We realise that Nasser-Ali is a peerless musician.

Fade to black.

The music continues through the following sequence.

SEQUENCE 99—EXT. DAY— (Cemetery. Burial of Nasser-Ali's mother)—Flashback—

Opening shot in the cemetery.

The camera is still looking down from above.

Then the camera moves down gradually and takes places behind the people.

At the graveside: Nasser-Ali, Faranguisse who is pregnant, Abdi, his wife and a group of extras.

Azrael (off):

"On the day Nasser-Ali's mother was buried, a strange phenomenon occurred. Just after the burial, a thick cloud of smoke formed over her grave."

The camera moves between the mourners to end at the smoke-wreathed grave.

Azrael (off):

"This caused a great deal of comment and obviously, everyone had his or her own explanation."

We hear people muttering. As they do so, a beggar passes from one to another. Each of them gives him a coin.

Mourner 1:

"That's all the cigarettes. Three packs a day! Can you imagine?"

Mourner 2:

"For sure, with all she smoked!"

Mourner 3:

"Nothing of the sort! I'm a surveyor and I can tell you this is limestone soil, which encourages condensation."

The beggar approaches Nasser-Ali.

Beggar:

"What fools ! The smoke merely proves that the soul exists. Your mother's soul was so intense that we can see it."

NASSER-ALI (thinking he is dealing with a madman):

"Yes, indeed. That must be it."

Beggar:

"You don't believe me! And yet you should."

NASSER-ALI (Unwilling to contradict a madman):

"Yes."

Beggar:

"You think I'm mad. But I know a lot about you."

NASSER-ALI:

"Really!"

Beggar:

"I know for example, you were born on 22 November 1908."

NASSER-ALI:

"Yes, that's right."

Beggar:

"Another example. I also know you lost your father at the age of 12."

NASSER-ALI:

"Well, er... Yes."

Beggar:

"I also know that at the age of 21 you left to study music in Shiraz... And that your heart was broken there."

Nasser-Ali suddenly looks at him in surprise.

Beggar:

"You think about her all the time, don't you?"

Nasser-Ali is increasingly stunned.

Beggar:

"Now you see! Now you begin to doubt! You thought I was just a poor fool, a beggar. Things are much more complicated than they seem. You were hurt so much, your heart turned into a block of stone. And you no longer allow the breath of life to enter you. You have renounced living and there is nothing worse for a man than to renounce life. You know what Hafez said:
I am not the man to resign myself to Destiny's wheel
I shall destroy it if it turns not to my will!"

Quoting from the poem, the beggar draws himself up to his full height. He holds his stick in both hands and, with a force no one would have suspected in him, snaps the stick in two.

Then he stoops back into his former posture of an old beggar.
He walks away and, without turning back, adds:

Beggar:

"You did well to stop praying for your mother. Her time had come."

Nasser-Ali is left speechless.

The beggar s moves further and further away until he disappears from sight.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 100—INT. DAWN— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom & Lili's bedroom.)—Back to colour—

Nasser-Ali is lying in bed, arms crossed behind his head.
The camera is above the bed and moves slowly towards him.

Azrael (off):

"Finally, Nasser-Ali could see clearly. For five days he had been calling on death with all heart and soul, and death seemed to have shrugged off his call. He wondered:

NASSER-ALI:

"Is at least someone praying for me in this world?"

The camera rises, up through the ceiling to the next floor.

His daughter's bedroom. She is sleeping.
Cross-dissolve.

**SEQUENCE 101—INT. DAWN— (Faranguisse's
bedroom.)—**

His wife's bedroom. She, too, is sleeping.
Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 102—INT/EXT. DAWN— (Cyrus's bedroom.)—

In Cyrus' bedroom, the boy is on his knees at his bedside. Praying.

Azrael (off):

"Oh yes, Nasser-Ali! There is someone praying for you."

The camera continues its movement, out of the window and into the distance.
We see the whole house. The only light is in Cyrus' bedroom. From a distance,
we see the boy, continuing his prayers.

Fade to black.



✧ SIXTH DAY ✧

SEQUENCE 103—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Description: Wide shot of Nasser-Ali. He is asleep. The camera is above him in a far distance. He's surrounded by darkness.

Azrael (off):

"In the course of the sixth day, Nasser-Ali finally met me, Azrael, the angel of death."

Cut.

The camera is now on Azrael sitting peacefully next to Nasser-Ali, humming a tune.

Description: all Azrael's movements are slick, fluid and strange, ghostly.

Azrael:

"Hello Nasser-Ali! Awake at last?"

Nasser-Ali suddenly covers his eyes. We hear the sound of a magic breath. Nasser-Ali lowers his hands from his face. He finds Azrael has come even closer, and is now standing over him. Nasser-Ali hurls himself out of bed and runs for the door, but Azrael is already there. Nasser-Ali falls to his knees and finally resigns himself to his fate.

NASSER-ALI:

"Alright! You won! I give in! Oh, my children! Forgive me, Farangisse, all of you! Lord! I ask your pardon!"

Nasser-Ali, hands crossed on his breast, eyes closed, continues his supplication to Azrael.

NASSER-ALI:

"Go on Azrael! Let's get it over with! Do what you have to do, I'm ready now!"

Nothing happens. Nasser-Ali opens one eye. No one is there. He looks to his right, sees Azrael and starts. He cries out briefly in surprise. Azrael tries to calm him down.

Azrael:

"Oh! Hey! Calm down! Come on..."

Azrael reaches out a hand to Nasser-Ali and helps him to rise.

Nasser-Ali gives him his hand unwillingly and, as soon as he is on his feet, swiftly withdraws his hand from Azrael's.

Azrael:

"Come on, now! Sit down. You'll do yourself a mischief!"

Azrael holds the packet of cigarettes out to Nasser-Ali and says:

Azrael:

"Here!"

Nasser-Ali sits at his table. He takes out a cigarette and no sooner is it in his hand than it lights all by itself. Nasser-Ali is startled and terrified. Trembling, he takes a long drag on the cigarette. He tries to pull himself together.

NASSER-ALI:

"So that's it! It's my turn now. That's it, isn't it?"

Azrael:

"Well, not really. I mean, I'd rather not say straight away."

NASSER-ALI (now more intrigued than frightened):

"What do you mean, not straight away? What are you doing here in that case?"

Azrael:

"I've come to make your acquaintance dear friend. For almost a week, you've been calling me, morning, noon and night. Well, here I am: I've come to see you."

NASSER-ALI (more intrigued than ever):

"And yet I was certain that anyone who saw you fell dead on the spot."

Azrael began to laugh and at the same time grew until he reached a height of some 15 feet. The camera shifts frame to follow the transformation.

Azrael:

"HA! HA! HA!"

Shot of Nasser-Ali cowering under the table.

When Azrael has finished laughing, he returns to his normal size.

Azrael bends down to find Nasser-Ali under the table.

Azrael:

"What you say is true only for those who meet a natural end."

Nasser-Ali emerges from under the table and resumes his seat.

Azrael:

"Technically, it's slightly different with suicides."

NASSER-ALI (pretending to enter into the spirit of things):

"Oh really? That's interesting!"

Nasser-Ali notices his cigarette is finished.

The ashtray glides in a magic way towards him.

Nasser-Ali is surprised and confused.

Azrael:

"I say that, but at the same time, there aren't really any hard and fast rules. There are exceptions. As you can imagine, I sometimes bump into people by chance."

Sitting in the armchair, Azrael glides backward.

NASSER-ALI:

"By chance..."

Azrael:

"Since I have a bit of time, I'll tell you a little story."

Azrael opens a pop up of the market of Jerusalem on the table.

SEQUENCE 104—THEATRE—(A market in Jerusalem) (Cardboard cut-out scenery.)

We are now inside the pop up.
The setting for the tale is cardboard cut-out theatre scenery.

Azrael:

"I remember, a long time ago, I was ordered to take the life of a certain Mr Ashour in Taj Mahal, in India. The day before, however, I met him in a market in Jerusalem."

Market scenery. Azrael approaches Ashour.

Azrael:

"Mr Ashour! What are you doing here?"

Mr Ashour turns pale. He starts screaming and runs away, overturning whatever lies in his path.

Azrael, still in the market, turns to camera and, as if addressing the spectators (Nasser-Ali, in fact), says:

Azrael:

"The fellow was so afraid, he fled screaming. He rushed off to King Solomon's palace and asked for an audience, as a matter of urgency."

SEQUENCE 105—THEATRE—(At king Salomon's palace in Jerusalem) (Cardboard cut-out scenery.)

Scenery of the King's palace moves into place.
Solomon is seated on his throne in the middle of a great marble hall. Two slaves fan him with golden palm fronds. A huge cat lies at Solomon's feet, grooming one paw with long sweeps of its tongue. To one side of the throne, from a perch, Simurgh, the King's mythical bird, observes the scene.

Mr. Ashour:

"Solomon!"

Solomon:

"Yes!"

Mr. Ashour:

"Oh! Solomon, Solomon!"

Solomon:

"Yes, yes!"

Mr. Ashour:

"Oh! Solomon! My King Solomon!"

King Solomon leans forward and, looking Ashour straight in the eyes, says in a deep voice:

Solomon:

"What can I do for you, Mr Ashour?"

Mr. Ashour:

"I have just met Azrael, the angel of death. He cast his terrifying gaze upon me! He has come for me! I'm going to die! I have to leave Jerusalem! Now! This minute! I have to leave this accursed place!"

Solomon:

"But Mr Ashour, where will you go? You know that no one escapes the angel of death!"

Mr. Ashour:

"I don't know, do I? As far away as possible... To India, to India!"

Salomon :

« Hum... If this is what you want... »

Close-up of Solomon, scratching his beard then blows in the palm of his hand.

Change of scenery.

SEQUENCE 106—THEATRE—(In the sky) (Cardboard cut-out scenery.)

We find Ashour on a magic carpet, high in the sky.

As the scenery changes, we hear the voice of Azrael:

Azrael (off):

"Solomon, of his great goodness, asked the wind to carry Mr Ashour to his desired destination, to the Taj Mahal, in India."

SEQUENCE 107—THEATRE—(Taj Mahal, India) (Cardboard cut-out scenery.)

Change of scenery. The Taj Mahal.

Safely arrived at last in India, Ashour is happy.



He looks to his left and his face falls.



The camera zooms back and Azrael appears in shot, as Ashour gives a scream of fear.



Azrael glides towards Ashour.

He reaches out his finger towards Ashour's forehead.

(In the same gesture as the finger of God on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.)

Subjective shot of Azrael's finger.

Mr. Ashour (in a highly agitated state):

"Azrael, my dear Azrael! Just one question... And afterwards do what you must... I promise, I swear!"

Azrael lowers his finger.

Azrael:

"Go ahead, Mr Ashour. I'm listening."

Mr. Ashour:

"If you were supposed to finish me here, why did you look at me so angrily in Jerusalem yesterday?"

Azrael:

"You are mistaken, my dear friend. I wasn't angry. Today I am due to give you your send-off here, in India, and yesterday I bumped into you by chance in the market in Jerusalem. You can imagine my surprise. I was wondering how you would manage to make such a long trip in just one day."

Mr. Ashour:

"Ah... I see."

Once again, Azrael approaches and stretches out his finger towards Ashour's forehead. Just before the finger touches: cut.

SEQUENCE 108—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

The pop up closes by itself and its cover is used as a transition with this new sequence.

Back to Nasser-Ali and Azrael.

Nasser-Ali is sitting at the table. We know that Azrael is right behind him, his hands on Nasser-Ali's shoulders.

NASSER-ALI:

"And he died? ..."

Azrael (off):

"Of course! His time had come."

The camera is on the seated Nasser-Ali. He looks pensive.

NASSER-ALI:

"And what about me? When is it?"

Azrael (off):

"I have no idea. I'm not the one that decides."

Nasser-Ali is sitting at his table. Azrael is behind him, dominating him with his tall black shape.

NASSER-ALI :

« Azraël ! Is it a little late for me to go back? »

Azrael (off):

"It's not a little late, my dear friend... It's to late."

The camera moves up and we discover Azrael. He recites from Omar Khàyyàm:

Azrael:

"Whoever returned of all that went before
To tell of that long road they travel over
Leave naught undone of what you have to do...
...For when you go, you will return no more."

Description: very far shot with Nasser-Ali seated at his table, pensive, eyes lowered, and Azrael gliding slowly towards the door. As he moves, the voice-over begins:

Nasser-Ali is completely wrapped in the wings of Azrael. During the fade to black, we hear:

Azrael:

"It's a shame, Nasser-Ali. You only had this one life."

Fade to black



✦ SEVENTH DAY ✦

SEQUENCE 109—INT.— (Nasser-Ali's bedroom, at different times on the seventh day.)

All the fades to black will take place before the last sentence of each shot ends.

Fake subjective camera for the whole sequence. Slightly low angle shot. The characters do not look to camera, but are speaking to someone lower down.

1st shot.

Characters: Faranguisse, Abdi and his wife, talking together.

Faranguisse:

"He really isn't well. We must do something!"

Abdi's wife:

"Everything will be alright Faranguisse. Don't you worry."

Abdi approaches the bed. He touches Nasser-Ali and says:

Abdi:

"Nasser-Ali! Nasser-Ali!"

He turns back to the two women.

Abdi:

"He has a fever."

Fade to black.

2nd shot.

Characters: Abdi, Doctor, Faranguisse, Cyrus and Lili.

The children are behind the half-open door. Abdi is seated. Faranguisse is standing next to the bed.

The doctor is preparing a hypodermic syringe.

Faranguisse goes to the door and tells the children:

Faranguisse:

"Go on, now, go and play in the garden!"

She closes the door.

Out of shot, the doctor gives Nasser-Ali an injection.

Abdi:

"Well?"

Doctor: (Turning)

"I've given him an injection, but in view of his condition, it's only a temporary solution."

Abdi:

"But is there nothing else you can do?"

Doctor:

"Well, when someone has decided to die...."

Fade to black.

3rd shot.

Cyrus and Lili are standing holding hands, looking down at their father.

Fade to black.

4th shot.

Before the shot opens, in the darkness, we hear Faranguisse crying.

The camera is on Faranguisse.

Faranguisse:

"Nasser-Ali, it's all my fault. Forgive me."

Nasser-Ali's hand comes into shot, covering his wife's hand, caressing it.

Fade to black.

5th shot.

We see Irâne from behind. At first, her image is out of focus. We hear Nasser-Ali in voice-over..

NASSER-ALI (off):

"Miss! ... Irâne!"

Fade to black.

On the board for the eighth day, the dialogue continues, as if Irâne had turned around to speak to Nasser-Ali, and we go back in time to their first meeting.

IRÂNE (en off):

"Do I know you?"



✦ EIGHTH DAY ✦

The whole of the eighth day will be a flashback in colour-tinted B&W.

SEQUENCE 110—EXT. DAY— (Street. The following of the Sequence 82.)

NASSER-ALI:

"Yes, well, err, no, not really... I saw you in your father's shop. I wanted to ask you..."

The clock rings three time, interrupting Nasser-Ali in is momentum.

Irâne laughs heartily.

IRÂNE:

"You wanted to ask me...?"

NASSER-ALI (he can't find his words):

" Hum... May I walk with you?"

Irâne laughs in delight. She's charmed by Nasser-Ali's clumsiness.

Cross dissolve.

SEQUENCE 111—EXT. NIGHT— (Under a porch)

Azrael (off):

"Nasser-Ali was in love. Every day, the two turtledoves met in secret. Nothing else was of any importance. Nothing else existed, apart from Irâne."

-We see Irâne and Nasser-Ali under a porch lit by a lantern, discreetly holding hands.

SEQUENCE 112—EXT. INT DAY— (Watchmaker)

Nasser-Ali comes to pick up Irâne in her father's shop. He narrowly avoid being seen by her father.

SEQUENCE 113—EXT. AFTERNOON—(In a beautiful park. Far away, the Master's shack)

-We see Nasser-Ali and Irâne walking across a beautiful garden. Nasser-Ali seems to be telling a funny story to Irâne. She laughs from the bottom of her heart.

SEQUENCE 114—INT. DAY— (At the violin master's.)

The master is sitting, waiting. Impassively, he turns his gaze to left and to right (like a samurai sensei).

SEQUENCE 115—EXT. DAY— (Shiraz.)

Nasser-Ali takes discreetly Irâne's hand. The tow lovers smile to each other.

Cut.

SEQUENCE 116—INT. DAY— (In Nasser-Ali's student room.)

-We see Irâne in Nasser-Ali's student room. She's sitting with her elbows resting on Nasser-Ali's desk. He's standing beside her playing violin. Irâne is moved to tears. She closes her eyes.

Cut

SEQUENCE 117—EXT. LATE AFTERNOON— (In a garden.)

The wind is blowing, carrying jasmine flowers.

NASSER-ALI:

"I can't live without you Irâne!"

IRÂNE:

"Nasser-Ali, my love!"

NASSER-ALI:

"Irâne, I love you, you are my life, my breath ..."

IRÂNE:

"Yes..."

NASSER-ALI:

"Irâne... (He hesitates for a moment). Will you marry me?"

IRÂNE:

"Of course I will, my darling! It's my dearest wish!"

NASSER-ALI:

"First thing tomorrow, I'll go and see your father!"

IRÂNE:

"Oh, Nasser-Ali! This is the most beautiful day of my life!"

SEQUENCE 118—INT. DAY— (Irâne's father's house.)

The father is not happy. He keeps anxiously adjusting the collar of his shirt.

Nasser-Ali and Irâne are sitting side by side.

Irâne addresses her father, in a timid voice.

IRÂNE:

"Father!"

Irâne's father:

"Irâne, leave us, please!"

IRÂNE:

"But Father...!"

Irâne's father:

"Please!"

Irâne obeys. She leaves the room from the backdoor.

As soon as Irâne has left, the father speaks to Nasser-Ali:

Irâne's father (angrily):

"How dare you come here and ask for my daughter's hand?"

NASSER-ALI:

"But Sir..."

Irâne's father:

"I wasn't born yesterday. Passion is passion. It goes as quickly as it comes but the reality of life is something else! You're a musician for heaven's sake! You don't have a penny. How are you going to take care of my daughter? Have you thought about that?"

NASSER-ALI:

"I'll work hard! I'll earn money!"

SEQUENCE 119—INT. DAY— (Irâne's father's house, behind the back door.)

We will see Irâne who is actually listening to the conversation behind the door. When she will hear Nasser-Ali saying he loves her, she will sob in silence.

Irâne's father (off):

"But how will you do that? What job will you do? You're a musician! You know you are! When has a musician ever made a decent living?"

NASSER-ALI (off):

"But Sir, I love her!"

Irâne's father (off in fury):

"Then prove it! Get out of her life! Don't ruin her future. You're still young. In time, you'll forget her and so will she."

SEQUENCE 120—INT. DAY— (Irâne's father's house.)

We are back in the room with Nasser-Ali and Irâne's father. Nasser-Ali is on his feet, putting on his coat. After a moment of silence:

NASSER-ALI:

"If there is one thing I can promise you Sir, is that I will never forget your daughter."

As soon as Nasser-Ali leaves, Irâne opens the backdoor and comes in the living room:

IRÂNE (sobbing):

"Father! How could you do that to me? I love him ... "

Irâne's father:

"I know my dear, I know, but I want the best for you. You have no future with this young man... Believe me. I have enough experience... I know what I'm talking about. "

Irâne makes a step backwards.

IRÂNE (desperate):

"Why don't you listen to me? I say I love him! He is THE ONE I want to marry..."

Irâne's father (trying to convince her):

"You're my only child. I have great dreams for you..."

IRÂNE (really angry):

"You don't have great dreams for me! You have great dreams for yourself!!"

Irâne's father :

"How dare you speak to me like this? I brought you up all alone! I was your mother and your father, I refused to marry again so no one in this world would ever make you any harm, and you ... "

Irâne's father cannot finish his sentence. He is too moved. He turns his back to his daughter.

Close up of Eern who looks at her shoes. She's sad and ashamed at the same time.

We hear the rain falling.

SEQUENCE 121—EXT. DAY—Rainy Day (Street to Nasser-Ali's student lodging.)

We see Irâne coming towards the camera.

She has no hat on.

She's completely wet under the rain.

SEQUENCE 122—INT. DAY— (Nasser-Ali's student lodging.)

Nasser-Ali is at home, in his seedy lodgings looking at Irâne's photograph. Outside the rain is pouring.

Off camera we hear the door being opened.

Nasser-Ali rises up his head. He's happy and immensely surprised.

IRÂNE:

"Nasser-Ali!"

Nasser-Ali leaps to his feet and embraces her.

Nasser-Ali is happy; he seems to have regained hope.

NASSER-ALI:

"Îrâne! You're here! You came!"

Îrâne lowers her eyes.

IRÂNE:

"I came to say goodbye my love."

Close-up of Nasser-Ali, who has turned pale.

IRÂNE:

"I've come to see you one last time."

NASSER-ALI:

"Îrâne..."

IRÂNE:

"Don't make this any harder than it already is. I can't do this to my father. It would kill him."

She turns to leave.

Nasser-Ali stands there, helplessly.

After a short while Îrâne comes into the shot again and throws herself into Nasser-Ali's arms.

We see them kiss for the first time. (A superb screen kiss, like Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca.)

Then she runs out of the room.

Nasser-Ali remains alone. Meanwhile, the camera moves slowly backwards leaving him once again surrounded by darkness, standing by the lodging door.

Fade to Black.

SEQUENCE 123—EXT. DAY— (The violin master's house.)

Nasser-Ali is sitting cross-legged. He is playing violin.

Shot of the violin master stroking his beard. He nods approvingly at what he hears.

Master:

"Now, you are a great musician."

Nasser-Ali lays down his violin and drops his eyes.

NASSER-ALI:

"Her father doesn't want me to marry her. I'll never see her again."

Master:

"What an imbecile!"

After a silence:

Master:

"Come with me my child..."

SEQUENCE 124—INT. DAY— (Inside the Master's shack.)

The Master stands up and goes inside his house. He comes back with a violin case. He opens the case and takes out a violin wrapped in a fine cloth. He delicately removes the violin from the cloth.

He gives the violin to Nasser-Ali who takes it. Nasser-Ali is extremely moved.

Master:

"This violin belonged to my Master. He gave it to me... You see, my child, henceforth the love you have lost will be in every note you play. She will be your breath and your sigh. This love is precious because it is eternal."

Master:

"Go now. I have nothing more to teach you."

Indications:

The music begins and continues all the way to the moment when Nasser-Ali (aged 50) meets Irâne, who fails to recognise him.

Different situations fade into one another.

We follow the parallel lives of Nasser-Ali and Irâne, who grow older from one scene to the next.

SEQUENCE 125—INT/EXT. DAY (inside the train)**Azrael (off):**

"For Nasser-Ali, this was the start of a long journey that lasted twenty years, to the four corners of the world. And, as his master had foretold, every time he played, Irâne was present in every note, every chord."

Nasser-Ali, at 23.

He is in a train. He looks through the window.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 126—EXT. DAY (Train in the country side)

The camera rises up and the silhouette of the Kremlin appears.

SEQUENCE 127—INT. NIGHT – (Moscow Opera house)

We see him at the Moscow Opera. He plays. We see Irâne's transparent ghost, standing next to him.

SEQUENCE 128—EXT. DAY – (Large garden, full of flowers)

Irâne, at 21.

She is marrying another (we see him from behind). Her father is there, with a satisfied air. She turns towards her father and makes him a sad smile.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 129—INT/EXT. NIGHT – (Hotel room in Paris) Moonlight.

Nasser-Ali, at 30.

He is in a Paris hotel room, looking at the Eiffel Tower from his window. A crescent moon lights the scene. On the bed, in the half-shadow, lies a naked woman half-covered by a sheet. (His mistress, we understand.)

The camera makes a close up on Nasser-Ali.

Nasser-Ali is smoking a cigarette, his eyes full of sadness.

The music continues.

SEQUENCE 130—INT. NIGHT - (The bourgeois house of Irâne and her husband)

We discover Irâne and her husband in the living room. A little girl (she is Irâne's daughter) plays with her dollhouse.

The husband is reading the news paper (He is behind the news paper, so we can't see his face).

Irâne is looking at a magazine.

After a few pages she gets focused on a picture of a boat.

In the background, Irâne's husband is reading the newspaper. We can't see his face. In the foreground, Irâne with her daughter on her knees are looking into a "World Image Book". We can distinguish a photo of the Eiffel tower. Irâne turns the page. Close up on Irâne's face. There's a huge melancholy in her eyes. We discover the new image: a boat sailing the Nile.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 131—EXT.DAY-(Boat on a river)

Nasser-Ali is on a boat (the same boat Irâne was looking at).

On the background we see the pyramids of Egypt. The image becomes a sequence of the film. The boat is sailing the Nile and we discover Cairo in the background.

SEQUENCE 132—EXT.DAY-(Boat on a river)

Nasser-Ali is on a boat. On the deck, he contemplates the landscape.
On the background we see the pyramids of Egypt.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 133—INT. NIGHT – (Concert hall –Cairo)

Nasser-Ali is giving a concert in Cairo.
He's filmed from the back.
Everybody in the audience is moved.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 134—EXT. DAY – (Nursing home)

Irène, at 37, is attending a smart party. A fifteen year-old girl, obviously her daughter, accompanies her.
Irène's father is also present.
We see a close up of Irène, gazing into her thoughts. Out of the shot, somebody calls her. Wide shot. She turns around and goes towards her father. He's much older and is sitting in a wheel chair.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 135—INT. DAY – (50s style radio studio) -

Nasser-Ali, at 50.
He is giving a concert on the radio. The atmosphere is a 1950s radio station.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 136—EXT. DAY – (50s style radio studio) -

In the style of the RKO logo, an antenna broadcasts electromagnetic waves.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 137—INT. DAY—(Irâne's home) -

Irâne, at 48.

Dolly shot during which we discover a radio, then in the foreground, Irânes profile.

She is sitting with her elbows resting on a table. Moved to tears, she is listening to Nasser-Ali's concert on a bulky 1950s radio set. She closes her eyes. The camera pulls away.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 138—EXT. NIGHT – (New York) –

Nasser-Ali appears in the New York mist. He comes close to the camera, his violin case in hand.

Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 139—INT. JOUR – (Téhéran) –

Irâne moves to her new home in Theran. She gives some indications to the movers. She goes towards the camera which begin to pull back. Continuing its movement, the camera goes out the window where Irâne stops and watch the sky.

SEQUENCE 140—EXT. DAY – (The sky) –

The camera makes a vertical pan on the clouds. An airplane enters the shot. The camera stops.

SEQUENCE 141—EXT. DAY – (The airplane) -

Nasser-Ali, at 42. He is in an airplane, returning to his home town. We see him from the outside of the plane.

SEQUENCE 142—EXT. DAY – (Téhéran) -

We see the city from up.

SEQUENCE 143— EXT. DAY— (Garden of Nasser-Ali's mother's house. April. The garden is full of flowers.)—

Retake of a part of sequence 79/80, where we understand Nasser-Ali's mother approved and encourage her son's marriage with Faranguisse.

SEQUENCE 144— INT. NIGHT – (Wedding of Nasser-Ali and Faranguisse) -

A photographer leans over and discovers Faranguisse and Nasser-Ali, side by side, the day of their marriage. Behind them, a matt painting is used for the set, like the photographers of the studios once used. The photographer brandishes a flash.

Fade to white.

SEQUENCE 145—EXT. NIGHT – (Hospital building)

The camera flies over the neighbourhood of the nursery.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 146—INT. NIGHT – (Hospital)

Irâne and her husband come to see for the first time their grandson at the nursery.

SEQUENCE 147—EXT. DAY – (Music school)

Behind a bay window, a student plays violin in front of his classmates. Sitting behind his teaching desk, Nasser-Ali seems bored.
Fade to black.

SEQUENCE 148—(Flower bush)

In front of a flower bush, Irâne seems listening to the music.

SEQUENCE 149—Nasser-Ali's bedroom and hallway.

The set disappears and is replaced by Nasser-Ali playing violin in his room. For a short while, Irâne and Nasser-Ali are both present on the screen. Then Irâne disappears in a cross dissolve. The camera moves backward and leaves the room. We discover Faranguisse in tears, leaning against the wall. The camera stops in the corridor. Faranguisse wipes her tears and suddenly moves to her husband who is still playing violin.

SEQUENCE 150—Nasser-Ali's bedroom.

Changes of axis. Fitting movement. Faranguisse enter the room and interrupts her husband. Faranguisse snatches the violin from Nasser-Ali's hands and breaks it.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 151—EXT. DAY — (Irâne's house. Year 1958.)

Irâne puts warm cloth on her grandson. They are getting ready to go out.

**SEQUENCE 152—INT. DAY —
(Music store)**

Nasser-Ali tries a violin in the music store.

**SEQUENCE 153—EXT. DAY —
(Street, avenue, the year is 1958.)**

Irâne and her grandson walk in Tehran streets.

**SEQUENCE 154—EXT. DAY —
(Street, avenue, the year is 1958. See Sequence 3)**

Nasser-Ali is walking along carrying his violin case. Only his feet and legs are in shot. Return to the start of the film.

His path crosses that of Irâne.

NASSER-ALI:

"Irâne!?"

Irâne and her grandson stop and turn around.

IRÂNE:

"Erm... yes... Yes, it's me."

He has taken his hat off.

NASSER-ALI:

"You don't remember me?"

IRÂNE:

"No... No, not at all."

The music stops.

GRANDSON (louder this time):

"Grandma! I'm hungry!"

IRÂNE:

"Yes, alright, we're going, sweetheart."

NASSER-ALI:

"I beg your pardon. I must have been mistaken."

IRÂNE:

"No harm done sir. Goodbye."

This time, we follow Irâne from behind. She turns a corner.

We see her from the front, with her grandson. Almost fainting, she leans against the wall. Her grandson watches her perplexedly.

IRÂNE (sighing):

"Nasser-Ali! My love!"

She weeps bitter tears.

We see Nasser-Ali, as in the beginning of the sequence. He cannot catch his breath, and puts his hand to his chest. Dizzy, he collapses onto a bench and sighs:

NASSER-ALI:

"Irâne..."

The camera moves up. The sky gets really dark. In the sky appears Azrael.

Azrael:

"And the rest of the story, I've already told you all about... I just wished he called me somewhat later..."

The camera moves down and comes close to Nasser-Ali's house.

Cross-dissolve.

SEQUENCE 155—INT. DAY — (Nasser-Ali's bedroom.)

Nasser-Ali comes into the shot.

The camera follows him.
He goes towards his bed.
He bends down on his knees and takes another violin case (the same as in sequence 10 & 37).
As he opens this violin case, and removes the broken violin from it.
He looks at something in the empty box and weeps in bitter tears.
We see what is inside the box: A photograph of Irâne. She's 20 years of age like when he saw her the first time.
Then he puts the broken violin in its case, close the case and put it where it was (under his bed).

Cross-dissolve.

Time has passed.
Nasser-Ali is now in his pajamas.
He lies down in his bed. The camera is above him and moves slowly towards him.

Nasser-Ali pulls the blanket over him.

Sweep by the blanket.



In silence, the following verse appears in white on the black background:

"My coming brought no prophet to the sky
Nor does my going swell its majesty
Coming and going put me to a stand
Ear never heard their wherefore nor their why."

Omar Khayyam

Credits.

