

THE MOVIE DIRECTOR

Scene 1

Sign reads: Northshire General Hospital. Graham Wilton, a young white hospital doctor is bending down to unlock his bicycle from post in a bicycle shed. He is joined by Aishwarya Patel, an attractive Asian doctor, who unlocks her bicycle. A male nurse passing by calls out from the driving seat of his car.

JACKO

Isn't it time you got yourselves proper wheels.

GRAHAM: Bikes give you fresh air and exercise.

JACKO: Don't go out with him, Dr. Patel, if he's too mean to buy a car.

(He drives off.)

GRAHAM (Awkwardly) Would you like to come for a drink?

AISHWARYA:

A soft drink, perhaps?

GRAHAM:

Okay.

(They cycle off together)

Scene 2. Int. pub. Graham brings a pint of beer and an orange juice from the counter. and joins Aishwarya at the table.

AISHWARYA:

This is quite a nice pub.

GRAHAM:

It can get a bit rowdy during the football season. Are you forbidden alcohol by your religion?

AISHWARYA:

No, but I'm not keen on pubs. This one is all right. How was your day?

GRAHAM:

I was in A and E. Someone came in with a nasty stab wound. The police were here. And you?

AISHWARYA:

Fairly quiet. Are you going to specialise when you've finished your internship?

GRAHAM

No. I'll probably join my father in general practice. He lives just north of here. How about you?

AISHWARYA:

I hope to specialise in obstetrics.

GRAHAM:

Do you cycle to save money, or for the exercise?

AISHWARYA:

Both. I have a car at home in London. But I enjoy cycling when I'm up here.

GRAHAM:

Would you like to come for a bike ride with me one day?

AISHWARYA: Yes, that would be very nice.

GRAHAM:

I've been meaning to ask you to come out with me for months.

AISHWARYA: Why didn't you?

GRAHAM:

I was frightened you'd say no.

AISHWARYA:

My father, who is a businessman, says you should push at every door to see if it will open.

GRAHAM

Good advice, that.

AISHWARYA:

I must go now. Thank you for the drink

GRAHAM:

When will you come for that cycle ride?

AISHWARYA:

Next Sunday, if you're free. But you mustn't pedal too fast.

GRAHAM:

We'll go at a nice leisurely pace. I'll call for you.

AISHWARYA:

How do you know where I live?

GRAHAM:

I've had you in my sights for months. See you about ten o'clock.

AISHWARYA: (Smiles)

O.K. Goodbye,

Scene 4: Int. Accident and Emergency ward in hospital. Drunken man come to reception counter and after brief altercation lunges at girl behind desk. Graham tries to intervene. Drunk turns on him and lands a punch, which sends him reeling. Jacko appears, hits drunk and pinions his arms.

JACKO (to receptionist)

Call the police.

The drunk struggles free. Jacko lands a punch that knocks him out. He dusts himself down, looking self-satisfied. Police call and arrest drunk.

JACKO:

Are you all right?

GRAHAM:

Yeah. I guess so. It didn't hurt much. He just caught me off balance. You did a great job.

JACKO:

I boxed a bit at school. Would you like a cup of coffee.

GRAHAM:

I guess so. We deserve a break

Scene 5. Int. Jacko and Graham are drinking coffee from paper cups in a small waiting room.

JACKO:

Saw you with Dr Patel the other day. I'd steer clear of Asian girls if I were you. They're very clingy, if you know what I mean. A friend of mine went out with one. She kept hassling him to get married.

GRAHAM:

That wouldn't worry me.

JACKO:

I was married once. You should listen to the voice of experience.

GRAHAM:

We'd better get back to work. Thanks again for laying out that drunk.

JACKO:

It was a pleasure.

Scene 6. Yorkshire Dales. Two cyclists on narrow track. Graham stops cycling. Aishwarya also stops.

GRAHAM: That wind is very strong. Shall we take a breather.

AISHWARYA:

Okay.

They dismount and sit under the shade of a tree.

AISHWARYA:

The scenery is so beautiful.

GRAHAM:

And so are you.

AISHWARYA:

Don't you think character is more important than appearance?.

GRAHAM

Perhaps. But that doesn't stop me from thinking that you're most beautiful girl I have ever seen.

AISHWARYA: (Teasing)

I think you just have a weakness for facial symmetry.

GRAHAM:

I can't help loving your particular symmetry.

AISHWARYA:

They say most men prefer blondes.

GRAHAM:

Brunettes have exciting, hidden depths.

AISHWARYA: (Thoughtfully)

Perhaps people should stay within their own culture, when they are contemplating a long-term relationship.

GRAHAM:

That went out years ago. Nowadays people are completely free to choose their partners.

AISHWARYA:

My parents would like me to marry someone of my own kind.

GRAHAM:

The older generation are very conservative. I am madly in love with you, Aishwarya. I have been for months. I couldn't bear the thought of you going with someone else.

AISHWARYA:

Is that really how you feel?

GRAHAM:

Yes, absolutely. Do you think you might learn to feel the same way about me?

AISHWARYA:

Perhaps I do. I knew something special was going to happen between us the first time you came into the Common Room.

GRAHAM:

Those are the nicest words I have ever heard.

Kisses her

AISHWARYA:

Suppose my parents are right? Do you think we have enough in common?

GRAHAM:

We're both medical practitioners. Isn't that enough?

AISHWARYA:

I have worried for a long time that I might find myself in this situation..

She gently rebuffs his attempt to kiss her again and stares at the scenery.

GRAHAM:

Aishwarya, don't let yourself be influenced by your parents' hang-ups. We're grown-up people. It's up to us. grasp happiness while we can.

AISHWARYA:

I was brought up to be responsible.

GRAHAM:

So was I. But Gather ye roses while ye may is the best advice anyone ever gave.

He tries to kiss her again. This time she gradually responds and they sink onto the grass.

Scene 7. Interior of pub. Aishwarya and Graham in earnest conversation.

GRAHAM:

Have you told your parents I want to marry you?

AISHWARYA:

Why are you in such a hurry.

GRAHAM:

I'm frightened you'll fall for someone else.

AISHWARYA:

I have had several other offers.

GRAHAM:

I'll kill him. I'll kill all of them ...

AISHWARYA:

I'm only joking. I don't believe in having lots of partners.

GRAHAM:

Thank Heaven for that. I shall love you from now to eternity.

AISHWARYA: (teasingly)

Eternity is quite a long time.

GRAHAM

Not long enough for me to say all the different ways I love you.

Jacko enters pub with Elizabeth, his girl friend.

JACKO:

Do you love birds mind if we join you?

(To Elizabeth)

This is Graham Wilton — the doctor I was telling you about when we had that barney in A and E.

GRAHAM:

Yes, he saved my life. Please sit down.

Jacko and Elizabeth sit down

JACKO

Meet Elizabeth, my girl friend. She's a physiotherapist.

AISHWARYA:

We have met. Elizabeth has been working on one of my patients.

GRAHAM:

I haven't seen you lately, Jacko.

JACKO:

I took some leave to do other things. A mate of mine has a haulage business. I drive his trucks occasionally — I have a heavy vehicles licence. He pays very well.

AISHWARYA:

Nursing is ridiculously badly paid.

JACKO:

We're saving up for a deposit on a house. That's why I moonlight. Can I buy you folks a drink?

GRAHAM

No thanks. We're fine.

Jacko goes to the bar

AISHWARYA

Are you and Jacko married?

ELIZABETH:

No. We share a flat. He's totally obsessed at the moment with making money. He's always coming up with harebrained schemes..

GRAHAM:

Such as?

ELIZABETH:

His latest idea is making movies. (Giggles)

AISHWARYA:

That would take a lot of capital..

ELIZABETH:

Not the kind he is thinking of making.

Jacko returns with drinks.

GRAHAM:

Elizabeth was saying you're interested in the film business.

JACKO:

Yes. Doctor Patel can have a part in my next film.

AISHWARYA: I can't act at all.

JACKO: I have already given you a screen test.

Aishwarya looks puzzled. He shows them a miniature, portable web camera hidden in his lapel.)

ELIZABETH:

It's disgusting. He spies on everyone.

JACKO:

I'm not the only one — everyone spies on everyone else. You can't pick your nose these days without everyone watching you on CCTV's. They're going to have a competition soon on Channel 4 TV to see who picks his nose the most stylishly.

AISHWARYA:

You're joking, of course.

JACKO:

I wouldn't be in the least surprised if it was in the newspapers tomorrow.

GRAHAM:

That's a neat little camera.

JACKO:

It can take a two-minute clip. But I also have a proper video-camera. .

GRAHAM:

Are you seriously thinking of putting it to commercial use?

JACKO:

Yup. When I've saved up enough money.

ELIZABETH

I've told him I won't act in his movies.

JACKO:

You would if I paid you enough money.

ELIZABETH:

I haven't got the right figure.. How about you, Aishwarya?

Aishwarya smiles and shakes her head.

JACKO:

That's because she earns enough already.

GRAHAM:

We hope your film-making career is a big success. We're on our way now.. Goodnight.

As Aishwarya and Graham leave, Jacko points his web camera at them.

Scene 8. INT. Bedroom. Jacko and Elizabeth in bed. They are both a little drunk. She is not very interested in his advances.

JACKO:

You shouldn't have told them about my film work.

ELIZABETH:

You can hardly call it work. You haven't made a penny yet.

JACKO:

That's because you won't pose for me.

ELIZABETH:

You're disgusting.

JACKO:

You're one the who's always on about getting the money to buy a house.

ELIZABETH:

I'm not going on porno movies just to buy a house.

JACKO:

Driving a lorry on my days off is fucking hard work.

ELIZABETH:

So is the work I do.

JACKO:

Making a successful movie would enable us to buy a house outright.

ELIZABETH:

Stick to nursing and lorry driving.

JACKO:

I got a few shots of you when you weren't looking. I might put them on the Internet.

ELIZABETH:

I'll murder you if you do.

JACKO:

It's all right, love. I'm only joking.

He tries to kiss her. But she turns over and goes to sleep.
He lies on his back. Shadowy images of Aishwarya enter his mind)

Scene10. Hospital ward. Aishwarya wearing a white coat is bending over a patient. Graham enters the ward and waits by the door. When Aishwarya is finished, she comes towards the door.

GRAHAM:

Darling, I want to make arrangements for you to meet my parents next weekend. Is that all right.

AISHWARYA:

Are you sure they'll like me?

GRAHAM:

They'll love you. I'll kill them if they don't. My sister will be at home. You'll get on fine with her. She's a journalist. We'll drive up there It's only an hour's drive.

AISHWARYA;

And the following week you must come down to London to meet my parents.

GRAHAM: I look forward to it.

Scene 11. Interior of railway carriage.. Aishwarya and Graham both look preoccupied.

AISHWARYA:

Your mother was OK when we visited your parents.

GRAHAM:

I told you that she'd love you.

AISHWARYA:

I'm not sure about your father..

GRAHAM: He just said it might take a little while for the locals to get used to having such a beautiful girl in the village.

AISHWARYA

That is not exactly what he meant.

GRAHAM:

It's exactly what he meant. He raved about you privately to me. He thinks you're wonderful. He just thought it would take a little while for the villagers to adjust. They look on people from as far away as Sheffield as foreigners. Wouldn't it be the same if I joined a practice in a small Indian village?

AISHWARYA:

Not necessarily. But I don't want to live in an English village.

GRAHAM

I don't *have* to go into my father's practice. Anyway, people are not as backwards as he seems to think. They would soon learn to love you.

AISHWARYA:

I'm sorry if I seem over sensitive. Perhaps you're right. It's not important.

GRAHAM:

Your parents may not approve of me.

AISHWARYA:

Of course they will. I have told them all about you.

GRAHAM:

Did you tell them about your complaint that I sleep in the noddy.

AISHWARYA: (laughs)

No, they think I'm an old-fashioned girl like my mother.

GRAHAM:

Will she approve of me?

AISHWARYA:

I sent her a photograph. She think you're incredibly handsome.

GRAHAM: I can't help it if my face is symmetrical.

(She laughs and they snuggle up to each other)

Scene 12. Jacko at the wheel of a lorry. Traffic lights turn red. He drums his fingers impatiently on the steering wheel. Seeing a pretty girl on the pedestrian crossing in front of him, he pulls out his miniature web cam and takes a movie clip, replaces the camera in his shirt pocket.

Scene 13. Ext. Large detached house in London suburb. Aishwarya and Graham open the front gate,

Scene 14. Int. Large dining room. Graham and Aishwarya are seated at a long table together with Aishwarya's parents, Sanjay and Savita. The latter is a pretty woman in her middle years wearing an elegant dress and discreet jewellery. Mr Patel is a shrewd, patriarchal figure with an animated way of talking. Maid enters and clears away first course.

SANJAY:

So, Graham, when you finish your internship what branch of medicine will you specialise in?

AISHWARYA:

I already told you, Daddy. Graham is going into general practice. His father is a GP.

SANJAY:

So it is going to be a mixed marriage — a GP and a consultant.

AISHWARYA:

That isn't funny, Daddy.

SANJAY:

There's many a true word spoken in jest. Graham, marriage is for life. I want to be quite sure you will be happy with each other.

Maid comes in with food.

SANJAY:

There, you see. Roast beef — just right for a Yorkshireman. .

GRAHAM:

Great! But I like Indian food. Aishwarya and I often go to our local Indian restaurant.

SANJAY:

Food is just one of a thousand strands of habits and attitudes which make up a human being. For people to live with each other happily they have to harmonise. Savita and I have only one thing about which we differ. She likes to spend money and I like to save it. (Laughs heartily).

GRAHAM (To Savita)

How do you and Sanjay solve that little problem?

SAVITA

We have come to a sensible arrangement. Whatever he doesn't save I spend.

SANJAY:

Perhaps you need a refresher course in shopping. I'm sure that such a thing is available on the Internet.

SAVITA:

The reason I have not spent money lately is because I have been putting it aside for Aishwarya's wedding.

SANJAY

No need for that. I shall pay for that when it comes due.

GRAHAM:

Aishwarya and I would prefer a small private wedding.

SANJAY:

That is a matter for the family to decide. In our culture marriage is important, not just for the sake of the young couple getting married but because marriage involves a whole complex web of relationships between families.

AISHWARYA:

We'll do whatever you want, Daddy.

SANJAY:

But will Graham's family agree?

GRAHAM:

Of course. My family will fit in with whatever plans you make.

SANJAY:

We should not hurry things. You know the old English saying: marry in haste repent at leisure.

GRAHAM:

Aishwarya and I don't want to wait too long. Incidentally, this is excellent Yorkshire pudding.

SANJAY:

Of course. I am in the food business.

GRAHAM:

You sell Yorkshire pudding?

SANJAY:

I sell many kinds of food.

GRAHAM:

How did you get started?

SANJAY

When I came to this country thirty years ago I imported a few items of Indian food. From then it grew like, how you say, Topsy. I have since branched into many other areas. My son, Robert is a computer engineer. He is in India now organising software for one of my companies.

GRAHAM: Couldn't he do it on the Internet?

SANJAY:

It is very important to preserve personal contacts. He is also looking into other areas of my business. And, of course, he visits his grandparents. They are very old now. Too old to travel.

SAVITA:

It is such a pity that they won't be able to attend the wedding. Perhaps Aishwarya and Graham will go out to visit them.

AISHWARYA:

Yes. We would love to do that.

SANJAY:

I have been to Yorkshire many times, Graham. A foreman in my Bradford business is fond quoting that old Yorkshire saying. Do nout for owt and owt for nout and if thou do out for nowt do it for thysen. It tells the harsh truth. You have to look after yourself and your loved ones and ignore the claims of other people less dear to you.

GRAHAM:

I must apologise for my fellow Yorkshiremen.

SANJAY:

Yorkshiremen know what they are about. When a flinty soil won't yield a proper living, you look after your family first. People all over the world understand that.

GRAHAM:

There is plenty for everyone nowadays.

SANJAY:

There are still many places in the world where the old rule still applies.

GRAHAM:

It's up to the rich countries to support the poorer ones. If we all subscribed to that saying, nothing would ever improve.

SANJAY:

It expresses an essential truth about human nature. But if you don't accept it we shall have to agree to differ.

GRAHAM:

Surely, we can find common ground.

That is not so easy. Which brings me to another essential point. Differences in dialect prevent people from communicating properly with each other. It is all too easy for misunderstandings to arise. That in turn can lead to disharmony and a breakdown in a marriage.

GRAHAM:

According to your theory I should only marry someone from Yorkshire?

SANJAY:

The closer the match the better the chances of harmony.

SAVITA:

Don't believe a word he is saying, Graham. He just loves to theorise.

SANJAY:

I did not build up a multi-million pound business by being ignorant about such matters. It is precisely because I understand these subtleties that I have been successful.. Marketing and public relations — “spin” as they call it nowadays — are not just figments of the imagination. They affect us all the time. I am sure, Graham, you agree with that.

GRAHAM:

I'm not sure what you mean.

SANJAY:

It means I have your welfare in mind as well as my daughter's. One day problems caused by differences in culture will be solved. But we have to live in the world as it is today. Which is why I say don't hurry into a marriage that may fail because you have not taken them into account. You are both young and there is not need to rush ahead like a Juggernaut.

GRAHAM:

Juggernaut?

SANJAY: Don't let events carry you along. No need to be like the racing driver. What's his name? — Michael Schumacher.

AISHWARYA:

Daddy. Graham and I have made up our minds.

SANJAY:

Yes, but all I ask is that you just let your thoughts simmer for a while. No need to rush.

Scene 15. Int. Aishwarya and Graham are standing outside Gita's bedroom door.

GRAHAM:

Your Dad doesn't seem very keen on me.

AISHWARYA:

He'll come round eventually. He likes everything to be perfect before he makes a decision. He's a creature of habit. He goes around meticulously examining every lock as well as the burglar alarms before he settles down to sleep at night.

GRAHAM:

What did he mean by a Juggernaut?

AISHWARYA: He just means that we should not be swept away by our emotions.

She kisses him briefly and he goes along the corridor to his room.

Scene 16

Int. Savita and Sanjay in bed. converse softly in Hindi. The screen is dubbed in English.

SANJAY:

I don't think we should encourage this match

SAVITA:

They are very much in love.

SANJAY:

That notion is quite foreign to our culture. The important thing is for people to be compatible. Marriage lasts a long time.

SAVITA:

Your daughter has been brought up in this country. She is a strong-minded young woman. It won't matter in the end what you or I say. She will do exactly what she wants to do.

SANJAY:

He is not a suitable match for her. We should try to marry her to the son of those people we met the other day in the call centre business? Their son is already a successful ear, nose and throat consultant.

SAVITA:

It is too late.

What do you mean?

SAVITA:

They are already committed to each other.

SANJAY:

If you mean what I think you mean, that makes me very angry.

SAVITA:

Don't be a fool, Sanjay. Accept what cannot be changed. He is a doctor. And a good-looking one, too.

SANJAY:

You women are always impressed by such superficialities.

SAVITA:

I married you because I thought you handsome. I didn't know you were going to become crabbed and surly in your old age.

SANJAY:

I am just not happy with the situation. I shall delay making wedding arrangement until I see how things go.

He turns over and goes to sleep.

Dissolve into Scene 17. Int. Jacko and Elizabeth's flat. Jack is peering into computer screen in living room. Elizabeth is looking over his shoulder.

ELIZABETH:

Isn't that Dr Aishwarya Patel?

JACKO:

Yeah, I aimed my camera at her as she walked through the hospital in front of me.

ELIZABETH:

Isn't it a crime to do that when she doesn't know it?

JACKO:

Of course not. I was probably being filmed myself at the same time. If it was a crime, the owners of the closed circuit TV cameras could be prosecuted for filming me.

ELIZABETH:

Why did you film her?

JACKO:

I need a model. You won't pose for me.

ELIZABETH:

That's because you keep on asking me to take my clothes off. Have you got a crush on her or something.

JACKO:

Don't be daft. I like her looks. I'll make one of those Merchant and Ivory type of films.

ELIZABETH:

You're living in day dreams, Jacko. You'll never be a film director.

JACKO: (pointing his web camera at her and staring at her defiantly)

When I have a movie camera in my hand I *am* a film director. Neither you nor anybody else can take that away from me.

Dissolves into. Scene 18. Ext. Graham and Aishwarya are cycling through a wood. The sun shines through the trees onto the leaf-strewn ground and the wheels of their bicycles.

AISHWARYA:

You actually did an emergency tracheotomy?

GRAHAM:

Yes, I was terrified. One thinks such a thing will never happen. This little boy had swallowed one of these plastic miniature Star Wars merchandise creatures. He was choking to death when he was brought in to A and E. I thought I had completely forgotten what we were taught at medical school. But as I started to operate it all came back to me. It's amazing.

AISHWARYA:

I'm very proud of you.

GRAHAM:

Thanks. The registrar said if I hadn't acted promptly he would have died. I slipped out and had a brandy afterwards.

AISHWARYA:

Perhaps you should specialise in surgery.

GRAHAM:

I don't think so. More exams would just about kill me. Anyway, I'm not keen on the sight of blood. It has always surprised me that more women don't go in for surgery. Presumably menstruation makes them less squeamish.

AISHWARYA:.

I think women have found the network of male surgeons more intimidating than the sight of blood

(Shy darkens. Distant peal of thunder)

GRAHAM:

Looks like it might rain. I don't think my visit to your parents was very helpful.

AISHWARYA:

My father is always very conservative. He'll come round eventually.

GRAHAM

In the meantime why don't you move in with me?

AISHWARYA:

I'm not sure. I think we should wait.

GRAHAM:

We could get married in a registry office.

AISHWARYA:

I should like to please my parents. They have spent a fortune on my education.

GRAHAM:

Your father doesn't approve of our marrying because of our so-called cultural and religious differences. Which is ridiculous when you have been brought up in this country. And I don't suppose you believe in all that religious gobbledegook.

AISHWARYA:

I have a respect for religion. It's a discipline — it helps human being to survive. Survival mechanisms can be spiritual as well as physical.

GRAHAM:

I'll have to take your word for it. All I know is that I want you for myself now and for ever.

He stops cycling. She does likewise.

GRAHAM: Do you love me enough to make love *en plain air*?

AISHWARYA:

Yes, of course.

GRAHAM: Come with me.

He wheels his bicycle towards some bushes. Aishwarya follows him. He drops his bike onto the ground. Aishwarya follows him into the undergrowth. They make love.

GRAHAM: I am such a lucky man.

Patter of rain on leaves.

AISHWARYA:

Yes, but we are going to get very wet soon. It serves you right for dragging me here against my will.

GRAHAM:

(Aghast) Against your will!

AISHWARYA:

I am only joking. It was lovely. But we are going to get soaked if we don't move.

(They remount and start cycling)

GRAHAM:

Which direction did we come from?

AISHWARYA:

I'm not sure. I think it was from over there

(They cycle in the direction she has indicated).

Thunder and lightning. Becoming louder and closer. Massive clouds loom. The cyclists become bedraggled and soaked.

GRAHAM:

That hornbeam over there. I'm sure we saw it before. We've been going round in circles.

AISHWARYA:

I think we're lost.

GRAHAM:

We only cycled a short way into the forest.

AISHWARYA:

That doesn't alter the fact that we don't know which way to go..

GRAHAM:

Lets try over there.

They cycle in the direction he has indicated and are compelled to stop when they find come up against a dense thicket of bushes and trees.

GRAHAM:

That's no good. Let's turn round and try the opposite direction.

They turn round and walk for a while pushing their bicycles.

GRAHAM:

There's that damned hornbeam again. Let's try that track over there.

They mount their cycles. They cycle for a while and are then compelled to dismount and continue on foot when the track runs into almost impenetrable vegetation.

AISHWARYA:

Nature can be very hostile

GRAHAM:

We'll soon get out of here. On the map the forest appears to only extend for a few kilometres

AISHWARYA:

If you are going round in circles it can go on for ever.

GRAHAM:

Now you've got me worried.

AISHWARYA:

So what shall we do? I'm getting very tired. Perhaps we should pray.

GRAHAM:

A lot of good that'll do!

Aishwarya looks earnestly heavenwards and moves her lips silently. There is a rumble of thunder and a further heavy downpour of rain. They cycle on.

GRAHAM:

Hey, wait a minute. I remember reading somewhere that the lichen on trees grows on the north side away from the sun. I'll inspect some trees as we go and if we travel due south we'll travel in a straight line and should come out of the wood. The main road runs east-west, so we should come to it eventually.

They remount and continue swerving through the trees.

Scene 19. Aishwarya and Graham, wet and bedraggled, cycling along main road

GRAHAM:

Well, there you are. Religion didn't help But a little bit of science did.

Aishwarya :

Is prayer such a terrible thing?

GRAHAM:

I just pointed out that it is more practical to rely on science.

AISHWARYA:

When every alternative rational alternative has been exhausted, there is surely no harm in an appeal to God.

GRAHAM:

I do not believe God is in the least concerned with the activities and the whims and caprices of insignificant human beings such as ourselves.

AISHWARYA:

We don't know for sure if that is the case. So there is no harm in assuming in an emergency that He spares a thought for us.

GRAHAM

Let's forget the whole business. You are absolutely soaked.

AISHWARYA:

No, I won't forget it. I don't like your suggestion that I am ignorant and superstitious. There are more people in the world like me who think there is a beneficent Being than people who scorn the idea. Even in this country people who think like I do are probably in the majority.

GRAHAM:

Aishwarya, I wasn't criticising your beliefs. I just happen to believe that God helps those who help themselves. As it happens we got out of trouble back there because I remembered a scientific fact. And it helped us out of a difficult situation.

AISHWARYA:

I could just as well argue that you remembered the characteristics of lichen growing on trees because I prayed for help. What I cannot forgive you for is your assumption that I am just an ignorant Indian female utterly useless in an emergency. I am a perfectly competent medical practitioner, capable of dealing with most emergencies, medical or otherwise. I just happened to be very tired back there. It is not the biggest crime in the world to pray. Ask your Archbishop of Canterbury.

GRAHAM:

Darling, Don't take on so.

AISHWARYA:

I have a point of view, which you ignored. It is just as my father says — we don't really understand each other.

They draw up outside Aishwarya's lodging house

AISHWARYA:

I am sorry, Graham. I think it's time that we cooled it a little. Let's give ourselves time to think.

GRAHAM:

There's nothing to think about. We had a little spat, that's all.

Aishwarya, still angry, wheels her bike into the front garden, props it up against a wall and walks into the house without turning round.

Scene 20. Ext. Warm, sunny day. Jacko is at the wheel of a long vehicle. He brakes as he passes Aishwarya wearing light summer clothing cycling to work. He takes his miniature web camera out of his pocket and drives slowly past her. As her image appears in the near-side mirror, he leans over and holds the camera towards it to capture her image. Suddenly, there is a metallic sound. His expression changes as he realises that something has gone horribly wrong. He jams on the brakes and jumps out of the cab. One wheel of the bike is slowly spinning. Aishwarya is lying beside her smashed bicycle, moaning in agony. Jacko runs towards her and cradles her head in his hands.

JACKO:

Dr Patel. I'm sorry. I don't know what happened. The back of my lorry swung around as I passed you.

AISHWARYA:

I think my leg is broken. Call an ambulance. (Winces with pain)

Jack pulls out his mobile phone and dials 999. He pauses for a moment, then throws his miniature web camera into a ditch. Aishwarya loses consciousness. Jacko feels for her pulse, checks her breathing and supports her head in his lap. When the ambulance comes he directs the paramedics, who place her on stretcher.

JACKO: Mind her right leg. It might be broken.

PARAMEDIC: Okay, mate. We'll take her to Northshire hospital.

Jacko watches as the ambulance speed away and walks dejectedly back to his long vehicle.

Scene 21. Operating theatre. Masked surgeons are analysing the situation.

SURGEON 1: Her right foot is mashed to a pulp.

SURGEON 2: Can we save the lower limb?

SURGEON 1: I doubt it. The tibia and fibula are practically welded together.

SURGEON 2. :She's young and healthy. Could we remove her foot, patch her up and work on the leg later.

SURGEON 1: It could take years. There is only a one per cent chance of saving the rest of her leg below the knee. There would be no advantage in terms of mobility. We'll have to amputate. Let's get to work ...

ACT TWO

Scene 22. Int. Private room in a hospital. Aishwarya is lying in bed. Graham comes in with flowers. He places flowers at the foot of the bed. Tries to kiss her but she turns her head away.

GRAHAM:

How are you feeling today?

AISHWARYA:

I am okay. They are looking after me very well. They are going to make me a beautiful right leg.

GRAHAM:

Good. You'll be as right as rain soon. As soon as you feel well enough I suggest we get married.

AISHWARYA:

I don't want to get married.

GRAHAM:

Nothing has changed. I still love you. In fact I love you even more.

AISHWARYA:

I am not the same person any more.

GRAHAM: In what way?

AISHWARYA:

It is hard to explain. But now that my leg has been removed I have a different body. Everything associated with it has become trivial and unimportant. I have decided that I am going to concentrate on other things now -- spiritual things. And I am going to do more studying and get on with my professional life.

GRAHAM:

You can do all that and still marry me.

AISHWARYA:

You don't understand. I cannot consider that kind of love any more. Put me out of your mind. You will soon find someone else. Next time choose a blonde girl.

GRAHAM:

She wouldn't be as sexy and exciting as you, my darling..

AISHWARYA:

You can't be sexy with an artificial limb.

GRAHAM:

Don't be absurd. You are still suffering from the shock. A few months from now you'll be feeling fine and I'll whisk you off on a honeymoon to India. How about that?

AISHWARYA:

No, Graham. What has happened has changed me for ever. I am not the same person. Thank you bringing me flowers. But I would prefer it if you didn't come to see me again.

GRAHAM:

Is it ... Is it because of your father's belief that people should always marry within their own culture?

AISHWARYA:

Nothing to do with that. I am now an entirely different person. I have gone beyond such trivialities..

GRAHAM:

But I still want to look after you for the rest of your life.

Aishwarya shakes her head and lets it droop onto her chest. Her eyes close. Graham watches her for a moment and tiptoes out of the room. When he has gone Aishwarya opens her eyes and sighs.

Scene 23. Int. As before.. Aishwarya is lying in bed. Her parents are at her bedside. Savita dabs her eyes. Sanjay is grim-faced.

SANJAY:

So why did they have to amputate your leg?

AISHWARYA:

Just part of my leg.

SANJAY:

Perhaps they didn't try hard enough to save it.

AISHWARYA:

They did everything possible. I know the surgeon who did it — he's a wonderful man. He treats me as though I'm a movie star. It was injured too much in the accident.

SANJAY:

So is this the end of your medical career?

AISHWARYA:

No. When they have fitted a prosthesis, I can then decide what to do.

SANJAY:

What is this prosthesis thing?

AISHWARYA:

An artificial lower limb. They are very good nowadays. You will hardly notice any difference.

SANJAY:

You will be able to walk?

AISHWARYA:

It will take time but I shall be able to walk. Stop worrying. Everything will return to normal eventually..

SAVITA

Has that young man, Graham been to visit you?

AISHWARYA:

Yes, he keeps coming to see me. But I have told him repeatedly that we are incompatible.

SANJAY:

Perhaps in the circumstances you should reconsider.

AISHWARYA:

Why should I reconsider. Nothing has changed just because I have lost a part of a limb.

SANJAY:

Things have changed. .

AISHWARYA:

If we were incompatible before the accident, we are no less incompatible now. I followed your advice. You should be very pleased.

SANJAY:

I am sorry now that I interfered.

AISHWARYA:

It was fated.

SAVITA:

You will soon meet another nice young man who will adore you.

AISHWARYA:

I don't want to. I am tired of all that business. From now on I intend to concentrate on my career

SANJAY:

We must get proper compensation from the insurance. That man who ran you over. Did he have a brain-storm or something?

AISHWARYA:

Who knows. We have to accept what fate has decreed. Ah, here he is. Don't be too hard on him.

Jacko appears at the door, holding a large bunch of flowers. Aishwarya calls to him to come in. He enters and placed the flowers on the bedside table.

AISHWARYA:

Thank you very much, Jacko. These are my parents. I have told them all about you.

JACKO: (Visibly upset)

Pleased to meet you. What can I say. It all happened in a flash. I still don't understand what caused it. I have given up my heavy goods driving licence. I'll never drive a lorry again.

AISHWARYA:

Are you still making films?

JACKO:

No, I am going to stick to nursing from now on. Goodbye, Dr Patel.

AISHWARYA: (As he leaves)

Thank you for the flowers. Give my best wishes to Elizabeth.

JACKO:

Okay. She says she's looking forward to helping you get on your feet again.

Sanjay and Urusla look at one another.

SANJAY:

It is time for us to go. I have some business to do in London. We'll come and see you next week. Do you have something to read?

AISHWARYA:

Yes, Daddy.

Savita stand up and gives Aishwarya prolonged hug They leave. Aishwarya watches them go and then buries her face in her hands.

THREE MONTHS LATER

Scene 24. Int. Empty room in hospital. Elizabeth is supporting Aishwarya. She holds onto Elizabeth and takes a few faltering steps.

ELIZABETH:

That's very good, Aishwarya. You're getting the idea. It will all come together eventually.

AISHWARYA:

It is very painful..

ELIZABETH:

Yes but you will be surprised at how quickly the pain goes. It will toughen up and soon you won't notice it.

AISHWARYA:

It's hard to believe it happened at all. I hate looking at it.

ELIZABETH:

Even that aspect will go eventually. I have seen it many times. The greatest gift God gave to mankind is our ability to adapt.

AISHWARYA:

Do you believe in miracles?

ELIZABETH:

Yes. You'd hardly believe it, but that horrible accident has even knocked some sense into Jacko. He has given up his silly idea of becoming a film director.

AISHWARYA:

So how will you manage to buy that house?

ELIZABETH:

We'll save up the deposit eventually.

Aishwarya walks a few more steps with Elizabeth's help.

Scene 25. Int. Elizabeth and Jacko's flat. Elizabeth puts a mug of coffee on the table in front of Jacko, who looks very unhappy.

ELIZABETH:

Have you taken your pills today?

JACKO:

Yes, but they haven't done much good. I'm still as depressed as hell. Why the fuck did I ever think I could make movies.

ELIZABETH:

We're all entitled to our delusions. I haven't seen your web cam lately. Incidentally, you never did tell me exactly how the accident happened.

JACKO:

I've told you. I just lost control.

ELIZABETH:

You must have been looking at her in your driving mirror. I knew you had a crush on her.

JACKO:

So what if I had. She's a fantastic looker. Or at least she was. Oh, God, I wish I'd never set eyes on her.

He puts his face in his hand and sobs. Elizabeth puts her hands on his heaving shoulders and tries to comfort him.

ELIZABETH:

It might not have been your fault. Perhaps she rode into the back of your lorry.

Jacko looks up and shakes his head.

ELIZABETH:

I believe she has split with Dr. Wilton.

JACKO: Because she has lost her leg?

ELIZABETH:

I'm sure that had something to do with it.

JACKO:

Then I can blame myself for that as well. Oh, my God, I hate myself. I don't know what to do.

ELIZABETH:

You've got to shake yourself out of this frame of mind and get on with your life. You're making life hell for me as well.

JACKO:

I'm sorry, love. I'm sorry I messed around with movie cameras. It gives you a sense of power when you have one in your hands. It's as though you can grasp hold of reality and bend it to your will. I just had this idea that one day I'd make a movie and it would help us financially.

ELIZABETH:

Would you like to try to improve matters?

JACKO:

There's nothing I can do now.

He puts his head in his hands and experiences a momentary flashback of the moment when he threw the web cam into the ditch.

ELIZABETH:

There is something useful you can do with your movie camera.

JACKO:

What's that?

ELIZABETH:

You told me once that you had seen Dr. Wilton on the golf course.

JACKO:

So?

ELIZABETH:

Tell him that you'll improve his golf by taking a movie of his golf swing.

JACKO:

How will that help?

ELIZABETH:

Just do it and you'll see.

Fade into Scene 26 (Elizabeth is again assisting Aishwarya to walk as in scene 24.)

AISHWARYA:

I'll never play tennis again..

ELIZABETH:

There are other sports.

AISHWARYA:

Such as?

ELIZABETH:

Golf is a nice, gentle exercise. Jacko and I play occasionally. He has a handicap. I haven't.

AISHWARYA:

I don't think it would appeal to me.

ELIZABETH:

How do you know if you haven't tried it? How is Dr. Wilton?

AISHWARYA:

It is all over between us.

ELIZABETH:

Such a pity. He's a very nice guy.

AISHWARYA:

He says he still wants to marry me. But I am no longer interested.

ELIZABETH:

You are still a fantastically lovely woman.

AISHWARYA:

My father buys chapattis cheap and sells them dear. The marriage market is a trade off between money and beauty. I have gone beyond that stage.

ELIZABETH:

Isn't it unfair to Doctor Wilton if he still loves you?

AISHWARYA:

It is all over now. I have more important things to think about such as my next job. I have an enormous amount of studying to do.

ELIZABETH:

Just roll your body a little more ... Would you come with me one day to the golf club and try a little practice on the putting green.

AISHWARYA:

I suppose I could give it a try.

ELIZABETH:

Come with me next Sunday? I'll pick you up in my car.

Repeat of scene 25. Int. Elizabeth's and Jacko's flat. Elizabeth and Jacko are staring into a television screen.

JACKO: (In an upbeat mood) This is the best movie I could have made. I was hiding behind that tree on the right.

ELIZABETH: Stephen Spielberg would be proud of you.

JACKO: Let it roll ...

Scene 28. Ext. Camera focuses on large tree then pans towards Graham and Aishwarya, who are standing on a putting green. They are both holding putters.

AISHWARYA:

I think Elizabeth and Jacko arranged all this. We have been set up.

GRAHAM: I had no idea when Jacko asked me to play golf with him that you would be here..

AISHWARYA:

No, nor had I when Elizabeth asked me to accompany her. I have never before held a golf club in my hands. Where have they gone?

GRAHAM: I think they've gone back to the club house.

AISHWARYA:

No, I can see Jacko standing behind that tree. He has his movie camera focused on us. Isn't that what the ancients used to call the *deus ex machina*?

GRAHAM: Sorry, you have me there.

AISHWARYA:

It's a kind of device inserted into a movie to help resolve the plot. We seem to be the chief actors. Don't let on that I have spotted him.

Graham pretends to putt, then changes his mind.

GRAHAM:

Look, Aishwarya, is there any chance that you might relent?

AISHWARYA:

No.

GRAHAM:

In that case we might as well play the game. Look swing your putter like this.

He demonstrates and misses his putt.

GRAHAM:

Here, have a go.

AISHWARYA:

Putts her ball straight into the hole

GRAHAM:

Fantastic. You're going to be good at this.

Graham notices Aishwarya limp as they move onto the next hole on the putting green. Holds her protectively. Then stops.

GRAHAM:

Darling, you keep telling me that you are no longer interested in marriage. Where is your next job?

AISHWARYA:

I have a six-months appointment at a hospital in Peterborough. They have an excellent obstetrics department.

GRAHAM:

If I get a job as a supply doctor in Peterborough, will you live with me while you're there? If it works, we can get married. Say yes -- if only for the sake of the movie director lurking in the bushes over there. He'll be very unhappy otherwise.

Aishwarya looks in the direction of the camera.

AISHWARYA:

You are very persistent

GRAHAM:

I am doing what your father advises. Push at every door until it opens. If you say yes, I promise we'll go and visit your grandmother in India.

AISHWARYA:

There are two of them.

GRAHAM:

Okay. Both of them.

Aishwarya and Graham drop their putters and embrace.