

EXT. DREAMSCAPE. DAY

Blinding light and blazing heat.

TARIQ'S [16 yrs] POV, looks at a crowd of people standing over him, all wearing Middle Eastern dress. A man pushes through the crowd and reaches out a hand to Tariq, calling his name, offering to help him up.

The dream fades into reality around him and the man becomes his teacher, holding out her hand for his homework, calling his name.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY

Tariq and his class are in their classroom in the community college, sitting at fold-away desk-chairs. Approximately a third of the students are from an Islamic background. JULIE (28 yrs), is collecting a pile of assignments - Tariq takes his assignment from his bag and adds it to the pile in Julie's hands.

INSERT:

He has a Bible in his bag.

JULIE

Now I want to see everyone here tomorrow, no exceptions. We cannot rearrange classes to let you go to the mosque. You can use the prayer room to pray.

The bell rings. Students start to leave.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Tariq!

The class exits. Tariq approaches Julie's desk.

TARIQ

Teacher...

JULIE

You don't have to call me teacher Tariq, you can call me Julie.

TARIQ

Julie...

JULIE

You're a good student Tariq, but sometimes in class I feel like you're just not present with us. Know what I mean?

Tariq stares at her blankly.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You need to focus in lessons.

TARIQ

Yes, teacher.

JULIE

I'll see you tomorrow, yes?

TARIQ

(beat)

It's Ramadan...

JULIE

Tariq, I've met your parents. I know how important your education is to them. They wouldn't want you to miss classes. Don't disappoint me tomorrow.

TARIQ

Yes teacher.

JULIE

Ok, you can go.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE. DUSK

Tariq exits the college - many other students are heading home or standing around talking. Many of them are Asian students, the girls are wearing the hijab.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH. DUSK

Tariq is walking home, and passes a Pentecostal church where a young black man is handing out flyers. He waves to Tariq, who nods in recognition.

CUT TO:

EXT. TARIQ'S STREET. NIGHT

Tariq enters his street, and walks to his house.

CUT TO:

INT. TARIQ'S HOUSE. NIGHT

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN ARABIC AND SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

From the inside of Tariq's house we see his front door. We hear keys jingle, Tariq enters.

FATHER (O.S)

Where have you been? You missed the dates.

TARIQ enters the living room. His whole family; MOTHER(49 yrs), FATHER (56 yrs), SISTER(18 yrs) and three older Brothers (AMIR, 28 yrs, ALI, 25 yrs, and NABAZ, 23 yrs) are present. There is a half eaten bowl of dates on the floor.

FATHER (CONT'D)

I said, where have you been?

TARIQ

Sorry Father.

FATHER

Why are you late? It is dark outside.

TARIQ

I had to stay behind. The teacher wanted to see me.

FATHER

You will tell me after. We must pray.

Tariq's father leads the family in the Maghrib prayers.

LATER

TARIQ's sister and mother carry in food for the iftar meal. The family is seated on the floor in the living room.

FATHER (CONT'D)

I expect better of my sons. Your education is very important. You
(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)
 should pay attention to your
 teacher. Which teacher was it?

TARIQ
 Julie.

FATHER
 The girl? I remember her. (shakes
 his head) These women dress so...
 immodestly. I don't understand it.
 Why can these men not be taught by
 other men? Why do they use first
 names?

AMIR
 So what were you thinking about?

TARIQ
 I... I was thinking about the
 Prophet Isa.

FATHER
 Isa? Well... it is good to be
 thinking of the prophets during
 Ramadan, but you must also
 concentrate on your studies. You
 can meditate on the teachings of
 the prophets tomorrow. At mosque.

TARIQ
 But...

FATHER
 I expect to see all my sons at the
 mosque tomorrow for Friday prayers
 - it is Ramadan. Don't forget.

TARIQ
 The teacher says we must be in
 class tomorrow, no exceptions.

FATHER
 Then you will explain to her. You
 are a man now. She will understand.

END OF SUBTITLES

CUT TO:

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN ARABIC AND

SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

TARIQ is reading from the Qu'ran. There is a knock at the door and TARIQ's FATHER opens it.

FATHER

I will wake you at 5.15 for Suhoor
yes? Good night.

Door closes and Tariq is alone. He puts aside the Koran and opens his schoolbag. Inside is the Bible. He takes it out with reverence and opens it to John 5:24

INSERT:

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

Tariq puts the Bible to one side and goes to sleep.

END OF SUBTITLES

CUT TO:

EXT. DREAMSCAPE. DAY

Tariq's POV, looks at a crowd of people standing over him, all wearing Middle Eastern dress, similar to the first scene only now the people are recognisable as his family members. The crowd parts and he sees the man from his first dream, stripped to the waist, being beaten.

TARIQ

No!

Closeup of lashes on his back. The man is then laid on a wooden cross. Tariq's face shows his sympathy with the man's pain as we hear him being nailed to the cross.

The cross is now upright with the man attached to it. He wears a crown of thorns.

TARIQ (CONT'D)

Isa!

Tariq wakes.

CUT TO:

INT. TARIQ'S BEDROOM. DAWN

Tariq's digital alarm clock LCD display shows: "5.15am"

Tariq's father is in the doorway.

FATHER
(whispered) Tariq! Suhoor.

CUT TO:

INT. MOSQUE. DAY

The prayer hall. The men are about to start praying. Tariq's Father and brothers are present. Tariq enters.

FATHER
(in Arabic)
Good boy.

The men, led by the IMAM (46 yrs), pray the first section of the dhuhr prayers.

LATER

The Imam is in the middle of preaching his khutba.

IMAM
...when your sins are weighed against your good deeds, your good deeds must outweigh them. That is why we keep the fast during Ramadan, it is why we keep ourselves pure. By doing these things we cancel out the sins of the past, and bring ourselves nearer to paradise.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM. DAY

Julie is giving out homework assignments. There are a number of empty chairs and very few Muslim students present.

JULIE
...and I expect no less than 2500 words.

Tariq enters.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Well, well, well, nice of you to
join us.

TARIQ
(mumbles))
Sorry I'm late, teacher.

JULIE
I'm flattered you came at all, but
Class is almost...

The bell goes.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Leave your chairs tidy.

The class leaves. Tariq stays behind.

TARIQ
Teacher, I had to go to the mosque.
It's Ramadan...

JULIE
Tariq, you can't just up and go to
the mosque whenever you feel like
it. You have to be in class.

TARIQ
But my father...

JULIE
Your parents must understand that.
You don't live in an Islamic
country - Friday is a work day
here. What would you do if you had
a job? You couldn't just leave work
in the middle of the day every
Friday.

(beat)
It's not good enough, Tariq. This
will go on your record, and your
parents will receive a letter about
your truancy. If it continues we'll
have to take further action.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE. DUSK

Tariq walks out of the college, frustrated. He kicks at the wall.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH. DUSK

Tariq passes the church. Music coming from inside, the door is open. He hesitates, then walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH. DUSK

Tariq enters the church which is full - it's a Pentecostal church with a largely black congregation. The music is loud and the atmosphere informal and joyful - the contrast with the mosque is stark.

Men and women are standing in the pews, many waving hands in the air, some dancing or moving in time to the music which is upbeat and joyful. Tariq walks, as if in a daze, to a pew. The music builds to a climax.

WORSHIP LEADER

Praise Jesus! Praise his holy name!

CONGREGATION (VARIOUSLY)

Amen brother! Hallelujah!

Tariq sits down, and an attractive young woman, SARAH (16 yrs) who is sitting further down the pew moves down to sit next to him.

SARAH

Hi, my name's Sarah, what's yours?

Tariq looks at her, somewhat horrified. Before he can answer, the minister starts to speak. The minister's speech is accompanied by music from the Hammond organ, and punctuated by it and the cries of the congregation.

MINISTER

Good evening, brothers and sisters, and welcome. We're here to worship our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CONGREGATION
Amen! Hallelujah! That'll Preach!

MINISTER
I want to encourage you today, if you don't know Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour then you should call out to him. Call out to him, Jesus!

CONGREGATION
Jesus! Amen! Yeah, brother!

MINISTER
Call out Jesuuuus! Call out to him! For he is the only one who saves!

CONGREGATION
That's right brother! Amen!

MINISTER
He is the only one with the power to cancel out your sins, because he's paid the debt for you on the cross. That's right. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that worth celebrating? Why don't you turn to the person next to you and give them a great big hug.

Sarah turns to Tariq, and before he can react hugs him. Tariq goes rigid in horror, then as soon as he is released stumbles backwards, and runs from the building out onto the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE CHURCH. DUSK

Tariq's brother Nabaz sees him exit the church hurriedly from across the street.

NABAZ
Tariq!

Nabaz crosses the road to join him.

NABAZ (CONT'D)
We've been looking for you, we were worried. What were you doing in there? Tariq? Look at me, what were you doing in there?

(MORE)

NABAZ (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 You can tell me or you can tell
 Father.

TARIQ
 I...

NABAZ
 (pause - Tariq has no
 answer)
 Very well come with me.

Nabaz takes Tariq roughly by the arm and marches him home

CUT TO:

INT. TARIQ'S HOUSE. NIGHT

NOTE: THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN ARABIC AND
 SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

Nabaz enters with Tariq. Tariq's Father, Mother and Sister
 are waiting in the living room.

NABAZ
 I found him.

FATHER
 Good - call your brothers. (to
 Tariq) Where have you been?!

NABAZ
 I found him coming out of a church.

Nabaz turns away and starts to talk on his cell phone.

FATHER
 What? Why? Tariq, you have
 neglected your obligation to
 yourself and to your family. What
 were you doing in the church?
 (beat)
 You should not listen to their
 blasphemy, especially when you
 should be at prayer.

Nabaz finds the Bible in Tariq's bag.

FATHER (CONT'D)
 Tariq, what is this? Who gave you
 this? Why are you reading it?

Amir and Ali enter the house

AMIR
You found him then?

FATHER
Look at this (hands Amir the Bible)
He has been in a church.

ALI
What were you doing there? You
missed prayers -

FATHER
What lies did they teach you. Did
they teach you Isa is God?

TARIQ
They did not teach me anything...

FATHER
Do not lie! You must have got that
Bible from somewhere.

TARIQ
I'm not lying!

FATHER
Amir, give me your belt. Hold him
still -

Amir takes off his belt and hands it to his Father. The other two brothers hold Tariq so that his backside is facing his father.

FATHER (CONT'D)
I do not want to hurt you but you
must tell me the truth.

TARIQ
I am!

FATHER
Very well, hold him tight.

Tariq's father proceeds to beat him on the backside with his belt while he speaks the next few lines.

FATHER (CONT'D)
You must not neglect your prayers.
I will not have my sons lie to me.
You will not bring shame on my
house by neglecting the truth of
Islam.

Tariq winces in pain with each strike. After the first few strikes, each strike brings with it a flashback shot of his dream in which Jesus is beaten.

TARIQ

Isa!!

At the sound of the name Isa, Tariq's father lowers the belt, stunned at what his son has said. His brothers relax their grip, similarly stunned, and Tariq turns around to face his father, realising what he has said aloud.

FATHER

What did you say...?

Tariq, terrified, bolts for the door.

END OF SUBTITLES

CUT TO:

EXT. TARIQ'S STREET. NIGHT

Tariq runs out into the street, his brothers following him. He runs out to the crossroads with the main road. Tariq turns to see his brothers pursuing him.

AMIR

Tariq! No!

He keeps running. A car hits Tariq from the side.

HIGH ANGLE:

Tariq is spreadyegled on the road, his brothers and other family gather around him.

CUT TO:

EXT. DREAMSCAPE. DAY - FLASHBACK

Tariq, as in the first scene, is surrounded by his family in Middle Eastern dress. A man (Jesus) pushes through the crowd and helps him up, pulling him into a hug. In the distance we hear sirens.

FADE OUT: