

23<sup>rd</sup> May '13

## **Highway**

### **Script**

#### **Opening**

The highway seen from the front seat of a moving Tempo Traveler.

Sound of the engine, passing vehicles, trees. A song in a girl's voice. Not a singer, singing to herself. Uncertain lyrics, sounds like a lullaby – 'Don't cry baby... Don't worry, I am with you. When you wake up in the morning, the sun will be shining, the birds will be singing. And everything will be all right.'

The road keeps changing. From plain to hills, from forest to desert.

Titles of the film appear.

Fade-out.

{2 ½ mins}

## **Home Video**

Wedding preparations in a rich city bungalow. Guests, clothes, jewellery, decorated gifts. All bright. The video must have been shot by a kid in the house. We see the bride to be – wishing people, smiling, bright, respectful. Dholki, geet, sherbet...

{ ½ min }

**Sc # 1**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Tripathy House**

A large bungalow in a premium Delhi colony.

Back of the house – a shadow passes a window, a door opens and a figure steals out, then makes it's way across the lawn.

Key is put to a lock and turned. The small corner gate opens. The figure, wrapped in a shawl, sneaks out, then walks down the lane.

The figure hurries up the pavement, runs across the street, removing the shawl cover. It is the bride to be. Her name is Veera. She comes to a waiting car and sits in excitement. A man named Vinay has come to pick her up.

Vinay           Itni kya urgency thi yaar...?

Veera           (simultaneously) Let's go let's go let's go...

Vinay           Zindagi saath bitaani hai humein, abhi ye log keh rahe hain kuch din mat milo to ruk jaate hai na...?

Veera           Chalo na...

Vinay           Veera, I think tum vaapas chali jao. Abhi tak kisi ne dekha nahin hai humein...

Veera           Vinay yaar I want to breathe... Ye rasam-rivaaj aur aaiye ji namaste ji... ghaghra aur jhumka aur nathni... please chalo yahan se... Thodi der is ghar se door rehte hain, khule mein. Sirf ek ghante ke liye...

Vinay           Ek ghante ke liye...?

Veera           Gaadi to start karo...

Vinay           Pandrah minute

Veera           Achcha chalo to...

Vinay shakes his head, starts the car.

Vinay           Pandrah minute

Veera           Chalooooo....

The car drives out.

{1 min}

**Sc # 2**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Car on Delhi Streets**

The car drives through a Delhi roundabout.

The car is driving on a Delhi street.

Inside, Vinay looks at a clock.

Vinay            Paanch minute bache hain...

Veera            Arey...? Abhi time start nahin hua hai. Pehle in bright lights se to nikalte hain, khule mein jaate hain kaheen... Highway chalein?

Vinay            Bina security ke?

Veera            Bus highway ko touch kar ke aa jayenge, theek hai? Promise...

Vinay            Dekho ye bilkul...

Veera            (cuts in) Please please please please please... Let's go let's go.

Vinay            (exhales) Phoo...

Veera smiles.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 3**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Car on Delhi Street**

The car is seen driving from a city street towards the highway.

**Sc # 4**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Car on Highway**

Car driving on the highway.

Inside, Veera is feeling much better.

Veera Ahhh... it's working... Dimagh ke saare knots khul rahe hain...

Vinay Good, vaapas chalte hain

Veera (quickly) Thode aur khulne hain. Little more, okay...?

Vinay Ye little more little more karte karte bahot zyada ho gaya hai

Veera Haan to little more...

Vinay Veera ye raasta safe nahin hai

Veera Tch tum ho na...

Silence. They drive.

Veera Vinay, vaapas hi nahin jaate hain yaar... Haan...? Chalo bhaag jaate hai hum...

Vinay Very funny

Veera Haan na... Kat lete hain yahan se... Aur ek beautiful ghar banaate hain... kisi pahaad par. Tum bhedh charaana, main tumhaare liye khaana banaoongi... bahot maza aayega.

Vinay (pissed) Okay, main turn kar raha hoon

Veera No no no no...

Vinay Bahot ho gayee bewakoofi

Veera Little more, little more...

Vinay Kaafi pehle mud jaana tha humein

Veera Arey yaar...

The car is seen turning back on the highway.

{1 min}

**Sc # 5**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Highway Petrol Station**

The car drives into a petrol station. The lights are dim and no one is seen at the pumps.

Inside the car, Vinay is looking around at the pumps.

Vinay           Band to nahin ho gaya?

He honks. Veera opens the door and gets out of the car.

Vinay           Veera sit... Veera...

Veera is already out, he looks at her, annoyed. She comes in front of the car and opens her arms, takes a deep breath.

Veera           See... Hawa kitni alag hai yahan. Kitni Fresh...

Vinay           Veera just come back...

Veera           Sheher mein to bechaini hoti hai saans lene mein... Aisa kyon nahin ho sakta...?

Vinay           Agar tumhaara drama khatam ho gaya hai to vaapas aa jao

Veera           Tum baahar aao na... Ek second ke liye...

Vinay           Veera main keh raha hoon...

Veera           Just for one second...

Suddenly, a gun shot is heard. Then a loud clang of a metal and desperate screaming – *Peeche dekh peeche se aa ro ae... Maar... Ae ruk.... Ya pakad, likad...* etc.

Veera turns in shock towards the petrol pump cabin.

Some people scamper out of the cabin, a few of them pointing guns. Two people in a scuffle with a gunman. *Oye Ravi... Chup teri... Vilaas... Vaeen pado reh... Chal bhaag aa rein peeche... Tu gaadi s-tart kar... Ruk ja ke raoon, khada reh...*

The men rush out. Veera is in their way. Faces of the men are covered with scarfs, blankets. She is transfixed as they cross close to her. One of them runs up to her, grabs her, twists her hand behind her and screams out to the cabin –

Mahabir       Ruk saala... Ruk... Ruk...

Veera screams in pain. Something hot hits her temple. It is a gun.

Mahabir        Sagle khade raho vaheen...

Two guards have rushed in with guns, but now look tentatively in Veera's direction. One of them moves up.

Mahabir        Teri...

The man holding Veera fires a shot towards the cabin. A glass shatters. Those men brace. The gun is brought back to Veera's temple. Veera screams.

Mahabir        Agli idhar chalegi... Pher na boloonga... (screams at his men) Arey kah wa jeep ko?

Someone is trying to start a jeep kept on the other side. It's not starting. The others are waiting.

Man 2            Check na kee pehle...? Hain...?

Man 3            Ya laaya kona...?

Veera feels her arm is going to come off the socket, it is being pulled so hard. She screams again. The man holding her hisses in reaction and she is banged on the bonnet of Vinay's car. The gun is on her temple. She looks at Vinay. Vinay has not moved. Veera is looking at Vinay.

Veera            (screams) Vinay...

She whimpers in pain.

Vinay is staring. Sounds of the jeep being started, men abusing.

Veera            (screams again) Vinay....

Vinay            (suddenly) Maine kaha tha na...? Maine kaha tha...

Man 2            (OC) Ya gaddi pakad...

Vinay            (continues) Ab khush?

Just then someone opens his door and pulls him out. Punches and kicks are landed roughly on him. One of the men sits in the driver's seat, the others get into the car.

Mahabir        Baitho sagle bheetar... (to the cabin) Khabardaar...

Then Veera is lifted from the bonnet and pushed towards the rear of the car. She is screaming in pain. She is pushed inside the car.

Mahabir        Thaam yaae...

Two others get in the rear after Veera.

Mahabir (calling out, OC) Peeche aayo koi to goli chal jaagi...

Veera is sitting squashed in the darkness, unable to fully comprehend what is really happening. The man holds the gun to her forehead from the front seat.

Mahabir (calling out, OC) Dekh roun main...

Man 2 Chal nikal, nikal...

Mahabir Tonk e phaun laga...

The car suddenly takes off amidst more threats and abuses. Veera panics, but is pulled back. Unbearable pain in her arms. Someone passes a phone to the man in front. Someone squeezes Veera in the darkness, she grimaces.

Mahabir (turns back) Ae... (into phone) Tere paas gaudi ae...? Kauhan hai tu?

Veera is choking, yelping. She can barely see anything inside the car. She can't follow the brisk, tense dialect that the men are speaking in –

Driver Jaana kahaun ae...?

Mahabir (into phone) Mangad ke peeche waalo rasto dekh ro ae... (to the driver) Seedho chal batata oon

Man 3 Main bataoon...

Mahabir (into phone) Tonk vaaye raaste par paahad ke peeche aa ja khtettan mein... Aur...

{3 ½ mins}

**Sc # 6**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Highway, Path, Crops**

The car is seen turning away from the highway into a path leading to crops.

The car comes to a stop between the crops.

Veera is transfixed as the men rush out of the car. She sits there, heaving, yelping like a dog. She looks up.

The men are running away, have reached a turn in the crops. A slight relief begins to come to her. But she sees that the men stop. One of them points in her direction and another begins to run towards her. She stiffens. He is coming back, her breath rises again. She grabs her phone from the front dashboard, makes to call. Then she makes to shut the door, the man holds the door and begins to pull roughly, abusing her. He opens the door, grabs her. Another man comes from behind and pushes her out.

She is brought out of the car, one of the men holds her mouth. Another picks up the phone, they rush her to the others at the turn of the crops.

The man waiting speaks –

Mahabir (OC) Chhod...

The two leave her. Veera stares at this man. This is Mahabir Bhaati. He looks at her, then pulls at the hair behind her head. She screams, he stuffs cloth into her mouth, the others tie her mouth with a scarf.

Then Mahabir lowers her head, still holding the hair above her nape and turns her into the path between the crops. Some torches are on. Veera is rushed down the path faster than she can manage. She stumbles occasionally, falls, is pulled up by the hair and the rush through the path continues.

{2 mins}

**Sc # 7**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Mud Path**

A Marshall jeep is parked in the darkness. Someone is standing there, shining his phone as indication.

Mahabir and the others emerge from the crops. Veera is faintly by now. The man near the jeep calls out -

Tonk           Aa jao aa jao... Sagle o...?

Mahabir       Haan...

Tonk           Yu koun ae...?

Mahabir       Peeche ke darwajje khol. Goru baith... Daalo yaaye bhitter...

Veera looks up. The back door of the jeep opens. She is now going to be lifted into the rear of the jeep.

Another man holds her to take her in. Veera suddenly grunts and shrieks and puts up a wild, superhuman struggle to break free. The others grab her, try to restrain her. Veera pushes desperately. If she does not manage to get away now, if she is hoisted into that darkness, her life as she knows it is over. Veera struggles with all her strength.

Mahabir suddenly yanks her away from everyone and strikes a massive slap across her face. She falters back, stunned. He paces up to her. She is grunting, looks up at him. Suddenly another full-blooded slap, harder than before. She drops to the ground.

Music begins.

Mahabir       Haanthan ne baandho...

As the men proceed to do so, then pick her up to put in the vehicle, we move away from them to the night atmosphere in these outskirts of Delhi.

{1 min}

## **{Dark Night} Song 1**

Music plays. We see night in the outskirts. Lyrics begin – What mystery lies behind your face? What are the stories that you never tell?

Intriguing atmosphere of night. The Marshall jeep is seen driving.

We enter a village settlement. It is dead night.

We come to a house in the village. Some lights are on inside. From a distance, we see a Skoda car drive up to the house and two people emerge from it. We move closer to the house.

{1 min}

/13 mins/

**Sc # 8**

**Night, Interiors**

**Cattle Yard**

Music fades out as we find Veera in the yard. She lies dumped on the floor, hands and mouth still tied. A dim bulb is burning. She appears senseless.

Door of the room opens. Veera's eyes open. Panic returns to her as she sees someone striding towards her. She tries to pull herself up. She looks at the man.

It is Mahabir, he crouches in front of her. She recoils from him in savage fear. He raises her by the side of her head to sit against the wall and removes her gag. She is yelping. He looks at her.

Mahabir      Naam bol apna

Veera whimpers from her chest.

Veera      Please... please mujhe... jaane do... please...

Mahabir      Naam ka ha tera?

Veera      (senselessly) Mujhe ghar jaana hai... Please... please...

He gives her small slaps on her face to revive her.

Mahabir      Naam... naam...

Veera continues to plead senselessly.

Mahabir      (screams) Arey chup...

She is shocked to silence. Mahabir grabs her by the hair of her nape.

Mahabir      Bol...

Veera      Veera...

Mahabir      Veera kaha?

Veera      Veera Tripathy...

There is a stir among the men who are standing at the door, hiding their face.

Fat Man      Ho ga...? Hain...?

Mahabir is looking at Veera.

Mahabir      (pulling hair more) Manek Tripathy ki beti hai?

Veera      (quickly) Haan... haan...

He stares at her. Then pushes her to the floor. He is looking at her in thought, she is looking at him in fear. He moves forward to her quickly, she shrieks, panics. But he grabs the cloth and gags her mouth in some annoyance. She stares at him. He walks back to the door. She is looking. The door closes. She closes her eyes.

{2 mins}

**Sc # 9**

**Night, Int / Exteriors**

**Front Yard**

All the men of the group are sitting in great tension. Buffaloes are seen in the cattleyard in the background. Silence.

Then the fat man who was seen getting out of the car speaks –

Fat Man        Hajaaran ber keh chukaon in ameeran te door raha kar... saban ki pahonch howe ae, inte uljhega to ye teri khaale udedh denge badan se... Ab siltiyo yaate...

The effeminate man who had got off the car with the fat man speaks now –

Babli            Par ye jaanta nahin tha na ki vo kaun hai...

Fat Man        Itti baddi odi gaadi mein kaun chale ae...? Hain...?

Tonk            Haan par Tripathy ki chhori...?

Fat Man        Haan... Tripathy ki chhori... Police, Home Guard, BSF, Millaetry sagle thaare pichhonde su ghus ke thaare munh se nikalne waale hain, ab bacha le apni ijat...

Pause.

Fat Man        Ek hi raasto ae... yaay kain phenk-oonk ke lambe nikal lo aur haath jodo Ram ke... Aur chhe maheene, saal talak mud ke Dilli ki ore munh mat na kar liyo...

Silence. He speaks again – to all but hinting at Mahabir.

Fat Man        Insaan ne apni okaat pata honi chaiye... Gaand mein na goo, hagne chale pahaad...

He suddenly looks at Mahabir, who has been looking at him, and challenges –

Fat              Kaha ghoor ro ae... hain... Ka dekh ra ae...?

Mahabir        Teri gaande... phat te huye dekh ra oon.

Ominous silence.

Mahabir        (indicating Babli) Ya ke jaisa ho gaya ae tu bi...

Tau             Ae Bhaati...

Fat man is looking at Mahabir. He speaks after a moment –

Fat Man        Toye yoon na kehna... Ab yo baat reh jaagi.

Fat man suddenly pulls out his gun and points at Mahabir to shoot, speaking meanwhile –

Fat Man Ya ke sagle kisse abhi ke abhi nibtaye doon full and final... hain... hain...?

Panic in the group as Mahabir flinches.

Tau (simultaneous) Na Kasaana na...

Fat man is figuring out if he should actually shoot -

Fat Man Kar doon... hain... kar doon...?

Naagar Ya pistale alag kar...

Mahabir (muttering) ...ameeran te door ra kar, dara kar...

Tau Tu na bolega abhi...

Mahabir (stands) Kaaha mil go humein inte dar ke...? Hain...? Inhein salaam thoko, inke darwaaje kholo... Kyon?

Fat Man Kyonki saale ye jab chaein, jaise chahein le sakte hain teri...

Mahabir To le to rakkhi ae... Or kon si leni baaki ae? Baat yu ae ki chaaploosi ki aadat pad gi ae humein... (to Fat Man) Dene mein maja aane laga ae ab...

Fat Man (grunts) Bhaati teri...

Tau Tonk ya ae le ja baahare...

Two people hold the fat man down as he struggles.

Another Ae bhai, rehne de...

Babli (caressing his torso) Na, na, na...

Naagar Abey oo Manek Tripathy ae... sagli duniya mein vaake kaarkhaane aae... neto minister saare vaake ghar aawe-jaawe ain... Us se bhid jaan...?

Fat man Ka karega...? Hain...? Phone karega vaake - Hello...? Mr Tripathy...? Ji aisa ae ki aapki laundiya mhaare paas hai. To main sms kar raha hoon address, aap na jara paise le ke vahan aa jaana....

Mahabir        Theek yueen boloongo main... Aur jab londiya ki taang pe goli padegi na... to Tripathy ka baap bhi aavega paise le ke. Na to kothe pe bitha doonga saali ye. Bik jaagi kisi andheri gali mein kahaiye patto bhi na chalego bahot baddo ae hindustan. Ar kuch bhi na huya... to saali ki thoothdi pe goli maar doonga par chodoon na vaaye...

Tau             Ya ki taant pe to kauuo baith go hai...

Naagar        Aur deekhe bethaaego mhaari pe bhi.

Pause.

Fat Man        Kutte ki maut marego Bhaati... Sun le...

Mahabir        Kutta kutte ki maut i marego... Kaha paad lenge mero, char bere phaansi devenge...? Teen khoon to pehle hi hain... Jaisi jindagi hai mout bhi vaisi hogi par ya kaam to hogo... Yu main karongo...

Pause.

{3 ½ mins}

**Sc # 10**

**Dawn, Int / Ext**

**Cattle Yard, House, Village Roads**

Veera's face as she is being woken up tenderly by someone.

Goru (OC) Suniye..., uth jaiye... Uthiye...

Veera opens her eyes, bleary, looks.

Goru Gaurav...

Veera comes to, flinches.

Goru (sliding hand to her knee) Ghabraiye nahin...

She looks at him.

Goru Goru Goru bolte hain humko... Hum dhyaan rakhenge aapka, theek hai...?

His hand has moved to her thigh, his face is innocent. She is stiff.

Goru Baad mein baat karenge... hain na...? Abhi humko jaana hai, kyonki...

Suddenly the door opens and in a rush another man called Aadoo comes in.

Aadoo Chal chal chal chal...

The room is flushed with sudden tension, Goru has pulled his hand and now orders Veera –

Goru Arey uth, jaldi kar...

Aadoo quickly grabs a few bags and things. Veera looks, rises.

A cloth has been tied to her mouth again as Goru and Aadoo lead her out. Morning light strains into her eyes, she is taken through a path to where some men are standing. All faces are covered, looking. She can feel danger and hurry.

Mahabir is standing with the old man in the yard. The fat and effeminate man are absent. Mahabir turns to Goru and Aadoo.

Mahabir Chalo...

They hurry with Veera, Mahabir turns to the old man.

Mahabir Bharoso waise ee na ae kaaye ko... Kar diyo jo karna ae...

Outside, in the lane, Veera is led to the Marshall jeep and made to sit.

Inside, Mahabir turns and walks out. The old man is looking.

Mahabir rushes to the driver's seat and starts the jeep. The vehicle rushes away.

Morning atmosphere is this village in the outskirts of Delhi.

The jeep drives out of the village.

{2 mins}

**Sc # 11**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Hillock**

A Tempo Traveller is parked on the side of the road on a hillock. The village is seen in the distance below. Tonk gets off the vehicle, looking.

The jeep roars in from behind.

Mahabir shuts the door of the jeep and rushes to the tempo where Veera is being made to clamber in. The Tempo rear is secured. Tonk and Mahabir get into the front of the tempo and shut the door. The tempo moves out, leaving the village behind.

Mahabir turns back to look through the trap window into the rear. His face is seen from the rear. Veera sits to one side, her mouth tied. Goru and Aadoo are sitting on the two side walls. They look at Mahabir.

Mahabir (to all) Phonan ne aaf kar do sagle...

Pause. Then –

Mahabir Aaj unki lugai apne haath lagi hai... Aaj apna din ae...

Pause. Then Tonk, who is driving, makes a loud invocation.

Tonk Bolo baba Kisan Das ki

Everyone joins enthusiastically –

All Jai. Je bola....

Tonk Bolo Lakkad Maharaj ki

All Jai. Je bola...

Veera looks, numb. Spirits of the men seem to rise with the invocations. Aadoo adjusts to a more comfortable position. Goru passes a secret consoling gesture to Veera. Veera wonders. Meanwhile –

Tonk Bolo Gaam Khede ki

All Jai. Je bola...

{1 min}

**Sc # 12**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Canyon, Mud Roads**

The tempo is seen travelling through rocky terrain. It finally reaches a highway.

In the front cabin, Tonk eases the tempo on the highway and picks up speed. Music takes off.

{ ½ min }

## **The Highway**

The journey begins. As Mahabir sits in front, looking straight, many things running through his mind. As Veera sits in the rear – mouth tied and living this nightmare. As the tempo traveller runs on the Highway. The landscape runs on both sides in different speeds.

Long play Highway Theme.

Hours and hours on the highway. The scenery changes, the light changes. The tempo crosses from Haryana into Rajasthan.

Mahabir sitting in the same position, looking ahead as evening light falls on his face. Veera in the same position as well, but whimpering now, begins to sob.

The horizon like outstretched arms.

The sun is setting. The tempo is seen driving down the hill into Ajmer town.

{1 ½ mins}

**Sc # 13**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Dargah Lanes, Building**

The Dargah of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz beset in the lanes of Ajmer, seen from a height in early night. Various sounds in the distance. Qawwali playing.

Backs of Mahabir and Tonk as they walk down the crowded lanes of Ajmer.

Tonk is connected to the music he hears in the lanes. Mahabir is headed for a particular spot.

A man is standing at a building window, looking down. He suddenly springs on seeing something. He has seen Mahabir who has reached a spot and is looking up. The man on the terrace makes tense gestures for Mahabir to wait there, and look the other way and leaves to come down.

Mahabir turns towards Tonk who is looking at music cds in the shanty shop.

Tonk           Qawwali ko koi latest number aayo ae...?

Hawker        Baat suno bhai qawwali latest nahin suni jaati...

Tonk           To ka suni jaave hai...?

The man from the terrace, who is wearing a white skull cap, emerges from the building, looks at Mahabir, looks away and walks down the lane. Meanwhile –

Hawker        Khaas kalaam hai ye... Maula Ghareeb Nawaz ki shaan mein...

Tonk           (OC) Aur puraani...?

Hawker        Bahot zyaada...

Tonk           Pher theek hai...

Mahabir and Tonk follow the man down the lane.

{1 min}

/24 ½ mins/

**Sc # 14**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Ajmer Lane Corner**

Mahabir walks the lane, looking around. Tonk is behind him. He comes to a crossroad, can not see the man in the skull cap.

Sharaf (OC) Gujjar...

Mahabir turns, the man emerges from the dark on a platform. Mahabir turns to him. Tonk reaches. The man perks on seeing Tonk, but recognizes him. Tonk salutes him. The man turns to Mahabir. He is tense, tending to sarcasm, speaks –

Sharaf Matlab ki kamaal kar diya tumne bhai yaane jhande gaad diye kasam se... Ab to Masha Allah kisse-kahaniyon mein charche honge tumhaare...

Mahabir Phone pe bolna theek na tha ye sab

Sharaf Yaane ki bhai dopahar ko khabar mili aur maine tumhara phone try shuroo kiya...

Tonk Bhai nu bata humein chhipa kahaon ro ae...

The man looks at Mahabir, speaks –

Sharaf Kya hai na ki bhai ab tum tum nahin rahe, mashallah hasti ho gaye ho famous, apna consignment le kar galli mein ghusoge do minute mein khushboo phail jayegi saare Ajmer mein... Ab tum yahan nahin ruk sakte.

Mahabir Khabron mein aa gayee kaha yu baat...?

Sharaf Ab tak to nahin bhai magar khabar sabko hai police waalon ki badaulat... (pause) Ya mere Bawa... Tere paas M K Tripathy ki beti hai? Hain...?

{1 min}

**Sc # 15**

**Night, Ext / Interiors**

**Tempo Parked in Ajmer Lane**

The tempo parked in a dark lane. All except one restaurant is shut.

Light falls on Veera as the rear flap of the tempo opens. She is sitting in the corner, gagged and tied. Light shines in her eyes. Someone slides in and closes the flap back.

Goru Hum hain...

She looks at him.

He moves to her and as she braces, he touches her face. She is looking at him. He is caressing her face.

Goru Bukhaar to nahin hai na kaheen...? Tch...

He pulls the gag off her mouth, touches her lips. Then –

Goru Sunn ho gaye honge na... honth...?

He begins to rub her lips. She pulls her face away.

Goru Arey...? (sniggers) Hum aapki side mein hain... Aur ye baat kisi ko bol mat deejyga... Bahot danger log hain ye... Kya karenge aapke saath... Aap to soch bhi nahin sakti hain... ki aisa kiya bhi ja sakta hai... magar hum hain...

He moves his hand and begins to caress her side.

Goru (continues) Hum dhyaan rakhenge...

She is looking at him, confused. He is getting charged, she is stiffening.

Goru Aapko apne ghar jaana hai na...? Haan...? Apne ma-baap ke paas..., apne logon mein... Jaana hai na vaapas...?

Tears begin to come to her eyes. Suddenly Goru freezes and withdraws.

Mahabir (OC) Jaldi kar le... Aadoo...

Goru (scared) Shh...

He quickly gags her back, moves away from her and cleans his face with his hands in nervousness. Then he moves to the flap and makes to open it but just then the flap is opened. Mahabir is there, looks at Goru.

Goru Aa gaye...? Paani pilo diyo ae, khaana baad mein denge.

Mahabir is looking at him suspiciously. He is making to get out of the tempo –

Goru            Hum udhar baithe hain... Aadoo hai vahan...

Mahabir        Baith ja

Goru immediately withdraws and sits. Aadoo comes to the shutter to get in.

The flap of the tempo rear is secured.

Mahabir starts the Tempo engine. He is sitting on the driver's seat. The man in the cap – whose name is Sharaf – is sitting next to him, having covered his face with a scarf. He does some quick religious invocation. Tonk is next to him.

Mahabir        (reconfirming) Sambar...

Sharaf            Haan... Namak ka karkhaana...

{3 mins}

**Sc # 16**

**Night, Interiors**

**Salt Factory**

The camera point-of-view moves through the interiors of the salt factory. It comes to a staircase, turns into a large defunct factory floor, and reaches Mahabir who is standing near a make-shift room arrangement. He looks up.

Goru is leading Veera, Tonk is following behind. Mahabir turns to ask –

Mahabir      Theek hai...?

Aadoo          (OC) Haan sab theek hai...

Veera is brought to the mattress on the side. There are no windows there, only high ventilators.

Aadoo opens her mouth gag. Her hands.

Goru places a plate with some food for her.

Veera is standing as everyone leaves and lights go off.

{1/2 min}

/29 mins/

**Sc # 17**

**Night, Interiors**

**Salt Factory**

Veera is eating the food.

She is standing, then walks. She is limping. She walks to the ventilators. She can hear chatter and the sound of someone playing the mouth organ in the night. She can not see outside at all. She tries raising her left hand. It is paining. She walks more, checking her limbs.

Time transition. Veera has been lying down, she is looking at the door. There is a narrow rim of light at the opening. She looks at it for a while. The men are not heard chattering any more, faint sound of a qawwali can be heard. She gets up, moves towards the door. She reaches the door, pushes it slightly. The door is open. She withdraws, her heartbeat rises. She waits, then she pushes the door to open more. Nothing happens. Veera turns quickly towards the ventilators. She can not hear any chatter, just the faint sound of a qawwali on a CD player. She walks back to the door. Waits. Then opens the door and looks. The staircase is dark. No one is seen. She closes her eyes for a second, then tip-toes forward. She climbs down the steps, slowly and carefully. The stairs becomes darker as she walks forward. She falters, hits something, hurries down the steps. It is very dark now. We can only hear the the sounds of her movement.

Then she falters in a big way, something falls, big sound in the dead night, she grimaces. There is some other sound too. Of someone else moving. And light comes on. Mahabir is standing there, next to his make-shift bed. He has switched on the light. She stares at him. He is looking at her. Then suddenly he paces up to her, she shrieks and withdraws in mortal fear, falls back on some sacks. He reaches his hand to her, she whimpers, he holds the hair on her nape, picks her up, then turns and walks her out.

He takes her through the passage. She is in pain, in horror, she does not know what he is going to do. He walks her out.

{3 mins}

**Sc # 18**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Salt Factory, Salt Pan**

The rest of the group is gathered around a small fire near the pillars in the compound. A small CD player is playing the qawwali. The men turn and look.

Mahabir emerges holding Veera and walks across the yard towards the salt pan.

Aadoo           Arey...?

They all rush towards Mahabir.

Aadoo           Kya hua bhai...?

Goru            Haan, kya hua...?

Mahabir       (striding forward) Bhaagna chaah ri...

The others are confused.

Aadoo           Haan to...?

Mahabir does not answer. He leads her to the end of the factory area, where the salt pan begins and pushes her away. She falters, turns and stares at him. The others join him.

Mahabir       Chal bhaag...

She is gaping at him, tense and scared and breathing heavily. She does not move.

Mahabir       Kaha hua? Bhaag...

She stands there, looking at him, at the others, wondering what they might do, what her chances are, why he is doing this. She stands for a moment. Then she turns and runs.

Sharaf (OC)   Arey...?

Mahabir and the others are seen looking at her as she runs away into the distance. She runs through the junk on the way, then is seen running down the rail tracks into the open.

{1min}

### **Salt Pan Run**

Veera's face as she runs desperately. What can be worse than being captive to these people? So she runs.

And runs. She looks back, runs.

She staggers to a fall, then screams to push herself and gets up and runs.

She runs and slows down with fatigue, still running but faltering now with the intoxication of tiredness and she can not run any more and she walks but is swaying and a few steps and she falls to her knees, whining as her lungs tear and she bundles down with head on her hands in front and breathes and breathes and falls to the side and breathes. She lies there. After a moment she opens her eyes, looks around.

{1 min}

### **Fear of the Unknown{Song # 2}**

Vastness, emptiness, white ground glistening in the skylight. And nothing.

The qawwali that the men were hearing on the CD player now plays in the soundtrack. Its about the vastness of existence, the darkness all around and the fear of being alone.

Veera collects herself, begins to feel nervous, scared.

She stands, music builds. She looks around – nothing. Where should she go? She turns and looks back. She looks into the vastness again. She is seized by fear, she begins to walk back, she runs.

She runs in the white vastness, she runs back.

She runs all the way to the salt factory. She runs back with all her might.

{1 ½ mins}

**Sc # 19**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Salt Factory, Salt Pan**

She is approaching the compound.

She runs towards the arches of the salt factory compound.

Mahabir and the others look up from where they are sitting, stand to see.  
Veera is seen coming in.

She runs, walks up, breathless, out of strength. She comes forwards and falls on Mahabir. He steps back, removes her, lets her fall to the ground. Music ends. She lies there, sick and defeated and breathing sourly.

Aadoo steps up to lift her.

Mahabir      Hat peeche...

Aadoo stops.

Mahabir      Apni marji se bhaagi... Apne aap hi jaagi bheetar...

Veera stays to take a few breaths.

Mahabir      (orders) Chal...

She instantly comes to her fours and moves forwards, clambering to stand and comes to her feet and continues to walk.

Veera is seen walking to the door that Mahabir had brought her out from.

{1 min}

/36 ½ mins/

### **Sunrise in the Salt Pan**

The gleam of the sun on the white land. The sun is rising in the salt. Veera's shawl and shoes are seen in the emptiness.

The vast expanse seen from the rail bridge in the salt factory compound.

Veera's face as she is in deep sleep on her mattress.

{1/2 min}

Sc # 20

Day, Exteriors

Salt Factory Room, Compound

The Tempo Traveller is hauled up in the compound. Aadoo, Tonk and Goru have removed the tarpauline cover.

Tonk Moe chaha kyon na dee...?

Aadoo Na dee...?

Tonk jumps off the tempo, followed by Aadoo. Tonk joins Mahabir and Sharaf who are sipping tea near the driver's seat of the tempo.

Mahabir (to Sharaf) Phone ke naye sim card jaroori hain... Tonk ko le ja, uske haath bhijva diyo...

Tonk Or bi samaan lena hai...

Mahabir Sab le aiyo...

Then they hear a voice –

Veera (OC) Excuse me...

The men look up. Aadoo is coming up with a cup of tea for Tonk. Veera's voice is coming from the ventilator of the make-shift room.

Veera (OC) Hello... Meri awaaz aa rahi hai...?

Sharaf comes to full attention, faces the building where the voice is coming from. Aadoo looks at Mahabir, then turns to ask Veera

Aadoo Kya hai...?

Veera (OC) Suniye, main thodi der ke liye... baahar aa sakti hoon?

Aadoo again looks at Mahabir who has an annoyed look.

Aadoo (aggressive) Kyon?

Veera is speaking into the ventilator.

Veera Mujhe aise... band band se na... sar ghoomta hai... Tabiyat bahot kharaab ho rahi hai... Please...

Aadoo looks at Mahabir yet again. Mahabir turns away.

Tonk Haan to theek hai na...

Sharaf (can't get over) M K Tripathy...

Veera (OC) Main bhaagne ki koshish nahin karoongi... Please, thodi der ke liye...

{1/2 min}

Sc # 21

Day, Exteriors

Salt Factory Compound

Veera sitting on a stool ahead of the tempo traveller. Mahabir is working behind on the engine. Sharaf is next to him – well-behaved, like a school boy in Veera's presence. Tonk is fastening a tarpauline rope to the side of the tempo, Aadoo is with him.

Veera looking to the right side. She is blank, silent for a while. Then –

Veera (abruptly) Ajeeb jagah hai...

Everyone looks at her.

Veera Maine aisi jagah kabhi nahin dekhi... Hum jab bhi baahar jaate hain, holiday par, to saara waqt to hotel mein hi rehte hain... To fayda kya hua? Us se achcha hai Dilli mein hi kisi hotel mein check-in kar lete. Hotel to sab jagah ek hi hote hain...

She realizes, looks around. The others are a little surprised.

Veera (wonder) Itna kyon bol rahi hoon...? Aisa lag raha hai main hoon hi nahin yahan, koi film chal rahi hai aur main dekh rahi hoon... control nahin hai, munh apne aap chal raha hai... Actually parson se raat se kuch bola hi nahin hai... correct... shayad isi liye...

Mahabir (sharp) Aae...

Veera (quickly) Sorry.

She looks to the side as though she is not there, so that she is not sent back. Mahabir walks to the other side. Goru comes with a cup of tea for her.

Goru Haan...

She turns, takes the tea cup. Goru passes a subtle look to her that he is with her. Tonk is the only one who has been looking at her straight, with a mystified smile.

Veera (for the tea) Thanks. (pause) Anyway, yahan aa kar bahot achcha lag raha hai so thank you...

She says quickly as though she intends to not speak at all. But adds –

Veera Andar lag raha tha ulti ho jayegi... tab hi maine bola, magar ab bahot behtar feel kar rahi hoon... Fresh air, taazi hawa ke baare mein... Main phir bol rahi hoon...? (pause) What's going on? Abhi mujhe tense hona chahiye... Tense to hoon... Magar... Bas, ab nahin boloongi...

She keeps quite. Takes a sip. Tonk is looking at her, comes around.

Tonk Chaha badhiyo ae...?

Veera Different hai... Magar bahot achchi hai. Is mein cheeni daali hai, ya kuch aur...?

Tonk (to Aadoo) Oye toone banayee?

Aadoo (coming around) Daali to cheeni hai bhai... Par yaan ko namak thoda ghus hi jaave hai...

Veera (substantiating) Har cheez mein namak hai... Chehre pe namak aa jaata hai

Aadoo Haan...

Veera Mujhe laga sirf main feel kar kar rahi hoon...

Goru is lurking behind. He looks behind, to see where Mahabir is. Meanwhile

—

Aadoo Na na, sab feel kar rahe hain... Mujhe to aise haath pe...

He brushes his finger on his arm and licks and says —

Aadoo ...ye dekho namak... dekho...

Goru looks towards them.

{3 mins}

**Sc # 22**

**Day, Interiors**

**Salt Factory, Room**

Goru sneaks up the staircase. He opens the bolt to Veera's room, gives a look down the staircase. Then comes inside.

Veera comes in from the bathing area, sees him. He shuts the door behind and moves to her quickly.

Goru           Aapko aise bhaagne ki kya jaroorat thi...?

She is looking at him defensively. He reaches close to her.

Goru           Hum keh rahe hain na ki hum karenge kuch jugaad.

He comes closer.

Goru           Ab suniye... Dekhiye...

He touches her neck, licks his finger.

Goru           Gaya sara namak...? Haan...?

She withdraws.

Goru           Nahin nahin nahin... Bharosa karna padega thoda... Nahi to kaise hoga...? Haan...? Plan suniye...

He holds her shoulder, she moves away.

Goru           Aise ghabraane se thodi hoga...? Haan to plan jo hai... vo ye hai...

He was coming on to her again, she withdraws, pushes.

Goru           Dekhiye... dekhiye...

She looks towards the door. Goru follows the look, then turns quickly to see.

Mahabir is standing in the room.

Goru leaves her instantly, steps back, she moves away. Goru looks at Mahabir in nervousness, is trying to figure out what to say.

Mahabir walks into the room. Goru suddenly smiles.

Goru           Hum jaante hain aap kya soch rahe hain...

He sniggers as he walks forward, Mahabir crashes a massive slap on his face. Goru recoils, holds his face, then smiles again.

Goru           Aisa bhi to ho sakta hai aap ghalat samajh rahe ho... Aise nahin ho sakta? Ab main bolta hoon ki baat kya thi. Aap khud hi...

Another massive slap.

Goru           Arey... Mahabir bhai aap ghalat samajh rahe ho aap suno to...

Mahabir grabs his scruff and pulls his face forward.

Mahabir       (clear) Yu sauda ae... Laundiya na...

Goru           Haan to bhai main...

Mahabir       Bas. Baat khatam.

Goru looks down, then nods. Mahabir leaves him. Goru corrects his shirt.

Goru           Okay...

Then he smiles. Then turns and walks out.

Mahabir turns to Veera. She looks at him, looks down.

Mahabir       Kapde dhang se na pehen sake hai...?

She looks down, looks up again. He walks out of the door, bolts it.

{3 mins}

### **Salt Factory Transition**

The salt factory during the day. Tonk is on a bike, Sharaf is behind him. They are saying bye to Mahabir and Aadoo and driving off. Goru is also seen in the background.

Goru turns to look back as he rushess across railway tracks towards Sambar Lake Railway station.

A train passes near the factory.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 23**

**Day, Interiors**

**Salt Factory Passage**

Mahabir standing in thought. Aadoo's breath is up, he looking at him for the way forward. Silence for a while. Then Mahabir makes an annoyed face and –

Mahabir      Chal...

Aadoo runs in the far direction. Mahabir walks out the other way.

Sc # 24

Day, Int / Exteriors

**Salt Factory Compound**

Mahabir is fixing a new number plate on the tempo.

Aadoo rushes Veera through the factory passage.

Veera            Abhi ke abhi nikal rahe hain...? Aur ab kahan ja rahe hain...?

Aadoo            Pata nahin... Chal jaldi...

They emerge from the door to where the tempo is parked.

Veera            To Goru ja ke sab ko bata dega...?

Mahabir        (lashes) Munh band kar ya ko... Haathan ne baandh aur daal peeche...

Veera looks at Mahabir, Aadoo takes her forward. Mahabir is seen walking to the old watchman and giving some notes.

The flap of the tempo is closed.

Mahabir roars the tempo out of the compound. The tempo drives out of the salt factory area.

Veera is gagged and hand-tied, is getting tossed in the rear.

The tempo drives through the salt pan.

Aadoo            Ho sake na bataave...?

Mahabir        Pakko bataego

Aadoo            Saala saanp...

The tempo drives up a road that runs through the salt lake.

Aadoo            Ar yu raasta Ratangarh i niklego?

Mahabir drives silently.

Aadoo            Ar tempo ke kaagajan ko ka karenge? Police hai, state border hai...  
unhein is naye number ke kaagaj na dikhaane honge...?

Mahabir        Jaako number lago ae vo gaadi thunk kar kabaad mein padi hai. Aur  
vaake kaagaj yo rae.

Mahabir indicates dashboard.

Aadoo            (relief) Arey... Jiyo... Ab aage ko ka plan hai...?

Mahabir        Tonk su baat karni hai Ajmer

Aadoo Phone on karoon...?

Mahabir (warns) Sim card ke likhad ke phenk de. Ruk ke call karni hogi kaheen se...

Veera in the rear is trying to hold on to things and not get tossed. She is not enjoying the ride.

{2 mins}

/46 mins/

Sc # 25

Day, Exteriors

Uneven Ground

The tempo is parked off the road. The lower flap of the tempo is down. Veera is on the edge of the rear, her mouth and hands are open, she is sick and making to vomit onto the road. Mahabir is standing on the side of the tempo, Aadoo is seen walking away in the distance.

It is a bushy, uneven area where the tempo is parked.

Mahabir is standing against the tempo. Veera is sitting, sipping water, trying to feel better. Mahabir moves, looks at Veera, then walks across to the side. He stops, feels Veera's presence behind. He walks to the front of the tempo, a few more steps ahead. He walks behind a bush, looks back, then begins to take a leak. After a second, he hears the sound of Veera getting out of the tempo. He springs, but he is already urinating, has to finish. He tries to look, but can not see anything. He tries to finish in a hurry.

Mahabir rushes to the tempo, Veera is not in the carrier. He swears and looks around, then rushes to the middle of the road. He looks in both directions. Then he turns back towards the tempo and runs. He reaches the ravines, looks around, tense. Then he takes out his gun and rushes down a ditch. He looks around, runs up a slope. He is seen running across till he comes to a spot and hears –

Veera (OC) Ruko...

Mahabir stops. There are some shrubs blocking his view.

Veera Peeche dekho...

Mahabir turns around and stands, breathing heavily. After a few seconds, Veera comes out from behind some shrubs, walks up.

Mahabir (screams) Kahaon gayee thi...? Hain...?

She looks at him.

Veera (attitude) Tum kahan gaye the?

Mahabir (sharp, seething) Dimagh kharaab ho gaya hai tera tu moso pooch rahi ae?

Veera Tumhein jaana ho sakta hai to mujhe bhi to jaana ho sakta hai na...?

She looks away, corrects her clothes.

Veera Sochna chahiye...

He is speechless, staring at her, and as she corrects her clothes, his eye involuntarily slips to her chest. She catches the look, he looks away, caught. Silence.

Mahabir (stiffly) Chal...

Veera Hmm...

She walks across him, more womanly than before. He follows her, awkward. She looks back at him. They walk ahead.

Aadoo comes above the ditch near the tempo.

Aadoo Kaha hua...?

Mahabir Ho gi baat?

Aadoo Haan...

Veera is climbing up the ditch. Mahabir is avoiding supporting her from behind. Aadoo pulls her, speaking to Mahabir.

Aadoo Aaj phone karego Tonk... yaake mobile mein battery laga ker, ar pher do din baad humsu milego... (to Veera) Aaja...

Veera Main aage baithoongi

Mahabir looks at her.

Mahabir (flares up) Kasam se haddiyan ne tod doongo ghani bakwaad kee to

Veera looks back at him.

Veera (soft assurance) Theek hai... Tod do haddiyan ne... Tasalli kar lo. Par baithoongi main aage hi.

Mahabir does not know whether to tear her apart or turn away, he is looking at her.

Aadoo Problem na hai...

Mahabir looks at Aadoo. Aadoo shakes his head.

Aadoo Main raoonga na side mein. Donon rahenge dono sidan mein, aur ka...?

Mahabir turns and walks away. Aadoo moves Veera towards the front.

The bonnet cover of the tempo is lowered. Veera is sitting in the middle of the tempo cabin. Mahabir has closed the bonnet, comes around and climbs to the driver's seat and shuts the door. They are not looking at each other.

Veera            Sorry...

He looks at her, looks away.

Veera            Maine bahot kharaab se baat kee. Strange... Itni budtameezi se to main kisi se baat nahin karti... Kabhi nahin... Mere baare mein to ye hai ki main bahot well-behaved... I mean tameezdaar hoon... Aur tumse to... Sorry... Actually ulti kar kar ke...

Mahabir        (cuts) Tu chup rahegi...? Chup rahegi...?

Veera            ...sorry bol rahi hoon...

Mahabir        (scolds) Main bol raha hoon sorry? Hain? Hum yahan tameej dikhaane aaye hain...?

She looks at him.

Mahabir        Apne baap ke ghar ja kar dikhaiyyo tameej...

Veera looks at him.

Veera            (agrees) Hmm...

She turns away easily. He starts the engine. She gets a little comfortable.

Mahabir        (calling, OC) Arey Chal...

Aadoo          (OC) Chal chal cha chal chal.

Aadoo comes in shuts the door.

Aadoo          Chal...

Veera gets more comfortable as the engine races.

Music begins. She looks forward.

{4 mins}

### **The Highway Again (Part One)**

The highway rolls, seen from the front of the tempo traveller.

Veera sits in the tempo, looking in front. She feels comfortable. She looks, she is noticing things. She is getting interested. She has never seen sights like this before.

The highway theme. The landscape runs on both sides. Hours and hours on the highway. The terrain changes. The journey has moved into the desert.

**Sc # 26**

**Evening, Exteriors**

**Dune**

Veera stands, walks up a dune and looks. The tempo is parked on the road in the distance below. The sun is setting. Veera looks at the sun. Then -

Veera           Hi...

The sun is clear on the horizon.

Veera           Tum vohi ho, Dilli waale...?

She sits on the dune, continues looking at the sun.

Veera           Badal gaye ho... Looking good. Handsome...

She lies down on the sand. She speads her limbs, stretches, relaxes.

The sun is setting.

{1/2 min}

## **The Highway Again (Part Two)**

The tempo is parked in a small village in the desert at night. Someone is sleeping in a blanket on the ledge just behind the tempo. Inside, Veera is making her bed. She looks towards the cabin, comes to the trap window to look. Mahabir is sleeping there. Veera lies down to go to sleep.

Next morning, a train comes whizzing on the tracks and crosses. Veera feels a gush. The tempo is parked behind at a distance. Mahabir and Aadoo are standing there. Veera is fascinated.

The tempo crosses the railway crossing.

The journey continues as Mahabir looks ahead and drives, many things running through his mind. As Veera sits next to him and looks out of the tempo. They are alone in the cabin.

The tempo is crossing an area crowded by trucks.

Veera raises her shawl over her head, largely covering her face. She looks towards Mahabir for approval. He glances. She slinks a little lower to be more inconspicuous. Mahabir looks away, she looks front.

Rajasthan passing.

Later Mahabir drives and Aadoo sits next to him. Veera is at the trap window, looking at the highway in front.

Music changes as a tea glass emerges from below the lowered flap of the tempo. We see that Aadoo takes it from the road outside and walks away. We see Veera's face come down to the floor of the tempo to look outside through the gap in the shutter. Aadoo is walking away to the tea stall to return the glass, Mahabir is standing over there, finishing his tea, making to leave. Veera lies down on the floor of the tempo and looks out. A group of Rajasthani musicians are gathered in a shack, playing music. This is a crossroads near the Panjab border. Mahabir and Aadoo are walking up candidly, talking to each other. Veera watches. Mahabir indicates to Aadoo, Aadoo comes to the tempo rear, closes the flap.

Rajasthan fades away into the evening.

The Highway rolls at night. The journey moves into Panjab.

The tempo's point of view moves up as the road rises and turns into an iron bridge. Music recedes as a barricade arm with a Stop sign is lowered in the middle of the bridge.

{1 ½ mins}

Sc # 27

Night, Int / Exteriors

Iron Bridge

Mahabir, who was driving, has braked. Policemen emerge from the sides and rush to the tempo as it stops. Mahabir looks if he can go back. A police jeep drives in after the tempo. Mahabir turns front, looks straight. Aadoo is looking at him, at the cops.

The tempo is trapped in the iron bridge on the stream. Policemen rush to the tempo cabin.

Policemen are shining torches on Mahabir and Aadoo.

Aadoo           Ka hua sirjee...? Ka baat bai...?

Other policemen are taking the registration number down.

Police 1       Peeche carrier ich kee ae...?

Aadoo           Kuch nahin hai sirjee...

Inspector      Kuch bhi nahin, hain.. Khaali le ke ja raha hai tempo...?

Mahabir       Ghar ke samaan ae bas...

Inspector      Ya Rajasthan da maal hai... chori da... hain...?

Aadoo and Mahabir exchange a look.

Aadoo           (forward with relief) Bilkul koi Rajasthan ka maal nahin hai. Maa ki kasam.

Police 1       Chal neeche utar...

The policeman opens the door and takes off the key.

Police 1       Chal...

Inspector      Dikha apne ghar da saaman.

Aadoo comes out of the tempo.

Police 2       (to Aadoo) Peeche ka daala khol.

Aadoo walks up to the Inspector.

Police 2       Oye...

Mahabir comes down from the tempo as Aadoo begins to speak with the Inspector.

Aadoo           Sir ek minute...

Inspector      Hain...?

Aadoo Ek baat karni hai...

Inspector Haan dasso ki baat karni ae...?

Aadoo Sir thoda jaldi mein hain... to...

Inspector To...?

Aadoo Kuch... samjhauta kar lete hain...

The inspector grabs and pushes Aadoo menacingly onto the tempo.

Inspector Teri aukaat hai... hain...? Tu mainu rishvat dega...? Saale do take de...?  
Chal khol daala... Dikha ki chori keeta ae...

Aadoo looks at Mahabir, then a policeman grabs and takes him to the rear. Mahabir remains standing at the front door, begins to look around.

At the rear end, the policeman reaches with Aadoo and checks the flap.

Inside, Veera is sitting tense. She has been listening.

Police 1 (OC) Kiddar tau khulda ae...? Khol...

Mahabir turns to the tempo, suddenly rises into the cabin and lowers the seat. He quickly takes out a gun from under the seat, checks the bullets.

Police 1 Kholta hai ya lagaoon ek danda?

Aadoo is very tense. The other policemen file behind him.

Inside, Veera hears the sound of the flap being unfastened. She is getting more and more tense.

Mahabir tucks the gun under his belt and moves stealthily to the rear, emerges near Aadoo and the cops, hand on his stomach and ready for action.

Inside, Veera hears the sound of the hook unfastening.

Police 2 (OC) Doosra khol...

She suddenly moves to climb up into the milk compartment. The bolt of the flap is heard unfastening. Veera stops. Why is she hiding? She climbs back, to show herself. She stops midway. She is throbbing in anxiety.

Outside, the flap is lowered.

Mahabir takes out his gun, moves and points at the backs of the policemen.

All the policemen are looking inside the tempo, they do not notice Mahabir.

Torches shining into the tempo rear, the policemen standing, looking in, Mahabir aiming the gun to their back. A silent moment. Nothing happens.

There is nothing in the tempo rear. Just some household things.

Aadoo is looking inside, surprised.

Mahabir is looking, moves away the gun, tucks it in again.

A policeman slides into the rear of the tempo, shines torch and looks.

The Inspector turns to Aadoo, puts his arm around Aadoo as the policeman is seen getting off the rear and closing the flap.

Inspector (smiles) Darasal imandaaran waali shakl nahin na hai teri... Is liye thoda confuse ho gaye si...

The policeman laugh.

Inspector Chal... dudki ho...

There is an uneasy moment as Mahabir and Aadoo look at the rear.

Inspector Bura maan gaya...? Hain...? Tempo zapt karwaoon...?

Aadoo (laugh) Nahin nahin...

Inspector To nikal...

Aadoo Haan...

Mahabir sits into the tempo cabin and shuts the door. He is shocked. Aadoo comes and sits. Mahabir looks at him.

The barricade is raised. The tempo drives out from the bridge.

{3 ½ mins}

**Sc # 28**

**Night, Ext / Interiors**

**Tempo off the Road**

After a while, the tempo comes to stop off the road.

The flap of the carrier is brought down and Aadoo looks inside, shining a torch.

Veera is sitting there, turns to look.

Aadoo is shocked to see her.

Aadoo        Kya hua...?

Mahabir comes next to him, looking at Veera, puzzled.

Aadoo        Hain...?

Aadoo looks at Mahabir, back at Veera.

Aadoo        Tu chhip gayee thi...?

Veera is looking lost.

Aadoo        (OC) Arey chhip gayee thi kya...?

Veera        Haan...

Pause. Aadoo looks at Mahabir.

Mahabir     Kyon...?

Aadoo        Yehi to mauka tha tere paas, chhipi kyon?

Veera        (irritated) Pata nahin...

Aadoo        Arey pata nahin kya matlab?

Veera        (barks back) Pata nahin matlab pata nahin... Ho sakta hai dimagh kharaab ho gaya hai mera... Aaraam se nikal sakti thi... What's wrong with me...? What's going on...?

Mahabir and Aadoo look at her.

She is deeply intrigued.

{1 min}

Sc # 29[A]

Night, Exteriors

Roadside Culvert

Faint sound of Gurubani floats in from far. A dhaba is seen at a distance, the tempo is seen parked there. Aadoo is doing something at the tempo. Mahabir and Veera are sitting on a side of the dhaba.

Mahabir is eating. He looks up at Veera.

Veera is sitting silently, looking into the distance.

Mahabir continues to eat. He is finishing.

Mahabir        Khaana hai to kha le jaldi...

Veera does not reply.

Mahabir        Kya...?

She turns and looks at him. Her mind is somewhere else. Silence.

Veera            Main nau saal ki thi... Ghar mein... Vo imported chocolates laate the - mere uncle... Dad se bhi bade the vo... Mujhe god mein bitha kar pyaar karte the...

Mahabir is looking at her.

Veera            Aur akele mein... bathroom ke andar... phir god mein bithate the... pyaar karte the...

Her breath rises.

Veera            Dard hota tha... bahot... Main... Mere... Cheekhti thi main, magar vo mera munh band kar dete the aise haath se munh band kar dete the ki meri cheekh baahar na nikle aur bahot dard aur main... main... Shh... shhh... Bas bas bas... Ho gaya... Meri gudiya... Best ladki hai duniya ki, sab se beautiful...

Mahabir is staring at her.

Veera            Phir aate the... phir munh dabaate... baar baar aate the... andar cheekhti thi main... Sh... Shhh... Kisi se kehna nahin, theek hai...? Ek din maine mummy ko bol diya, bataya unhein... Mummy ne kaha shh... Shh... Kisi se kehna nahin, theek hai...? Kisi se nahin kehna. Maine kisi se nahin kaha. Uske baad vo sab band ho gaya. Phir bhi vo aate the, mere liye chocolates le kar... imported chocolates... Aaj bhi aate hain... Shukla tau... Main unke god mein baithti hoon, vo mujhe pyaar karte hain, main smile karti hoon... Meri gudiya... sab se beautiful...

### **Flashback Veera 1**

A nine year old girl, standing under a tree in the garden. High key, high saturation, grainy picture. The girl is smiling.

**Sc # 29 [B]**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Roadside Culvert**

Veera sitting with Mahabir. He is looking at her.

Veera            Janwar saale... Tameez, tehzeeb... Namaste karo, paon chhuo inke...

### **Flashback Veera 2**

The girl is searching for something in the grass.

**Sc # 29 [C]**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Roadside Culvert**

Veera            Har taraf vohi hain... Unke beech rehna hai, hansna hai... dosti karni  
                         hai pyar karna hai...

She looks at Mahabir. He now looks away, puts up a tough face. Then turns and walks away.

She keeps looking at him.

{3 mins}

**Sc # 30**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Roadside**

Aadoo get in, Mahabir closes the rear flap of the tempo, walks to the front. Veera is standing there.

She looks at him.

He opens the door for her. She looks at the door, does not move. He looks at her. She looks down. Then she looks at him, moves to him. She opens her arms and hugs him. He gets stiff. She holds him. He is awkward. She holds his arm and lifts it to her back so that he holds her. Then she puts her face on his side. He feels a softness run through his body, he holds her with his other arm as well. She holds him properly. He holds her tighter. Her eyes close and she exhales as a relief covers her.

After a while she parts, he looks away. She does her hair, looks at him. He opens the door. She holds his shoulder for support as she climbs. He shuts her door.

And walks back to his side, as though nothing has happened and holds the door to open it. He waits, looking down. He waits a moment with himself, then opens the door.

{1 min}

**Sc # 31**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Highway**

The highway rolls at night.

In the front cabin of the Tempo Traveller – Mahabir is driving, Veera is sitting next to him. She speaks after a while –

Veera           Jahan se tum mujhe laaye ho, main vahan vaapas nahin jaana chahti.  
                  Jahan le ja rahe ho, vahan pahonchna nahin chahti. Par ye raasta... ye  
                  bahot achcha hai. Main chahti hoon ye raasta kabhi khatam na ho...

Silence as both look in front.

Music – The Highway theme.

The highway rolls in the night.

{ ½ min }

**<Interval>**

/1 hr 1 min/

## The Investigation

[A] Siren blares as the yellow light signal rushes into the police headquarters.

[B] The Commissioner of Police, Delhi, is rushing up the steps, talking on the phone.

[C] The Commissioner is briefing the senior officers of the special cell about the Veera Tripathy abduction case.

Comisssoner    FIR Dera Mandi Police station mein darj hai, Delhi ki jurisdiction mein. Case ke papers aapko mil chuke hain...

[D] A politician with Mr Manek Tripathy in his drawing room.

Tripathy        Dekho yaar ye baat public nahin ho sakti.

Minister        Special Cell handle kar rahi hai ye case. Information need to know basis par hi aage dee jayegi.

[E] Officers of the special cell in the shanty house where Veera was first taken. The plainclothes ACP talking on the phone –

ACP             Mahabir Bhaati, status faraar hai... Yes sir. Sir... Ye kidnappers nahin hain, contract criminals hain. Land-grabbing, dacoity etc ke zyada cases hain.

[F]             Policemen looking at screens at the Special Cell Investigation room. Mahabir's hand and thumb prints come up on a screen.

[G] Mahabir talking to Tonk in the Salt Factory compound.

Mahabir        Ladki ke phone mein battery laga, phone kar, phir battery likaad de.

[H] Veera's rushes in to Tripathy's study late at night.

Mother        Veera ka phone hai... (into phone) Hello... haan...

[I] Tonk on the other side.

Tonk            Hum dekhna chahte hain ki tum bharose ke laayak ho ki nahin... Pher phone karenge...

[J] The phone interception room at the Special Cell office. Policemen listening in.

[K] A special cell officer hands a paper to the ACP.

Officer        Sir Noida se call hui hai... Just Dilli ke border se.

[L] Police jeeps rushing on the highway.

[M] Tonk sitting in the chair car of a train, watching a video on his phone.

[N] A checkpost near Noida, vehicles getting checked.

[O] Fat man talking to a Special Cell officer in a dingy restaurant.

Fat Man        Sir maine khud chal ke aapko bataya nahin bataya... to je kyon chhipa loonga...? Vo madam ne kaha le gaya mujhe kasam se nahin pata... Abhi tak...

[P] Mahabir's photo getting faxed.

Veera's photo getting faxed.

[Q] Goru sitting in a room with fat man and the Special Cell officer.

Goru            Main bataane hi to aaya hoon sir, sab kuch bataoonga... Hai na...? Na bataane waali koi baat hi nahin hai...

[R]        Police jeeps and vehicles reach the deserted Salt Factory in Sambar. A group of travelling families are sitting to the side.

The Special Cell Police Inspector is standing in the factory compound. His subordinate officer walks up to him.

Officer        Sir saat-aath din pehle nikle hain yahan se.

[S] The Home Minister on the phone

Minister        Tab to kaheen bhi ho sakte hain...

[T] Tonk is on the phone

Tonk            Agli baar main bataoonga ki paise kis tarah dene hain...

[U] The Special Cell officer is talking on the phone –

Officer        Sir phone Calcutta se tha... Yes sir Veera Tripathy ke number se.

[V] Tonk is travelling by train, watching a video on a phone.

[X] Police barricading happening at various places.

[Y] Veera's mother rocking on a chair at night, tense.

Mother        God knows vo kahan hai is waqt... vo kya kar rahe hai uske saath...

[Z] Police sirens as patrol happens on various streets, in various towns.

{1 ½ mins}

### **Freedom {Song 3} (Part One)**

Veera's hand, making waves in the breeze outside the tempo window, playing. Then she removes her hand and gets her face out of the window, into the strong breeze. Her eyes narrow, hair flies amuck.

Panjab.

Veera lying on the side of the highway as vehicles grind past very close to her.

Veera drinking orange juice with Aadoo on the roadside. Mahabir looking from the rear view as he sits on the driver's seat of the tempo nearby. Veera takes large gulps, shows her bicep to Aadoo.

Veera is running next to a canal, racing with the tempo.

Mahabir and Aadoo washing the tempo near a bridge on the canal. There is water spouting out of some fat pipes. Veera climbs the pipes and lowers her face into the gush and screams.

The three of them are sitting under a tree next to the canal and eating.

Trees and fields passing as the tempo moves.

Veera running and walking in the wide wheat fields. She looks back. Mahabir is standing in the distance, watching over her. She turns and continues to play in the fields.

**Sc # 32**

**Day, Ext / Interiors**

**Dhaba Area**

Veera is walking out of the washroom of the dhaaba. Two boys cross, looking at her and as she walks up one of them comments –

Boy 1           Kya samaan chhipa le ja rahi hai kapdon mein...?

Boy 2           Oye check to kara...?

Veera turns to them aggressively and charges.

Veera           Kya bola? Haan...?

Boy 1           (stepping up) Aaja kone mein batata hoon.

Veera           (calling) Mahabir...

Mahabir sitting at the corner, having tea. Hears the call and quickly gets up and strides towards her.

Veera turns to see him coming, turns to the boys. And charges at them.

Veera           Chal bata... Bata...

The boys look at Mahabir as he comes in charging.

Veera           Kya hua? Nahin bataega?

Mahabir grabs both the boys by their necks. He bangs them on the wall. Veera comes to them.

Veera           Bata... Bol saale... Bol...

Boy 1           Nahin nahin, kuch nahin...

Veera hits out at them as Mahabir holds their throats to the wall.

Veera           Kuch nahin...? Kuch nahin...?

{1 min}

### Freedom {Song 3} (Part Two)

Veera climbing up mound in the fields, sits, falls rolls over, laughs and sits again.

She is sleeping in the shade of the mound.

Later, she is walking on the road, biting on a guava. Mahabir drives the tempo slowly along with her on the path.

The highway runs.

The highway road running in a town area. A man is seen standing up from a food stall and walking up, bowing. It is Tonk.

He climbs into the tempo next to Aadoo, looks at Mahabir – all happy to meet each other.

Tonk            (to Mahabir) Aage se left...

The tempo enters the Noor Mahal Dana Mandi.

{3 ½ mins}

**Sc # 33**

**Day, Ext / Interiors**

**Daana Mandi, Deserted House**

The atmosphere of the Noor Mahal Dana Mandi. Looking at the old deserted houses, then making way up the stairs of a house, through a door with a recently broken lock, coming to a courtyard with overgrown grass.

Veera walks in with Aadoo. She has been looking at everything with amazement. Mahabir crosses to the inside room.

Veera           Kaisi kaisi jagah hai is country mein...?

Aadoo           Aisi tooti purani gandi jagah hi kyon pasand aaye hai aameeran ko...?  
Hain...?

Veera laughs.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 34**

**Day, Interiors**

**Deserted Room**

Veera enters in front of the wall, still smiling.

Tonk (OC) Ar nek idhar aa ja...

A newspaper is handed to her.

Tonk Yaay pakad, tareek dikhaani hai.

She holds it, Tonk begins to take pictures with a small digital camera, she sees that is a bangla newspaper.

Veera Ye language kaun si hai?

Aadoo Bangali...

Veera Ki unhein lage hum Bengal mein hain....? Hmmmm, smart...

Tonk removes the camera.

Tonk Oye apharan huya ae tero... Dukhi to lag ja...

She laughs.

Tonk (to Aadoo) Aiso ka ghanta paise milenge humein...?

Aadoo Achcha chal hasna band... Serious, serious...

Veera Teri shakl dekh kar koi ghanta serious ho sakta hai...?

She laughs.

Veera Aadoo...

She laughs more.

Aadoo Okay lo main peeche mud jaata hoon...

Aadoo turns back, facing Mahabir who is standing at the door.

Mahabir is looking strictly at the proceedings. Veera is attempting to control her laughter behind. Aadoo looks at Mahabir, gets into thought.

{1 min}

Sc # 35

Evening, Exteriors

Noor Mahal Yard / Terrace

Mahabir sitting on a step with Tonk having tea and *mathri*. A mechanic is working on the tempo engine. Aadoo is looking at the engine. Then he looks behind. Veera is seen standing on the terrace in the distance. Mahabir is keeping watch on Veera as well.

Meanwhile –

Tonk Jagah theek ae... Samaan-sumoon lena hai to market hai...

Aadoo comes up to them.

Mahabir Latte lene hain laundiya ke... Vo aise alag su na dikhe...

Aadoo Apna to achcha achcha hone waala hai sab... par poochna tha ki ye phirauti aur phone ke chakkar mein pange pad gaye... by the way... To kya ab bhi...

Mahabir looks at him. Aadoo looks at him, rephrases.

Aadoo To plan to vohi rahega na apna...?

Mahabir (stares) Kyon...?

Aadoo Aise hi... pooch raon

Mahabir (strongly) Ya laundiya kothhe pe bechenge...

Aadoo (agreeing) Haan...

Mahabir Jaada laad mein mat na aa vaake...

Aadoo Na na, aisa na hai...

Pause.

Mahabir Vaaki ijat hai. Aur kae ki ijat na hai...?

Pause.

Mahabir Ghareeban ki lugai ki kaha ijat? Vaaye to le jao raatan mein, ki seher su baddo saahab aayo o, lugai lagegi aaj raat... Aur le ke kaun ja go...?

Tonk Ae chod na bhai, rehn de...

Mahabir        Vaaka apna ghar waala... marad... Vo baahar jameen pe baitthego, aur lugai bhittar, saob ke saath. Phir darwaja khulego aur vo apni lugaiya le ke ghar vaapas aur apna saara ghusso lugai pe ee likaadego...  
Kyonki ye ameeran... ye jab chahein jaise chahein le sake ain mhaari...

Aadoo scratches his head, looks down in physical discomfort.

Mahabir        (seething) Inki to maa ka saala... Inki ma ka...

Silence. Aadoo is sitting, head craned down. Tonk is looking the other way. Mahabir is looking straight. Veera is seen on the terrace in the distance.

Veera is eating some sweet, looking around happily at the town.

The sun is setting on Noor Mahal.

{1 ½ mins}

/8 ½ mins/

Sc # 36 [A]

Night, Exteriors

Open Courtyard, Deserted House Front

A courtyard on the first floor at night. Mahabir is seen sitting to one side, doing something. Aadoo is seen coming up the stairs followed by Veera. He looks at Mahabir and stops, returns to her. Veera is completely covered in a *Chaadara*.

Aadoo (nervous) Meri maan, aaj rehne de. Aaj mood theek na hai bhai ka

Veera To main theek karti hoon na mood...

Aadoo Arey...

Veera crosses him, walks towards Mahabir. Aadoo quickly turns and slinks away.

Veera realizes as she reaches behind that Mahabir is humming a tune. She slows down, tiptoes softly to reach him. She listens. Mahabir hums for a while as he changes laces of his shoe. She moves again. Mahabir turns suddenly to her. She gets a start.

Mahabir Paagal ae...? Pher na kariyo, samjhi?

Veera notices that he is very tense.

Veera (easily) Hmm. Samajh gayee.

She comes across. He looks at her.

Mahabir (gruff) Kaha baat hai?

Veera Dhaenteran...

She opens the *chaadara*, shows off the new ethnic clothes that she is wearing.

Veera Tumne kaha tha mere liye kapde lene... Aadoo ne bataya...

He turns away.

Veera Acting mat karo, bahot achchi lag rahi hoon main...

Pause, he continues with his shoes. She sits, then begins to hum the tune that he was humming. He looks at her.

Veera Ye kaun sa gaana hai?

He does not reply. Looks away.

Veera Haan...?

Mahabir (rude) Tujhe kaam ka hai?

Veera           Mujhe ye gaana sunna hai... (settles down) Ye kaam hai

He looks at her.

Mahabir       (with finality) Dekh tu abhi chali ja. Chal...

She remains there, looking at him with tenderness.

Veera           Mahabir Bhaati...

He does not reply.

Veera           Bahot achchi tune hai ye...

Pause. She hums the tune again.

He is getting disturbed, remains looking down. Then –

Veera           Batao na, kahan suni...?

Mahabir       (suddenly screams) Kyon bataoon main...? Hain...?

He is aware that he has over-reacted. He looks down.

Veera           Ab to zaroor jaanna hai mujhe. Kaun sa gaana hai?

Mahabir looks at her in irritation.

Mahabir       Gaana na hai...

Veera           To phir? Gaana nahin hai to tumne kahan suna...?

Mahabir       Meri ma gaati thi...

Veera           Really...? Wow... Tumhaare liye gaati theen...? Haan? Bolo na please...

Mahabir       Arey haan mere liye gaati thi... Vo kaam karti thi to... main uske saath  
hota tha to... main rota tha... to vo gaati thi... Ho gaya...?

Veera           Tum rote the...? Oh...

She finds this very endearing. He is befuddled.

Veera           To tumhaari mother tumhaare saath hi rehti hain?

He looks at her, gets worked up in a spark, stands.

Mahabir       Chal, bahot ho gaya, bhittarr ja. (stern) Chal uth...

She does not move, looks up at him.

Veera           Kya hai na, mera mood nahin hai jaane ka.

He gets synged.

Mahabir Bahot par nikal aaye hain tere?

Veera Hai na? Aur darr to bilkul khatm ho gaya hai. Aur bura mat manna magar ab to kaafi cute lagne lage ho tum mujhe...

He looks at her, unable to react.

Veera Achcha rote kyon thhe tum? Haan? Batao na? Kaun tang karta tha baba ko?

He turns to her again, in anger again, but looks vulnerable. Then turns and walks away.

Veera (calling after) Achcha sorry... Sorry, nahin poochoongi... Promise nahin poochoongi... Suno to...

He walks across the terrace, hurries down the steps. Then stops in between, gathers himself, then walks down. But slows down. He can hear Veera humming his mother's tune. He looks up.

Veera comes to the edge of the terrace, humming the tune. Mahabir hides at the wall. She does not know he is there. He stands and listens. He starts to become unsettled.

### **Village Flashback**

A brick kiln, seen through crops at night.

A boy of eleven weeping tears of rage, being restrained, being slapped. Aankh neeche, aankh neeche, he is being told in Gurjari. Another slap.

A lady in the kitchen space in the village house, being scolded by the man – Dhyaan kahan hai tera, hain? Jala kar rakh kar dee daal.

The supervisor's office room next to the kiln at night, seen from a distance. Someone seems to be sitting on the floor outside, waiting.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 36 [B]**

**Night, Exteriors**

**Open Courtyard, Deserted House Front**

Mahabir tries to control himself with a tough attitude. Veera is putting words in the tune – Ro na... hmm hmm... na ro... Hmm hmm hmm hmmm so ja na ro... Mahabir stands alone in the dark, fighting something inside.

{4 mins}

/13 mins/

### **The Lullaby {Song 4} Part One**

Mahabir driving the tempo, the memories in his mind. Veera sitting next to him, humming the tune that she had heard from Mahabir last night.

Flashback. The lady, now working in the brick kiln. She is pushing a wheelbarrow.

Flashback. The boy, now thirteen, is sitting on the floor of a crowded moving bus, weeping.

Mahabir driving the tempo. Veera is singing the song. The song is choking Mahabir and he is surprised by that. But he does not want to admit to it, holds himself strongly.

Flashback, the lady is holding an infant Mahabir in her arms, sitting in the fields near the kiln and singing the lullaby to him. This is the same song that we heard Veera hum in the beginning titles. The infant is crying. The lady is singing.

The tempo moves from Panjab to Himachal Pradesh.

Mahabir wakes with a jerk. He has been sleeping in the rear as the tempo moves in the day. Veera instantly puts her hand on his forehead, strokes his head. He is in shallow sleep, looks at her caring face. He comes to his senses, feels strange. She stoops more towards him, strokes his head. He closes his eyes. She watches over him, comforts him as he sleeps. He keeps his eyes closed.

Flashback. The lady singing while working in the fields. The kid is tied to her back with cloth. The lady's caring, loving face as she sings to him.

Mahabir driving the tempo.

Veera singing the song in the journey.

The tempo travels in the hills.

Veera walks into the market place of a hill town called Rampur under the watchful eyes of Mahabir. Her head is covered in a shawl. They move into a shop.

**Sc # 37**

**Day, Interiors**

**Hill Shop**

Mahabir gives money to the shopkeeper, then looks around. Veera is sitting next to him, looking at him.

Veera            Tumhaari mother...

He looks at her.

Veera            Kya bulaate ho tum unko?

Pause.

Mahabir        Amma

Veera            Hmm... To Amma... vo theek to hain na...?

Mahabir looks at her, insecure.

Veera            Matlab... theek hain na?

She realizes that he does not know. Then she comes forward to speak –

Veera            Tumhein mujhse promise karna hoga Mahabir, ki ye sab khatam hote hi tum unse miloge. Kahan hain vo...?

He looks at her.

Mahabir        Gaam mein...

Veera            To tum gaon ja kar unse miloge. Theek hai?

He is staring at her.

Veera            Haan?

He nods.

Veera            Promise?

He nods again. She smiles, then gets up, moves. He remains looking at her. Music begins again.

{1/2 min}

### **The Lullaby {Song # 4} Part Two**

Mahabir is looking at Veera as she walks ahead of him up the steps of the market-place. He is looking at her differently now.

The tempo is parked on a street corner. Aadoo opens the rear flap. Veera walks up, turns to look at Mahabir, then climbs in. Mahabir walks up. He comes up to the tempo rear, looks at her. She smiles at him. He looks down, closes the flap. He stands there for a moment. He walks to the front seat, gets ups.

The tempo runs on the highway in the hills. Music ends.

{4 mins}

**Sc # 38**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Market Shop**

Aadoo is standing at a music stall in a local market, going through MP3s. He picks one up.

Aadoo (looking at it) Inglis hai na full...?

Shopkeeper (OC) Total

Aadoo is looking at the disc cover.

**Sc # 39**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Empty Yard**

Veera, sitting on the front seat of the tempo, looking at the song list on the MP3 with excitement. Aadoo is standing next to her.

Veera           Ye waala...

She makes to take the disc out.

### Western Dance {Song # 5}

Mahabir returns to the tempo, moves to the front to check something as the western song begins to play on the music system. It is a song like – ‘Don’t you wish your girlfriend was hot like me’. Mahabir sees that Veera is on the front seat, listening to the music. Aadoo is on the ground on the other side. Veera starts to get with the music, with the full western attitude. She begins to move, then more and more. Finally, she jumps down, begins to dance with attitude. Aadoo has moved back, is looking at her, looks at Mahabir. Mahabir is looking at Veera, looks around, no threat, looks back at her. Veera is full out pumping the dance, it has been a while for her. She turns to look at Mahabir, entranced by the attitude, connects with him without breaking the act. He looks at her. He sees her. She is different from him. He turns casually to the tempo engine, does his check up and stuff. She turns to look at Aadoo. Aadoo begins to move his head, looks at Mahabir, continues to move his head. Then with a large *paintra* jumps forward – *Hadippa*. He begins to do bhangra steps to the western music. She continues to dance with western attitude without breaking. He does full baisakhi bhangra. Mahabir moves behind the tempo, stands leaning his back on it, in thought.

{2 ½ mins}

/20 mins/

**Sc # 40**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Town Outskirts**

The tempo is seen approaching a town.

The tempo drives up and halts on the roadside. Mahabir is seen getting off the tempo, walking to the rear.

Veera looks at Mahabir as he opens the flap.

Mahabir      Aa ja...

Veera notices a soft attitude in Mahabir towards her. She instantly moves to come down.

Mahabir takes Veera forward, looking around. They are carrying their bags. They come up to Aadoo who is at the driver's seat. Mahabir gives Aadoo the keys.

Aadoo          Chandigarh bus stand...

Mahabir nods. Aadoo smiles at him, holds his hand.

Aadoo          Bahot sahi bhai...

Then he looks at Veera.

Aadoo          Okay Tata...

Veera          Tum ja rahe ho...?

Aadoo          Yes No Right Andy Sandy

Veera giggles.

Aadoo          Khayaal rakhna...

Veera          Phir milenge...

He nods, looks at Mahabir, nods to him. Mahabir turns around, Veera follows, they walk away.

Veera is wondering where they are going. Mahabir is walking, looking down. Then he looks at her deliberately as they walk up. The tempo is seen turning around and driving away behind them.

She looks at him. He keeps looking. She feels shy after a while, looks down, feels the thrill of heartbeat. He looks at her for a long time, looks as though he is remembering her.

{1 min}

Sc # 41 [A]

Day, Exteriors

Town Marketplace, Lane

The marketplace.

Veera is subtly looking around as she walks, also casting glances at Mahabir, feeling happy.

Mahabir walks her into a lane. He stops, looking forward.

Mahabir      Vaan dekh... Police s-tation ae...?

She looks.

There is a Police Station behind them, at a little distance.

Mahabir      Bheetar ja ke s-tation incharge se mil...

She looks at him in question.

Mahabir      Apna naam bata, aur pitaji ka naam... Bol tu vohi hai jaaka Dilli se kidnap hua...

She smiles.

Veera          Tum jaante ho main nahin jaoongi...

He disregards that, continues –

Mahabir      Aur ya phaun le apna... Ghar phaun kar liyo...

He begins to put some cash in her bag.

Veera          (sniggers) Sunai nahin de raha hai? Main nahin jaoongi.

Mahabir      (flares) Nahin jayegi to kaaha karegi hain...? Shaadi karegi mere se? Bachche paalegi mere...? Hain...? Kaaha karegi...?

Veera          (retorts) Ye achanak kya ho jaata hai tumhein...? Ye kya scene create kar rahe ho...?

Mahabir      (continuing to charge) Kaaha karegi tu mere saath...? Kaaha karegi... tu jaanti nahin main kaun oon...?

Veera          Vohi to baat hai... Main jaanti hoon tum kaun ho...

Mahabir breaks out.

Mahabir      Teen khoon kiye hain maine... Theek hai...? Maine... Yo haath... yaa se, ya...

He is shivering.

Mahabir        Mari jindagi khatam ae kuch na ho sake ae, theek na ho sake, bas mar jaoonga... Tu mud ja... Dil se dua hai tere liye...

He looks briefly at her, then turns and walks away.

She looks at him go, reeling under what she has heard. Then speaks -

Veera            Kaise...

She rushes after him.

Veera            Kaise Mahabir...?

He stops, turns to her.

Mahabir        Dekh main keh raha hoon chali ja... Baot bura ho jaaga, chali ja...

Veera            Kya kahaani hai tumhaari Mahabir...? (comes forward) Kaise ho gaya ye sab...?

Mahabir        (seething) Chup, chup... Munh band kar aur ja police station.

Veera            (insulted, challenges) Nahin jaoongi. Kya kar loge?

He looks at her, then grabs her arm and starts walking her to the police station. She grunts in anger, resists with all her strength.

Veera            What the hell... Chhodo... Chhodo mujhe... Mahabir...

Mahabir        Chup chaap chal

Veera            Bahot taaqat hai? (fights him) Bahot taaqat hai?

The struggle intensifies and people notice.

Mahabir        Ae main bata raha hoon dimagh kharaab mat kar...

Veera            (using all her strength) Nahin jaoongi... nahin jaoongi. Mera bhi khoon kar do...

He leaves her, glares at her in fury. She looks back in defiance.

Then he turns and walks towards the police station. She looks at him go. There is a constable standing outside the police station.

Veera            Mahabir, ruko...

Then she goes behind him.

Veera            Kya bachpana hai...?

He begins to walk faster. She runs, reaches and grabs him.

Veera            Paagal ho gaye ho...?

He grabs her and moves in the same flow towards the police station as the constable watches, then pushes her close to the constable and quickly turns and runs back leaving Veera confounded.

The constable is looking at her, greatly intrigued.

Mahabir crosses the lane, hurries down as his heart beats, as he feels a melting inside. He is trying to control himself.

Veera is standing in front of the police constable, blank.

Constable 1 Haanji...

The constable steps up to Veera.

Constable 1 Kya baat hai?

Veera closes her eyes for a moment. Pause.

Constable 1 (OC) Hello...

Another policeman emerges from the building, looking at her.

Veera opens her eyes, a rush of various thoughts in her brain. The other constable is coming up to her.

Inspector (OC) Excuse...

Veera Ek second... Mujhe ek call karni hai.

She turns, taking her phone out, moves a few steps away as the policemen look at her. She looks at her phone for a second. Then she looks up in the direction that Mahabir had left.

**Sc # 42 [A]**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Town Street**

Mahabir catches a local vehicle that plies in the town, and leaves.

**Sc # 41 [B]**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Town Marketplace, Lane**

Veera standing in the police station compound.

Her heart is beating. She contorts her face then suddenly starts to run.

The police men are seen reacting in surprise behind as Veera crosses the lane like Mahabir had done.

{3 mins}

**Sc # 42 [B]**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Town Street**

Veera paces up in great hurry as people notice.

She asks a paaserby –

Veera            Bus stand kahan hai bhai saab...? Chandigarh ki bus kahan milegi...?

She comes on the street to a local vehicle. She comes alongside the driver.

Veera            Rekong Peo bus stand...

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 43**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Trekker on Highway**

The trekker moves on the highway between Kalpa and Rekong Peo.

Veera's face as she sits in the trekker, looks forward anxiously. She has to catch him. She can't let go. It's a strange journey. She feels something she has never felt before.

The road ahead, from Veera's point of view.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 44**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Town Bus Stand, Bus**

Mahabir is standing in the dark space on the side of a shop. He is looking down, tea in hand. After a while he takes a sip. Another sip, then sees something and immediately steps forward.

It is Veera on the platform in the distance, looking around for him in panic, people noticing her.

Mahabir looks at her. Then takes another step forward, to show himself.

She continues the panic search in the distance for a moment, then looks and the panic stops. She rushes towards him.

He sees her coming for a second. Then he turns, She slows down. He looks at something and moves to the ticket counter.

She comes up to him as he gets into the ticket queue. Her breath is up, she is anxious, and angry.

Veera            Ek baat tum samajh lo Mahabir... Jo bhi hona hai na... vo tum akele nahin decide kar sakte, samjhe...? Tumhein mujhse...

Mahabir has been looking around, not at her.

Mahabir        (cuts her) Vahan ja ke khadi ho ja, bench ke paas.

She realizes that she needs to be discreet, turns, covers herself more with the shawl and walks up.

She stands behind the water cooler, still breathing hard, looks at him.

He is buying some tickets. He looks at her.

She looks tense, apprehensive and teary. She is looking at him, wondering.

He smiles at her – a wide smile from the heart.

She is hit by it, melts.

{1 ½ mins}

### **Song # 6 (Part One)**

She takes support of the pillar, tries to relax. She looks at him.

He is in the queue, looks at her.

She turns back, sits down on the ground.

Some native women are trying to get into a state transport bus.

Veera joins them, helps an old woman get up.

Veera is sitting on the aisle seat next to the old woman, waiting for Mahabir. The bus moves. She panics, begins to look out, desperately.

Mahabir comes up the moving bus.

She sees him, he sees her. She relaxes.

He walks up the aisle without looking at her. They are pretending that they do not know each other.

He comes and stands next to her.

She closes her eyes. Then she moves her knee to touch him.

He controls his reaction, looks away.

She sits there, feeling comfort in the touch.

He stands there, confused in the warmth that he is feeling.

They have no place together. They are together only as long as the journey lasts.

They are sitting on different seats in the bus. Not looking but connected.

The bus stops for a break at a dhaaba.

Veera gets off. Mahabir gets off a little behind her. She looks towards him, goes behind the bus. He goes the other way.

Sc # 45

Day, Exteriors

Roadside Dhaaba

Veera is reclined on the back of the parked bus. She is looking down in thought. Mahabir comes in. He looks away, stands. She looks away too. She speaks after a moment.

Veera            Bachche paalne ka plan nahin hai

He looks down.

Veera            Shaadi ka bhi nahin hai. Plan nahin hai... Bas aisa lag raha hai ki thoda aur... thodi door aur...

She looks at him, continues –

Veera            Thoda aur time – tumhaare saath... (pause) Maine kabhi aisa kabhi feel nahin kiya hai na... ki main jo chaahe kar sakti hoon, jaise chaahe reh sakti hoon... kyonki tum samhaal loge. Maine kabhi aisa feel nahin kiya hai. (pause) Magar tum phans jaoge... Pehle vo soch rahe the ki hum shayad Calcutta mein hain. Ab unhein pata chal jayega hum is area mein hain. Ab koi chance nahin hai bachne ka, hai na? Haan...?

Mahabir        Hmm...

Veera            Shit yaar... Sab kharaab ho gaya.

She closes her eyes, faces down. Then she looks back at him maturely.

Veera            Kya karein? Bolo...

They are looking at each other.

Mahabir        Mera khayaal oopar chalte hain

She looks at him for a moment, then –

Veera            Haan...?

Mahabir        Chhat par... Chalegi...?

She feels a thrill, giggles, but then gets quickly anxious again.

Veera            Magar hum aage...

Mahabir        Kitta baat karegi...? Chal

She giggles in excitement. Then follows him up the iron stairs to the roof. They tip-toe as he leads her forward. Then sit in front of a tarpauline which covers some luggage. A jolt as the bus starts, she giggles again.

{2 mins}

### **Song # 6 (Part Two)**

The Himalayas. The mountains seen from close. The snow, clouds, rocks. Veera and Mahabir sitting on the bus top. After a while she puts his arm around herself. He holds her. She gets comfortable. He looks the other way.

The journey continues. Both get anchored.

{4 mins}

**Sc # 46**

**Evening, Exteriors**

**Cliff**

The sun is setting in the hills. Veera walks up a cliff, looking at the sun.

Veera           Hi...

The setting sun.

Veera           Yaar tumne kabhi bataya nahin ki duniya aisi bhi hai... Unbelievable.

She looks at the sun.

Veera           Kya hua? Maine bhi nahin bataya tha ki main aisi hoon...? Mujhe khud kahan pata tha? Magar hoon... To hoon....

She sits down, looks at the sun.

The sun is setting in the hills.

{1 min}

**Sc # 47**

**Late Evening, Exteriors**

**Mountain Road**

A distant look at some vehicles parked on the road. The bus reaches the jam.

Mahabir walks up on the sides of vehicles to a group of people standing around an official looking young man, all speaking hectic in local language. The talk is about the landslide and JCB and blast machine. People are looking at their watches.

**Sc # 48**

**Night, Int / Exteriors**

**Inside the Bus**

Some people sleeping inside the bus.

On the aisle floor Veera is lying down, wrapped in a blanket. Directly ahead of her in the aisle is Mahabir, also lying down. He now raises himself to look at her. She looks up.

Veera           Theek hoon... So jao...

He lowers to lie down again.

Mahabir        Takleef utha rahi hai bahot... Jaanta hoon main...

Veera           Takleef to hai, jhoot nahin boloongi.

Mahabir        Hmm... Par abhi kaa kar sake hain...?

Veera           Main kuch karoon...?

Mahabir        Hmm...? Kaa?

She slides up, reaches his toes, slides up, he adjusts, she slides up to his chest, slides up and puts her head in line with his.

Veera           Hmm... Ab koi takleef nahin ho rahi.

He does not react, is awkward.

Veera           Tumko ho rahi hai?

Mahabir        Haan...?

Veera           Takleef?

Mahabir        Nahin...

Veera           Good. Aur agar main tumhaare baazu par sar rakh doon, usmein koi takleef hai?

He says nothing.

Veera           Main bataati hoon.

She pulls his arm out, puts her head on it, lies down in the confined space.

Veera           Aise. Takleef hai?

Silence.

Veera           Haan?

Mahabir      Nahin. So ja.

Veera        Okay. Good night.

Silence. They lie snug, going to sleep.

{1 min}

## **Bare Mountain Sumo**

Bare mountains in the morning.

A lone Sumo is seen running on the bare road in the distance.

Veera sleeping in the rear seat, Mahabir sitting in front.

The point of view of the vehicle on the mountain roads.

The Sumo is seen parked near a monastery.

{1/2 min}

/35 mins/

**Sc # 49**

**Day, Ext / Interiors**

**Monastery Terrace**

Veera is sitting at a distance from the monastery, looking ahead. Mahabir steps up to her from behind, looks.

Mahabir      Kaha dekha kare hai itte ghor se...?

Veera          Tumhein pahaad pasand hain ya samundar?

Mahabir      Samandar na dekha hai maine.

Veera          Mujhe bhi pahaad pasand hain.

She looks at the hills in the distance.

Veera          Ab jaise vo hai... Aisa lag raha hai jaise vo bula raha hai mujhe...  
Kaash hum vahan ja paate...

Mahabir      Chal...

She looks at him.

Veera          (disbelief) Hum vahan jayenge?

Mahabir      Aur koi plan hai?

She giggles.

Veera          Nahin...

Mahabir      To chal...

Veera          (excited) Chal...

He moves. She moves out with him.

{1/2 min}

## **Changing Mountain Montage 1**

The mountain.

Veera and Mahabir are seen walking towards it.

He is being careful about her. She is thrilled to be here.

Sc # 50

Day, Exteriors

Mountain Path

Veera is sitting on the path, looking at Mahabir. He is sitting on the side.

Veera Please...

He is uneasy.

Veera Ek second ke liye yaar...

He opens his bag and takes out the gun, gives it to her. She comes to a forward posture, looking at the gun with awe and takes it in both her hands.

Veera (excited) Whoa...

Then she makes to aim at something.

Mahabir Ho gaya? Vaapas de.

She brings the gun close to look, then holds the gun with both hands and –

Veera Dhichkyon, dhichkyon...

Mahabir Haan theek hai de de.

Veera Power hai boss...

He tries to take the gun from her, she dodges and points the gun at him.

Veera Hands up...

Mahabir (sudden) Thappad maroonga...

Veera Arey...?

Mahabir Matlab khelne ki cheej thodi hai... La de...

Veera Achcha ek baat batao... Ek goli mein aadmi khatam ho jaata hai na?  
Haan...?

Mahabir Do aadmi. Ja par chale hai.. Aur jo chalaye hai... (pause) Bahot buri cheej hai...

He extends his hand for the gun. She has been looking at him.

Veera To phenk kyon nahin dete ise? Kyon rakkhi huyi hai?

Mahabir Ae... Kaa jaanti tu hai in cheejon ke baare mein...?

He snatches the gun from her.

Mahabir Jaanti hai...?

Veera Dekh rahi hoon....

She looks at him. He keeps the gun back, looks down. She changes attitude.

Veera           Yaar jhagda nahin karenge hum... Haan... No jhagda...

Mahabir        Tu aise na kiya kar baatein...

Veera           Ole ole ole...

Mahabir        Pher...

Veera           Achcha sorry... Chalo...

She grabs his arm and gets him to his feet.

Veera           Chalo race. Ready...?

He looks at her as she takes mark.

Veera           (quick) Steady, go...

She sprints ahead. He looks at her, laughs. Then walks after.

They are seen walking in the distance.

{2 ½ mins}

/38 mins/

## **Changing Mountain Montage 2**

Veera and Mahabir sitting on the mountain slope, taking a break from the climbing. They sit in similar style.

They are seen walking up the mountain again.

Mountains change.

View of mountains from the top.

Sc # 51

Evening, Ext / Interiors

Deserted Mountain Post

A deserted post in the snow. Veera and Mahabir walk towards it.

They are cold and out of breath – worked up.

They enter the enclosure and sit in a corner.

Veera           Ye duniya to nahin ho sakti... Haan...? Ye koi aur jagah hai... Duniya nahin hai...

They are chafing, shaking. He is looking at her. She looks at him.

Veera           Ab...? (pause) Ab kahan jayenge...?

They look at each other.

Veera           Kya hoga...? Haan...?

Mahabir        Kaha pata...

She is getting anxious.

Veera           Really... Kahan hain hum...? Kahan jayenge...?

Mahabir looks at her. He takes out a bottle of water.

Veera           Ye le paani pee le thoda sa

She drinks the water, wipes her mouth. He makes sure the water is wiped. She looks at him. He touches her head with his palm. She melts.

Mahabir        Abhi so ja, theek hai...?

He removes his hand.

Mahabir        Pher kal sooraj aayega, pher hum aage challenge... Challenge to raasta mil jayega koi na koi... hai na...?

Veera           Haan...

Mahabir        So ja...

She bundles with his arm and closes her eyes. He smiles to himself. Then looks at her. The smile disappears. He looks away, looks at her again.

The mountain post in fading light.

{1 min}

### **Changing Mountain Montage 3**

Other mountains.

Green mountains with snow tops. Typical whistle of shepherds drifts through the mountain air.

Mahabir and Veera are seen in the distance. She is riding on his back. The whistle is heard. Veera looks up from his shoulder, listening to the whistle. He is listening too. She gets off his back, intrigued. He moves ahead, she follows.

He climbs up a mound, pulls her up. They look down. He seems pleased by what he is looking at. She looks too.

Down in the valley is a large flock of nomadic shepherds with their live-stock, crossing through the snow.

He looks at her, moves ahead. She follows. They move down towards the shepherd flock.

From a distance they are seen coming to some of the shepherd families, talking to them.

{1 min}

Sc # 52

Day, Exteriors

Mountains, Path

A path between the mountains. The migratory flock moves along a water stream, on both sides of the stream. It is raining.

Veera and Mahabir walking the rocky path in the midst of sheep, horses and shepherds. She is looking at the hills.

Veera           Aise hi kisi phaad par... mera ghar ho... main hamesha chaahti thi...  
Mera ghar. Sapna tha mera...

Mahabir        To chun le koi pahad. Ye sab apne hi hain...

Veera           Achcha?

Mahabir        Aur kiske hain...? Apne hain, yaheen milenge jab bi aayegi.

Veera           Main to chun loongi... par ghar banaane ka kaam tumhaara...

He looks at her. She gets it.

Veera           Matlab makaan ki baat kar rahi hoon, vaise waale Ghar... ki baat nahin  
kar rahi... Filhaal...

Mahabir        (smiles) Theek

Veera           Chun rahi hoon haan...

She begins to look at the hills as house sites. They walk ahead.

The migratory flock moving down along the stream.

{1 min}

/ 41 mins/

**Sc # 53**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Water Stream**

Gushing wild water stream. Veera walks up a rock in stream. She clammers on to a rock further in the gush. She stands taking the atmosphere in. The water is gushing rapidly. She looks at it, laughs in exultation. Then sits, looks at the water, laughs more, talks to it. The madly rushing water in the magnificent valley. Veera sits on the rock in the stream.

{1/2 min}

Sc # 54

Day / Evening, Exteriors

Resting Camp

Veera sits on a rock on a cliff near the stream. The flock has camped here for temporarily. Some children walk up to her. A woman is with them. They greet and smile.

Woman Thak gaya...?

Veera Nahin nahin...

The woman crosses and sits.

Woman Tum yahan kyon aaya...?

Veera Hum aaya... Hum apna ghar ka liye plot dekhne aaya...

Woman Haan...?

Veera Humko idhar ghar banaana hai...

Woman Idhar...? Idhar ghar banaega...?

Veera Jee...

Woman Kya karega idhar...?

Veera Rahega... apne ghar mein... Garden mein phool lagaoongi, khaana banaoongi... Ghar ki safai karoongi...

Woman (points back) Apna khasam ka liye...?

Veera turns and looks at Mahabir. He is with some men nearby.

Veera Haan, iske liye khaana banaoongi...

Woman (enjoying) Haan... Aur kya banayega khaana?

Veera Main banaega... Pizza Pomodoro...

Woman Haan...?

Veera Aur Oyester Teriyaki... Aur banayega Sushi...

Woma Susi?

Veera Sushi, sushi...

They sit chatting next to the stream.

{1 min}

**Sc # 55**

**Late Evening, Exteriors**

**Evening Camp**

Tents are pitched.

A lady and some others singing. Everyone resting, sitting around the fire. A lady is making some typical plaits for Veera. Mahabir is sitting close by. He is going with the flow, but does not want to go where he can never reach.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 56**

**Morning, Exteriors**

**Mountain Path**

The next morning, the flock is seen moving onwards on a mountain trail.

The flock moves away from the stream, into the forest.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 57**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Path, Mountain Village**

Music continues as we come to a vantage point at the edge of the forest.

Mahabir and Veera come up and look.

A village is seen down in the distance. Veera looks at the shepherd families moving into the village.

Veera           Khush ho rahe hain bade...

Mahabir       Apne gaam aaye hain...

Veera looks at him.

Veera           Tum bhi to khush hone waale ho jaldi... haan... haan...? Promise kiya hai tumne...

She grabs his arm, they walk ahead.

They move into the village with the others.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 58**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Mountain Cottage**

A cottage in the village.

Veera comes to it, looks. She moves closer, drawn to it.

Nearer to the house, Mahabir comes up with some men and is making to offer them some money which they do not seem to be accepting.

Veera walks up, crosses Mahabir, looking at the house.

Veera           Kitni mehnat bach gayee... Yehi to hai mera ghar, exactly jaisa chahiye tha.

A young girl opens the door of the house as Veera comes there. She looks back at Mahabir. He looks at her. She walks into the house.

Mahabir turns to the old man who was with him earlier.

Old Man       Aaraam se baitho yahan... Usko aane mein abhi late hai...

Mahabir nods.

{1 min}

**Sc # 59**

**Day, Interiors**

**Mountain Cottage**

Veera turns to look at Mahabir as he enters.

Veera           Bhook lagi hai?

He looks at her. There is a new excitement in her.

Mahabir       Haan...

Veera           Dus minute. Main sab kuch ready karti hoon. Jab tak tum munh-haath dho, aaraam karo.

Mahabir       Saath hi karte hai ready...

Veera           Ji nahin. Ye mera ghar hai. Chalo out...

She pushes him out of the door.

Mahabir       Arey... Main andar safai to kar doon...

Veera           Out out out...

She shuts the door behind him.

He comes out, tries to look in. Turns away. Then goes to the window, looks in.

Inside Veera breaks Maggi and puts it into boiling water, then half covers the pot with a lid. Then walks energetically to the other room.

Mahabir walks to peer from the door.

Inside, she is doing the bed. Then takes a broom and begins to sweep the floor. There is the thrill of the home-maker in her.

Mahabir turns away. He feels a lump in the throat. He stands near the door, looking the other way.

After a while, he hears her call –

Veera           (OC) Aa jao...

Mahabir turns, moves inside, looks.

Veera has kept two plates on a mat on the settee. Excitement is ticking in her as she puts the pot of Maggi on the mat. She looks towards Mahabir and smiles. Mahabir turns back quickly as his face contorts. He begins to move back.

Veera            Kya hua?

Mahabir        Ek minute

He walks out of the door. He tries to control himself, but knows that a surge of tears is coming. He strides up to a basin of water, sits holding it, trying to control himself. He can not. He splashes water on his face. He fights with the crying, splashes water again, wipes his face. Manages a straight face. He gets up.

The door opens and Mahabir comes in, looking down. He looks up.

Veera has lit a candle at the food spread. With great fondness she is placing a cushion as a seat for Mahabir. Mahabir goes out before she can see him.

He comes against the pillar, trying to control himself again, but Veera comes out after a moment. He looks at her, looks away. She quickly hugs him from behind. He breaks down, begins to weep.

Veera            Nahin nahin... Kuch nahin...

Mahabir        (weeping) Ye cheej... ye kabhi na mil sake hai... Mo ko ghar kabhi na mil sake hai... Bahot door chala gaya main... Bahot door chala gaya... Maine to sochi thi saanjh hote hi laut jaoonga... Har din socha karoon vaapas chala jaoonga... Amma ke paas... Bees saal ho gaye... Kaha pata hai bhi ki na Amma... Mar gayee ho shayad...

Veera            Of course hai.. Of course... Aur tum jaoge vaapas... Ab sab theek hone waala hai, dekh lena tum

Mahabir        Ye ka ho gaya...? Main yu na hoon... Main yu na hoon. Bas main va\an khada tha... Va ne haath mein bandook pakda dee... kahi chala de Bhaati, chala de... Maine chala dee... Aise hi... Aur sab khatam... (pause) Maine bahot buri kee hai... Meri koi maafi na hai... Par mere saath kaun si achchi huyi hai? Mere saath bhi to buri hi buri huyi hai na... Main bi to... laadla tha Amma ka... Amma...

She hugs his head to her chest, brings him down to sit on the threshold. His head comes to her lap and he curls, she strokes his head, then puts her head on his side. They remain like that.

Veera and Mahabir are seen at the threshold of their home.

{3 ½ mins}

/48 ½ mins/

**Sc # 60**

**Night, Interiors**

**Mountain Cottage**

Veera rouses from sleep, looks up.

She finds that Mahabir has lifted her and is bringing her inside the cottage. She had fallen asleep. She bundles herself, puts her arms around his neck and closes her eyes. He turns, shuts the door, turns around and takes her through the house into the bed room. He puts her into bed. She does not let go of him, pulls him. He sits, she pulls more, he lies down, she moves closer to him, gets on top of him, holds him. He holds her. She kicks up the quilt to put it on both of them. He relaxes. It is a strangely comfortable situation. For both of them.

{1 min}

## **Sunrise in Kashmir**

A new sun rises in the mountains.

**Sc # 61**

**Day, Interiors**

**Cottage Room**

Mahabir wakes up, sees that Veera is not in the bed. He gets up, looks around. Then notices outside the window.

He sees Veera walking towards a clearing.

Mahabir stretches, yawns, gets out of bed.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 62**

**Day, Int / Exteriors**

**Mountain Cottage, Village**

Veera is walking up the green field amidst the mountains. She is humming a happy tune. She turns and looks.

Mahabir is walking out of the house towards her. She smiles at him. He smiles, follows her.

Veera sits on a rock, looking into the mountains. Breeze is blowing her hair, she is free. She is humming a tune. Mahabir is walking up to her. She turns to look at him again, turns back, continues to hum.

After a moment, there is a cracking sound across the valley. She is surprised. It sounded like a thunderbolt. She looks to the side, then turns back to look.

Mahabir is holding his waist, lowering to the ground in the middle of the clearing.

Veera looks at him in question.

He is turning around to look behind.

Another cracking sound, the second bullet hits Mahabir and he falls to the ground.

Veera is looking.

Behind Mahabir she sees rows of police and paramilitary soldiers running in from various sides. Scores of them, all pointing guns towards Mahabir.

Pause. As Veera looks. Then –

Veera           (screams) Hey....

She gets off the rock, bounds towards Mahabir.

Veera           Heyy...

The forces are charging towards Mahabir from three sides.

Veera runs towards Mahabir as he falls to the ground. The lullaby echoes in the beautiful valley. Veera is waving her arms to the policemen, rushing in.

She reaches Mahabir screaming, covers him protectively, breathing hard with her mouth open. He is going senseless.

Veera           (sudden scream) Mahabir...

He tries to push her away from himself. She falters, grabs him back. He is trying to push her again.

Veera (scream) Mahabir...

Mahabir looks at her.

The battalion is rushing to them in formation. Veera looks towards them, then screams to Mahabir –

Veera Gun kahan hai...? Tumhaari gun kahan hai...?

Mahabir (mutters) Phenk dee...

She looks towards the approaching cops, back at Mahabir.

Veera (scream to revive) Mahabir...

The forces reach them.

Veera (lashes out) Hato... Peeche hato...

The forces are surprised, they stop. She is holding Mahabir to her chest and screaming like a wounded tigress.

Veera (scream) Khabardaar...

She looks back at Mahabir.

Veera (scream) Mahabir... Mahabir...

He is mumbling something, senselessly.

Veera (trying to listen) Haan...? Haan...? Sab theek ho jayega... sab theek ho jayega...

The ACP Special Cell moves forward, looks at her.

ACP Veera Tripathy?

Veera (screams) Goli kyon chalayee you bastards...? Goli kyon chalayee...? Kya kar raha tha ye...?

The ACP looks back at the force. The men seem confused. This was not what they were briefed. The ACP moves forward –

ACP Veera suno...

Veera Peeche... peeche... Maar daaloongi main...

She turns to Mahabir, keeps screaming to revive him. The ACP indicates secretly to the other officer. The formation moves stealthily to circle Veera. The ACP speaks to Veera –

ACP Isko hospital le jaana chahiye

Veera (scream) Shoot kyon kiya? Haan...? Main chhodoongi nahin... Peeche hato...

ACP Dekho time nahin hai. Isko hospital le jaana hoga warna ye mar jayega....

Veera (scream) Nahin... Kuch nahin hoga...

ACP Jaldi le jaate hain isey

Veera (impatient) Haan, hospital le chalo... Jaldi...

The ACP turns and calls the medics.

ACP Bulao, bulao...

Veera (trying to revive) Mahabir... Mahabir...

{4 mins}

**Sc # 63**

**Day, Exteriors**

**Village Path**

Medics carrying the stretcher through the village path. Villagers watch. Mahabir is on the stretcher – motionless.

Veera is holding the stretcher close to Mahabir's face, clambering along, speaking to him.

Veera            Suno... suno Mahabir...

There is no reaction from him.

Veera            Main tumhein gaon le jaoongi, theek hai? Promise... Amma ke paas...

The ACP and the medics look at Mahabir, look at Veera.

Veera            Maine kaha tha na sab achcha hoga...? Kaha tha na...? Kuch nahin hua, sab theek hai... Main bol rahi hoon na... Tum dekhna...

The stretcher is being taken away through the village lane.

{1/2 min}

**Sc # 64**

**Evening, Exteriors**

**Town Hospital**

The hospital of a small hill town. Surrounded by police vehicles. Some policemen stand around. A police car and two others rush in and park at the porch.

Sc # 65

Evening, Interiors

Hospital Cabin

The door opens and Veera looks up in anticipation. She is sitting on the cot. It's been many hours that she is sitting like a rock, the stains of Mahabir's blood still on her *firan*. She sees someone, then turns her eyes away in bitter disappointment.

It's her father. And mother. Two others emerge from the curtain. They are looking at her, moving to her.

She is sitting, looking the other way.

Mother        Veera...

Veera does not respond. They move to her slowly. Suddenly Veera turns to them and stands –

Veera        Dekhiye... main jaanti hoon aap kya soch rahe hain... magar baat kya hai, aap nahin jaante... Anyway, the important thing is that Mahabir ko bachaana hai... Usey bachaana hai papa, okay...? Mujhe kidnap kiya... haan... Magar baat vo nahin hai... baat ulti hai...

Mother        Kya ho gaya meri bachchi...?

Veera        (irritation) Arey kuch nahin hua hai... (plain) Kuch nahin hua, main bataoongi...

Father looks at a doctor who has come with him, doctor moves to her.

Doctor        Veera...

Veera        (instinctive) Ye kaun hai? Ye kaun hai...?

Doctor        Baitho, baith jao...

She gets it, sniggers.

Veera        Aap log kya soch rahe hain? Haan...? Mujhe kuch nahin hua hai...

The doctor has indicated the nurse and the others to hold her. They move close to hold her.

Veera        Ye kya ho raha hai...?

They grab her.

Veera        Arey... arey....? Chhodo..., chhodo mujhe... Arey....?

It becomes a struggle.

Veera        (screams) Papa...

Doctor (to Tripathy) Aap bhi...

Tripathy holds her as well, tries to calm her down. Veera sees that a nurse is filling an injection syringe.

Veera (sharp) Ye injection kis ke liye? (scream) Ruko, ruko... Let me go...

She struggles, they turn her to her side and hold her down as she shouts –

Veera Papa please, meri baat suniye...

Tripathy Sh.. sh.. sh..

The doctor pulls her shalwaar down, proceeds to disinfect her skin.

Veera (scream) Arey stop it...

Then she begins to negotiate –

Veera Achcha ek second, ek second... ek second rukiye... kuch baat hai, rukiye to... ek second, dekhiye... mujhe... nahin, dekhiye... baat suniye... Arey... ek second...

Doctor Bas bas bas...

The needle is pierced and the plunger is pressed. The doctor is holding cotton-wool to the point.

Veera (scream) Baat samajh nahin aati? Ye kya kiya...? Abhi mujhe... Main...

Doctor Shhh... Ab aap so jao. Theek hai?

Tripathy Sleep Veera... You are exhausted. You have to sleep, okay?

The drug begins to have influence on her.

Veera I don't have to... No...

Flash. Mountains. Mahabir in the distance.

Veera There is... No...

Flash. Stream, forest. Mahabir walking away.

Veera's mind goes away.

{1 ½ mins}

/56 mins/

**Sc # 66**

**Evening, Int / Exteriors**

**Hospital Corridor**

Mr. Tripathy walks out to the corridor from the room, moves to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi, who is talking to the ACP Special Cell and the area SP.

ACP            Spot death thi sir. Around nine-fifteen. Stretcher par daalne ke pehle hi mar chuka tha.

Tripathy        Kamal...

The Commissioner turns swiftly to him.

Tripathy        Veera ko abhi Delhi move kar sakte hain?

CoP            Sure...

Mr. Tripathy nods, walks back inside.

CoP            Body kahan hai?

Music begins, we begin to move back, down the corridor, away from the policemen as they talk.

SP            Mortuary mein hai sir...

CoP            Post Mortem ho gaya?

ACP            Yes sir

CoP            Mahabir Bhaati...

ACP            Yes sir

{1/2 min}

## The Recovery

[A] The white stripes running on the black road at night.

Inside, Veera is lying asleep on a cot. A nurse attends to her. She opens her eyes in the dark, looks around, can not comprehend what is happening.

[B] Veera jittering violently. She is in her senses but her mind is swimming. Veera's room in Tripathy House at night. The nurse gets up from her feet and rushes to her head. An old governess rushes in.

Nurse            Aap idhar aao, main injection ready karti hoon.

[C] Veera's face as she lies motionless on the bed. Her mother watches her. The nurse is at her station.

[D] Day. Veera removes her sheet and makes to sit. Her head spins, she begins to collapse, supports herself. The nurse rushes to her.

Veera walking to the bathroom, supported heavily by the nurse.

[E] Veera's mother speaking as Veera is reclined on the bed.

Mother            Vinay ki mummy milna chahti hain aapse. Achche se milna, theek hai...? pleasant tareeke se.

Mother cleans out Veera's face a bit with her palms, continues –

Mother            Taaki unhein lage sab theek hai, normal hai...

[F] Vinay's mother and gaudy sister and sitting around Veera's bed.

Gaudy            Dad was saying we can have the wedding in some other city and I said Ammmazing... I think we can all...

Vinay's Mom (scrutinizingly) Tumhaara kya khayaal hai Veera...?

Veera is looking at her.

Vinay's Mom Wedding kis sheher mein honi chahiye...?

Veera            Jee...

Mother            (cutting in) MK was saying New York. Aap logon ke liye bhi convenient hai...

[G]            Veera's friends and some others sitting around Veera and talking happily.

They look towards Veera. Veera smiles slightly.

[H] Veera sitting on the chair, looking out of the window.

{1 ½ mins}

Sc # 67

Night, Interiors

Tripathy House

Merry gathering in the hall post dinner.

Shukla Achcha... har winter mein kehte hain bahot sardi pad rahi hai... aur har summer mein kehte hain o my god it's too hot...

Gaudy Correct correct

Shukla Why is it always a surprise...? Har saal...? Kamaal hai...

Meanwhile, Veera has appeared at the staircase in the distance. Now her mother sees her and rushes forward.

Mother Arey... Kya hua...?

Everyone stops and looks.

Mother Aap neeche kyon aa rahi hain? Where is the nurse...?

Mother reaches Veera, Veera continues to climb down.

Tripathy Let her come. Aa jao beta...

Mother supports Veera as she climbs down, still weak.

In the hall there are many others. Vinay and his family are there too. Everyone look towards her.

Veera reaches a sofa.

Shukla Good. Aaiye, baithiye...

Veera is made to sit on the sofa.

Shukla How are you feeling now...?

Veera (weak) Better...

Veera looks around slowly.

Veera Aap sab kaise hain...?

Veera hears Vinay's sister titter.

Shukla Jr (OC) Hum to theek hain...

Vinay's mom (OC) Bus aapke baare mein thoda worried thhe ki aapki tabiyat theek ho jaaye

Veera Hmm...

Shukla (OC) Pehle se bahot behtar lag rahi hai Manu...

Everyone is looking at Veera.

Veera turns to Vinay.

Veera Hi Vinay...

Everyone smiles, a pleasant hum in the room. They watch intently.

Vinay Hi Veera...

Veera Pahaad ke oopar... ghar mil gaya mujhe...

Vinay (OC) Really...?

Veera Banaya maine khaana... apne ghar ki safai bhi kee... Phir goli chal gayee...

Veera's mother tries to change the topic –

Mother Vinay ko mountains bahot pasand hain na...? Austria mein vo kaun sa resort hai Veera ka favourite...?

Priya The ski resort...?

Veera (continuing her drift) Main hamesha kehti thi na... ki main bhaag jaaongi yahan se, mujhe sheher mein nahin rehna...? Sab kehte hain, bhaagta koi nahin hai. Main bhi nahin jaati... Agar Mahabir mujhe kidnap kar ke na le gayaa hota. Magar ab na... main ja chuki hoon. Ab main vaapas nahin aa sakti.

Mr. Tripathy sits up.

Tripathy I think tumhein aaraam karna chahiye Veera. We will talk later.

Veera (unaffected) Ajeeb baat hai... Kidnap ho gayee... par vahan azaad thi... Aur yahan... jail mein...

Tripathy Arey... (snigger) Anyway, Pratima...

Mother (coming forward) Chalo Veera...

Veera (disregarding) Ye ghar hai mera...?

She looks at the elderly gentleman as she is made to stand. Her mother notices.

Mother Come...

Veera Aaj chocolate nahin laaye Shukla tayaji...?

Shukla (smile) Abhi mangwa kar deta hoon...

Veera Kahan?

Shukla Hmm...?

Veera Kahan denge? Yahan, ya bathroom mein...?

Shukla looks at her.

Veera Haan...?

Mother (undercurrent) Veera, chup...

Veera turns to her.

Veera (aloud) Jee mummy...? Kuch kehna hai...?

Mother becomes uncomfortable, looks at Tripathy, Tripathy is looking at her, at Shukla. Shukla shrugs.

Shukla Hunh... Strange... Ahem...

Veera looks at Shukla.

Veera Yaad nahin aa raha hai...? Main yaad karati hoon – Meri princess... Duniya ki sabse khoobsurat ladki hai meri bachchi... Yaad aaya...? Apne haath se mera munh daba kar band kar dete the... haan...? taaki meri cheekh baahar na nikle... haan...? Jo main chillati thi... Jo main us pain mein cheekhti thi vo cheekh baahar na nikle koi sun na le isliye zor se mera munh daba dete the Shh... Shh...

Shukla (simultaneously) Arey... arey...

Tripathy Whaa...

Shukla's son stares at his father, at Veera.

Shukla By god...

Mother Priya hold her please...

Mother and her sister Priya make to turn Veera away.

Shukla Sach mein paagal ho gayee hai ye... Sahi keh rahe hain sab...

Veera (continues) Bathroom mein... baar baar... nal chala kar...

Mother (scolding nurse) Kahan chali gayee thi tum haan...?

The nurse turns Veera, mother and she begin to pull her away now.

Nurse Aaiye, aaiye...

Veera Cheekhti thi... nau saal ki thi... cheekhti thi... magar vo haath munh ke oopar, dab gayee cheekh, kisi ne nahin suni...

Mother Chaloo... Le chalo...

Shukla Mad... she has gone mad... Ask her to shut up... Manu ask her to shut her mouth or else...

Veera (screams) Shut up... Aaaaaa... Aaaaaa...

Everyone hears her scream.

She stares defiantly at Shukla. Shukla turns and strides out of the room, followed by his son.

Silence.

Tripathy looks at her daughter. Veera turns to him.

Veera Yaa, aisa to hota hai... Aisa to hota rehta hai... To kya hai na... I am not okay with it. Ye duniya... jahan aisa hota rehta hai... jahan kya sach hai, kya jhoot hai... sab mila hua hai... Bahot confusion hai yahan...

Tripathy Veera... Baby... Okay, lets be sensible about this...

Veera (loud) No... I won't be sensible... I'll be stupid... I am stupid...

Tripathy Relax baby...

Veera Sensible...? Veera baahar jao to careful rehna... Ghar ke baahar bahot bure log hote hain, ladki to hamesha careful rehna chahiye...? To ye kyon nahin kaha ki mujhe ghar ke andar bhi careful rehna hai, mujhe aap logon se bhi bach ke rehna hai...? Ye kyon nahin kaha...? Yahan to main bilkul exposed thi... Ghar mein thi main... To mujhe nahin hona hai sensible. Main bewakoof hoon... Main kharaab hoon... Magar main aap logon mein se ek nahin hoon. Main vaapas nahin aaoongi...

Music begins. Everyone sits silently.

Veera stands for a moment, tears dripping from her eyes, then she turns and walks. Lyrics of the song begin. She walks away from everyone.

{4 ½ mins}

## Song # 6 {Heera}

Tripathy's bungalow in the day.

Veera sits in a car as the family watches. She slides to the other side.

The car drives out of the bungalow.

The highway. The car driving on the highway. Veera looking in front. She asks the driver to stop the car. The car pulls over.

Veera walks to the side, breaking down. She cries her heart out. She drops to her knees, taking Mahabir's name, letting it out, finally letting him go.

The highway rolls in the day. The landscape runs on both sides, in different speeds.

Cherries drop into the water. It is a cottage industry plant, making fruit preserve. Small assembly of churners, conveyors, many cans. Veera supervising the process, noting numbers in a register.

Next to the factory, on a hill – a small concrete house. Veera is seen walking out in the evening. She is standing outside her house in the fading light. Her hair is blowing softly in the breeze, she is breathing the mountain air. The journey has changed, the light has changed. She has changed too. She is looks into the distance, at the grass field.

Two kids are playing together in the field. A boy and a girl. This is the girl who we have seen collecting flowers earlier, and the boy who we have seen getting slapped and restrained. Now they are playing together.

Veera looks at them, smiles.

The kids are looking for something in the grass, the boy passes something he has found to the girl. Then they run away together.

Veera is looking at them, smiling from her heart. Fade out.

{2 mins}

/1 hr 4 ½ mins/

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{2 hrs 5 ½ mins}