

JALAN JALAN

by

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Based on the book "Jalan, Jalan" by Mike Stoner

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NOTE: All scenes are Indonesia unless specified as England.

MEDAN, INDONESIA - AUGUST 2000

1

INT. CAR - NIGHT

1

Indonesia. JAMES, 26, English, average height and weight, sits with eyes closed in the back of a "four-by-four" car, driven by PAK ANDY, 50, Chinese Indonesian, pudgy, with a swirl of thinning hair.

PAK ANDY

Is first time in Indonesia?

James opens his eyes, and a tear falls, landing on the back of his hand. He wipes it off on his trousers.

JAMES

Yes.

They pass lighted billboards portraying happy Indonesian faces drinking condensed milk, coffee, driving Nissans, and smoking cigarettes. As they approach the city, roadside shacks appear, with young shirtless men frying food. James rolls down his window, and the boomph of music arises, fades, and arises again as they pass various roadside sound systems.

PAK ANDY

Close your window. We are coming to traffic lights.

A tired James rolls up his window. The car comes to a stoplight. Instantly there is a tap at the window. A young boy presses his face against the tinted window, smiling. He shapes his hands into the form of a bowl.

BOY

Please, *bule*. Please, mister.

Pak Andy shakes his head and waves away the two young boys from his window. James shrugs his shoulders at the boy and shows his empty hands.

BOY (CONT'D)

Please, mister, please.

James grabs his wallet and fumbles out a large bill, but Pak Andy pulls the car forward.

JAMES

No, wait.

Pak Andy keeps driving forward. The boy jogs desperately beside them, tapping at the window and trying to keep up. James starts to roll down the window, but Pak Andy speeds past the boy and turns right.

PAK ANDY

Very bad people. Always asking for money. They should get a job. I have a job. You have a job. Bad people.

James sits back, trying hard not to scowl at Pak Andy.

2

EXT. ENGLISH SCHOOL - NIGHT

2

Pak Andy and James arrive at the school, green and white under flickering floodlights. A SIGN on the three-storey building reads "ENGLISH WORLD." A dozen teens, Indonesians and Chinese, stand out front smoking and talking.

PAK ANDY

Classes have finished.

Pak Andy stops the car, gets out, and walks away.

JAMES

(to himself)

Righto.

James gets out of the car. A Chinese boy, JOHNNY, 17, in a leather jacket and white t-shirt, comes to greet him.

JOHNNY

Hey. You. Hello.

James smiles back, tired and not exactly confident.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

You are the new teacher?

JAMES

Yes. I am.

JOHNNY

I am *Johnny*.

Johnny pulls his collar up around his neck and loads a cigarette between his lips.

JAMES

Nice to meet you.

JOHNNY
What's your name, man?

JAMES
I'm--

He is interrupted by a two-fingered WHISTLE from Pak Andy, standing at the door of the school. He shoos James away with his hand. James points questioningly to the car. Pak Andy shakes his head no. James points to the street, confused.

JOHNNY
No, man, He wants you to go in.

JAMES
So why's he shooin' me away?

JOHNNY
I don't know what "shooin'" is, man. But what he does means "Come here."

James points to the school to get confirmation from Pak Andy, who nods his head yes, and shoos him away even more.

JAMES
(to Johnny)
Thanks. Maybe see you later.

JOHNNY
Yeah. See you, man.

3 INT. ENGLISH SCHOOL - RECEPTION - NIGHT

3

Pak Andy is standing with an elbow on a counter.

PAK ANDY
You are hungry?

JAMES
Yes. No meat, please. I'm a vegetarian.

Pak Andy snorts, and then yells down the hall.

PAK ANDY
Epoo!

From down the corridor comes running a short Indonesian, IQPAL, in matching brown pants and shirt, with a long dark fringe of hair that hangs over his eyes. He stands in front of Pak Andy with his head bowed.

PAK ANDY (CONT'D)
 (in Indonesian)
 Go get some food for the new
 teacher!

Pak Andy hands Iqpal some money. Iqpal puts the money in his shirt pocket, flashes a large smile at James, and leaves.

PAK ANDY (CONT'D)
 Food is coming. Come. I'll show you
 the staffroom and give you your
 timetable.

4 INT. STAFFROOM - NIGHT

4

Pak Andy points to one of ten desks.

PAK ANDY
 You will sit here. You will start
 at 9:00 tomorrow morning.

Pak Andy impatiently gestures toward a desk. James sits down.

JAMES
 Okay. But...I can't work tomorrow.
 I'm jet-lagged and I need to sleep.

PAK ANDY
 I have you on the timetable for
 tomorrow. There are students.

JAMES
 (sighs)
 Ah, alright.

PAK ANDY
 And do not call me Pak. It is Pak
 Andy, like you say Mister Andy in
 English. Please show respect.

JAMES
 Pak Andy. Sorry.

PAK ANDY
 Here is class schedule.

Pak Andy drops a file on the desk and leaves. James takes a brief look at the file, then puts his head down on the desk to rest. The air conditioner on the wall hums him to sleep.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

5

EXT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

5

Lying in a meadow, LAURA, 25, dark hair and green eyes, holds James in her arms.

LAURA

Don't worry, baby. Don't worry.

Her hair falls over his face. She kisses his eyelids, his nose, his lips.

END FLASHBACK.

He wakes abruptly, vaguely reaching to stroke her hair that is not there. Iqpal stands next to the desk.

IQPAL

Food for you, mister.

JAMES

Thanks. I'm very hungry.

IQPAL

Gooooo.

(big smile)

Food very good here.

Iqpal takes food from the bag and puts a plate on the desk.

JAMES

Thank you, Epool.

IQPAL

No, not Epool. Epool.

JAMES

Epool?

Iqpal takes a pen and paper from a desk, and carefully scratches his name on the paper. James looks at it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ah...Iqpal.

IQPAL

Yes, yes.

Iqpal slaps James on the back and smiles wide again.

JAMES

Nice to meet you, Iqpal.

James offers a handshake. Iqpal takes his hand and shakes it reverently. Pak Andy enters the room.

PAK ANDY
 (in Indonesian)
 Classroom 4 is dirty. Clean it now.

PAK ANDY (CONT'D)
 (to James)
 Come. I will take you to your
 house.

6 INT. CAR - NIGHT 6

As they move in traffic consisting of cars, buses, bicycles,
 and *becaks* (cycle-rickshaws), James fades quickly into sleep.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

7 EXT. LAURA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 7

Laura swings open the door she has just unlocked, one hand on
 the handle and the other ushering James inside.

LAURA
 Kiss me.

He kisses her, and she begins to shed her clothes.

END FLASHBACK.

8 INT. CAR - NIGHT 8

Pak Andy brings the car to an abrupt stop in front of an
 apartment building, causing James to awaken from his dream.

PAK ANDY
 Kim's house. Now your house too.
 Go. Knock on door.

9 EXT. KIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT 9

James goes and knocks on Kim's door. It opens, and Pak Andy
 takes off. KIM, half Vietnamese, tall, skinny, early 30s,
 neck-length dark hair, greets him.

KIM
 Fuuuuuuuck. That man is such a
 fucking fuck, man. You're the
 newbie. Come on in.

10 INT. KIM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 10

The house is open-plan, with a white tiled floor. On TV a chubby Asian man is beating up four men in suits. Kim flops down into one of two big-cushioned armchairs. There are two beer bottles on the coffee table, one empty, one full.

KIM

Make yourself at fucking home, man.

James drags his rucksack down the hallway.

11 INT. KIM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 11

He lays his rucksack on the bed. Fumbling deep inside one of its pockets, he extracts a smooth white pebble, holds it in his palm and stares at it for a long moment.

12 INT. KIM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 12

James flops into an armchair next to Kim to watch TV. Kim grabs a cigarette from a pack.

KIM

You smoke?

JAMES

Not anymore. Is that Marlboro?

KIM

No, man. Kretek cigarette.

Kim waves the cigarette under James's nose.

JAMES

Smells like apple pie. Yeah, hell, why not?

He takes one and lights it.

KIM

Strongest cigarette in the world.

James takes a puff and coughs.

JAMES

Tastes like it. But very good.

KIM

Anyway, I didn't mean "smoke." I meant "smoooke."

James looks blankly at him.

KIM (CONT'D)
Smoke smoke. Smoooke?

JAMES
Ah. Yes. Sometimes.

Kim pulls a frisbee of weed out from under his chair. Kim rolls a the joint and passes it to James, who lights it up and takes a long hit, mindlessly looking at the TV.

13 INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM - MORNING

13

James awakens to the sound of a muezzin. Hungover, sweating from the heat, he cries softly, then recovers. He looks at his watch: 6:15. He spots a half-smoked cigarette in an ashtray on the floor next to the bed. He picks it up, props himself to sitting, finds a lighter and lights it.

JAMES
(to the cigarette)
You evil bastard.

He closes his eyes and takes a long drag. He opens them when he hears in his head:

LAURA
Really? Smoking again?

He stifles a sob, snuffs out the cigarette in the ashtray, then rolls back into bed and falls back to sleep.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

14 EXT. ENGLAND - BUS STOP - DAY

14

James and Laura wait at the bus stop in silence, her suitcase and shoulder bag on the ground next to her. Her passport is on the top of the shoulder bag. The bus is seen in the distance. She pulls him close.

LAURA
Tell me not to go.

JAMES
Don't go.

LAURA
I have to go.

JAMES
Don't go. I mean it.

He grabs her by her front jeans pockets and pulls her back.

LAURA
Three years and you're still my
lovesick puppy. I'm only gone three
months.

JAMES
Three months is forever.

LAURA
I'm coming back. Hey, enjoy the
time. Go find yourself somewhere.

She smiles. There is a surge in traffic noise, including the sound of the bus. He presses himself into her.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I guess that means my bus is here.

JAMES
It means I've got a boner.

LAURA
(chuckles)
Sicko.

Her hands grab into his buttocks and her nails dig in. She grabs at his neck with her teeth and pulls. The bus arrives.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Gotta go. Sorry, puppy.

The bus door opens. The driver gets out, opens the luggage doors. Laura's eyes sparkle with wet. James's do the same.

LAURA (CONT'D)
But you'll see, three months...
(snaps her fingers)
is this.

END FLASHBACK.

15

EXT. ROADSIDE - MORNING

15

A random mix of cars, yellow minibuses, motorbikes, and cycle-rickshaws weave along the road. People flag down vehicles, which stop just a moment, then instantly take off.

JAMES
Are we taking a rickshaw?

KIM
Buses are more fun. We want the
Number 23 or 34.

Three minibuses approach, side by side. Kim waves his hand.
The outermost bus cuts off the other two and stops for him.

16 INT. MINIBUS - MORNING 16

The other passengers stare at them, whispering and laughing.

BUS PASSENGER
Eh, *bule*, where you go, mister?

JAMES
Work. Teaching.

BUS DRIVER
Ah, English Teacher. I speak
English. David Beckham.
(he laughs)

KIM
Manchester United.

ALL PASSENGERS
Manchester United. David Beck-
haaam!

People slap each other on the knee. Kim pulls out his pack of
cigarettes, passes them around the bus, to much appreciation.

17 EXT. BUS STOP - MORNING 17

Kim and James step off the bus.

KIM
It's just a short walk from here.

18 EXT. ROADSIDE - MORNING 18

As they walk, two 10-year-olds boys run up to them.

TEENAGER #1
Hey mister.

KIM
Hi.

TEENAGER #2

Hey mister. Where are you going?

Kim smiles broadly at them.

KIM

Jalan jalan, boys!

The boys run off, laughing.

JAMES

What does *jalan jalan* mean?

KIM

Just fucking walking, man. Out for a stroll. Going nowhere in particular.

JAMES

So, why are you here?

KIM

Fuck, I dunno. I wasn't that comfortable in the U.S. of A. I'm a product of one of their wars.

James angles his head as if to question.

KIM (CONT'D)

Vietnam War baby. Adopted. Never knew my real dad. Why are you here, man?

JAMES

Jalan jalan.

KIM

Yeah, good answer, man.

They arrive at the school.

19

INT. SCHOOL - STAFFROOM - MORNING

19

The clock on the wall shows 8:30. The other teachers are drinking coffee: MARTY, a bearded Aussie, 30, Julie, 30-something with big breasts, GEOFF, a Brit, 28.

KIM

Hey, everyone, here's the fucking newbie! James, this is Marty, Julie, Geoff.

MARTY
Where you from?

JULIE
Why the hell did you choose this
shithole?

GEOFF
How's your jet-leg?

JULIE
Pak's a cunt. Tell him to fuck off
if you don't want to do something.

JAMES
Uh, okay. Where's my class exactly?

MARTY
Which one you got?

JAMES
Dickens.

MARTY
Third floor. Come on, I'll show
you.

20 INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY 20

Third floor hallway. Marty points to a classroom door.

MARTY
I'm next door. Give me a knock if
you have any problems. Not that you
will. These kids are bonzer.

JAMES
Thanks, Marty.

James opens the door and enters.

21 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 21

James enters the classroom to find thirteen students from
ages 8 to 14 eagerly awaiting him.

JAMES
Good morning. I'm your new teacher.

STUDENTS
Good morning, sir.

JAMES

Does anyone have any questions?

DENNIS, a short ethnic Chinese in a red and blue striped t-shirt, raises his hand. James nods for him to go ahead.

DENNIS

What does "fuck" mean, sir?

23

INT. MEI'S BAR - NIGHT

23

The bar is open-air. James and the other teachers sit at two tables pushed together. MEI, 35, ethnic Chinese, comes out from behind the counter to deliver a beer to BARRY, 55, British, chubby but muscular, at the table next to James's group. He stares at Mei almost without pause. James's group get up one by one to grab Bintang beers from the fridge, and Mei makes notes on the piles of paper in front of her.

MARTY

(to James)

So, what d'ya reckon? Staying?

JAMES

Yep. Takes some getting used to, though.

JULIE

You never get used to it. Something weird and bizarre every day.

JAMES

Good. That's what I want.

JULIE

It wears thin sometimes.

KIM

I fucking love it here. We'll take you out and show you the night life later, man. Fucking unbelievable, Ain't that right, Julie?

JULIE

To die for.

"Ghost Laura" puts her arms around James's neck from behind and nuzzles behind his ear.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

You're not real. Get off.

He twists his head away from her.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
I'd like a cuddle.

He jerks his head and she lets go.

KIM
You okay, man?

JAMES
Yeah. Stiff neck.

GEOFF
Jet-lag's a pain, eh?

Kim gets up and goes to the fridge.

KIM
Who wants a Bintaaang?

EVERYONE
(checking their bottles)
Yes.

MARTY
(to James)
Has Pak asked you to teach his
mate's kids yet?

JAMES
He's mentioned it.

JULIE
Don't trust him. Pak's a cunt.

GEOFF
Julie, do you have to swear so
much?

She ignores him.

JULIE
He asked me and I went 'round this
guy's house and there's armed
guards and dogs and cameras as soon
as you get through the gate. I
walked straight back out.

JAMES
Well, I'll give it a go.

JULIE
It's bad news. Any friend of Pak's
is bad news.

KIM

Let the newbie fucking find out for himself.

Kim sticks a cigarette in James's mouth.

KIM (CONT'D)

Welcome to Mei's and welcome to the Friday night gang. Bunch of freaks that we be.

JAMES

Where are all the other teachers?

KIM

Scared. At home watching TV. Didn't realise there was actually going to be some adventure to living here. Who's game to go dancing tonight?

GEOFF

Not me. I'm getting up to go camera shopping tomorrow.

JULIE

I'm up for it.

JAMES

Sure, why not?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Me too, me too!

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

No. Go. Away.

The group gets up to leave.

BARRY

(shouting from his table)

Where are you faggots off to, then?

KIM

Why, Barry? You hoping to come, man?

BARRY

Not with you faggots.

KIM

That's good, 'cos we didn't fucking ask you.

(to Mei, smiling)

Thanks, Mei!

MEI
Have a good night, Mr. Keanu.

BARRY
(to James)
Enjoy your night, new faggot.

James is stunned, speechless. The group goes outside.

24 EXT. MEI'S BAR - NIGHT

24

JAMES
What's with that guy?

JULIE
He's a wife-beating dick. He's here
to escape jail time back home.
Broke her arms, allegedly.

KIM
He does some dodgy business here,
and is sniffing after Mei.

JAMES
"Mr. Keanu"? You don't look
anything like Keanu Reeves.

KIM
Yeah, I know, but I hate to tell
her she's wrong.

25 EXT. HOTEL GARUDA - NIGHT

25

The hotel is glass-fronted, alight with sequenced flashing bulbs, attended by a doorman in full London Mayfair Hotel doorman garb. The rest of the street is peeling and crumbling colonial Dutch facades, rubbish piles, and potholes.

A taxi arrives, and the group fall out the back. They are met by two boys, 8 and 10, with trays hanging around their necks filled with various cigarettes and lighters. The group try to go around them, but the boys deftly move to block.

KIM
(to the 8-year-old)
Okay. Give me twenty kretek.

But the 10-year-old butts in front of the 8-year-old, and Kim and Julie both buy a pack from the older boy. Marty takes the moment to escape into the hotel.

8-YEAR-OLD BOY

(to James)

Please mister, buy my cigarettes.
Marlboro, kretek, Davidoff.

JAMES

A pack of Marlboro and a pack of
kretek.

Suddenly the older boy jostles the younger one away.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Eh! Back off. I'm buying from *him*.

The older boy tuts and heads off to another taxi pulling up.

8-YEAR-OLD BOY

Thank you, mister, thank you!

26

INT. HOTEL GARUDA - NIGHT

26

A world of smoke, live drums, a guitar solo and 300 people. Three girls with orange-dyed hair, cleavage, and skirts that barely cover their privates turn in circles to "Livin' On a Prayer." A waiter takes the group to a table up front already occupied by Indonesian men. He speaks to them and they nod their heads, smile at the expats, and leave the table.

WAITER

(shouts above the music)

Please, please sit.

JULIE

We *bules* always get the best seats.

JAMES

Why?

JULIE

We're like status symbols. If a place has *bules*, it must be good.

JAMES

What's a *bule*?

JULIE

Albino. They call us albinos.

JAMES

(laughs)

Cheeky bastards.

They order drinks and light cigarettes as the band whips up a perfect intro to Guns N' Roses "Sweet Child O' Mine."

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
(shouts)
Best rock intro ever!

James jerks his head around, expecting to see Laura. Instead he sees Julie, smiling toward the band. She grabs his hand and leads him to the dance floor. Marty and Kim follow. Focus on the spinning reflecting DISCO BALL hanging from the ceiling.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

22

EXT. BEACH - DAY

22

James and Laura, in bathing suits, lie on a beach towel on a pebbled beach.

LAURA
How many pebbles do you think are
on this beach?

JAMES
Seventy-two billion, three hundred
twenty-three thousand and four.
(scans the beach)
Maybe five.

LAURA
They're like...moments in time.

JAMES
Then wouldn't they have to be all
in a row? I mean, time flows along
a straight line.

LAURA
Not in the four-dimensional space-
time Einstein talked about.

JAMES
If I had known you were a quantum
physicist, I would've asked you to
pay more of the rent.

LAURA
Each of these pebbles is like a
moment in time, all connected
equally.

She picks up three pebbles one by one as she speaks.

LAURA (CONT'D)

So this pebble is a moment, this pebble is now, and this one is a moment ago. But if something happens, like a wave comes along and jumbles them up, then maybe this pebble...

(she reaches for a farther pebble)

becomes the moment after that, instead of the one you expected that seemed to be next to it. And whoosh!

JAMES

Whoosh?

LAURA

One moment we're on the beach, then the next we're watching Napoleon pop out of his mum's cannon, then the next we're back on the beach!

She lies on her back and folds her hands behind her head. He takes a pebble she just dropped and puts it in her navel.

JAMES

If that was possible, don't you think more people would've experienced it? Had glimpses of the past or future?

She turns sideways toward him to answer. The pebble falls out of her navel. He reflexively picks it up and holds onto it.

LAURA

Perhaps we have, but the moment is so quick we don't notice it.

She smiles at him, stands up, then walks toward the water.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM - MORNING

James awakes, stares at the ceiling.

KIM

Newbie! You up?! Time to go!

27

EXT. ROADSIDE SHACK CAFE - MORNING

27

Across from the English school, James and Kim sit on a bench under a blue tarp, drinking coffee and sweating. At the lone table, two Indonesian men play chess as a third watches them.

KIM

Fuuuck, it's fucking hot. Whew, is it fucking hot.

JAMES

Thanks for confirming. I'm new here, so I wasn't sure.

CHESS WATCHER

You hot, my friend?

KIM

Yeah, fucking hot, man.

CHESS WATCHER

(laughs)

Hot is good.

KIM

(smiles)

Why'd you go home early the other night? Music not up to par?

JAMES

Music was great. Jet-lag suddenly hit me. Really needed some sleep.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

You wanted to be alone with me and my sexy body, tell him.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

I can't ever be with your sexy body again, so what the fuck.

James shakes his head to be rid of her.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You guys have a good time?

KIM

Yeah. Julie did some E and danced like a frenetic chimp all night, while Marty sat and watched her. We got back about three.

JAMES

Jesus. Is that a normal night?

KIM
Pretty much.

James smiles.

KIM (CONT'D)
(noticing his watch)
Almost time for the next class.

They get up, pay for their coffees, nod to the Chess Watcher, and zigzag through traffic to cross the street to the school.

28

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

28

James enters to find twelve students already seated: aged seventeen to thirty, all but two Chinese-Indonesian. James draws a likeness of a dolphin on the board.

JAMES
Good morning, class.
(when no one responds)
Right, then. What's this?

JOHNNY
Have you ever kissed a girl, sir?

JAMES
Uh...yes. Yes, I have.

Suddenly everyone is paying rapt attention.

JOHNNY
How long did you kiss her for?

James turns back to the chalkboard.

JAMES
Now, this is a dolphin.

JOHNNY
How many girls did you kiss?
(lying)
I have kissed very many.

JENNIFER
You liar.

ADINDA, 30, female, ethnic Indonesians, speaks up.

ADINDA
We don't kiss here. Not often.

YENNY, a petite Chinese girl, joins in.

YENNY

I saw my parents kiss once, but they didn't know I see. It is bad to kiss in public.

JAMES

In England it's okay. What about holding hands? Is that allowed?

JENNIFER

Not really.

The other Indonesian, FRANZ, speaks up.

FRANZ

Do you not think your country is too free?

JENNIFER

I think it is nice, to show you love someone and it's okay others can see it.

The other girls in the class nod.

JOHNNY

In England, do people kiss in public with this?
(points to his tongue)

JAMES

Sometimes.

JOHNNY

I want to go to England!

The class laugh, except Franz, and Adinda.

JAMES

Anyway, we're here to learn English.
(taps the dolphin drawing)
What's this?

SUSIE

A shark, sir?

A two-metre-high wall with a gate. A camera mounted above points down at James, who checks the address against what is written on the paper in his hand, and pushes the button.

JAMES

I'm the English teacher.

The gate slides open. James finds himself in front of a large Chinese man with a big gun slung over his shoulder. The man nods toward the mansion, and James heads for the front door. In the driveway he passes three more large men with guns playing cards on the bonnet of a shiny black Range Rover. Another armed man walks around the side of the house looking up at the wall as he goes. One of the card players takes a moment to open the solid wood front door and usher James in.

30

INT. CHARLES'S MANSION - DAY

30

At the opposite end of the large room, four mid-forties men watch Manchester United on a large TV screen. One of them, CHARLES, 45, 5'10", Chinese, with neatly combed hair, stands.

CHARLES

Ah, the new teacher.
 (toward a door outside)
 Fitri! Benny! Your new teacher is
 here!

Charles walks over to greet James.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Good to meet you. I am Charles.

Charles shakes James's hand for a long moment and inspects James intently as he does. Despite his red and white Hawaiian shirt, Charles shows no sense of humour.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Come.

He leads James to a buffet table with food and wine.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Eat what you want. The wine is
 flown in from France, and also the
 cheese.

Charles takes some Brie and walks back over to the TV.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

The children come soon.

James hesitates, then pours himself some wine and puts some food on a plate. He is standing there awkwardly when the two kids enter: FITRI, a 15-year-old girl about to become beautiful, and BENNY, a chubby 10-year-old boy.

FITRI
I am Fitri.

BENNY
I am Benny.

Benny puts five prawns and a chunk of beef onto his plate.

CHARLES
(in Chinese, to the kids)
You should go to the games room.

FITRI
My father says we should go to the
games room. Please, this way.

They pass a 25-metre outdoor pool on the way.

FITRI (CONT'D)
Bring your shorts next time. We can
swim.

31 INT. GAMES ROOM - DAY

31

The games room contains a snooker table, dartboard, ping-pong table, and jukebox. Fitri slumps into a beanbag chair. Benny falls backward into another, dumping his prawns, which he picks up and eats anyway. Fitri slaps him across the head.

FITRI
My brother is a pig.

BENNY
My sister is a bitch.

James sets his wine and food down neatly next to a beanbag and flops into it.

JAMES
First English lesson: "bitch" is a
bad word.

BENNY
But she called me a pig.

JAMES
Well, "pig" isn't exactly polite,
but sometimes it's suitable for
little boys.
(stuffs his mouth with
mushrooms)
And for grown men.

Benny laughs, opens his mouth wide, and gulps his last prawn.

FITRI

Oh, great. Two idiot pigs.
(laughs)

JAMES

(smiles)
Your English is already very good.

FITRI

My father takes us on his business trips, to Australia and sometimes America.

JAMES

Very nice. Well, then, why don't we start with you just asking me some questions, about anything you want.

FITRI

Do you have a girlfriend?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Good start. What are you going to say to that?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

You're my girlfriend.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Oh, am I? I thought I was dead and you were trying to forget me.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

Don't remind me.

BENNY

Well?

JAMES

Yes. No. I used to.

FITRI

Do you miss her?

JAMES

Very much.

FITRI

Why did you break?

JAMES
 (correcting her)
 "Break up."

BENNY
 Why did you break up?

JAMES
 Um...she died.

FITRI
 That is sad. Are you sad?

JAMES
 Excuse me, where's the toilet?

FITRI
 Outside this room and two doors on
 the right.

32 INT. MANSION - BATHROOM - DAY 32

James sits on the toilet lid, head in hands, and sobs until snot comes out his nose. Then he stands and splashes cold water on his reddened face, and dries his face on a towel.

33 EXT. MANSION - POOLSIDE - DAY 33

As James comes outside into the pool area, Charles is waiting for him, standing with a lit cigarette in one hand and holding out an unlit one to James with the other.

CHARLES
 Are you alright?

JAMES
 Thank you.
 (accepting and lighting
 the cigarette)
 I'm fine, thanks.

CHARLES
 Fitri told me she is worried she
 made you unhappy.

JAMES
 It wasn't her fault. You know,
 memories jump out at you sometimes.

CHARLES
 Yes. I know.

Charles's eyes soften and he looks at the blue pool water.

JAMES

This isn't a very good first impression.

CHARLES

Don't be sorry. Life likes to surprise us at the most inopportune of times.

JAMES

You have nice children.

CHARLES

Thank you. I worry about them, living here, in a house that looks more like a prison.

JAMES

Why do you have such security?

CHARLES

I am a businessman who sometimes does business that makes enemies. Since the riots I don't take chances anymore.

JAMES

Riots?

Charles flicks his cigarette into the pool.

CHARLES

Two years ago. Economic and race riots. It was a very bad time for us Chinese living here.

JAMES

I'm sorry, I didn't know.

CHARLES

You must return to your students, and I must check to see how Mr. Beckham is doing. Please, use my home like your home.

Charles heads into the house, and James follows.

Pak Andy finishes counting out money to James for his pay.

PAK ANDY
Three million eight hundred
thousand rupiah.

JAMES
A millionaire at last. But,
shouldn't there be more?

PAK ANDY
No. That is all.

JAMES
What about for teaching Charles's
children?

PAK ANDY
Oh, I'm sorry. He is happy?

JAMES
I think so. The kids seem to like
me.

Pak counts off some more money and gives it to James.

PAK ANDY
There. Tell Julie she can come now.

35 INT. ENGLISH SCHOOL - STAFFROOM - MORNING

35

James enters. Julie is squiggling on a on piece of paper.

JAMES
(to Julie)
In you go.

JULIE
Great. Hope you counted your money.
That Pak's a cunt.

Julie gets out of her chair so quick it spins around twice.

JAMES
She's got such a way with words.

KIM
She's losing it.

Geoff is bent over the photocopier, trying to remove a paper
jam.

GEOFF
Nob.

He slams the front of the copier shut and presses start. The machine whirrs, clicks, then triple beeps.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Bastard!

James sits at his desk and looks at the course book. The lesson: "A Brief History of the Beatles."

JAMES

A brief history of the Beatles? Not exactly up-to-date here, are we?

KIM

You ready for the jungle tomorrow, Newbie?

JAMES

Now I'm paid I am.

KIM

Early start tomorrow, but we're still thinking about hitting the town tonight. What do you reckon?

Kim spins in his chair, and coffee splashes on his shirt.

KIM (CONT'D)

Fuuuuck.

JAMES

Sure, why not?

KIM

Fucking that's my boy.

Julie enters the room and flicks her wages across her face.

JULIE

Tried to diddle me two thousand.
Cunt.

Geoff kicks the front of the copier.

GEOFF

I second that. He hasn't even given us a working copier.

Geoff scrunches the papers he was trying to copy and throws them against the wall.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Cunt.

All eyes turn toward him.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Well, he is.

He picks up an armful of books and heads to class.

KIM

There goes your catchphrase, Jules.

JULIE

Never liked the word anyway. Far too rude.

Everyone laughs.

36

INT. HOTEL GARUDA - NIGHT

36

The band is playing Bon Jovi. Kim slap-drums on the table. Marty holds his beer to the light, examining it. Geoff sits forward with his chin on his hands, examining the guitarist's handiwork. Julie shuffles on her chair like she wants to be somewhere else. James takes it all in. The band starts playing Clapton's "Wonderful Tonight."

JULIE

I hate this song. This is shit.

Julie stands up, shifting her weight from foot to foot and poking everyone in turn.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go.

KIM

What's the rush, Jules?

JULIE

Let's go to Ghekko. I want some *obat*.

KIM

I think the lady wants to get stupid.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

She already is stupid.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

Back again?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Not leaving you alone with her and
her big breasts.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Nothing to worry about. I'm not
interested.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Right.

JAMES
What about the jungle?

KIM
We'll still do it. Sleep on the
bus.

JAMES
That suits us.

KIM
What?

JAMES
Suits *me*. That suits me.

Julie pulls James's hand, leading them toward the door, and
the others quickly follow.

37 EXT. GHEKKO CLUB - NIGHT 37

They arrive in a taxi.

38 INT. GHEKKO CLUB - NIGHT 38

The waiter brings their drinks. Julie tugs at his sleeve and
says something in his ear. He pulls something out of his
pocket and hands it to her as she gives him some bills.

JULIE
(to the group)
Sorted.

KIM
Good girl.

JAMES
(to Kim)
What'd she get?

KIM

Obat.

JAMES

What's that?

JULIE

Medicine.

JAMES

Medicine?

KIM

Ecstasy.

JAMES

From the waiter?

KIM

That's how it works here. All these clubs push their own drugs.

Julie offers the pills around the table. Kim and Marty each take one. Geoff shakes his head no. James raises his hand to decline. Julie yells over the music into James's ear.

JULIE

Go on. It's good stuff here.

James shakes his head.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Ever done it before?

James shakes his head again. Julie dashes to the dance floor. Geoff gets up from the table and raises his hand in farewell.

JAMES

You off?

GEOFF

Not my thing. You want to share a taxi?

James nods. They take two steps toward the door before James reconsiders. He taps Geoff on the shoulder.

JAMES

I'm gonna stay just for a bit.

Geoff nods, pats James on the shoulder, heads for the door.

39 INT. GHEKKO CLUB - NIGHT - LATER

39

BEGIN MONTAGE

James and the remaining teachers dance, with each other and with strangers. Beers pile up on the table, then shot glasses. Dancing, dancing, dancing.

END MONTAGE

James takes a break from dancing to sit at the table and drink a shot.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
You enjoying this?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Sort of.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
You should take a pill. Get stupid.
Shag old Big-Boobs here.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Can't exactly shag you, can I?

He staggers back out onto the dance floor. Suddenly someone spins him around. It's Julie. She pushes a pill between his lips and pinches his nose and he swallows it.

JULIE
(ruffling his hair)
Take your medicine.

James sees Laura, back at the table, get up and leave.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Good!

40 INT. GHEKKO CLUB - NIGHT - LATER

40

The club is half empty. Kim and Marty are gone. Only Julie and James remain. James is smiling brain-dead at everyone he sees. His face lights up even more when he spots a beautiful Indian woman, EKA, with long, thick hair and shining dark eyes. She smiles at him. Julie appears next to him.

JULIE
Go talk to her.

JAMES
What do I say?

JULIE
Ask her if she's a prostitute.

JAMES
She's not a prostitute.

Julie shrugs. James goes to Eka's table, flies effortlessly over two other seats and sits next to her.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Hi.

EKA
Hello.

JAMES
Can I get you a drink?

EKA
No, thank you. I am Eka.
(nods toward Julie)
Your girlfriend?

JAMES
Just a friend.

EKA
You want to leave?

JAMES
What?

EKA
Come. We go.

JAMES
Wait. Are you a prostitute?

She slaps him in the face.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Sorry. Sorry, I'm so stupid.

He flashes a silent curse look at Julie, who is too busy dancing to notice.

EKA
Very stupid. But you say sorry very quick and there are many prostitutes here. So I forgive you one time, because you look like nice man.
(standing up)
Come. Let's go.

41 EXT. KIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT 41

A taxi pulls up. James and Eka get out, and enter the house.

42 INT. KIM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 42

James and Eka enter his bedroom. They lie on the bed.

EKA
I am very tired.

Eka rolls onto her side with her back to James. Her shirt rises up two inches, revealing smooth perfect skin the colour of light chocolate. He stares at her body in the dark as it rises and falls with her breathing, but doesn't touch her.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Nice arse, that.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Must you?

43 INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM - MORNING 43

Daylight comes through the window. James is still in the same position, looking at Eka. Kim bangs on the door.

KIM
You there, man? Fucking get up.

Eka stirs.

JAMES
I'm up. Give me a minute.

KIM
Got to get to the bus by ten. Move your ass if you're coming.

Eka turns, looks at James, a bit confused at where she is.

EKA
I must go.

She sits at the end of the bed and slides her sandals on.

EKA (CONT'D)
Please show where is road.

JAMES
Yeah, sure.

44 INT. KIM'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING 44

Kim is back in his bedroom as James and Eka pass down the hallway.

45 EXT. KIM'S HOUSE - MORNING 45

James leads Eka up the passage beside the house. She stops when she can see the traffic going by on the main road.

EKA

It is okay. I can find my way.

JAMES

Are you sure? We're a way out from the centre.

EKA

Tidak apa-apa.

JAMES

Sorry?

EKA

No what-what. No problem. But please give taxi money.

She holds our her hand and tilts her head. He pulls out his roll of notes and offers her ten thousand.

EKA (CONT'D)

No. More.

James smiles and holds out the notes for her to choose. She takes forty thousand, then kisses his cheek.

EKA (CONT'D)

Terima Kasih. See you at club next week.

She walks away catwalking like a runway model. James watches her, transfixed.

46 INT. MINIBUS - MORNING 46

James and Kim are squeezed into the back of the minibus, watching the world out of the open back. The helmetless rider of a scooter behind them waves, and they wave and smile.

KIM

Who was in your room last night?
Get your first taste of Indo girl?

JAMES
No.

KIM
Fuuuck. Not Julie?

JAMES
No.

KIM
Will you stop smiling like a
fucking dick, man? You did E last
night, didn't you?

JAMES
Yep.

KIM
First time?

JAMES
Yep.

KIM
So?

JAMES
I think she was Indian.

KIM
Hope you wore your hat.

JAMES
Hat?

KIM
Condom. Pre-fucking-caution.

JAMES
Didn't need to. We didn't do it.

KIM
I hope you didn't pay the bitch
then.

JAMES
Only for the taxi home. And she
wasn't a bitch.

KIM
Nooo. You paid her and you didn't
even get some?

JAMES

She was nice. I didn't want to.

KIM

You Brits are weird.

James just continues smiling gormlessly.

47

EXT. PINANG BUS STATION - MORNING

47

The minibus arrives at the Pinang bus station. James and Kim get off out the back. At the bus office they find Marty and Julie, who is still wearing her same clothes from last night.

JULIE

Hey, you made it. I'm still fucking high.

(not a laugh)

Ha haa.

JAMES

Ha haa.

KIM

Jesus Christ, I knew we should've taken them home with us when we left.

MARTY

Come on, guys, let's find the bus.

Kim leads them up the road and through the crowds. He looks at the front of a bus and says something to a man standing by its side. The man scratches his stomach, which pokes out of a too-small coffee-splattered T-shirt, and nods.

KIM

(to the group)

This is it!

Kim gets on and the others join him.

48

INT. BUS - DAY

48

Julie sits up front next to James, and Kim and Marty sit in the back. She wobble-nods her head in time to the Indonesian *dangdut* music coming from a portable radio.

JULIE

You looking forward to this?

JAMES

Can't wait. Me and Laura always wanted to see orang-utans.

JULIE

Laura?

James's smile from earlier drops away.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Hmm. Take it Laura wasn't the prostitute from last night.

JAMES

She wasn't a...ah, fuck it.

JULIE

You look like shit. You should have a smoke. Shake that drug back up.

JAMES

No thanks.

Julie lights a cigarette. She wobbles her head to the music and swirls her free hand above her. James pastes a smile on his face and wobbles his head to the music. A handful of locals sing and hand-dance along. James falls asleep.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

49

EXT. ENGLAND - GRASSY FIELD - DAY

49

James and Laura have just had sex a moment ago and lie half-dressed in a grassy field, looking up at the sky.

LAURA

Ever notice how those contrails from really high airplanes seem to cut the sky like a scalpel?

James's smiles at the playful oddness of her question.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Do you think it could tear and all the sky's innards would fall on us?

JAMES

Where does your brain get these things?

LAURA

It could be like a giant piñata. Beautiful things would fall down on us in soft plops and they'd be so squashy and gentle we'd be able to climb out from under them and say, "Look at that. The sky fell on our heads and it was alright and actually quite nice."

JAMES

What if it's hard and grey instead?

LAURA

Why would it be?

JAMES

You're right. Soft and squashy it is.

He reaches for her breast to squish it. She laughs and deftly rolls away and pulls up her shorts.

END FLASHBACK.

At a big bump in the road, James's head bangs against the metal bar that runs along the windows, and he wakes up.

50 EXT. BUKIT LAWANG BUS STOP - DAY

50

A sign tells them they've arrived in the tourist village of Bukit Lawang. They exit the bus with their shoulder bags.

KIM

This way.

51 EXT. JUNGLE PATH - DAY

51

Kim leads them up a path among wooden shacks and stalls selling sarongs and batik shirts. The jungle is thick behind the buildings. They pass bamboo bars and eating stalls. After a few minutes they are past the buildings, and the trees tower over the river on both sides. Indonesians shoot down the river on large inner tubes.

MARTY

Who's up for tubing later?

JULIE

(looking pale)
Not me.

KIM
 Maybe tomorrow. I want food and
 beer and swimming.

MARTY
 Beer sounds good.

James gawks at the immense jungle. They come across some more stalls and restaurants and Kim leads them into a restaurant.

52 EXT. JUNGLE RESTAURANT - DAY 52

Kim is greeted by a SHIRTLESS GUY, 20, dark-skinned, lean muscle, and straight hair down to his waist.

SHIRTLESS GUY
 Hey, hello, my friend! Good to see
 you again.
 (fist bumps Kim)
 You want rooms?

KIM
 Yeah, man. We'll take singles.

SHIRTLESS GUY
 Okay.

The guy goes into a back room and brings out five keys, each hanging off a number carved in wood.

KIM
 Our rooms are just up there. Let's
 meet back here in thirty.

53 EXT. JUNGLE PATH - DAY 53

They each walk the short path of stone steps to their huts behind the restaurant. A large aquamarine and black butterfly flutters in front of James and lands on a leaf by the path. He kneels a moment to watch it until it flies away.

54 INT. JAMES'S HUT - DAY 54

James enters his hut. It is simple: a double bed and a bamboo chair, no windows but daylight falls through gaps in the wooden walls. He opens a door to a rickety balcony.

55 EXT. JAMES'S HUT - BALCONY - DAY 55

A breathtaking view of dense jungle ferns and flowers. A small waterfall falls into a brook that bubbles over rocks and down the hillside. More butterflies float by.

56 INT. JAMES'S HUT - DAY 56

James opens the other door, which is a bathroom-shower combo with no shower curtain separating the two.

57 INT. JAMES'S HUT - SHOWER - DAY 57

James tests the icy water with his hands and arms, then steps in with his whole body with a shiver. He takes a deep breath and releases it slowly, enjoying the exhilaration of it.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

58 EXT. POND WITH WATERFALL - DAY 58

Laura races ahead of James along a hillside valley stream ending in a pond, into which a waterfall drops from about ten feet above. She lifts her shirt over her head, and strips until her pale white body is naked. She yelps from the cold as she steps into the shallow pond water, then giggles as she stumbles over hidden rocks into deeper water to reach the waterfall on the other side. She stands for a minute in the fine spray before a combined laugh/yell as she moves under the full power of the falling water.

LAURA

Come in! Come here!

James quickly strips, awkwardly from the excitement, and wades too fast into the pond, falling and quickly getting up. She wraps her arms around him when he reaches her. They stand under the waterfall, bodies pressed together, kissing.

END FLASHBACK.

59 INT. JAMES'S HUT - SHOWER - DAY 59

James finds himself leaning his head on his arm against the wall of the shower. He reaches and turns off the water.

60

EXT. RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

60

James joins the other three at an outdoor table by the river. The river forms a 50-metre-long pool in front of them, between a weir upriver and another one downriver.

KIM

Dig in, man. These are the best fucking pancakes ever.

JULIE

So, was that girl a prozzie last night?

JAMES

Well, I didn't sleep with her and she didn't offer, so I guess not. I just paid for her taxi home.

KIM

Nothing wrong with an occasional whore.

JAMES

She was a really nice girl, okay? And why the fuck do I have to explain myself?

JULIE

Orangs. Look, across the river.

Two long-haired orang-utans are sitting across the river on a rock outcropping that hangs out over the river. A lanky blond guy, stripping down to swim, is waving his shirt at them.

KIM

Time for a swim. We can get a closer look.

JULIE

It's reserve property on that side. That fucker shouldn't be over there.

They take their shoes and shirts off and head for the water. Julie is wearing a bikini top. After a moment admiring the orang-utans, Julie swims and James floats on his back slowly downriver, as Kim and Marty dive and swim and splash each other like kids. Two people on inner tubes float by, splashing each other. They don't see James in time, knocking into him and sending him underwater. He pops up coughing, then dog-paddles over to the far bank and sits to watch the orang-utans. He hears a Liverpudlian accent behind him.

LIVERPUDLIAN

Eh mate. You're not a doctor, are ya? I slept with some bitch in Bangkok two days ago, and now I got all these spots on my dick.

JAMES

No, I'm not a doctor.

LIVERPUDLIAN

You couldn't take a look, could ya?

JAMES

(abruptly)

Sorry, no.

James quickly dives into the water, coming up next to Julie, who is pushing a breast back into her too-small bikini top.

JULIE

Fuck!

JAMES

Sorry, it was an accident.

JULIE

No, not you. *Him*.

The Liverpudlian has now stripped naked and is stumbling over rocks as he moves toward the water. He waves at the group as if they are old friends.

LIVERPUDLIAN

Hey! How's the water?

Indonesians on the near bank are staring wide-eyed and tight-mouthed. One shouts the sentiments of all:

INDONESIAN ON THE BANK

Eh, man! Don't be naked! There are Muslim here!

JULIE

Everybody out!

Kim and Marty stop their diving competition by the far bank and look at her.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Out! Now!

She yells with such authority that everyone swim-wade-splashes toward the near shore as the naked Liverpudlian enters from the far shore.

The man looks at them clueless, his mouth agape. The group all exit on the near shore. One of the orang-utans makes a whoop, attracting the man's attention. Orang #1 has taken one of his shoes, and the man scrambles back out of the water to try to get it back.

LIVERPUDLIAN

Eh, that's my shoe!

Orang #1 waves the shoe back and forth in front of the man, just slow enough to entice him, but too fast for him to grab. The man snatches at the shoe, but misses.

LIVERPUDLIAN (CONT'D)

Give it back, man!

As the man makes another grab, Orang #1 casually tosses the shoe to Orang #2. The naked man runs after him, and Orang #2 climbs a tree. It dangles the shoe to within the man's reach, but when he grabs at it, the orang pulls it away. This game happens twice more. The locals on the near bank are starting to smile. The man tries to climb the tree trunk and reaches up again, finally touching the shoe, but the orang flicks its wrist and the shoe sails out into the water, floats for a second, then sinks. The man drops and falls on his arse.

LIVERPUDLIAN (CONT'D)

Shit!!

James and the group laugh, and the locals join in. The orangs disappear into the forest foliage without further ado.

KIM

Fuckin' karma.

MARTY

Beats the shit out of watching TV.

The Liverpudlian thrashes around in the river in a fruitless search for his lost shoe. With the main show over, the locals go back to whatever they were doing.

61 EXT. JUNGLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

61

James and the others are sitting at a table drinking with two INDONESIANS, one of whom is smoking a joint. There is a low roll of THUNDER. INDONESIAN #1 passes the joint to James, who takes a puff.

BAR INDONESIAN #1

Big storm is coming.

JAMES

Yes.

BAR INDONESIAN #1

And I must go to work.

He stands up.

KIM

(taking the joint)

What sort of work do you do at night?

BAR INDONESIAN #1

Am policeman.

He pulls his ID from his back pocket.

BAR INDONESIAN #1 (CONT'D)

Look for people smoking drugs.

Kim pauses with the joint two inches from his lips.

KIM

(with an uncertain
chuckle)

No fucking way.

The man laughs and holds his ID to show Kim close up.

BAR INDONESIAN #1

I not work now. But in ten minutes I do. In ten minutes if I see you with ganja, I arrest. Now we are friends, but when I am police, I am police. Long time in prison for smoking ganja here.

JULIE

But you've got some on you. How can you put people in jail when you smoke it?

BAR INDONESIAN #1

Is my job. Smoking with you is my relax.

(puts his ID back)

If you see me later, do not say hi. I am undercover in bars and clubs here.

KIM

Okay. You're a fucking dude. Thanks for the smoke.

Kim takes one last drag and stubs out the joint in the ashtray. He offers his hand and the cop shakes it. The cop and his buddy leave, nodding at the barman on their way out.

LIGHTNING FLASHES for the first time, and drops of RAIN start to fall as LOUD THUNDER follows.

MARTY

Isn't that the guy with the spotted dick?

KIM

Eh, Newbie, your friend's here with a local girl.

James, stoned, turns and sees the Liverpudlian, now dressed, with his arm around a pretty Indonesian girl. She tries to turn away as he plants a kiss on her lips. He laughs at her discomfort, his hand firmly on her shoulder.

MARTY

Someone should tell her about his condition.

JAMES

That will be me.

James stands up, tripping on a cushion, falling backward onto the low rail. Kim manages to grab his arm and prevent him from falling into the river.

KIM

Sit down, man. You're stoned.

JAMES

New Me Newbie has a job to do. No more thinking. Just action.

James takes careful but awkward steps past the cushions, giggling as he steadies himself by his hand on Julie's head.

JULIE

What the hell are you on?

KIM

He's not used to this extra-strength jungle grass.

(laughs)

Got to watch this.

James is still giggling as he approaches the Liverpudlian and the girl.

JAMES
 Alright, mate?

LIVERPUDLIAN
 Yeah. Alright.

He pulls the girl tighter to him, and she smiles at James, who points his rum and Coke at the girl as he asks:

JAMES
 This yooour girlfriend?

James suddenly realises he's holding a drink, and sets it down at a low table of three backpackers, one a white guy with dreadlocks. The dreadlocks make James giggle again.

LIVERPUDLIAN
 What's so funny, mate?

JAMES
 Nothing. *Mate.*

LIVERPUDLIAN
 You takin' the piss, or wha?

James jerks his head on the last word and the guy flinches. James laughs out loud and the guy moves the girl in front of himself like a shield.

JAMES
Apa kabar? [You okay?]

BAR GIRL
Baik-baik. [Fine.]

JAMES
 (to the guy)
 How's the spots?

LIVERPUDLIAN
 Spots? What spots?

As he says this, the guy absently scratches his crotch. The girl notices, and she points to his crotch.

BAR GIRL
 Here spots?

LIVERPUDLIAN
 No. No spots. Here very big dick, that's all.

Lightning strikes, and quick thunder.

JAMES

This is all very dramatic.

LIVERPUDLIAN

It'll be fuckin' dramatic when I
split yer fuckin' head open, eh?

The backpackers scoot away from the impending encounter.

BAR GIRL

(points to crotch)
He has spot here?

JAMES

That's what I saw in the river.

The girl steps away from the guy and gets behind James.

LIVERPUDLIAN

(steps forward)
You're fuckin' dead, mate.

BAR GIRL

You dirty pig!

The girl darts away and splashes up the muddy path. The guy
cocks his arm to strike. James can't remember how to make a
fist, and closes his eyes. The BARMAN suddenly appears and
hooks his arm over the guy's arm, holding it back firmly.

BARMAN

Not in my bar.

LIVERPUDLIAN

Okay, okay. Just let go.

The Barman lets go, and the guy yanks his arm away.

LIVERPUDLIAN (CONT'D)

But this one here is fuckin' dead
next time I see him.

James's giggling has diminished to a smile.

BARMAN

Please pay your bill and leave.

LIVERPUDLIAN

I ain't payin'. And you should kick
him out too. He started it.

BARMAN

This man helped Indah. She is my
cousin. You pay. You leave.

Lightning and thunder again. The guy glares at the Barman, then throws a punch at him in a wide arc. The Barman calmly leans back, not even moving his feet, and the punch misses.

LIVERPUDLIAN

I could come back here tonight and burn this place down.

BARMAN

Around here, people like you, disappear. One moment here, next day no sign. Gone. Please pay.

LIVERPUDLIAN

Fuck you.

The guy trips as he turns to leave, falls in the mud, gets up and walks off quickly. The patrons erupt in applause.

JAMES

(to Barman)

Thanks.

BARMAN

It is okay. I know where he stays. This place we are all close, like family. You won't see him again. Please, go back and enjoy tonight with your friends.

The Barman goes back to his seat, picks up his guitar and strums, and his LONG-HAIRED FRIEND STARTS singing "Now Woman, No Cry." James goes and stands in the corner with his arms stretched along the rails.

KIM

Our hero.

Julie and Marty laugh. James leans his head backward out into the rain and lets it wash his face, satisfied, cleansed.

62

INT. CHARLES'S MANSION - DAY

62

James, Fitri, and Benny are on a break from an English lesson, sitting in beanbag chairs and eating snacks. James has just taken a bite of food when Fitri blurts out:

FITRI

Our sister was raped.

James stops chewing.

FITRI (CONT'D)
That is why she is not here.

James swallows the unchewed bite.

JAMES
Where is she?

FITRI
In Singapore. With my mother.

Benny chases an ice cube in the bottom of his glass with a straw.

BENNY
I like mango juice.

FITRI
That is why my father hates
Indonesians.

JAMES
Why do you stay here?

FITRI
My father has good business here,
He says he cannot have business the
same in other countries.

James shifts uncomfortably in his beanbag.

FITRI (CONT'D)
But rape isn't bad compared to what
they did to my friend's sister.

Charles is suddenly in the doorway.

CHARLES
(sharply)
Fitri. This is not conversation for
an English lesson. The lesson is
over for today. Children, let's go
for noodles.

James stands up.

JAMES
Alright, then, I'll be going.

CHARLES
No. You come too. Meet in front. I
will bring the car around.

Charles leaves the room.

BENNY
Cool. I'm hungry.

FITRI
(to James)
Do not be afraid. My father is not
angry with you.

JAMES
I'm not...I'm not afraid.

63 INT. NOODLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

63

They have finished their meal. Benny burps, and Fitri punches him in the arm.

CHARLES
You two have ice cream. Your
teacher and I are going outside for
a cigarette.

Charles dabs his mouth with a napkin and stands up. James does the same.

64 EXT. NOODLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

64

James and Charles stand under the neon sign of the restaurant. Above, the stars are clear and the moon is full. James offers Charles one of his Marlboros.

CHARLES
Thank you.

Charles lights his cigarette and James's.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
My wife was also raped.

JAMES
(at a loss for words)
Oh.

CHARLES
You do not have to say anything.

JAMES
I'm sorry.

CHARLES
I am sorry for you too. You have
had loss. I can see it.

James looks at his feet, nibbles at his lower lip.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I do not want to know. But if you need my help, please ask.

JAMES

Thanks. I'm okay. Really.

CHARLES

Yes. Yes, of course you are.

A silence, during which four cars pass.

JAMES

Is that why your wife isn't here?

CHARLES

She is in Singapore. They were taken from a taxi on the way to the airport. We could see it coming, with the riots going on. I had to stay, but she says I should have driven her. I should have protected her.

(puffs his cigarette)

She is right. I stayed to protect my money. My fucking money.

James looks through the restaurant window at Fitri and Benny.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I had sent Fitri and Benny to stay with their cousins in Singapore. They do not know about my wife, only about their sister.

JAMES

Can't you go join your wife?

CHARLES

She will not have me back. And my business is here. I was born here. Fitri and Benny were born here. This is our home.

JAMES

Fitri is an Indonesian name, right?

Charles nods.

CHARLES

I will get the kids and pay. Thank you for the cigarette.

Charles goes inside, and James looks up at the stars.

65

INT. CHARLES'S CAR - NIGHT

65

They stop at a traffic light. A woman with hollow cheeks sits in the road, holding a sleeping baby wrapped in a sarong. She looks up at Charles and holds her hand out. He reaches into his glove box, takes out some notes, lowers his window, and holds them out to her. She stands and takes them from him. The lights change and Charles pulls away.

JAMES

Fitri says you hate Indonesians.

CHARLES

I am Chinese-Indonesian and this is my country. If I say I hate Indonesians, I do not mean it, or I try not to. How can we hate an entire people because of the actions of a few? She is just a woman who is worse off than me.

JAMES

Pak Andy seems to think all beggars should find a job.

CHARLES

Pak Andy is a pathetic little man with no character. He is a mouse.

JAMES

I thought you were friends. That's why I'm teaching your kids.

CHARLES

No. He is repaying a debt. He is poor at business, and terrible at gambling.

They arrive at James's house.

JAMES

Thanks.

CHARLES

Thank you. Soon I am opening a new club. I want you to come to the blessing.

JAMES

Blessing?

CHARLES

It is a tradition for new businesses to be blessed by a *dukun*, to bring good luck.

JAMES

Do-can?

CHARLES

Du-kun. He is like an Indonesian medicine man, a witch doctor. He has blessed all my businesses, and all are prosperous.

JAMES

I didn't expect you to be superstitious.

CHARLES

I believe in nothing, but I am open to anything. Perhaps it helps me, perhaps it doesn't. But I think you should meet him. He might help you.

JAMES

(noncommittal)

Okay.

CHARLES

Good. Good night. Say "Good night," children.

But the children are asleep. James gets out of the car, and Charles pulls away. James looks at the sky once more, at the multitude of stars.

JAMES

(to himself)

What good could a *gukun*--

(correcting himself)

dukun, do?

LAURA

Perhaps he'll get rid of me.

JAMES

I thought I'd already got rid of you.

LAURA

You can try, baby. You can try.

James shakes his head, walks toward the door of his house.

66 INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM - MORNING

66

James is waking to Laura's voice in his head.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
 Happy birthday to me.
 Happy birthday to me.
 So glad you remembered.
 Happy birthday to me!

JAMES
 (eyes still closed)
 I *didn't* remember.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
 Oh really?

He curls into a foetal position and covers his eyes with his hands. After a long moment, he removes his hands from his eyes and rolls out of bed.

67 INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

67

On the chalkboard is written: "Essay topic: If I had a million dollars."

JAMES
 Today you're going to write in class.

JOHNNY
 What is your favourite sex position?

JAMES
 Not today, Johnny. Let's stick to the topic: "If I Had a Million Dollars." If you have a question, try to answer it yourself first, unless it's a really important one.

The students get to work. James clasps his hands behind his head and stares at his sandaled feet. He reacts to an invisible touch on his shoulder.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
 You haven't said you love me for a long time.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
 You're dead. Perhaps that's a reason.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
It *is* my birthday.

JAMES
You know I love you.

Hearing James speak, a couple girls in the front look at him quizzically for a moment, then return to their writing.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD) (CONT'D)
I always love you. I love you.

A student, HENDRA, 15, raises his hand. James rouses himself and goes toward the boy's desk.

68 EXT. TIKI PALACE BAR - EVENING 68

James pays the driver, gets out of the *becak*, enters the bar.

69 INT. TIKI PALACE BAR - EVENING 69

The bar is plush, with chrome and glass tables and hidden lights shining up the walls. Classy. Girls sit alone or in groups on high chairs along one mirrored side. James goes to the bar, sits on a stool. The BARTENDER smiles.

BARTENDER
Hi.

JAMES
Two double whiskies, please.

The bartender pours, then goes to attend to other patrons.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Two? You've gone mad.

He pours one glass into the other, pushes the empty one away, and takes a drink from the full one.

JAMES
If so, we know whose fault it is.
(to himself)
Jesus, I'm talking to a figment of
my imagination.

He downs the rest of the shot.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

What if I'm not a figment? What if I am sitting here next to you and you talk to me because you know I might be here? Imagine if you ignored me and I really was here, trying to communicate with you. I'd be really pissed off.

JAMES

Not likely, though, is it?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

No. But let me be here today. Give me that much on my birthday. Please.

JAMES

Alright, alright.

The bartender looks at James.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Not out loud, silly. Keep it all in your head, otherwise I'm going to get embarrassed and leave.

James laughs. The bartender looks again, so James turns the laugh into a cough, holds two fingers up at the barman, who tops off the shot. James takes a drink.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

Just today. Because it's your birthday.

He puts his head on his arms on the bar, his shoulders shrugging in silent sobs.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Don't cry, baby. Don't cry.

JAMES

(sobbing loudly)
I bloody miss you so much!

Suddenly there is a real hand on top of James's.

EKA

Shhh. Do not cry.

James looks up, half expecting it to be Laura.

EKA (CONT'D)

What is wrong? Why cry?

James slides his hands away from hers, using them to dry his eyes. She hands him a napkin and he blows his nose.

JAMES

I'm sorry.

EKA

Tidak apa-apa. No problem.

The bartender says something to Eka in Indonesian. She says something back and waves her hand at him and he moves away.

EKA (CONT'D)

What is wrong, crazy English man?

Eka pushes the drink toward him, and he takes a sip.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Go on, tell her. I dare you.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

You're not here. No matter how hard I try to make you here, you're not.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Can you be sure I'm not?

JAMES

My girlfriend died a few months ago.

(off Eka's sympathetic look)

I talk to her sometimes, but I don't think she's really listening. She says she is, but I don't think she is.

EKA

You are sad man. Crazy sad man. How do you know she not listens? Spirits are very clever.

Eka pulls out a stool and sits next to James.

JAMES

I don't know. I just think it isn't possible.

EKA

Many strange things possible in this world. Many many. Perhaps you should believe she there.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Yes, methinks you should.

JAMES
I'm going crazy believing. Wanting to touch her, to feel her, and I can't. It's better I don't believe. I'm trying to get away from her. To forget her.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Forget me? Huh!

JAMES
God, shut up!
(to Eka)
Sorry. Not you. Her.

EKA
So if you don't want her spirit here, you must be strong.
(prodding his arm)
You must have new life.

JAMES
Ha.

EKA
What funny?

JAMES
That's exactly why I came to this country. For a new life. A new Me.

James finishes his whisky as the bartender approaches.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(to Eka)
Would you like a whisky?

EKA
Okay.

James holds up two fingers to the bartender, who grabs a fresh glass for Eka and pours two shots.

JAMES
I didn't expect to see you here.

EKA
Sometimes here.

JAMES
To meet men?

EKA

(laughs)

Yes. To meet men for money. I am bad girl.

JAMES

You told me you weren't a prostitute.

EKA

Not prostitute. I just take money from men. I am beautiful, so I can.

James chuckles at her frankness.

EKA (CONT'D)

I never sleep with them first time.

JAMES

Second time?

EKA

Sometimes, if I like. But not for you tonight. You not need sex tonight. I think you need talk.

JAMES

It's her...it would've been her birthday today. I was doing okay--sort of okay--then this morning my first thought when I woke was: It's Laura's birthday.

EKA

Poor Mr. Crazy.

She runs her fingers down his cheek. He flinches.

EKA (CONT'D)

I'm sure she is happy you remember. I'm sure she miss you. Please give me cigarette.

James fishes out two cigarettes, and they smoke.

JAMES

I just wish I could go back, change something. Stop her, so she misses the bus.

EKA

Bus?

JAMES

She died in an accident. She'd just got off a bus.

EKA

Do not think of past. Perhaps she will be reborn and when you are reborn perhaps you will be together again.

JAMES

You believe in that?

EKA

Yes. I am Hindu. My ancestors are from India many years ago.

She runs her fingers through her silky hair.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Men. You can't help thinking about nooky, can you?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

I wasn't thinking about...that.

Eka notices he is distracted.

EKA

You talk to her again?

JAMES

No. Yes, a little.

EKA

You want I go? Leave you two alone, crazy man?

JAMES

No, I don't.
(clinks his glass to hers)
Here's to strange coincidences.

EKA

What is "coinci"...?

JAMES

Coincidences. It means lucky to meet you here tonight.

EKA

I am happy to meet you. But no pom-pom tonight.

JAMES
Sorry? Pom-pom?

EKA
Sex. No sex.

JAMES
Good.
(jokes)
I don't think my girlfriend would
like it.

He breaks into a mad high-pitched giggle that sounds like it might become crying, so he stops. Eka shows no reaction.

EKA
But we go to hotel and we sleep
together, yes?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
(to Laura)
What do you think?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Really? You want my opinion on
this?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Yes?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Honestly, and jealousy aside, I
think you need solid company, and
whatever I may be, I can't give you
that. So go if you really must, but
no pom-pom.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
No pom-pom.

EKA
What says your girlfriend?

JAMES
Yes. She says yes.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
But no pom-pom.

JAMES
But no pom-pom.

Eka stands up. James pays the tab, and they go.

70 INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

70

James and Eka climb into bed. She takes his clothes off, then walks the length of his spine as a massage. Bones crack, tension vanishes, he relaxes deeply. She removes her clothes. They kiss. Then she holds him in her arms, with his head on her breast, and strokes his hair, as he falls asleep.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

71 INT. JAMES'S ENGLAND LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

71

James is on the phone with Laura's mother, JANE. He thinks what she's saying is a weird joke.

JAMES
(uncomfortable laugh)
What?

JANE
(on phone)
In Pilsen. The bus stopped for a break. They think she looked the wrong way.

JAMES
But...

JANE
She looked the wrong way and then crossed the street.
(her voice breaking)
She forgot it wasn't England, and she looked left instead of right.

The full impact of Jane's words hit James. The phone is shaking against his ear. He shakily puts down the phone, missing the cradle on the first attempt, then setting it right. His face contorts in anguish and a sound comes out of his mouth like a tortured animal as he drops to the floor.

JAMES
Aaaaaooooooooouuuuuwww!

END FLASHBACK.

72 INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

72

A large cockroach climbs the wall. Eka and James are naked, she with her back to him, and her hand in his. He tries to pull his hand away, but she squeezes her hand tight over his.

EKA
 Stay, Mr. Crazy. You must tell me
 how you feel.

She turns to face him, her breast falling fully on his arm.

EKA (CONT'D)
 You feel okay?

JAMES
 I am okay. I think.
 (checks a moment)
 Calm.

She is now up on her elbows looking down at him, holding his
 hand beneath her chin, her breast touching his side.

EKA
 Look better. Face not so...
 (scrunches her face)

JAMES
 I feel better. A new day today.

EKA
 Now want pom-pom. You? Pom-pom?

He raises his head and kisses her. Her tongue pushes into his
 mouth. His arms go around her and she climbs on top of him,
 her breasts pushing into his chest. He pushes his face into
 her cascading hair.

73

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

73

They both lie there, smoking après-sex cigarettes, watching
 the rising smoke in a beam of sunlight.

JAMES
 I should get to work.

EKA
 Yes. Be happy man at work. Think of
 Eka, not dead girl.

She reaches across him to stub out her cigarette in an ash
 tray on the bedside table, then lies back down.

EKA (CONT'D)
Ada apa? (What's wrong?)

JAMES
 Nothing. *Tidak apa-apa.*

He rolls on his side to face her.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Terima kasih. (Thank you.)

EKA
Why thank me? I like.

JAMES
For last night. For helping. Maybe I'd be lying in a gutter somewhere now if you hadn't been there.

EKA
I do not understand all you say.
(rubs her nose against his)
But I happy I help.

JAMES
I must go.

EKA
You want see me again?

JAMES
Yes.

EKA
Bagus. (Good.) You find me Friday night in Iguana Club.

JAMES
I will.

He goes to kiss her, but she is already bounding out of bed.

EKA
You work now. Come, Crazy.

74

EXT. MEMPHIS NIGHTCLUB - AFTERNOON

74

James stands outside the MEMPHIS club next to Charles, who is wearing a dark suit and sunglasses, and a dark tie with red swirls. On the other side of Charles is the *dukun* (shaman), TEDDY, a short old man with a wrinkled walnut face, and one eye misted over milky white. He wears a plain brown short-sleeved shirt over a beige and black sarong, and long dirt-encrusted toenails stick out the front of his sandals. Over his shoulder is a multicoloured woven bag. There is a group of businessmen. Beautiful girls in short skirts and T-shirts that say "MEMPHIS" are handing out flyers and Davidoff cigarettes to passersby.

CHARLES
 (to everyone and no one)
 Elvis. My tribute.

BUSINESSMAN
 (in Chinese)
 Congratulations, Charles. May we
 see it now?

CHARLES
 Please, everyone, welcome, and let
 us enter.

Two of Charles's bodyguards act as bouncers and push open the double doors. The girls stay outside. Everyone else enters.

75

INT. MEMPHIS NIGHTCLUB - AFTERNOON

75

In a small entrance foyer, Charles holds his hand up as a signal to wait. All sunglasses are removed, and Charles nods at Teddy and ushers him to a second set of double doors, which the bodyguards open. Red and green laser lights twirl and refract off of spinning glass balls hanging over a shining dance floor. Music plays quietly in the background.

Teddy grabs a leather pouch from his bag and shakes sand over the threshold of the main room. He mutters a chant, then lets out a small burp, which is met by serious expressions and nods of approval. Teddy makes his way to the dance floor, closes his eyes, begins chanting and tinkling a small bell.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
 You think this is all bollocks,
 don't you?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
 He's a fruitcake. Then again, I'm
 talking to my dead girlfriend.

Teddy stops his ritual, and begins staring at James with his one shining eye. Everyone turns to look at James.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD) (CONT'D)
 (to Laura)
 Why is he looking at me?

James looks around the club and up at the ceiling lights, trying to avoid Teddy's stare, but when he looks back, Teddy is still staring at him. Teddy nods an almost imperceptible nod at James, closes his eyes, chants some more, then breathes in and lets out a deep animalistic three-second burp.

He puts his bell back in his bag, walks over to Charles, and whispers something in his ear. Charles whispers back, and they both nod and look over at James.

CHARLES

The club is now blessed and will be open to the public from nine tonight. But please all enjoy yourselves now. There is free champagne at the bar.

The guests make their way to the bar. Charles comes over to James, with Teddy at his side.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

What did you think of the blessing?

JAMES

Very interesting. Thank you for inviting me.

James tries to avoid Teddy's continuing stare.

CHARLES

Teddy is a very talented shaman. I am very successful maybe thanks to him.

TEDDY

Very talent.

CHARLES

Teddy thinks you need his help.

James looks at Teddy, who is gazing up at him.

TEDDY

(points at James)
Mm. Need help.

JAMES

No. Really. I'm fine.

Teddy pokes James in the chest with a crooked finger.

TEDDY

You
(poke)
Need
(poke)
Help
(poke)

JAMES

No, I--

CHARLES

He says you do. So you do.

Charles signals to his guests he will be there in a moment.

TEDDY

Mm. Both you need Teddy help.

Teddy points to James's head and then his chest again.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Both you. Mm. And she too.

Teddy double-taps James in the chest and an electric shock knocks James back a step.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Tell Charles when ready. You, you
and she come see Teddy. I help all
you.

Charles puts his arm around Teddy's bony shoulder, raises an eyebrow at James, smiles, nods, and leads Teddy away.

76 EXT. MEMPHIS NIGHTCLUB - EVENING

76

James exits the club, a bit confused, rubbing his chest, and flags down a *becak*.

77 INT. MEI'S BAR - EVENING

77

James enters, muttering to himself.

JAMES

(to himself)

Fucking *dukun*. "You, you, and she."
What a load of shite.

Geoff, alone at a table, beckons James over. James grabs a Bintang from the fridge then sits with Geoff, who is staring at Mei. She is wearing sunglasses even though it's evening. Barry stares at her from the other side of the room.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Sunglasses?

GEOFF

(gestures at Barry)

That bloody twat.

(MORE)

GEOFF (CONT'D)

He's only been with her a couple weeks and he's already hit her.

JAMES

How do you know it was him?

Geoff makes a grimace face that says "We both know it was him," and James knows it's true. Geoff stares from Barry to Mei and back again, his knuckles white, grasping his beer bottle with both hands. Mei points a remote at the large screen TV on the wall, and Sky News comes on.

JAMES (CONT'D)

That's new. Satellite?

GEOFF

(sarcastic)

Well spotted.

TV NEWSMAN

The Supreme Court has ruled against another recount, and George W. Bush is the new President of the United States.

BARRY

Put on the sport, Mei.

MEI

But Mr. New and Mr. Geoff are watching the news.

BARRY

Fuck those faggots. Put on the sport.

Mei's hand shakes as she picks up the remote. She puts it back down without changing the channel.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Mei. Sport.

MEI

I want news too. I want hear about how U.S. cheats with democracy.

BARRY

Mei, I paid for that fucking TV, so put on what I want.

MEI

My bar.

(shifting more upright)

My bar.

Barry's chair scrapes on the floor as he gets up and moves toward the TV. James avoids his gaze, and Geoff looks down.

BARRY

You want to watch TV, you faggots,
you buy your fucking own.

(reaches and turns TV off)

And Mei, when I invest my money in
this shitty business it means this
is *our* business, not yours.
Understand, Mei?

Mei doesn't respond.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(almost a shout)

Mei! Understand?

Mei nods her head in jerky fast movements. Barry heads back to his table.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(mutters)

Fucking faggots.

GEOFF

(a whisper)

Arsehole. Fuck you.

(louder, head still
lowered)

Fuck you.

BARRY

Geoff, isn't it? Things can happen
to a man in this country, so you
just watch yourself, you Limey
faggot.

A dry gulp sounds in Geoff's throat.

BARRY (CONT'D)

You too, Newbie. You're too fucking
scared to even look at me.

Mei gets off her stool, goes to Barry and whispers in his ear. He grunts, then speaks.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Alright.

(to James and Geoff)

Mei says you spend well. For
faggots. So fucking stay if you
must.

GEOFF
 (to James)
 Can you pay my bill? I'll sort you
 out next week.

Without waiting for a reply, Geoff gets up and leaves.

BARRY
 Pussy.

James goes over and pays Mei, with a forced smile.

JAMES
 Thanks.

MEI
 (mouthing it)
 Sorry.

James walks away, his eyes fixed firmly on the door.

BARRY
 Pussy.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
 You going to let him get away with
 that?

James puts up his hand, as if to shield himself from both
 voices, and makes his exit.

78

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

78

MONTAGE: James and Eka having sex.

Flesh. Faces burrowing. Into necks. Into skin. Clawing,
 Caressing. Pulling. Tongue trails. Gentle bites. Almost pain.
 Hair in lips. Sobs. Cries. Sighs. Solace. Closed eyes.
 Stroking. Finger tracing. Softness. Chests rising, falling.
 Slowing. Stroking. Rising. Falling. Spinning. Sleeping.

EKA
 Better?

JAMES
 Mmm.

She strokes his hair.

EKA
 I forget.

JAMES

What?

EKA

I forget...many things I don't want to think of. For a while, I forget. I am happy. Thank you.

James traces her belly button with his finger, then smiles and kisses her nipple.

79

EXT. ENGLISH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

79

It's raining relentlessly. It floods the road, and there are waterfalls off awnings and buildings. Thunder cracks every few seconds, and one must raise their voice to be heard.

JOHNNY

So where you going today, man?

He flicks a cigarette at his mouth and misses. It bounces off his lip, falls into a wide rivulet on the school's forecourt, and joins a torrent of water flowing down the road.

JAMES

Keep practicing, Johnny. I'm going to Toba with the other teachers. Just waiting for them to finish their classes.

JOHNNY

Cool, man. Lake Toba is beautiful.

JAMES

So I hear.

Johnny shifts from foot to foot.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You okay?

JOHNNY

Um. Um. Yeah.

They are the only two people outside the school.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Actually, can I ask you something?

JAMES

Of course.

An old man wading knee-high over the street suddenly drops and disappears up to his chest. He swim-splashes a few feet, then pushes himself up and out of the water as if climbing out of a well, and carries on as though nothing has happened.

JOHNNY

Oh man, he fell in the shit. Under the pavement. What do you call it, where shit and piss goes?

JAMES

Sewers?

JOHNNY

Yeah, man. Sewers. He fell in sewer. The pavement must be missing there. Shitty toes now. Lucky he did not go under, drown in shit and piss. Ugh, that'd be shitty, haha.

JAMES

Certainly would. What did you want to ask, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Uh, yeah. So, er, you do pom-pom with girls many times, yeah?

JAMES

Yeah. I suppose I used to.

JOHNNY

Do you do, you know, other stuff?

JAMES

What other stuff do you mean, Johnny?

JOHNNY

You know. Stuff.

JAMES

No, I don't know.

JOHNNY

(nervously)
Er, do you ever do it with boys too?

JAMES

No, I haven't.

JOHNNY

It's just that...it's not fair. You know?

JAMES

What's not fair?

JOHNNY

I'd, er--I'd, er--well, so many people pom-pom with you, it's not fair because I'd like to too.

A long silence is broken when lightning strikes.

JAMES

Sorry, Johnny, but, but...you wouldn't want to see me naked. It's not pretty.

JOHNNY

(hopeless)
I would.

JAMES

I'm sorry, Johnny, but...I've got to go get my bag inside.

James gives Johnny a light double pat on the shoulder and heads toward the school entrance.

80

INT. ENGLISH SCHOOL - STAFFROOM - DAY

80

James, Julie, and Marty are at their desks, when Geoff comes striding in, sits at his desk, and puts his head down.

JAMES

You alright?

Julie looks more closely, sees Geoff has a black eye.

JULIE

Is that a black eye?

JAMES

How'd you get it?

GEOFF

That Canadian bastard at Mei's.

JULIE

What? Barry?

MARTY

Why did Barry hit you?

GEOFF

I was in Mei's last night by myself, and I got drunk and told him to lay off Mei. He was having a go at her right in front of the customers.

JULIE

Good for you.

GEOFF

Not really. He whacked me. I ran out like a girl, then I expect he took more out on her.

Kim enters the room, leans in and examines Geoff's black eye.

KIM

That's a beauty, Geoff. Standing up for Mei again?

GEOFF

(sharply)
Somebody has to.
(sighs)
Anyway, I'm going up to prepare my class.

The others nod to each other, pick up their own books and leave the staff room to go to their own classes.

81 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

81

Johnny is absent, and the energy of the room is low.

JAMES

Anyone seen Johnny?

Several students shake their heads. A few mutter in the negative.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay, perhaps he's ill. What shall we talk about today, then?

Silence.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Any questions about life, England, anything?

More silence. James is unprepared, no lesson plan.

FRANZ

So today, at last we can have a normal lesson, yes?

JAMES

Ah, yes. Of course. Page...
 (fumbles through the course book)
 Chapter Seven. Reading Exercise:
 The Royal Wedding. Read it and then answer the questions.

The more serious students sit up straight and begin reading, then the rest follow suit.

82

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

82

James and Eka are naked. She sits atop him, on the back of his legs, massaging his back.

EKA

What will you do?

JAMES

Nothing I can do, really.

EKA

Not nice.

She smacks James on his left bum cheek.

JAMES

Ow. What was that for?

EKA

Because you are friend. You must help him.

JAMES

He's not my friend. None of them are really my friends.

She thwacks his other bum cheek.

EKA

If they not your friends, I not your friend too. You care for nobody?

Eka takes her hands off his body and sits upright.

JAMES

You are my friend. I don't talk to them. They know nothing about me. You know a lot.

EKA

They do not know about your ghost girl? They do not know you are crazy man?

She reaches for a cigarette and he flinches as she sets a cold ashtray on his back. James tries to move so he can sit up, but Eka pushes his head back down.

EKA (CONT'D)

No move. I'm talking and smoking, so you not to move.

She bounces up and down once to make sure he gets the message.

EKA (CONT'D)

You stupid, you know?

JAMES

Oh? Why's that? Can you give me a cigarette, please?

EKA

No. Because they like you. They invite you, who they never know a few months ago, to bars and go to Bukit. They make you friend, but you say they are not friends. You not a nice crazy man.

JAMES

Okay. I like them, and maybe they are my friends. But how can I help Geoff?

She holds the cigarette in front of his lips.

EKA

You get nicer. You allowed one smoke.

He takes one drag, then she takes it away.

EKA (CONT'D)

You help is all. I don't know how. He your friend, not mine.

She rolls off him and lies on her back. He sighs softly.

EKA (CONT'D)
 Promise you will help him.

She turns to face him. He holds her gaze for a moment, redirects it to the breast nearest him, then closes his eyes.

EKA (CONT'D)
 You think of her again.

JAMES
 No. I don't.

He gets up on one elbow and looks at her. She looks away.

EKA
 I hungry. We go for food.

Eka gets out of bed and goes to the shower.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
 I'm sorry, Laura. I'm sorry. I just need to forget you.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
 You're doing a fine job of that, burying yourself in her sex.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
 It takes the pain away. Without that break, I'll shatter.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
 Man up. Man up and deal with me!

Tears are now running down his cheeks and wetting the pillow.

JAMES
 Leave me be. Please fucking leave me alone!

EKA
 (from the shower)
 Come here, Crazy. Stop talking to her. Come here.

James swings his legs off the bed and takes a long drag on the cigarette.

EKA (CONT'D)
 Come here, before I angry.

James joins Eka in the shower. She throws cold water from a bucket over him, lathers him with soap, and rinses again with the cold water. He shivers himself back to sanity.

JAMES

I care for you, Eka.

EKA

No you not. Shut up and take towel.

James reaches out of the shower, grabs a towel, holds it to his face for a moment, then starts to dry off.

83

EXT. CHARLES'S MANSION - POOL - DAY

83

Fitri is dangling her feet in the pool while Benny floats tummy side down on a gently turning airbed in the middle. James dangles his feet next to Fitri's.

JAMES

What's your mother's name?

FITRI

Su-chin. Why?

JAMES

It makes someone more real, more of a person, when you know their name.

FITRI

Please don't mention her again. It makes me sad.

JAMES

Okay. What's the past participle of "drive"?

Fitri looks at him, all open eyes and open mouth.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, I am being paid to teach you English.

FITRI

But I already know nearly all in English.

JAMES

"Nearly everything." You already know nearly everything.

Fitri kicks him under the water.

FITRI

Benny! What is the past participle of "drive"?

BENNY

Driven!

FITRI

Even he knows. We don't need lessons.

JAMES

So why not ask your father to take you to Singapore to be with your mum?

FITRI

He is too proud, too busy. Too scared. And I think my mother will not talk to him.

JAMES

You should ask him. You should tell him to go with you. It hurts him, all the time. He needs resolution.

FITRI

(softly)

I know.

Benny splashes her and James. They recover from the serious moment, jump into the pool and start splashing him back. Suddenly Charles appears at the patio door. They stop their splashing as he walks over to the side of the pool.

CHARLES

These English lessons are becoming very relaxed. Maybe I pay you too much, Englishman.

FITRI

We learned a lot today, Father. About stative verbs.

CHARLES

Huh.

JAMES

Do you have time for me to ask you something after the lesson, Charles?

CHARLES

Come and talk now. My lazy children can wait for you.

Charles and James walk inside the house.

84 INT. CHARLES'S MANSION - DAY

84

Charles goes to the fridge, takes out two Heinekens, offers one to James. He turns on the TV: a Manchester United game.

CHARLES

Mr. Beckham relaxes me. He is the best thing from your country.

They each take a swig of their beers.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

So, what did you want to ask me?

JAMES

I'd like your help with something.

CHARLES

If you ask for my help, you know I will want something in return.

85 EXT. CHARLES'S MANSION - DAY

85

Fitri has joined Benny in the pool. An armed guard walks along the perimeter wall. In the background we see the door to where Charles and James are talking.

86 INT. CHARLES'S MANSION - DAY

86

There are now two additional beers on the low table.

CHARLES

Why do you need me? You should do this on your own. And why do it anyway?

JAMES

Because I want to. I don't want to sit back anymore and hear about these things and do nothing. I want your help because I don't want to risk screwing it up. I'm just not physically up to it.

CHARLES

If you are mentally adequate you can do it alone. I am not a strong man, but people think I am. Reputation is my biggest muscle.

JAMES

I don't have that reputation.

CHARLES

Are you sure? You are a little mystery to most, I think. That is a kind of reputations on its own.

JAMES

I just don't want to mess up.

CHARLES

Okay. Tell me when and where it will happen.

(humour in his eyes)

Although why you assume I can help with such a thing I do not know.

JAMES

Is tomorrow night too soon?

Charles shakes his head.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Thank you.

CHARLES

Now...what you must do for me.

James takes in a deep breath, lets it go.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Didn't think this through, did you?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

It's nothing bad, I'm sure.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

You're being naive. He's mafioso.

CHARLES

Your mind is elsewhere. Your eyes have gone away.

JAMES

Sorry.

CHARLES

You remember Teddy?

JAMES

The witch doctor?

CHARLES

The *dukun*. You will see him. He will find out where your eyes and mind go and he will help you.

JAMES

But that doesn't help you.

CHARLES

But it makes me happy. If Teddy says he can help you, then he can help you.

JAMES

So why doesn't he help you with your problem?

CHARLES

Because I have asked him not to. And do not mention it again. You will meet the *dukun*. I will ask him when and where, and you will go there.

JAMES

Okay. But it won't help me either.

CHARLES

Why? Because you don't need help?

JAMES

Exactly.

Charles laughs suddenly and loudly.

CHARLES

There are so many things wound up in your body, down in your insides, swirling around your fragile skull, I can almost hear them.

87

INT. MEI'S BAR - NIGHT

87

The bar is busy. James, Kim, Geoff, Julie, and Marty take up the long table near the beer fridge. Barry's gang includes an unpleasant fifty-something German and his beautiful yet sad-looking twenty-something Indonesian wife, and a bland sixty-five-year-old Englishman.

KIM

You should go over and whack him, man. I fucking would if I were you.

JULIE

No you wouldn't. You're as pussy as the rest of us, Kim. Just a bit more stoned.

KIM
I am not stoned.

JULIE
You're never fucking straight, Kim.

KIM
Look who's talking, Joolie. You're constantly twitching and fiddling like a fucking twitchy English bitch on drugs.

MARTY
(quiet but firm)
Kim, watch your mouth.

KIM
Hey, everyone gang up on the Yank, why don't you?

MARTY
You're getting paranoid, Kim. Have a break from the grass.

Geoff sits quietly with his back to Mei, a bit sideways in his chair to avoid any eye contact with Barry.

JAMES
You alright, Geoff?

GEOFF
(turns)
What? Oh, yeah, fine.

Geoff looks to Barry's table for a moment, then back.

BARRY
What's wrong with the faggot table tonight? Someone break a nail?

A nervous guffaw erupts from Kim. James's leg twitches slightly, then stops as he looks at the clock on the wall.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Why wait?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
What?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Go for it. You weren't scared of that Liverpudlian.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
I was stoned that day. And the
barman saved my arse.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
You got brave. It's a new you.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Ha. I'll get pummelled.

Three large Chinese men walk into the bar with heavy
footsteps and sit at a table behind James. James shifts to
look, and recognises them as some of Charles's bodyguards.
There are whispers, then laughter, from Barry's table.

BARRY
You packed your bags yet, faggot
boy?

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
Go on, be Clint Eastwood. Clean up
this town!

JAMES
(blurts out)
Oh, shut the fuck up!

BARRY
Oh, one of the girls is
menstruating.

More laughs from Barry's table. Mei uses the remote to turn
on the TV as a distraction to calm things down.

JULIE
(in a hushed voice)
What are you doing?

James stands, turns to face Barry's table.

GERMAN MAN
Look out, Barry. He'll kill with
his verb tenses.

Barry smirks, sits back and crosses his muscular arms. James
looks to Charles's bodyguards, and gains courage. He strides
across the bar right up to Barry.

JAMES
Can you, Barry,
(points his finger at him)
please keep your mouth shut when we
are in this bar?

The German's wife gets up and goes to the toilet.

ENGLISHMAN
Sit back down, son.

JAMES
No. Not yet.

JULIE
Come and sit down.

KIM
Yeah! Go get him, Newbie!

The Chinese remain silent, giving no indication they are backup for James.

JAMES
And I'd like you to apologise to my friend Geoff.

Barry shakes his head and his smirk widens.

BARRY
(oozing hate)
Anything else? Fag.

JAMES
Stop hitting Mei.

Barry stands up, and his chair falls and slides behind him. He takes off his glasses and sets them on the table.

BARRY
You...

JAMES
Me what? "Faggot"? Haven't you got any other insults in that ape head?

Barry stutters and blinks.

BARRY
(weakly)
Pussy.

James laughs.

JAMES
Now first, say sorry to Geoff.

BARRY
Fuck that.

A chair scrapes behind James, but it's not the Chinese.

MARTY
(stands up)
Apologise.

KIM
(stands up)
Yeah. Apologise, dude. Apologise to
Mei too, on your way out.

James looks back at his table. Everyone is standing except
Geoff, who is smiling a big smile at his beer bottle.

KIM (CONT'D)
Fuck it, Newbie. I'm with you.
Fucking apologise, Barry. You dick!

The Chinese are watching football on the TV. Patches of sweat
are forming on Barry's T-shirt.

BARRY
Fuck you, faggot.

Mei steps out from behind her counter.

MEI
Apologise, Barry.

BARRY
Get back behind the counter, Mei.
I'll deal with you later.

MEI
No. You apologise. Then you leave.
Not come back, Barry.

BARRY
Get back behind the fucking
counter, Mei. Before I put you
there.

A cry from the Chinese table makes everyone look, but it's
only them reacting to the TV.

BODYGUARD #1
Sorry. Chelsea score. You please
carry on.

The bodyguard waves at them and turns back to the game.

JAMES
You attempt to put her anywhere,
and I'll put you in the hospital.

ENGLISHMAN

(standing up)

I'm with him on that, Barry. You lay one finger on her and I'll take that baseball bat to you. Business interests will be forgotten.

Betrayed, and scared, Barry looks to the German for backup. The German looks around the bar and does a quick mental calculation, then nods his chin up at Barry.

GERMAN MAN

Ja, fuck you, man. You are a dick.

BARRY

But I own this bar. You lot get the fuck out before...

JAMES

Before what? You take on all of us? I'm thinking we all grab you, and give Mei that baseball bat. You like that idea, Mei?

Mei nods, lips drawn tight and eyes like darts at Barry.

MEI

I like much. But most I like is Barry sign me my bar back, then never come back again here.

ENGLISHMAN

That's doable. It's part my money invested here, and I'm pulling out. We'll have the contracts ready next week, won't we, Barry?

Barry rubs watery eyes, puts his glasses back on. He clears his throat, then, avoiding all eyes, walks toward the door.

JAMES

What about the apology, Barry?

Barry stops, his back to the room.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Now, Barry. To Geoff and Mei.

Barry turns, exhausted, his head sags. Geoff gets up, puts his arm through Mei's, and leads her to where Barry stands.

GEOFF

Mei first, please, Barry.

A momentary flash of anger lights Barry's eyes as they meet Geoff's, but when they see what is there the light goes out and they move on to Mei. Avoiding her eyes, he looks down.

BARRY
I'm sorry, Mei.
(his shoulders slump)
Really.

Mei stands straight, head held high. Barry looks back to Geoff, but before he can speak, Geoff's fist smashes his chin. Barry's head snaps back on his shoulders and he crumples to the floor. After a moment he pushes himself up to wobbly legs and, without a word, staggers from the bar.

GEOFF
Bugger the apology. That felt better.

MEI
You have free beer, Mr. Geoff. And you too, Mr. Newbie.

Mei surveys her bar and customers like a queen.

MEI (CONT'D)
All of you. Free beer.

KIM
Fuckin' A.

MEI
But only one.

The Chinese bodyguards stand and throw notes on the table.

BODYGUARD #1
Not for us, thank you. The football was very good. Liverpool win.

MARTY
Who were they?

JAMES
Passing trade, I guess.
(to Geoff)
And who, are you?

Geoff examines his knuckles with a huge smile.

GEOFF
A happy man. Thanks for that very surreal and satisfying moment.

The Englishman downs his beer and raises his eyebrows to the German, whose wife comes back from the toilet.

ENGLISHMAN

Come on, Erich. Let's leave this bunch to their not-so-faggoty ways.

(to James)

Well done. I never really liked him.

The Englishman leaves, with the German and his wife.

88

INT. NOODLE RESTAURANT - DAY

88

James and Charles are eating noodle soup.

CHARLES

I hear you did a good show.

JAMES

Yes, it seemed to do the trick.

CHARLES

So now you must do your part of the deal.

JAMES

But your men didn't do anything.

CHARLES

Exactly what I told them. They should step in only if you were being killed. I saw something in you, that I knew you would deal with the problem without much help.

JAMES

I'm a coward, so I don't know what you saw.

CHARLES

Something is missing in you, and when people aren't whole, they get on and do what they must without worry for themselves.

JAMES

Like you.

Charles nods, then slurps the last of his noodles. He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a small black book.

CHARLES

On Tuesday you must be in Lampuuk near Banda Aceh. Teddy will meet you at the next cove north from Lampuuk beach during the afternoon. You will do everything he says.

JAMES

Why?

CHARLES

Because he will help you replace the missing part of you.

JAMES

If you're so sure, why don't you use him?

CHARLES

Because Su-chin does not want me. And I respect her for that. I am not good for her.

JAMES

Well, I think--

CHARLES

I do not care what you think. It is not your business.

JAMES

Neither you nor Teddy know my problems. I'll do what you want, but he can't help me. It's impossible.

CHARLES

To Teddy you are like a glass man. He can see inside you.

They study each other for a moment.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Charles rises and heads to the toilets. James picks up the black book Charles has left on the table. At the back are pages with phone numbers. James reaches takes out a pencil and paper, and quickly scrawls ten numbers that start with a 00 international prefix. He lays the notebook back down, and five seconds later Charles reappears and sits down.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You have sweat on your face.

JAMES

The noodles were spicy.

CHARLES

I will tell Pak Andy you must have time off. Go to Lampuuk.

JAMES

I don't believe he can help me.

CHARLES

Teddy's knowledge may be stronger than your belief.

89

EXT. STREET - DAY

89

James exits the restaurant, looks at a slow cruising *becak*, then, agitated, decides to walk instead.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

Well? No comment? Nothing to say about Teddy? Like, he can't get rid of you because you're already gone? You're not the real Laura anyway. All you do is mess with my head. The real Laura was kind and understanding. She was playful, but you're just hurtful. Well, fuck you, Laura. If you're not gonna discuss this, fuck you.

The locals are starting to look at James as they pass.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Don't give a shit. Don't give a shit. Don't give a shit. Don't give a shit!

On the last repetition, he suddenly runs into the street, forcing a motor *becak* to stop.

BECAK DRIVER

Crazy *bule*!

James jumps into the *becak*'s sidecar with such force that it nearly overbalances the driver and the bike.

JAMES

Club Memphis.

The driver recovers quickly from his anger and drives off.

90

INT. MEMPHIS NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

90

James enters the nightclub. He strides to the bar and orders.

JAMES
Whisky and Coke.

The barman places the drink on the bar. James puts a note beside it, and spins on his stool to survey the club. Not many patrons, and only a few dancing. James leaves his stool and takes his drink to a table near the dance floor.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Still not coming, fickle Laura?
(pause)
Eh, I said, "Not coming, then?!"

James feels a hand on his neck.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Ah, you couldn't resist, could you?

He turns to see, and it's Julie.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Ha, Julie.

JULIE
Ha, Newbie.

She pulls up a chair next to his.

JULIE (CONT'D)
What're you doing here, hero man?

JAMES
(waves his glass)
About to get fuck-faced.

JULIE
What is it with you? What's your story?

JAMES
Nah, it'd make your brain explode.

JULIE
I think that's already happening.
(laughs, shakes her head)
Go on.

JAMES
Nope. Nope, nope, nope.

JULIE

Well, how about some medicine,
then? It's Saturday night, and I
too wish to get fuck-faced.

JAMES

Why? Marty been too much?

JULIE

Marty's a fucking pillow on my
face, suffocating me.

Julie takes some pills from her pocket.

JAMES

Make mine a double.

Julie takes one pill and James downs two with his drink.

JULIE

Let's dance these bastards up.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Julie takes James by the arm to the dance floor. The flashing
lights and loud music make it seem like a storm. He dance-
staggered away from her, then back, and into her arms.

END MONTAGE

JAMES

Storm is rising! All hands on deck!

JULIE

Aye aye, Cap'n.

Julie laughs and swirls James round in a circle. James lets
go and spins away, just as Eka appears. She says something to
Julie, who nods, then goes over to James.

EKA

What you do, Crazy?

JAMES

Ah, Princess Eka. What are ye doing
on my ship?

EKA

So now you crazy pirate? I think
you take very strong obat. I get
you water.

JAMES
 (laughing)
 There be nothing here but water.

Eka puts a bottle of water in his hands.

EKA
 Drink.

He drinks it all down, then stares at the strobes and lasers flashing all around.

JAMES
 I'm fucked.

EKA
 Yes, you are. You look very bad.
 You should go home.

JAMES
 I *like* fucked.

Suddenly he cradles his stomach with both arms. Sweat drips off his head onto his trousers.

EKA
 I think you sick.

James staggers over to find the toilets.

91 INT. MEMPHIS NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

91

James walks over to Eka, who is talking to Julie.

JULIE
 How you doing?

JAMES
 Want more fucked.

EKA
 No.

JAMES
 You have beautiful breasts.

EKA
 You sick. You need bed.

JAMES
 A sick man needs medicine.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
No. Enough.

James look at Laura, but she morphs to Eka.

EKA
(but Laura's voice)
We go. You need sleep.

JAMES
How? What?

He leans in close to her, stares into her eyes. It's Laura.

EKA
(but Laura's voice)
Come, crazy. I give massage to help
sleep.

James grabs "Laura" by the tops of her arms.

JAMES
Fuck going on? Fuck you doing?

EKA
Ado Ado. Hurt me. Stop.

Laura becomes Eka again.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)
(from behind him)
You tripping, boy.

James spins around but it's Julie, not Laura.

JULIE
(but Laura's voice)
Go on. Go off with your little
girlie.

JAMES
Laura, just be you, dammit. Stop
fucking with me.

JULIE
(but Laura's voice)
You're fucking with you.

James spins around again, and sees Laura. (Actually Eka.)

EKA
(but voice of Laura)
I love you.
(MORE)

EKA (CONT'D)

Stop tripping and wandering and
messing about and start living.

James hugs her. But her hair feels wrong, her breasts are too large, and he pulls away to see it is not Laura, but Eka.

EKA (CONT'D)

Come.

92 INT. CHEAP MOTEL - NIGHT

92

James is sitting up in bed, eyes closed, as Eka holds a glass of warm milk to his lips.

EKA

Susu. Warm milk. Drink.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Come on, drink the milk, poor sick boy.

He drinks, wincing at the pain in his head.

JAMES

This must be what dying feels like.

Eka guides him to lying down, puts a pillow under his head.

EKA

Come, Crazy. You not die. Just fever. Sleep.

She kisses his cheek.

LAURA (IN HIS HEAD)

Sleep, baby. Sleep.

93 INT. CHEAP MOTEL - MORNING

93

James is in bed, waking up.

JAMES

What day is it?

EKA

Monday.

JAMES

(sits up)
What? Shit.

Pain in his head hits him so hard he lays back down.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Shit. I need to get a bus. I have to meet a dukun. In Aceh.

Eka, naked, pushes a bottle of water against his lips. Eka stands up. Her hair falls down across her nipples.

EKA

Dukun? To get rid of her?

She waves her hand around the room.

EKA (CONT'D)

She was here a lot. You talk to her too much. Maybe he get rid of her. You should go. She not good for you.

JAMES

Yes she is. No she's not. I don't know. Where am I?

EKA

Motel. You were very sick. I look after you. Not like her. She make you bad, I care you.

JAMES

Thank you. I promised Charles I would go.

EKA

Yes, I think you need special medicine. You go to *dukun*. Go wash now get ready. I help.

She yanks the soggy sheet off his naked body.

94

EXT. BUS STATION - MORNING

94

James and Eka stand next to a new bus, with tinted windows.

EKA

Take care, Crazy. *Dukun* sometimes good *dukun*, sometimes bad, sometimes lie.

She is beautiful. And good. James forces a smile for her.

EKA (CONT'D)

Here are pills for head.

JAMES

Thank you.

He holds her hand, and she pulls it away.

EKA

Not on street. People don't see affection.

(blows a kiss)

Go. Be careful. Fix ghost.

James boards the bus.

95 INT. BUS - DAY 95

The bus seats are fully reclining, with a blanket folded on each. James finds his, sits down, and looks for Eka through the window, but she is gone. Lying back, sweat prickles up on his forehead. He pulls the blanket up over his head.

96 INT. BUS - NIGHT 96

A flash of light outside catches James's eye. He peers out the window to see a soldier with a machine gun over his shoulder. A checkpoint. The bus is waved on, and James puts the blanket over his head again.

97 INT. BUS - MORNING 97

BUS DRIVER

Eh, man. Wake up. Banda is here.

The driver yanks the blanket off James, who tries to pull it back, but the driver yanks it fully off and throws it over the seat behind him.

98 EXT. BANDA BUS STATION - DAWN 98

James steps down off the bus into a noisy, parched, bustling town square. Taxi drivers in grubby trousers surround him.

TAXI DRIVER #1

Come, come. I take you to Pulan
Weh. I take you to boat for Pulan
Weh.

JAMES

No. No taxi. Leave me alone. Go.

TAXI DRIVER
No, come, mister. Taxi now.

JAMES
I don't want taxi. I want coffee.
Kopi susu. Mengerti?

TAXI DRIVER
Ah. *Kopi. Mengerti.* Understand
good.

This driver points to a nearby building with a wonky table
and two chairs.

JAMES
Thank you.

James sits at the table, and the taxi driver stands next to
him.

JAMES (CONT'D)
No taxi. I don't need now.

TAXI DRIVER #3
Okay. No problem. *Tidak apa apa.* I
wait you *kopi*.

JAMES
No. Look. I don't want taxi, okay?
No Pulau Weh. No ferry. Lampuuk,
okay. I will take bus. Now go.

The owner of the one-table coffee shop moves an umbrella to
shield James from the sun.

TAXI DRIVER
I wait. Take you where you want.

JAMES
(sighs)
Please sit. Have a *kopi*.

James nods to the other chair. The taxi driver smiles, sits.

Lampuuk Beach is at the end of a path which passes through
sand dunes and occasional palm trees. James walks past a
never-completed hotel of grey concrete walls. There is a
stick drawing of a naked woman with fuzzy genitals and big
breasts. A scrawl says: "Fuck me. I am British whore."

James follows the path around a grass-mottled dune to the beach. Massive waves roar as they crash on the shore. There are a few huts, and a bamboo restaurant with a hand-painted sign--"Smiling Jack's"--and beyond that a rock outcrop dividing this beach from the next one. Three sleepy white people sit in the shade of the restaurant. James waves, and they nod. Behind the bar-cum-reception area stands a young Indonesian who greets him with a big smile.

SMILING JACK

Hello! Welcome! What can I do for you?

JAMES

Hi. I need a room, please.

SMILING JACK

Right this way, friend.

100

EXT. BANDA HUT - DAY

100

Smiling Jack leads James to a hut set slightly back from the beach. It has an uneven balcony with a hammock strung across it. Laura lies in the hammock, wearing a bikini.

SMILING JACK

You like it?

JAMES

Very much.

Laura places her fingers at the top of her bikini bottom. James suddenly bends over, sweat on his forehead.

SMILING JACK

You okay, man?

JAMES

(moans)

Yeah. Just getting over something.

SMILING JACK

Over there.

(nods to an outbuilding)

Use bucket from well, behind wall. No soap in well, okay? It pollutes the water.

JAMES

Okay.

James runs to the loo, opens the door, and is happy to see it is sit style, not squat style.

101 EXT. BANDA HUT - MOMENTS LATER

101

James returns. Laura is still lying in the hammock.

LAURA
You really aren't well.

JAMES
Because I have the squits and a fever or because my super-dead girlfriend is lying in my hammock?

LAURA
Possibly both. Although I know I'm here, so therefore I exist, which means the squits is your biggest problem.

James places his hand on her stomach, which quivers.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Mmm.

JAMES
Don't tell me you can feel that?

LAURA
Okay, I won't.

JAMES
I'm not going to shag a dead person.

LAURA
Okay. But your touch feels good.

James pulls his hand away and looks to the crashing waves.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Ever wonder where all that energy comes from?

JAMES
The moon, wind, turning of the earth.

LAURA
And ever wonder where all *that* energy comes from?

He looks back to her and shakes his head.

JAMES

All I wonder is where all your energy went. Your life force.

LAURA

I'm still here.

JAMES

No, you're not. All you are is some electric spark fluttering around my brain, fucking me up.

LAURA

Am I?

JAMES

Yes.

LAURA

All those moments are still there, silly. They're all still there and I'm in every one, still with you. All lying there, waiting to be found. You really want to see this *dukun*?

JAMES

I've got to. I promised Charles.

LAURA

But do you really want to? He might magic me away.

JAMES

You're not here anyway, so...

LAURA

Want to be fixed, do you? So you can go off and be an angry New You with a massive chip on his shoulder for the girl he lost?

Three waves collapse on shore before James answers.

JAMES

No, I don't want to be fixed. I want it back. All the moments we had, and the moments we never got to have. I want them back.

Laura sighs, puts an arm over her eyes. James goes to touch her but his hand goes through her and touches the hammock.

LAURA

It's nearly time you went, then. Go see the magic man. Let's hope I'm waiting for you when you get back and he hasn't ghost-busted me away.

JAMES

I love you, Laura.

LAURA

I love you more.

JAMES

Not possible.

He turns and vomits over the side of the balcony. When he looks back at the hammock she is gone.

102 EXT. SMILING JACK'S - DAY

102

Smiling Jack is wiping glasses on a bamboo counter.

SMILING JACK

You okay, my friend? You not look so good.

JAMES

Small headache from long journey. Going *jalan jalan* to clear my head. Where's the path to the next beach?

SMILING JACK

Jalan jalan is good for a man with troubles.

(points)

Next beach through ferns at big rocks.

Smiling Jack goes back to wiping glasses. James heads toward the rocky outcrop Smiling Jack pointed to, through some ferns, then a coconut grove.

103 EXT. COVE - DAY

103

James emerges into the deserted sandy beach of a large cove. Waves crash with double the size and force of the other beach. Sweating, James kicks off his sandals, steps into the water, throws handfuls of seawater on his head. The strong waves push him back and forth. He stares at the horizon until he smells smoke behind him.

He turns around to see Teddy sitting on the beach with a small fire in front of him, a small pot sitting in the flames. Teddy smiles and pats the sand next to him. James leaves the sea and sits next to him.

TEDDY
You have fever.

JAMES
Yes.

TEDDY
I have something for you to help
one of your sickness.

Teddy fumbles in his small shoulder bag.

JAMES
Snake's head? Bottle of goat piss?

Teddy comes up with a blister pack of pills.

TEDDY
Take one every four hours.

JAMES
Oh. Thanks.

Teddy hands James a bottle of water, and James takes a pill.

TEDDY
It will help with stomach and
fever, but of course bad drugs you
must sweat out. I tell Charles he
should not sell bad drugs at club,
but he like his money.

Teddy laughs and punches James playfully in the shoulder.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
But he is good man in other ways.
And he likes you and you have
problems. So I help.

James peers at the pot to see broken pieces of leaf in about a cupful of water that is starting to bubble. Laura, still in her bikini, leans over his shoulder to take a look.

LAURA
Mmmmmmm. Yummy.

JAMES
Tea?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
Of course he can't. You're in my head. You don't exist. You're not even on the beach.

LAURA
Then how come the sand's burning my bum?

Teddy looks away from Laura and into the flames.

TEDDY
No matter how many wrong turns a man take, he end up every time where he should be. You have taken many wrong turns, but you will end up in right place, right moment. So will your demons.

JAMES
My demons?

TEDDY
You know who I mean.

LAURA
Is he talking about me?

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)
He's just playing with my mind, that's all. Relax.

LAURA
I can't. He's freaking me out. I'm going for a walk.

James watches as Laura walks toward the trees that line the beach. She leaves no footprints.

TEDDY
Your brain will shrivel in this heat.

Teddy takes a square of batik cloth from his belt and puts it over James's head. James offers the joint back to Teddy, who declines it. Laura parts a big fern, looks back at them, then steps into the forest.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
When you get in car, or on bus, or plane, you travel away from some place. You think that place has gone? You think you can't get back there?

Teddy pokes James in his side.

 TEDDY (CONT'D)
Eh? You think it is "poof"? Gone?

 JAMES
Er.

 TEDDY
Tell me. Is it gone?

James looks to the forest, where Laura is still gone. He opens his mouth to speak, but Teddy cuts him off.

 TEDDY (CONT'D)
No. It is still there. You can take another bus, plane, or drive car back there. No problem. Maybe the ticket costs more, or there is diversion on road. Maybe how you get there has changed, but the place has not.
 (nods, pauses)
Like time, my friend. Like time.

Quite high, James giggles.

 TEDDY (CONT'D)
Mmm. Get high. Good. Time for drink.

Teddy lifts the pot out of the fire with his bare hands and sets it quickly down in the sand.

 TEDDY (CONT'D)
Shit. Is hot.

 JAMES
Of course it is.
 (giggles)
It's a fire.

Teddy stirs the potion with a stick and mutters something. He scoops up some sand and throws it in James's face.

 JAMES (CONT'D)
Ow. Fuck.

 TEDDY
Shh. Drink.

Teddy pulls the cloth off James's head and uses it to pick up the soup.

JAMES

No thanks.

TEDDY

Drink. It is sweet. Drink slowly.
But leave a little.

Teddy looks out to the ocean.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

While you drink, listen to the
great water, watch the waves.
Rolling. Breaking. Rolling.

James sniffs the liquid, takes one last drag on the joint,
sticks the joint in the sand, and takes a sip of the soup.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Rolling. Breaking. Rolling.
(points to the sea)
The waves.

James sips more and more, looking out at the waves.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Rolling. Breaking. Rolling. The
wave, she comes in, she goes out,
hiding under the next wave as she
comes in. All of them rolling,
breaking, rolling over each other,
then back out to great ocean. But
they will return again in another
time, or on another shore.

The waves are crashing more violently now. James's eyelids
droop, stress leaves him, as his body profoundly relaxes.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Rolling. Breaking. Rolling.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

If only Laura were here. If only
she...

TEDDY

Forward and backward. Rolling.
Breaking. Rolling. Retreating under
the next.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

If only she what?

TEDDY

The places we have come from are
still there. They are still there.
We just have to find them.

JAMES (IN HIS HEAD)

Laura...she is still where? Where
is she? Why have I come here,
without her?

TEDDY

Rolling. Breaking.

James is exquisitely relaxed.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

(deep and guttural)
BUUUUUURP!

James jumps.

JAMES

Bloody hell, Teddy.

Teddy stands up.

TEDDY

Now give me the dish before you
drink it all. You greedy Westerners
always drink up all that is
offered. And sometimes all that
isn't.

James hands the bowl to Teddy, who takes it and wades into the ocean. Somehow his flamingo legs withstand the violently crashing waves. James stands, unsteady, but ready to rescue Teddy if necessary. Teddy says something to the sea, but it is drowned out in the roar of the waves. Teddy throws the metal bowl into a collapsing wave, which swallows it whole. He holds his hands palms up to the sky, says some more words, then turns toward shore. He loses his footing and falls. James splashes out to help him, but Teddy holds up a hand.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

I am good. No what what.

Teddy and James stand on the beach and look to the ocean.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

It is done. Go home, my friend. Go
and return to the old places. See
what is still there. Waiting for
you.

Teddy looks sideways at James and winks with his cloudy eye.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Good luck.

Teddy squeezes James's shoulder, walks back to the fire, kicks sand over it, picks up his bag and wanders along the beach toward the hill and the trees at the far end. James watches until Teddy reaches the trees and clambers into the foliage like an orang-utan and disappears.

104 INT. STAFFROOM - DAY

104

All the teachers are present when James enters.

KIM

Hey. Newbie returns.

Kim stands up and smacks James on the back.

KIM (CONT'D)

Thought you'd been eaten by the drug monster somewhere. Last seen leaving Memphis off your face with a beautiful Indian girl, I heard.

JULIE

That was five days ago. That *obat* was strong shit. We've been worried.

JAMES

I'm okay. Just had to shoot off for a couple of days. I'll see you at Mei's for a farewell drink on Friday.

KIM

Whoa. What?

JAMES

Yep, it's that time. Bye-byes all round. In the meantime I'm off to class. See you later.

James laughs and trots out of the room, leaving a room full of "no ways" and "fucks" behind.

105 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

105

James enters and puts his lesson plan on the desk. Johnny is in his usual seat, looking awkward and embarrassed.

JAMES

There you all are. Sorry I missed you on Monday. Who was your teacher?

FRANZ

Mr. Geoff. He did good lesson about past tenses.

JOHNNY

It was boring. "Finished time," blah blah. "Unfinished time," blah blah.

JAMES

Got to agree with you, Johnny. Especially as there's no such thing as finished time.

FRANZ

Of course there is. I ate my dinner yesterday, and it is finished.

JAMES

For you, I suppose it is. But sometimes some of us, maybe, can change the past.

FRANZ

What?

JOHNNY

Eh, teacher. I said some crazy stuff in the past. You say I can change that?

JAMES

If you can find that moment, yes. But perhaps you don't have to change anything you said.

Johnny sits back, relaxing his shoulders.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Maybe you just said it to the wrong person. You don't need to change anything. Just make sure if you say it again, you say it to the right person.

Puzzled looks from everyone but Johnny.

JOHNNY

Thanks, boss.

JAMES

So what does anyone want to discuss today, for this, our last lesson together?

The emotional response in the room makes James's eyes water.

JOHNNY

What do you mean, last lesson?

JENNIFER

You cannot go. No other teacher talks to us like you.

JAMES

That's probably because they teach you what they're supposed to be teaching. Not how immoral my world is.

JOHNNY

And sexy.

The class erupts in laughter.

JAMES

Sexy maybe. But sometimes subtle sexy is better.

STUDENT #1

Subtle?

JAMES

Not here.

(puts hand in his face)

Not in your face like this, but maybe over here.

(puts hand behind his ear)

Where no one can see, or maybe just a glimpse. Subtle.

JENNIFER

This country is too subtle.

Sounds of agreement from most of the class.

JAMES

(nods)

Maybe.

JENNIFER

We will miss you, sir.

JOHNNY

Why you going, man? You not like Indonesian or Chinese pussy?

Oohs and aahs of disgust mix with laughter.

FRANZ

Goodbye and please return to your stupid country. You very bad teacher.

Franz leaves, and there is a moment of silence.

JOHNNY

Boss, really, why leave us?

JAMES

Because I just miss home. I need to go home. I'm scared of it, but I must go home.

(eyes watering, blurred)

I need to find out if the past is finished past or it it is still there, waiting.

JOHNNY

Well then, you better go, I guess. Good luck, man.

JAMES

And good luck to you too, Johnny. Good luck to all of you.

106

EXT. ENGLISH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

106

James runs into Iqpal, cleaning the windows by the entrance.

JAMES

See you then, Iqpal.

IQPAL

Selamat. Have a good journey home. I think you happy now.

JAMES

You think? I'll miss it. The colours and the smells, the *becaks*, the coffee, the heat.

IQPAL

You miss this? No. Your country is paradise, I think.

JAMES

Paradise? I don't think so. This is closer to paradise.

IQPAL

No, Here is poor and no money, disease and dirty and many problems. Your country I have seen on TV. It is paradise. Beautiful houses and women with white skin and you are all rich.

JAMES

You can't always believe the TV.

James squeezes Iqpal's shoulder.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Take care, Iqpal. I'll remember you.

IQPAL

Come and visit.

JAMES

I will try. I want to. *Selamat*, Iqpal.

IQPAL

Selamat.

107

INT. CHARLES'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY

107

The guards let James into the house and close the door behind him. The TV is off, there appears to be no one around, and no splashing from the pool. There are two new chairs--big leather armchairs, one with its back to James. He starts to reach for a mangosteen from the fruit bowl when a voice interrupts him.

CHARLES

Please have a mangosteen. But don't get any juice on my furniture.

James realises Charles must be in the turned away chair.

JAMES

How did you know I was taking some fruit?

James walks around to the front of the chair to see Charles.

CHARLES

Always make sure you can see what's behind you, especially if you have enemies.

(points to the TV screen)

I still watch it even when it isn't on.

James sees his shape in the black TV screen.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

So Teddy helped you make a decision?

JAMES

Have you seen Teddy?

CHARLES

No. But you look better. Something has changed in you.

JAMES

Yes, there's a big crack running through my head here.

(traces with his finger)

All my common sense and sanity is dripping out of it.

CHARLES

(smiles)

Teddy will do that to a man. I never said I believe if what he does is real or just superstition, but he is a wise old man.

JAMES

Anyway, thank you.

CHARLES

For what?

JAMES

For seeing something in me that needed help.

CHARLES

This is a very strange world. I live in a place of tragedies, both manmade and natural. Your country is a place of soft paddling and half-truths where your biggest tragedies are holes in the road and rain in summer.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

You are ruled by ignorance taught by your government and media. But now you can go back there and remember that the belief in magic still exists here.

JAMES

Thank you, Charles. But can I ask you one thing, and please don't get angry?

CHARLES

I know what your question is.

JAMES

You do?

CHARLES

Yes.

(looks at the blank TV)

Why do I do what I do? Why do I promote the smoking in my clubs and why do I sell drugs and allow prostitution?

JAMES

Pretty much.

CHARLES

Because I can. I am a businessman and people everywhere are stupid and someone will always take advantage. Sometimes governments, sometimes businessmen. I feel better that is is me and not someone else.

JAMES

Perhaps it is better that it is you.

CHARLES

And I thought you like my drugs.

JAMES

(laughs)

I do.

CHARLES

So keep your Western hypocritical opinions to yourself.

(he smiles)

And go and teach my children your oh-so-important language.

JAMES
Thanks again, Charles.

CHARLES
Mostly I wanted Teddy to see you
because I like you.

JAMES
Mm. Okay.

CHARLES
They should be in the games room.
Fitri will be sad. She also likes
you. When is your flight?

JAMES
Saturday at nine in the morning.

CHARLES
I will pick you up at seven. No
argument.

JAMES
None made. See you then.

108

INT. CHARLES'S MANSION - GAMES ROOM - AFTERNOON

108

Benny sits in his beanbag chair. Fitri stands in front of
heres, wiping her eyes.

FITRI
Why must you go?

JAMES
You remember the time I cried?

FITRI
Yes.

JAMES
Well, I have to go because of that.
I've had enough crying and I hope
to find out the world is more
flexible than we think.

FITRI
Flexible?

JAMES
Bendy. Easy to bend. Changeable.

FITRI

This world is not bendy.
 (closes her eyes)
 It is hard and straight and cannot
 be changed.

BENNY

Big cockroach.

Benny jumps up out of his chair and grabs a broom. Fitri opens here eyes.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Really big.

FITRI

Such a stupid boy. It is his new
 game. He calls it cockroach hockey.

BENNY

Watch this.

The cockroach is large, about seven centimetres. Benny flicks it on its back with a knock from his toe. He runs to the door and opens it, then runs back to the cockroach.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Ready...GO!

He smacks the cockroach with the broom. It flies across the tile floor, out the door and into the pool. Benny does a victory dance with the broom held above his head.

BENNY (CONT'D)

He scores!

FITRI

Idiot.

BENNY

Got to watch it swim.

Benny runs out to the edge of the pool and kneels to watch the cockroach swim.

JAMES

Why do you think the world is so
 unbendy?

FITRI

Because my father will always be
 sad. Nothing will bring my parents
 together. This country will always
 hate us.

(MORE)

FITRI (CONT'D)

(sniffs)

And friends will never stay long.

Fitri throws herself back into her beanbag.

JAMES

What if your mother at least started talking to your father again? Would that make a difference? Perhaps if your sister came to visit?

FITRI

It is impossible.

(she sits up)

Isn't it?

JAMES

Well, I'm not sure, but...I feel something might happen.

(smiles at her)

FITRI

You've done something.

JAMES

What could I do? And if I had, it might not amount to anything.

Fitri studies James hard, as her father does.

FITRI

If you have managed something, my teacher, I will come and find you one day and kiss you.

She leans across, grabs his head in her hands and plants her lips on his cheek.

FITRI (CONT'D)

That is in case I cannot find you. I know it is bad, but I wanted to.

JAMES

I hope whatever I have or haven't done helps a little.

(winks at her)

FITRI

Then thank you, for maybe or maybe not trying.

JAMES

Everything is bendy. If it seems that it isn't, you just have to learn to bend it.

Fitri nods.

109 EXT. CHARLES'S MANSION FRONT GATE - EVENING

109

James exits the front door. The guards swing their guns into ready position. The gate slides open, and a guard checks the road, then waves James out. Fitri and Benny stand in a shadow at the front door, holding hands. They wave to James, who waves back. The electric gate closes with a metallic click.

110 INT. CHEAP MOTEL - DAY

110

Eka sits on her made bed in a leopard-pattern skirt and satin blouse. James sits in a bamboo chair pulled in front of it.

JAMES

Eka, you are so special to me.

EKA

I so special you leave me. So special you no more want pom-pom with me.

JAMES

You are a wise and lovely friend.

EKA

And you have good sex with me.

JAMES

Very good. Something has happened in here.

(taps his temple)

Maybe I've become crazy.

EKA

Huh. Already crazy.

JAMES

Now maybe more crazy. Or, maybe the *dukun* has done something very impossible and special to my world.

EKA

You think she lives again?

JAMES

I think...maybe she never died. Not now.

EKA

But maybe she did.

JAMES

Maybe she did.

EKA

Dukun clever. Not that clever. She dead. She is only ghost now.

Eka's head has dropped forward, her hands in her lap again. James leans forward, takes her hands, but they are lifeless.

JAMES

I don't know, Eka. I'm scared things that she is dead, that I will still be alone.

She grasps him around the neck and pulls him onto the bed so that their arms are wrapped around each other.

EKA

You come back here if she still dead. You come back to your Eka.

She kisses him, hard and angry, then thrusts him away from her and pushes herself to standing all in one motion.

EKA (CONT'D)

Now go, you crazy *bule*.

She throws her purse over her shoulder, throws the hair back off her face and smiles, having regained her composure.

JAMES

I will think of you. And you will find--

Eka's hand on his chest pushes him back down on the bed.

EKA

Shut up. I go. I have good time at Iguana. Bye, Crazy.

Mei is confident and radiant behind her counter. Julie's fingers tap on the table.

Marty steals sideways glances at her, as she looks in every direction but his. Geoff sits upright and confident. Kim raises his glass.

NOTE: I think i have to invent a goodbye to James here up until he leaves with Julie.

KIM

A toast!

They all raise their glasses or beer bottles.

KIM (CONT'D)

To our dearly departing friend
James, as he goes back to his old
life--or his new life--whichever it
turns out to be.

James nods at the truth of that ambiguity.

KIM (CONT'D)

We will not forget you--even when
we're really toasted.

Laughter from the group.

JULIE

Which will be often.

KIM

Even so, you've been a unique and
welcome addition to the group, and
life won't be the same without you.

GEOFF

Amen.

Glasses and bottles clink, to various words of cheer.

JAMES

I came here because I was in dire
need. Of what, I'm still not sure.
You all helped me almost find it.
Thank you.

More clinks and cheers. James nods to Mei, who has joined them.

JAMES (CONT'D)

And now, I must go home, because if
I stay any longer I'll be in no
shape to find my plane tomorrow.

James begins shaking hands, hugging, and slapping backs.

MARTY

Stay in touch.

Mei cries quietly and squeezes his hand, while her other hand holds Geoff's.

GEOFF

Thank you.

Kim sticks a clove cigarette in Jame's mouth.

KIM

Make sure you're fucking quiet when you leave in the morning, man, because I'm going to be pretty fucked.

James shakes his head.

KIM (CONT'D)

Have a good *jalan* home, man. A good *jalan* fucking *jalan*.

112 INT. KIM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 112

James lies on his bed looking at the ceiling. He reaches to the bedside table, looks at his ticket: "Date: July 30."

BEGIN FLASHBACK

113 INT. JAMES'S ENGLAND BEDROOM - NIGHT 113

James and Laura lie in bed naked. She plays her hand along his stomach as they talk.

LAURA

I get back from my trip four days before you do. I'll pick you up at the airport when you return. But until then, no phone calls.

JAMES

I can't contact you until then?

LAURA

No. And to make sure, I'm not giving you my number in Prague.

JAMES

And this is why?

LAURA

Call it...an experiment in love and time. "Time spent apart enlightens the heart."

JAMES

You just made that up.

LAURA

(smiling)

July 30th. By then we'll miss each other so much our love will be astronomical.

114 INT. JAMES'S BEDROOM - DAWN 114

James awakes to the sound of the muezzin. He smiles wistfully, looks over at his open, unpacked suitcase, and rolls out of bed.

115 INT. CHARLES'S CAR - MORNING 115

Charles seems uptight, but says nothing. He drives into traffic, knuckles white on the steering wheel.

JAMES

(swallowing hard)

Are you alright?

CHARLES

(knuckles go whiter)

I am angry.

James tenses, takes a deep breath and sighs.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I am angry because I should have made that call a long time ago. The phone call you made.

Charles's squeezes James's thigh, then slaps it.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Thank you.

JAMES

(relaxing)

Have you heard something?

CHARLES

Su-chin called me last night. It was very difficult.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

But we have spoken about the children. About possibilities for the future. She told me you called her, that you were worried about the children and about me. Thank you for doing something I was too scared to do.

JAMES

Fitri and Benny are great kids.

CHARLES

They will be seeing their mother and sister soon. Su-Chin won't come here, but I will be taking them to Singapore next month.

(he smiles)

How many numbers did you have to try first out of my little black book before you got the right one?

JAMES

Just a few. You've changed my life, so I wanted to return the favour.

CHARLES

Let us hope we have both succeeded.

They exchange small but hopeful smiles and Charles drives off.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

James sits with a blanket over his head, turning fitfully. He gives up, removes the blanket, notices the book the man next to him is reading: "A Brief History of Time," by Stephen Hawking. The man notices, smiles at James and returns to the book.

JAMES

Hawking is quite a guy.

PASSENGER

Actually, I agree more with Penrose: the universe is unbounded and will expand forever. And, there may have been another universe before this one, which is itself still continuing.

JAMES

Wow. That's beyond me.

PASSENGER

Me too, actually. And I'm a physicist.

(chuckles)

No one really knows the answers.
But, it's fun to think about.

James smiles, shakes his head, closes his eyes and leans his head against the window.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

The plane's tires hit the runway, then taxis.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

At the electronic "ding-dong." James is stuck in a window seat. His fingers tap on his leg, which twitches reflexively, and forced to wait while the other passengers stand up and eagerly grab their bags from the overhead lockers.

INT. AIRPORT CORRIDOR - DAY

James walks in the middle of a long line of people, craning his head to look ahead even though there is nothing to see except the passport control stations.

INT. AIRPORT - PASSPORT CONTROL - DAY

The toes of James's right foot tap nervously as he waits for the passport control officer to hand him back his passport.

INT. AIRPORT - ARRIVAL HALL - DAY

Backpack in hand now, James passes quickly through the sliding doors and scans the crowd of people held back by ropes and stanchions. Passengers are greeted by hugging, shaking hands, laughing, crying, smiling. James's head jerks as his eyes dart to different sections of the crowd. Eyes watering, his face red, breathing too fast, he stands still as others brush past him to greet their loved ones. He sees a flash of green scarf--but no, it's the wrong shade of green, and the hair beneath it is blonde. He takes a step forward, clears his eyes with his hand, takes a deep breath, and spots the dark green scarf and ebony hair. His shoulders relax as he releases the breath, and water fills his eyes again as the black and green blur together. The world blurs together. Everything blurs together.