SHAHEEN

By

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1. **INT. HOME - RAWALPINDI, PAKISTAN MARCH 2007. DAY**

The house is a small but cozy place, which has too much furniture and all the necessities of life.

SHAHEEN is sitting on her bed reading a book

Her room is neat with a few bookshelves over flowing with books

She has a huge poster of Benazir Bhutto and few smaller news clips about Bhutto

Shaheen’s brother SHAHBAZ enters Shaheen’s room

Shaheen is at her desk scribbling something, she ignores Shahbaz

Shahbaz looks at Benazir Bhutto’s poster and picks up a pen from Shaheen’s desk.

He raises the pen to draw a moustache on Bhutto’s face

Shaheen snatches the pen and pushes Shahbaz on to the bed

SHAHEEN
No messing around with my new poster

Shahbaz drops on the bed and casually puts his hands beneath his head, looks up first at the poster and then at Shaheen

SHAHBAZ
I think that a moustache will suit

Shaheen lightly throws the pen at Shahbaz

SHAHEEN
She doesn’t have to be like a man to rule the country

Shahbaz catches the pen

SHAHBAZ
She certainly wants to be like a man
SHAHEEN
She wants to be a prime minister
and rule the country

SHAHBAZ
So she is trying to be a man

SHAHEEN
She is trying to be the best she
can be for her country and for
herself

2.  EXT. ROOFTOP - SHAHEEN’S HOME. DAY

Shaheen is at the rooftop of her house. The rooftops are
all joined in a cluster; we can see that you can easily
jump onto other people’s rooftops.

A group of women are standing on one of the roof tops
gossiping and looking at Shaheen.

Shaheen’s mother RUKHSANA appears form the staircase and
motions Shaheen to notice the neighbours staring at her

Shaheen realizes what they are staring at and she adjusts
her clothes to cover her bra strap and adjusts her scarf
to cover her breasts.

Rukhsana walks towards Shaheen and points at her head

Shaheen is agitated, but does what she is asked to do and
she adjusts her scarf to cover her head too.

RUKHSANA
Shaheen, I need you downstairs

Shaheen and Rukhsana start descending the staircase, one
after the other as it is a congested place

RUKHSANA
How many times have I told you
not to come upstairs without
covering yourself properly?
People talk you know, what
will they say?

Shaheen gives her mother a look which means please not
again and takes off her scarf, realizing that she is well
out of sight
SHAHEEN
What is it mother?

RUKHSANA
I just want to teach you how to make a chapatti

SHAHEEN
(Bored)
Maybe some other time, I have a lot do

RUKHSANA
(Points at Shaheen’s uncovered breasts)
You were just standing on the roof daydreaming like that

Shaheen ignores her mother’s comment

SHAHEEN
Mother you know I am hopeless at anything in housework

RUKHSANA
You are not hopeless you just don’t try

SHAHEEN
I did try mother, if you remember

RUKHSANA
You didn’t try with your heart.
I haven’t seen you fail in anything you do with your heart in it

SHAHEEN
Mother, please!

RUKHSANA
(Pleading)
Do it for your mothers sake, you know Shaheen I am getting old and my bones don’t bear my weight anymore. You won’t come and help your ageing mother?
SHAHEEN
(Sighing)
Alright mother I will start

Shaheen washes her hands in the sink and wipes them on her scarf.

RUKHSANA
(Happy with herself)
Promise me, you will make an effort

SHAHEEN
(Acts interested for her mother)
Ok Mother I promise, Chapatti, here I come!

Rukhsana takes out a big bowl fills it with flour and Shaheen fills a jug of water and pours it in the bowl of flour

RUKHSANA
Now slowly pour the water in the flour

SHAHEEN
No not too much just bit by bit. Mix the flour with your other hand

Shaheen kneads the flour with Rukhsana’s help

RUKHSANA
That day I was trying to talk to you about a daughter’s responsibility

SHAHEEN
Mother you are always talking about a daughter’s, mother’s or sister’s responsibility

Rukhsana takes a handful of the kneaded flour in shapes it into a perfect ball

RUKHSANA
So you know Mrs Arshad, you aunt’s sister in law?
SHAHEEN
You have more gossip about their family?

Shaheen observes her mother and makes a not so perfect ball of kneaded flour

RUKHSANA
You know she has married both her daughters off, so she is looking for a nice girl for her son

SHAHEEN
It’s about time he got married he is so old

Shaheen looks at how her mother is doing it and holds both the Chapatti balls in her hands to observe the difference

RUKHSANA
(Worried)
He is not old

SHAHEEN
He is old mother he was doing his masters when I was in grade eight

Rukhsana puts the ball on flat surface and puts the pan on high heat

RUKHSANA
His father passed away, he had to marry off his sisters and settle down on his own, and that takes time

Rukhsana rolls the ball into a flat chapatti with a rolling pin

SHAHEEN
(Suspicious)
I know the whole story mother. But why are you telling me all this?

Shaheen distracted by the talk, she half-heartedly tries to roll the chapatti flat
RUKHSANA
Ten years is not much of a difference, your father is fifteen years older than me!

Rukhsana puts the flattened chapatti on the pan and turns it over.

SHAHEEN
I am not marrying him; if that is what you are getting at

Shaheen has the rolling pin in her hand and is rolling it in her hands instead of paying attention to the chapatti. Rukhsana turns over the perfectly cooked chapatti. Rukhsana completes Shaheen’s chapatti and puts it on the pan.

RUKHSANA
(Sternly)
Listen to me Shaheen, this is what your father and I want

SHAHEEN
(Adamant)
But this is not what I want

RUKHSANA
(Accusingly)
I knew you were up to something ...
Who is it? Tell me? Are you having an affair behind our backs?

SHAHEEN
Oh that’s what you think?

RUKHSANA
Then why are you rejecting such a good proposal?

SHAHEEN
Because I want to live my own life

The chapatti is burning behind Shaheen and Rukhsana

RUKHSANA
You will have a life at your husband’s home
SHAHEEN
I want to have a job and a career

RUKHSANA
And that is all? You don’t have someone else that you are seeing?

SHAHEEN
I am not Mother; you hardly let me go out by myself

RUKHSANA
The whole neighbourhood says you are too independent for a girl and you stand there and complain that we don’t let you go out by yourself.

Shaheen leaves and Rukhsana realizes that the burned chapatti is catching fire now. She puts the pan with the chapatti under the water.

3. INT. SHAHEEN HOME .AFTER NOON

Shaheen enters her house. She has been out in the sun and looks exhausted.

Shaheen peaks in the living room and sees that there are guests inside.

Shaheen runs up to the kitchen and sees her mother busy making chai (tea) for the guests.

SHAHEEN
Mother, why are Mrs Arshad and Aunty Safina here?

RUKHSANA
You know why they are here, I told you

SHAHEEN
And I told you I am not interested in marrying that old man
RUKHSANA
You told me that you wanted to work, have a career. Mrs Arshad and her son have agreed that you can work

SHAHEEN
(Sarcastic)
Really! Wow that’s so kind of them. What about the fact that I did not like their son and I don’t even want to sit beside him let alone marry him?

RUKHSANA
How can you not like him, you hardly know him

SHAHEEN
Exactly, I hardly know him.

RUKHSANA
Shaheen why are you giving us such a hard time? You are already twenty-two and if we don’t get you married soon no one will want to marry you

SHAHEEN
I don’t care if I don’t get married

RUKHSANA
I care. What will our relatives and the neighbours say that we couldn’t even marry you off at a decent age?

Murtaza enters the kitchen.

MURTAZA
What is taking you so long; the guests are waiting for the tea. I think Shaheen should take the tea inside.

SHAHEEN
I don’t want to go inside

MURTAZA
Go inside and meet Mrs Arshad.
Murtaza looks at Shaheen and her adamant mood.

**MURTAZA**
(Coaxing)
Right now all we are asking is for you to go inside and see what they have to say for themselves. You might even like the boy.

**SHAHEEN**
And if I don’t?

**MURTAZA**
Just go inside Shaheen, don’t create a scene in front of the guests. We can talk about this later.

**RUKHSANA**
Look at her face, if she goes inside with that mood, what will they think?

**MURTAZA**
Shaheen, don’t embarrass me in front of my sister and go inside.

Shaheen recoils at the look on her father’s face and shakes her head.

Rukhsana puts the tray of food in Shaheen’s hands and adjusts her scarf on her head.

Rukhsana looks at Shaheen. Shaheen looks beautiful and Rukhsana gives a sigh of relief.

**RUKHSANA**
Don’t talk too much in front of them. They will think you are shameless.

4.  **INT. SHAHEEN’S HOME - LIVING ROOM .AFTER NOON**

Murtaza’s sister SAFINA is sitting with Mrs ARSHAD and her son HUMANYUN.
Mrs Arshad is critically observing the house and wipes the table with her hand to see if it’s dusty, it’s not dusty.

Shaheen enters the living room. The room is very cosy and is decorated with heavy furniture.

SAFINA
Mrs Arshad, meet my niece Shaheen. See I told you she has turned out to be a beautiful woman

Shaheen feels uncomfortable at this compliment; she tries to hide her anger when Mrs Arshad’s eyes scan her slowly from head to toe

MRS ARSHAD
Indeed she has, when I last saw you Shaheen you were still at school. It seems like yesterday

MRS ARSHAD
So Shaheen your aunty tells me that you have done really well in your studies?

RUKHSANA
Oh yes, Shaheen is always surrounded with books

RUKHSANA
What kind of books?

RUKHSANA
Anything from history to politics and from novels to poetry

MRS ARSHAD
Books are good but they can put strange ideas into a girl’s heads I am sure you must have trained her in house work too.

SAFINA
Offcourse Rukhsana has, girls can learn how to cook by just observing their mothers
MRS ARSHAD
That’s good, my son likes his food fresh and homemade, he never eats out you see, don’t you Humanyun.

HUMANYUN
(meekly)
Yes mother.

MRS ARSHAD
Humanyun is a very obedient son. Whoever marries him will be very lucky.

RUKHSANA
Yes, he is a very good boy.

Awkward silence

SHAHEEN
So you told my parents that you will allow your wife to work.

Safina and Rukhsana both give looks to Shaheen to stop talking. Mrs Arshad does not like that Shaheen has addressed Humanyun directly and looks at Safina with a questioning look.

Humanyun gestures to speak, but Mrs Arshad interrupts.

MRS ARSHAD
Every girl who gets good grades at college wants to work a bit. Even my daughter wanted to work. But once you have babies, than of course you will have to leave your job.

SHAHEEN
I think women can have careers and children.

Safina and Rukhsana both slam their hands on their foreheads.
MRS ARSHAD
You will feel differently once you are married. No reason to worry about this right now.

Humanyun drains a glass of water.

5. INT. SHAHEEN’S PARENTS HOME - LIVING ROOM. DAY

Shaheen and her parents are having an argument. Murtaza is angry and agitated.

SHAHEEN
Father you promised me that you won’t force me into marrying anyone

MURTAZA
That was before you rejected five proposals. You cannot reject all of them.

RUKHSANA
Good girls heed their parent’s advice and are obedient to their wishes

MURTAZA
And this is our wish. Trust us we are making the right decision for you. You will be very happy with Humanyun. He is a very good boy. He is settled and has a stable job

SHAHEEN
Humanyun is like a puppy around his mother. He doesn’t even let him speak.

RUKHSANA
This is a sign of an obedient child, who respects his mother. Not like you who argues with her mother all the time
SHAHEEN
But I have a reason to argue.
I have the right to choose my
spouse without you two
pressurising me

MURTAZA
If you have the right to
choose does not mean you have
to reject every proposal that
comes for you.

RUKHSANA
Do you think that we will make
you do something which is not
good for you?

SHAHEEN
(almost shouting)
Forcing me like this, can’t be
good for me

RUKHSANA
Listen Shaheen this proposal
is from the family; we cannot
reject it without any real
reason.

MURTAZA
How do you think I will
explain to your Aunty Safina?
She will think that I couldn’t
even raise an obedient
daughter

SHAHEEN
Well you didn’t raise an
obedient daughter

Murtaza slaps Shaheen across the face. Shaheen is shocked
and gets red with anger

MURTAZA
(shouting)
I have given you everything
that I could. I have raised
you in comfort fulfilled your
every wish. And you say that I
didn’t raise you right.
SHAHEEN
(surprised and angry)
Father you hit me!

MURTAZA
I have had enough of this non-sense. You will agree to marry Humanyun. This is my house; you can’t always have your way under my roof.

Murtaza walks out; Shaheen is shocked and close to tears

RUKHSANA
I have never seen him so angry in his life. He does not like looking helpless in front of his older sister Safina. I suggest you be a good daughter and agree to what he is saying

6. INT. SHAHEEN’S BEDROOM .DAY

Shaheen is looking at Bhutto’s Poster.

She picks up the phone and makes a call

SHAHEEN
Asalam-O-Alikum. This is Shaheen Murtaza. I was referred by my friend Afshan Amir. I believe you have a job opening that you need to fill urgently.

Shaheen listens

SHAHEEN
No, I won’t mind if it is in a rural area and a week’s notice is enough for me

Shaheen listens again while nodding

SHAHEEN
That sounds great, thanks.
Shaheen takes off Benazir Bhutto’s poster and puts it carefully in a bag. With a few folders and some of her books

Shaheen then takes out a suitcase and packs her clothes and hides the suitcase under her bed

She looks confused and sits there deep in thought and curling her hair tightly on her fingers in nervousness

7. **INT. SHAHEEN’S HOME - LIVING ROOM. AFTER NOON**

Shaheen is in the living room with her parents.

Shaheen is leaving but she is not talking to her father, because he slapped her

A couple of packed suitcases are lying beside Shaheen

**MURTAZA**
You think you will be able to survive on your own in a remote village and build a school there? You have never even been on your own. How do you think you will survive in a remote village? Allah knows how they live!

**RUKHSANA**
(Teary voice)
A girl who disobeys her parents never finds peace.

**SHAHEEN**
I won’t find peace locked up in a home cooking chapatti’s.

**RUKHSANA**
(pleading)
O sweetheart don’t go, we were doing this for your own good

**SHAHEEN**
I know mother, but what you want for me is different from what I want for myself.
RUHKSANA
Don’t leave your old mother alone, what will I tell the family, what will I tell the neighbours?

MURTZA
Let her go, she has never been on her own. She won’t be able to survive she will be back in two days

RUHKSANA
Can at least one of you stop being stubborn? Now Shaheen leave the suitcases here, we can discuss this in peace. No reason to make an emotional decision

SHAHEEN
It is not an emotional decision I have always wanted to teach in a village.

RUHKSANA
Murtaza I think she is mad at you. Why don’t you just apologize to her for slapping her? And she will calm down. She won’t leave her old mother alone, will you Shaheen?

SHAHEEN
Mother, I love you a lot but I am really tired of your coercing and emotional blackmailing.

RUHKSANA
(Worried)
Ok, ok calm down, we will call aunty Safina and ask her to reject the proposal, Happy? Now why don’t you go back into your room?

MURTZA
(Angrily pacing the room )
No one will call your Aunty Safina. I am not going to
cancel this proposal. Shaheen should obey me, I am her father

RUHKSANA
Murtaza help me out here will you? I am trying to make her stay

Murtaza comes very close to Shaheen and points at her face

MURTAZA
(accusing)
Make her stay? She is sneaking behind our backs applying for this job, making me look like a fool

SHAHEEN
I learnt it from you. You sneaked behind my back and finalized the proposal

MURTAZA
(Accusingly to Rukhsana)
Where did she learn to talk back like that?

RUHKSANA
(Hurt)
She inherited stubbornness from her paternal side

MURTAZA
(Having an anger surge)
You thankless, disobedient child! You don’t even know how the world is like. I have protected you all your life. You can’t live on your own. You want to leave! Leave my house right now! You won’t be able to survive by yourself. This might put some sense into you and make you realise how ungrateful you are to me
SHAHEEN
(To her mother)
I will let you know when I arrive there

Shaheen picks up her bags

RUKHSANA
(Weeping)
I carried you in my womb and raised you; this is how you will repay me

Shaheen walks out of the house

MURTAZA
(Loudly so Shaheen can hear)
This girl will bring shame upon us

RUKHSANA
Please stop shouting Murtaza the neighbours will know what’s going on

8. EXT. SHAHEEN’S NEIGHBOURHOOD. DAY

NEIGHBOUR’S POV.
Shaheen walks out of her house on to the street

A neighbour from the roof top, spots her leaving

NEIGHBOUR 1
(Calls upon other neighbours)
Hey listen; did you know what just happened? Shaheen walked out of her parent’s house alone with two suitcases

NEIGHBOUR 2
I thought Rukhsana was a good mother, what a disobedient child, making her parents go through all this

9. EXT. LOCAL BUS STOP CENTRAL RAWALPINDI. DAY
Shaheen is waiting on a local bus stop alone with her suitcases.

A few men stare at her. Shaheen is intimated but acts like it isn’t bothering her.

The wagon arrives, it is decorated with truck art and the driver is eating paan (traditional mouth sweetener)

DRIVER
You alone

SHAHEEN
No! Do you go through village Chak-soma in District Hota?

DRIVER
I will be going to central Hota, from there you will have to change to another wagon to get to Chak-Soma.

SHAHEEN
Good, let me know where to catch that wagon when we reach Hota?

DRIVER
Those two back there they are from Chak-soma.

The driver points out at a young man in his mid twenties OMAR and a girl MAHJABEEN around fifteen years old at the back. They look so alike that it is obvious they are siblings.

Shaheen goes and sits next to them, thinking weather its appropriate to start the conversation. Mahjabeen gives Shaheen a brilliant friendly smile.

SHAHEEN
Asalam-O-Aalikum. The driver told me that you guys are also going to Chak-soma!

MAHJABEEN
Walikum-us-Salam. We are from Chak-Soma. My name is Mahjabeen and this is my brother Omar.
Omar nods at Shaheen

OMAR
What brings you to our village?

SHAHEEN
I got a job there as a school teacher for the girls primary school.

MAHJABEEN
So they have finally hired someone. The school has been closed since the last teacher left.

SHAHEEN
And when was that?

OMAR
Over a year ago!

SHAHEEN
So where do the village girls go to school?

MAHJABEEN
Some of them walk for two hours to get to the nearest school, in the neighbouring village. Like I used to.

OMAR
Some parents can’t be bothered so most girls don’t go to school because of this.

SHAHEEN
Is there a boy’s school at Chak-Soma?

OMAR
There is a primary school: our father is the school master.

MAHJABEEN
He will be really excited to know they have hired someone to start the girl’s school again.
SHAHEEN
(begins to relax)
I would love to meet him too.
To get some tips, this is my first job

OMAR
It’s been very hard to fill in this position permanently.
Most teachers do not want to come to a remote village for a job. It is good that you have taken the initiative

SHAHEEN
I did sign a two year contract

MAHJABEEN
Someone sticking to that job for two years that will be a first

10. EXT. HOTA LOCAL BUS STOP. SUN SETTING

All the passengers get off at the Hota. Shaheen, Mahjabeen and Omar get off at the end.

Mahjabeen and Omar have developed an instant liking for Shaheen and they are talking as if they have known each other forever

An old but huge building is right behind the stop with a sign saying HOTA DISTRICT COUNCIL

OMAR
This is our local District Council. Our Village Chak-Soma comes under this council too

MAHJABEEN
You will be coming here very often

Omar and Mahjabeen point out to Shaheen other parts of Hota and than the Wagon arrives and all three get on it.
11. **EXT. CHAK-SOMA LOCAL BUS STOP – SUN SETTING**

Shaheen, Mahjabeen and Omar get off the bus stop laughing. Mahjabeen has been telling jokes.

Chak-Soma is a beautiful village surrounded by mustard fields. When they enter the central Village area Shaheen looks around at the green fields and takes in the fresh air, the central square is full of girls playing stapoo (a local game played mostly by girls on the streets).

**OMAR**

We will walk you to your house.

**SHAHEEN**

That’s alright; I have troubled you two a lot already.

**MAHJABEEN**

It is your first day here; let us take you to your new house and it’s getting dark.

**SHAHEEN**

Oh I am so excited. A house all to myself.

**OMAR**

Don’t get too excited.

12. **INT. CHAK-SOMA – SHAHEEN’S NEW HOME .NIGHT**

Shaheen enters the house. Omar and Mahjabeen say good bye.

Shaheen looks around the tiny place. It is a very simple; a complete contrast to her comfortable room at her parents’ house.

The floor is made of mud. The house has no paint and the bricks are visible. There is single traditional bed (the charpoy) in the room. There is a stove that is on the ground and a small low stool to sit on it for cooking.

13. **INT. CHAK-SOMA- SHAHEEN’S NEW HOME .MORNING**

There is a soft knock from outside. Shaheen opens the doors to see that Mahjabeen is standing there with a pot in her hand.
SHAHEEN
Asalam-o-Alikum Mahjabeen so nice to see you here

MAHJABEEN
Mother cooked some biryani, I thought you would like to have some

SHAHEEN
Thank you so much, I haven’t even thought about food yet

MAHJABEEN
I can bring you some food from my home until you settle down

SHAHEEN
That’s such a generous offer, but I think I should start managing things myself

MAHJABEEN
Actually... I wanted to talk to you about something I am really excited about.

SHAHEEN
What is that?

MAHJABEEN
I have finished my tenth grade and I will be going to Pakpattan for year eleven, but my school won’t start until next term. I have got six months of boredom ahead. I was wondering if I could help you start up your school?

SHAHEEN
I am not sure I am allowed to hire someone yet

MAHJABEEN
I don’t want to be hired. I want to do something I love. Won’t it be good to have a helping hand at your new school anyway?
SHAHEEN
Ah well...

MAHJABEEN
(Smiling and pleading with sincere eyes)
Please, pretty please

SHAHEEN
What about your parents

MAHJABEEN
My father won’t mind, he would be happy for me!

SHAHEEN
Ok we will first discuss this with your father.

MAHJABEEN
I am so excited. Yay!

14. INT. CHAK-SOMA- SHAHEEN’S HOME. NOON

Shaheen is at her home, when suddenly her fan stops working.

It’s really hot so she tries the electric switch and the light doesn’t turn on.

She goes out to get some air

Many villagers have come out of their houses looking for a cool breeze.

SHAHEEN
How often do the electricity blackouts happen here?

VILLAGER
Almost every day for two hours, but this is not the regular time
We heard a loud thud from the transformer, maybe it’s failed again

SHAHEEN
Again?
VILLAGER
Last time it took a week to fix it. Look it is the transformer. See our local engineer is climbing the transformer

Shaheen looks at the person climbing the pole

SHAHEEN
Is that Omar?

VILLAGER
Yes it is. That boy, he does us all so proud, he did his degree in electric engineering from the city, but came back to work for the village. He is employed by the government to look after our electric supplies.

The villagers are hot and easily get bored. Soon they start dispersing

Omar gets off the pole and spots Shaheen

SHAHEEN
Did you fix it?

OMAR
(sarcastic laugh)
No, I can’t. There was an electric surge that blew up the transformer. I was just disconnecting it with the supply to prevent the transformer from catching a fire

SHAHEEN
How long will it take to be fixed?

OMAR
I honestly don’t know, but it will take a while for the government to send a team to help me out. I am finished here. What are you doing now?
SHAHEEN
I don’t know. What do you
people do with no electricity
in this heat?

OMAR
Has Mahjabeen taken you to
Chak-soma local sweet shop?
They make these wonderful cold
kulfi’s.

SHAHEEN
That sounds like a good idea

OMAR
Let’s go get it before their
kulfi’s melt away in their
freezers, their freezers won’t
be working for a while

Omar and Shaheen enter the sweet shop. Shaheen is
entranced at the variety of colourful sweets, while Omar
grabs the two kulfi’s (traditional ice-cream) from the
freezer and makes a payment.

Shaheen and Omar leave the sweet shop

Shaheen and Omar walk slowly and try to eat their kulfi’s
while they melt away fast. While they are walking back to
Shaheen’s house the postman comes towards Omar

POSTMAN
I have been looking for you
Omar. Chauhdary Jabbar was
asking for you to come and fix
his electricity generator,
which doesn’t seem to be
working

OMAR
Let him know I am coming

The postman leaves

OMAR
Sorry Shaheen I have been
summoned by the Chauhdary, the
landlord of the Village
SHAHEEN
A Chauhdary who has a personal electricity generator in his house, oh I so wish I had one too

OMAR
Already missing the city?

SHAHEEN
(Bravely)
Not at all

15. EXT. CHAK-SOMA- OUTSIDE THE NEW GIRLS SCHOOL. DAY

A few days later. A small cottage has a sign saying Girls School, Chak-Soma.

The school has a big lock on it.

Mahjabeen is showing Shaheen around the village.

Mahjabeen and Shaheen walk to a farm and enter it.

16. INT. FARM. DAY

The FARMER is milking his cow. The FARMER’S WIFE smiles at them

FARMER’S WIFE
Hello Mahjabeen, how are you? You look lovely. And you must be the new school teacher

SHAHEEN
Yes I am and my name is Shaheen

FARMER’S WIFE
Asalam-o-Alikum Shaheen and welcome to chak-soma. How can I help you today?

SHAHEEN
I was looking to buy some Milk and eggs here
FARMER’S WIFE
You have come to the right place. Can I tempt you into buying a Chicken; you could cook it for dinner tonight?

SHAHEEN
Yes thank you, I would love that

The Farmers Wife and two of her kid’s suddenly start running after a chicken

FARMER
(Still milking the cow)
That will be two hundred rupees for all of it!

SHAHEEN
Wow that’s expensive; I thought because I am buying from a farm it would be much cheaper than the city. But it is more expensive

The Chicken flies over the cow and the cow is agitated, The farmer calms down the cow and starts milking again

FARMER
If we sell from our farm we have to give fifty percent commission to Chauhdary Jabbar, the village chief, otherwise we sell in bulk to him which he resells in the city

FARMER’S WIFE and her kids have cornered a chicken

SHAHEEN
So you have to sell it to him or give him fifty percent commission if you sell it yourself, but why?

MAHJABEEN
Jabbar owns most of the land here

FARMER
Including this farm and the fields my family and I work on.
Shaheen is distracted by the chicken wailing.

The farmer’s wife is holding the chicken.

The farmer daughter sharpens a knife and gives it to his mother

Farmer’s wife puts the knife in action to slaughter the chicken.

Shaheen looks away and closes her eyes. Shaheen can only hear the slaughter of the chicken

FARMER’S WIFE
Allah Ho Akbar, Allah Ho Akbar, Allah Ho Akbar.

MAHJABEEN
(Laughs)
Shaheen, you have never seen a chicken being slaughtered

SHAHEEN
I think I have lost my appetite for chicken

FARMER
You will forget about this once you reach home

Mahjabeen takes her away from the scene and we see the farmer’s wife skinning the chicken.

17. INT. HAIDER’S PORCH. DAY

The village boy’s school Head master HAIDER is sitting on a charpoy (traditional bed) talking to Shaheen.

Haider’s son Omar and daughter Mahjabeen are sitting across them in chairs

Haider’s wife Farida serves chai

SHAHEEN
So how long has the girls school been closed?

HAIDER
Since the last teacher left
SHAHEEN
And how long ago did she leave?

HAIDER
A year maybe longer

Haider pours the tea in his saucer and sips through it.

HAIDER
It’s hard for someone who doesn’t belong to this village to stay here for long.

OMAR & MAHJABEEN
(Shocked)
Father!

HAIDER
I meant the old teacher

Uncomfortable silence for a second

Farida joins them wiping her hands off her scarf.

SHAHEEN
I have applied for funding for my school

HAIDER
That was fast, but you will find that it will take a lot of time to get it approved.

OMAR
Unless of course

Haider gives a stare to Omar

SHAHEEN
Unless what?

MAHJABEEN
Unless Chauhdary Jabbar wants it

SHAHEEN
Chauhdary Jabbar seems to control everything here
HAIDER
He is the Chauhdary of our village, the village chief here. He owns most of the village land

OMAR
Which he inherited from his father

MAHJABEEN
And his wife’s father

SHAHEEN
From his wife’s father?

FARIDA
You know these landlords they like to keep their lands within the family. He was married to his cousin who was twenty years older than him when he was only eighteen.

HAIDER
There was no male cousin her age so Jabbar had to marry her to keep the family inheritance within the family.

FARIDA
Luckily Jabbar didn’t inherit his family’s cruelty

HAIDER
I agree he isn’t as much of a tyrant as his father but he still keeps a tight control over his land and controls the market price of everything produced in the village.

OMAR
Why are you two boring Shaheen with our village history?

SHAHEEN
It’s alright, it’s good to know.
HAIDER
You should know, you are here now

FARIDA
So tell us something about yourself. We know you are from Rawalpindi. What I can’t understand is how your parents let you come so far away on your own?

SHAHEEN
(Hesitates)
Umm Yes

FARIDA
Don’t they want to marry you? You must be twenty-two are you?

MAHJABEEN
Mother!!!!!

OMAR
(Apologetically)
My mother thinks no question is too personal

SHAHEEN
They do want to marry me off, but I want to have a career and do something useful

FARIDA
You could have found a job in the city, why come so far on your own?

SHAHEEN
Just to experience life by myself, I think parents protect their girls too much in our culture

HAIDER
Our daughters are our honour we have to protect them, but yes you are right by protecting them too much we do sometimes limit their freedom
FARIDA
Oh Haider these ideas of yours
will spoil Mahjabeen, she is
already too independent for a
fifteen year old.

Farida picks up the cups and saucer and puts them on the
tray.

Mahjabeen takes Shaheen into her room

21. EXT. CHAK-SOMA BUS STOP. DAY

Shaheen is waiting for the local wagon to come

22. EXT. HOTA BUS STOP IN FRONT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL.
DAY

Shaheen gets out of the local wagon thanking the driver.
She walks past the council building and walks for a while
until she reaches the magistrates offices

She goes inside the District Magistrate’s office

MAGISTRATE
Ah! Shaheen my, favourite
niece, how have you been?

SHAHEEN
I have been good Uncle Rashid

MAGISTRATE
Settling well in your new job?

SHAHEEN
Good, have you heard from my
mother?

MAGISTRATE
Yes I did talk to her; she
told me how you left the house
after you had an argument with
Murtaza. She was crying and
was worried how you will
manage by yourself
SHAHEEN
I wrote to her telling her I arrived safely, but I didn’t receive a reply

MAGISTRATE
What can I say, she is fine. Though, I am a bit worried about you. You have left your parents house. Do you want me to talk to Murtaza to take you back in?

SHAHEEN
No uncle Rashid I don’t want to go back. I really like it here and I have a Job I love

MAGISTRATE
Your father can be very forceful sometimes. But he is your father. You should try to mend the bridges

SHAHEEN
I am trying, I wrote to them, I have also called, they haven’t replied

MAGISTRATE
I think they do want you back but they are mad at you for walking out without their permission

SHAHEEN
I am not going back. Please don’t ask me to. I need to live by myself for a while to understand what I want

MAGISTRATE
Ok, ok I don’t want to be forcing you. So tell me how your job is going?

SHAHEEN
Well I am starting to set up the school but require more funding for that
MAGISTRATE
You know the governmental processes can be slow, all you can do is, do your job with what you have. How are people in the village treating you?

SHAHEEN
They are really kind to me; I think I have already made a few friends

MAGISTRATE
My sincere suggestion is that if you keep to yourself and not interfere in other people’s business you will do just fine

SHAHEEN
Thanks for the tip uncle.

MAGISTRATE
Any time dear Shaheen. Come visit me anytime you like. Or give me a call I can come pick you up

Shaheen leaves the magistrates office

20. EXT. CHAK-SOMA BUS STOP. MORNING

Shaheen is getting off from the wagon, Omar spots her

OMAR
Asalam-O-Alikum Shaheen! Where have you been?

SHAHEEN
Just visiting a relative, where are you off to?

OMAR
I am walking up to get some kites for the Basant festival, come along with me

Shaheen and Omar walk up to the kite shop which is full of colourful kites
Omar selects a kite from the huge collection. The kite he selects has an eagle on it. In Urdu Shaheen means eagle.

21. INT. JABBAR’S HOUSE . DAY

Next day

Shaheen and Mahjabeen enter Jabbar’s house. Mahjabeen looks around notices that Jabbar’s house is quite well furnished.

Mahjabeen becomes fascinated by a fish tank and she cannot control her excitement upon seeing the fish in it

Jabbar’s wife NASREEN comes into the room and looks at the girls with suspicion,

Nasreen is quite an older woman as compared to Jabbar and resents the youth of Shaheen and Mahjabeen

    NASREEN
    Does Chauhdary Jabbar know you are coming?

Jabbar enters and clears his throat

    JABBAR
    That’s how you welcome gusts to your house.

Nasreen gives Jabbar a look of disgust

    JABBAR
    Why don’t you go and see if the maids are bringing something for our guests

Not happy Nasreen leaves the room

Shaheen stares at a beautiful miniature painting about village life.

Mahjabeen notices what Shaheen is looking at and joins her in staring the painting. They are both in a trance

    JABBAR
    It’s an original by Ustad Allah Bukhsh
SHAHEEN
The original is at the National art gallery in Islamabad, I saw it at on a college visit.

JABBAR
(Successfully hides his embarrassment)
I was just testing your knowledge. You are quite an intelligent girl, what brings you to our humble village.

SHAHEEN
The job

JABBAR
But you could have easily gotten a job in the city; you could have even gone to a bigger city like Islamabad. Why Chak-Soma?

MAHJABEEN
I have never seen something like that

Mahjabeen points at the fish tank

MAHJABEEN (CONT’D)
Where can you get one of those?

JABBAR
I am not sure, it was a gift. Do you like it?

MAHJABEEN
It’s really beautiful

JABBAR
People rarely appreciate beautiful things

SHAHEEN
I am sorry Chauhdary Jabbar for coming to your home unannounced
JABBAR
That’s perfectly alright. You and your friend are always welcome at my house. How can I be of assistance?

SHAHEEN
The school is in a very bad condition and I have applied for funding for the school

JABBAR
Well the application will take its due time as everything does.

MAHJABEEN
We were wondering if you could help us with it!

JABBAR
(Flirting)
Well it depends upon who is asking

Shaheen is not happy with how things are going

SHAHEEN
(Sternly)
Being the Councillor of Chak-Soma we were thinking that you would be interested in supporting my funding proposal in the district council. It will benefit the girls who have to walk miles to go to the closest school

JABBAR
Yes, this concerns me a lot, which is why our council approved funding for your position Miss Shaheen

MAHJABEEN
(excited)
So you will help Shaheen get support for the funding in the council
JABBAR
If that is what you want!

SHAHEEN
Thank you so much Jabbar, but it’s getting late and Mahjabeen’s parents would be worried

JABBAR
No, No I understand, you two could come to my house day after tomorrow, and I can personally give you a small donation to start up the school

SHAHEEN
That’s very generous of you, but I will have to decline the offer. Mahjabeen lets go

Shaheen takes Mahjabeen’s hand and gets out of the house in a rush

MAHJABEEN
Why did you not take the donation, that would have been great and we would be able to start improving the school right away

SHAHEEN
O Mahjabeen, he wasn’t really interested in the school, he was flirting with you.

MAHJABEEN
I think he was too but why does that matter?

SHAHEEN
Mahjabeen it does matter. I don’t think I feel comfortable taking you to his house again

MAHJABEEN
Why?
SHAHEEN
These rich people, when they do favours they expect you to pay them back with favours; Allah knows what he will expect from us in return

MAHJABEEN
My brother Omar flirts with you, you don’t seem to mind that

SHAHEEN
Mahjabeen, Jabbar is an older guy flirting with a fifteen year old. Not only is he old, he is powerful and conniving.

MAHJABEEN
Well what can he do really?

SHAHEEN
I do not know. Just didn’t feel right, you should be careful around him

MAHJABEEN
You are beginning to sound like my mother

25. EXT. CHAK-SOMA. DAY

Shaheen walks from door to door trying to get people to send their girls to her school

Shaheen and Mahjabeen come out of one of the house hugging the woman and her two little girls

SHAHEEN
See you at school

Shaheen and Mahjabeen run out of another house

MAN FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE
(shouts)
Stupid city woman, will educate my wife, on my dead body
Shaheen ticks off on a list on her notebook.

Shaheen smiles at Mahjabeen and shows her the list

23. EXT. CHAK-SOMA OUTSIDE HAIDER’S HOUSE. EVENING

Jabbar is coming out of Haider’s House, he is red with anger

When Shaheen enters Haider’s house, she sees that Haider is very worried.

There is a big box of a beautiful large fish tank lying on the ground. And a box of fishes along with it

Shaheen goes in to find Mahjabeen

Farida has been scolding Mahjabeen and Mahjabeen is close to tears

FARIDA
Here is the real culprit. You took my daughter to Jabbar’s house. Why didn’t you ask us first. We grew up in this village, we know how he is

SHAHEEN
I realized after we went there that it wasn’t such a good idea

MAHJABEEN
It’s not Shaheen’s fault mother

FARIDA
Why did you two have to go to a stranger’s house, and if Shaheen you really had to go you should have gone by yourself, why drag my innocent girl into this?

FARIDA
Now wipe of your tears Mahjabeen and come help me in the kitchen

Farida leaves Mahjabeen’s room
SHAHEEN
What happened?

MAHJABEEN
Jabbar came in with a water aquarium, like the one I liked at his house

SHAHEEN
Yes, I saw that. Are your parents really mad?

MAHJABEEN
They are worried; Jabbar is giving gifts and he is also asking to marry me

SHAHEEN
Did you know that before we went there yesterday?

MAHJABEEN
No I didn’t. My mother just told me that he has asked previously but they never told me, they should have.

SHAHEEN
Do not worry your parents can reject the proposal

MAHJABEEN
Oh they have, but Jabbar owns everything in this village. Most people in the village are afraid to say no to him. Jabbar’s father used to get people killed for not obeying him.

SHAHEEN
But I have heard he is different. You think he can force your family to marry you off?

MAHJABEEN
(Assuring)
I don’t think so, my father will never agree to that
24. EXT. CHAK-SOMA GIRLS SCHOOL. DAY

Shaheen and Mahjabeen have opened the school it looks neat and the doors are freshly painted.

The lock from the school is removed and the doors are wide open.

Shaheen and Mahjabeen are standing at the school door welcoming the girls.

Shaheen and Mahjabeen go inside after the girls.

Shaheen assembles all of them and gives them copies of a poem.

SHAHEEN
Now girls, we will sing this poem every day before we start school

Shaheen starts singing the poem

SHAHEEN
An eagle flies across the skies
The sun will shine tomorrow

Mahjabeen joins her in the singing

SHAHEEN & MAHJABEEN
The rain will come and we will run
And there will be no sorrow

The School girls slowly start singing joining in too

CHORUS
An eagle flies across the skies
The sun will shine tomorrow
The rain will come and we will run
And there will be no sorrow

Outside the school the Farmer and his wife walk past the school and stop to listen to the girls singing
25. INT. CHAK-SOMA GIRLS SCHOOL. DAY

Shaheen and Mahjabeen are in different class rooms when they hear a racket and come outside.

Jabbar has entered the school with the Mayor of Hota.

    JABBAR
    This is Miss Shaheen and this is Miss Mahjabeen. Because of these two wonderful women our village has its own girl’s primary school.

    SHAHEEN
    Thank you Chauhdary Jabbar, you are very kind.

    JABBAR
    I was telling the mayor here how important this school is for the people of Chak-Soma. It would be great if we could invest more in this project.

    Mayor
    I am happy to see that you two are working really hard. Jabbar speaks very highly of you.

    SHAHEEN
    That is very kind of him.

    JABBAR
    Here is the donation I promised you.

    SHAHEEN
    I think that won’t be necessary.

    Mayor
    You are short of funding I am sure you must be grateful for Jabbar’s generosity. Come on take it, it is for the girls of Chak-soma.

Shaheen takes the envelope reluctantly.
26. INT. CHAK-SOMA GIRLS SCHOOL. DAY

The School bell rings. The students run away from her class.

Shaheen exhausted sits down on the chair and slumps.

Shaheen hears screams and runs to the backyard of the school.

Shaheen witnesses Mahjabeen being abducted by a group of men, Jabbar is ordering them around

When she comes closer they have gotten onto a jeep and have taken Mahjabeen

When the jeeps are out of sight, Shaheen makes a run for Haider’s house

27. INT. HAIDER’S PORCH. LATE AFTERNOON

Mahjabeen’s mother Farida is wailing. Some relatives are gathered in the house and the looks on their faces are grim. The relatives include Haider’s older brother HUSSIEIN

HUSSIEIN
(To HAIDER)
Why didn’t you marry her off when Jabbar asked for her hand?

HAIDER
Because she is too young, and I wasn’t going to marry her to him

HUSSIEIN
And now, what will you do now?

HAIDER
O Hussein I don’t know, I didn’t think Jabbar would just kidnap her like that

FARIDA
He asked for her hand a year ago and we refused saying she is too young. He didn’t ask
again until a few days ago, we thought he would be as cautious as he was the last time

HUSSEIN
We all know he thinks he owns the world and he was not going to take a no for an answer

FARIDA
Well we were not expecting this at all

HUSSEIN
The problem is now that this has happened what can we do?

OMAR
We should file a police report and demand Jabbar to return her

HUSSEIN
O Omar there is so much you don’t understand about this world. No one will accept her now, she is an abducted girl, and it doesn’t matter if she went by her free will or not.

SHAHEEN
It’s not about whether people in the society accept her or not. It matters if you people accept her or not

HUSSEIN
What will we do with her once she comes back? People will point fingers at her and no one will agree to marry her

OMAR
I think we shouldn’t care about that, we should get her back because she has been abducted against her will. Allah knows how he is keeping her.
HUSSEIN
That is not our concern anymore; he has taken her so it’s Jabbar’s responsibility to keep her the way he wishes. I think he must have married her by now.

HAIDER
Why did this have to happen to us?

HUSSEIN
Well you should have kept your beautiful daughter out of people’s sights. You gave her too much freedom, let her go anywhere on her own; someone was going to go for her.

OMAR
(frustrated)
Father why are you letting Uncle Hussein decide this matter for us? We should not accept what has happened otherwise Jabbar will think he can get away with anything.

HAIDER
Jabbar does get away with anything. He owns this village. Most people here are indebted to him or work on his land. Everyone respects him and fears him. No one will be on our side if we go against Jabbar.

OMAR
(angry)
Father I can’t believe you are the same man who stood in front of Jabbar and rejected his proposal. He couldn’t believe it. No one says no to him but you did.
FARIDA
(weeping)
And what did rejecting get us.
I told Haider we should tell
him to wait and send Mahjabeen
to the city quietly

Haider starts crying helplessly

HUSSEIN
We can’t bring an abducted
girl back home. This will
bring shame upon the whole
family. Who will marry her?
Who will accept her? She will
live a life of misery, it is
better we accept what fate had
bought upon us.

28. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOME. NIGHT

Shaheen is sitting contemplating when she hears a knock
at the door

She opens the door as it is Omar

SHAHEEN
Hello Omar, any news from
Mahjabeen

OMAR
My parents and my uncle think,
that after a few months maybe
Jabbar will let her visit us

SHAHEEN
They are really counting on
the fact that Jabbar will
treat her right and marry her
and then let you guys see her
too

OMAR
They think if they accept her
marriage with Jabbar there is
no reason that Jabbar won’t
let us see her.

SHAHEEN
Well what do you think?
OMAR
I think we are letting Jabbar get away with it. No one should be able to get away with kidnapping someone like this. He has shown us that he is a tyrant and will do anything to get what he wants.

SHAHEEN
So what were you planning to do?

OMAR
I know my sister she didn’t want this for herself and she would be counting on me to help her out.

SHAHEEN
Do you think we should go to the police?

OMAR
We can’t just barge into Jabbar’s house and get Mahjabeen out from there. We have to file a police complaint.

SHAHEEN
And if something happens to Mahjabeen at Jabbar’s house we will have a record that we filed a complaint for her abduction.

OMAR
That’s sharp, I didn’t think of it that way. I came here to ask you something, as you witnessed the abduction; I had to know if you would come along with me to file the police complaint?
SHAHEEN
Offcourse I would, I would do anything to help you get Mahjabeen back.
I feel a bit responsible too; I shouldn’t have taken her to Jabbar’s house

OMAR
It’s not your fault really. Jabbar has asked for Mahjabeen’s proposal before too. My parents never told Mahjabeen. They thought she needn’t know. If Mahjabeen knew she wouldn’t have gone herself.

SHAHEEN
Do you think seeing Mahjabeen in his house triggered it?

OMAR
Allah knows what triggered this upon our family

Shaheen pats Omar on the shoulder consoling him

29. INT. CHAK-SOMA POLICE STATION. EVENING

Shaheen and Omar approach Inspector Ahsan

Ahsan gets up and greets them and motions them to sit down across his desk

SHAHEEN
We are here to file an urgent complaint

AHSAN
About what?

OMAR
My sister Mahjabeen was abducted today?

AHSAN
So your sister is missing?
SHAHEEN
No she was abducted

AHSAN
How do you know she was abducted and didn’t run away?

SHAHEEN
Because I witnessed it

AHSAN
So who is it that abducted Mahjabeen?

SHAHEEN
Chauhdary Jabbar Hussein

AHSAN
You are new here, you sure it was Chauhdary Jabbar, he is a very respected man here

SHAHEEN
Yes I have met him twice before, I am sure it was him

AHSAN
Twice when and where?

SHAHEEN
Once a few days ago at his house. And once when he came to the school to give us a donation to start up

AHSAN
So why did you visit Chauhdary Jabbar’s House, Miss Shaheen? Did you go by yourself?

SHAHEEN
(seeing the trap)
I went with Mahjabeen; we were looking for some support for the school

AHSAN
Which he gave you soon after?
SHAHEEN
Yes he came to the school with the mayor. They came to see our efforts for reopening the school

AHSAN
Was he supportive of the school?

SHAHEEN
Yes he was, why?

AHSAN
Did he have an argument with you or Mahjabeen?

SHAHEEN
No

AHSAN
Do you think Mahjabeen might have eloped with Jabbar on her free will?

OMAR
No, I know she did not

AHSAN
Why do you think Chauhdary Jabbar might have abducted her?

OMAR
He came to our house to ask for Mahjabeen’s proposal but my father refused it. So he went on and abducted her

AHSAN
Is it possible that your sister Mahjabeen might have asked Jabbar to take her because her father wasn’t allowing this marriage?

OMAR
(angry)
I told you, I know my sister, he abducted her
SHAHEEN
I am sorry inspector Ahsan; he is emotional about his sister, these questions maybe too disturbing for Omar

AHSAN
I am sorry Miss Shaheen; we have to make sure Mahjabeen didn’t go on her free will.

SHAHEEN
She was taken by a group of thugs. And she was screaming when they were taking her

AHSAN
We have to be sure that the witness is reliable. We need two female witnesses or one male witness

SHAHEEN
Oh really? This rule applies only when it goes to the Shariah Court. We actually do not need any witnesses to file a complaint

AHSAN
(Acting smart)
So are you telling me now that you are not a witness anymore?

SHAHEEN
(Wary)
I did not say that. I was explaining the law to you, so you understand that I know it very well.

Ahsan starts jotting down the points of their complaint. Shaheen and Omar read it. Shaheen suggest some changes and they both sign it. Ahsan gives them a carbon copy of the complaint

Shaheen and Omar thank Inspector Ahsan and Leave
Shaheen points to Omar to keep silent. Shaheen tip toes behind the police station to spy at Ahsan from his office window. Omar follows

POV SHAHEEN. Inspector Ahsan is on the phone he is shaking his head and is obviously nervous.

Shaheen tries to get closer to listen

Ahsan
I cannot just throw away their complaint; I have to make an investigation. You don’t want to get me in trouble, do you?

Ahsan listens shaking his head

Ahsan
The school teacher is a witness and she isn’t easy to fool

Ahsan listens

Ahsan
Chauhdary Sahab, don’t shout at me, I know my way around this but you have to understand that I have to investigate.

Ahsan
How long do you think it will take you to convince Mahjabeen into making a statement that she eloped with you on her will?

Ahsan listens

Ahsan
Make her see that her family won’t accept her back after being abducted, she doesn’t have much choice. Just convince her to make a statement and then I can close the investigation.
Ahsan listens again

Ahsan
Ok but don’t try to bribe the
school teacher; she will use
it against you.

Shaheen breaks a twig, Ahsan Startles and peeps out.
Shaheen stays still. Ahsan closes his window.

When Ahsan pulls back, Shaheen and Omar tip-toe back to
the front and walk silently for a while.

OMAR
Now what?

SHAHEEN
We will have to find out a way
to get around Inspector Ahsan

31. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOUSE DAY

Shaheen is writing a letter.

The Copy of the Police complaint from the police register
is on her desk.

She puts them both in an envelope

32. EXT. CHAK-SOMA. DAY

Shaheen is waiting for the local wagon

An overloaded wagon arrives; it has beautiful truck art
on it.

Shaheen climbs into it

33. EXT. BUS STOP OPPOSITE PAKPATTAN COUNCIL. DAY

Shaheen gets off the local wagon

And walks up to the council and looks at the sign for the
public Library of Pakpattan
34. INT. LIBRARY PAKPATTAN. DAY

Shaheen is in the legal section of the Library.

She is looking through law books on filing a case.

She starts looking through a book about filing complaint against police corruption.

35. EXT. CHAK-SOMA. DAY

Shaheen gets off the overloaded wagon and the farmer’s wife and her kids are helping her carry the books.

They reach her home and put the books in her house.

FARMER’S WIFE
(laughing)
Don’t teach my girl such thick books; she won’t marry anyone from this village

SHAHEEN
She can’t even read yet

FARMER’S WIFE
You know the lady who lives next to me. She used to send her little girl to school every day to our neighbouring village. Everyday her father used to ride her one Hour on his bicycle.

SHAHEEN
That’s nice of him; see now you have school in your own village

FARMER’S WIFE
You know what the thankless daughter did? She ran away with a boy from the city. We never saw her again. Brought such shame on her family

36. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOUSE. DAY

Someone knocks on the door and it’s the postman
Shaheen opens the door

She receives a letter which does not have any sender’s name

She goes inside to open the letter

She reads the letter and it is signed Mahjabeen at the end

37. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOUSE. DAY

Shaheen opens the door for Omar

OMAR
You told the postman to tell me that you wanted to see me at your house?

SHAHEEN
Yes, I received a letter from Mahjabeen

OMAR
Really, where is it?

SHAHEEN
Here

Omar reads the letter aloud

OMAR
Dear Shaheen, I know you saw Jabbar abducting me that day. He took me to his house and performed the Nikkah. It was against my will but I was forced to sign the marriage certificate. My parents came to see me today at Jabbar’s house. Jabbar has convinced them to accept our marriage. I don’t think they are going to do anything about this. I suggest you talk to my brother Omar and help me out. I do not want to live at Jabbar’s house; I didn’t want this for myself. And I do not want to
accept my fate. Hope you can help me out in this terrible situation. I didn’t know where to go for help, so I am writing to you. Desperately waiting for help, Mahjabeen

OMAR
This is Mahjabeen’s handwriting; we should take it to the police as proof.

SHAHEEN
No Omar, we already know Inspector Ahsan is going to turn things around in Jabbar’s favour.

OMAR
So there is really nothing we can do

SHAHEEN
There is always a way. Just let me hang on to this for now.

38. INT. CHAK-SOMA POLICE STATION. MORNING

Shaheen and Omar are sitting in front of Inspector Ahsan

AHSAN
Thank you for coming to the police station on such a short notice

SHAHEEN
That is not a problem, do you have any news for us about Mahjabeen

AHSAN
I have investigated the matter. I went to Jabbar’s House to ask him some questions. He let me talk to his new wife Mahjabeen. She told me that she had married Jabbar on her free will.
OMAR
I don’t think that is true

SHAHEEN
Omar please let him talk.

AHSAN
And I have also talked to Mahjabeen’s Parents. They have both accepted their daughter’s marriage to Jabbar and have no complaint to make

OMAR
You are in with Jabbar on this; you won’t get away with this

SHAHEEN
Omar, calm down

AHSAN
That’s alright Miss Shaheen, it’s normal for a brother to be unable to accept when a sister runs away

OMAR
My sister did not run away. We have got proof for that!

AHSAN
What proof? Show it to me!

SHAHEEN
Omar what is wrong with you, please control your anger

AHSAN
I think you should take Omar home and put some sense into him.

SHAHEEN
Yes, I will, but can we have the copy of the statement Mahjabeen has given to the police that she eloped with Jabbar on her free will?
AHSAN
It is a confidential police
document Miss Shaheen

OMAR
It is confidential now?

Shaheen gives Omar a stern look

SHAHEEN
If we see the statement we may
be convinced that Mahjabeen
did elope on her free will

AHSAN
I will have to ask my senior
officials, if I can do that

39. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOME NEXT DAY

Jabbar knocks at her door and peeps

JABBAR
Asalam-O-Alikum Miss Shaheen,
will you please allow me to
enter your house

SHAHEEN
Yes, come in

JABBAR
I think there is some sort of
misunderstanding going on
between us. I wanted to
clarify it

SHAHEEN
There is no misunderstanding
Chauhdary Jabbar, you know I
saw you abduct Mahjabeen

JABBAR
But she has accepted me as her
husband now

SHAHEEN
I am not sure about that
JABBAR
How come?

SHAHEEN
I just can’t imagine Mahjabeen wanting to stay in your house after being abducted.

JABBAR
Luxurious living and a comfortable house can change someone’s mind really fast. I can give her comfort that she could have never imagined. I will take good care of her and provide her with everything she wants or needs. Even her parents are happy with this now.

SHAHEEN
It does not matter if her parents agree or not. It matters what Mahjabeen wants. I am not so sure that she wants to stay with you.

Jabbar is suddenly shaken by this idea, he has certainly never thought of wanting to know what Mahjabeen wants. Shaheen sees the look on his face.

SHAHEEN
Did you ask Mahjabeen what she wants?

Jabbar recovers and ignores the question.

JABBAR
How can you be so sure that Mahjabeen does not want to stay with me?

SHAHEEN
I saw her being abducted and screaming for help.

JABBAR
And there is nothing else?
SHAHEEN
(Suspicious)
No I haven’t seen her since,
what can there be?

JABBAR
I was just asking

SHAHEEN
Inspector Ahsan told me you
let Mahjabeen’s parents see
her. Is it possible that I see
her too? That way I will know
for sure what she wants and
there will be no
misunderstanding between us

JABBAR
(Hesitates)
Miss Shaheen, I haven’t locked
her up in the house I did let
her see her parents

SHAHEEN
So it’s ok if I come visit
her?

JABBAR
(Hesitates)
Ah maybe in a week or two. I
was thinking of taking her to
Muree

40. INT. GIRLS PRIMARY SCHOOL CHAK-SOMA. DAY

Shaheen is singing the morning assembly poem with the
girls that she gave them the first day, now they remember
it by heart

CHORUS
An eagle flies across the
skies
The sun will shine tomorrow
The rain will come and we will
run
And there will be no sorrow

The school has improved a lot since we last saw it
Inspector Ahsan enters the school and looks around and nods at Shaheen

Shaheen motions her students to continue singing, and she walks out to talk to Ahsan.

AHSAN
You have done a pretty good job in quite a short while.

SHAHEEN
Thank you Inspector Ahsan.
I am sorry I am a bit short of time how can I help you today?

AHSAN
I just came to see how you are adjusting in the new place, it must be difficult

SHAHEEN
I am sure you didn’t come looking for me to ask me that, while the girls are waiting for me inside

We can still hear the girls singing

AHSAN
There was one thing which has been troubling me

SHAHEEN
What is that?

AHSAN
I always want to investigate everything thoroughly; I don’t want to leave any pieces missing.

SHAHEEN
Right

AHSAN
That day Omar said that he had proof that Jabbar abducted Mahjabeen. I was wondering if there was proof I should look into it
SHAHEEN
(See’s through it)
But you said Mahjabeen gave a statement that she had runaway with Chauhdary Jabbar herself, so even if we have any proof it doesn’t matter because she is saying she has gone on her own free will

AHSAN
(See’s the trap)
Yes, yes, you are very right; I was just trying to be thorough. That’s all

SHAHEEN
If Mahjabeen has agreed to stay with Jabbar who are we to interfere

AHSAN
It’s a good thing that you have come to that conclusion. No point interfering in other people’s personal matters.

The singing has slowly stopped, Shaheen runs back into the school expecting chaos.

41. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOUSE. AFTERNOON

SHAHEEN
See I told you we should not let them get wind of Mahjabeen’s letters, otherwise they will try to cover it up

OMAR
Are you sure they came looking for them?

SHAHEEN
Yes both Jabbar and Ahsan came to confirm if you had any proof or you were just bluffing. Don’t worry I think I handled it just fine
OMAR
Do you think Mahjabeen has given a statement that she eloped with Jabbar?

SHAHEEN
No, she hasn’t, if she had Jabbar’s problems would be solved and they wouldn’t be coming to us to find out what proof we have

42. EXT. HOTA BUS STOP - IN FRONT DISTRICT COUNCIL. DAY

Shaheen gets off the local wagon.

She walks past the council building and walks for a while until she reaches the magistrates offices

She goes inside the District Magistrate’s office

MAGISTRATE
Hello Shaheen, how’s the village environment treating you?

SHAHEEN
Uncle Rashid, I am here to ask you to help me

MAGISTRATE
Help you? What is it Shaheen, everything alright?

SHAHEEN
A young girl in my village has been kidnapped by the village landlord. The police aren’t cooperating and they are turning evidence around in favour of Jabbar

MAGISTRATE
Hold on. What has this got to do with you?

SHAHEEN
She helped me setup the school and now she has been sending letters to me telling me she
does not want to stay with Jabbar

MAGISTRATE
Did you take the letters to the police?

SHAHEEN
The police are bought out by Jabbar they won’t go against him, they will cover up the evidence. That is why I need your intervention

MAGISTRATE
Shaheen I think you have come to the wrong place

SHAHEEN
No I have not I have looked at the laws and procedures. If you think a police officer is not cooperating you can go the District Magistrate to get a warrant

MAGISTRATE
You want me to issue a warrant to search Chauhdary Jabbar’s house

SHAHEEN
Yes, that’s why I am here

MAGISTRATE
And if I get the warrant and we found the girl at his place but she claims to have run way with him, than I will look like a fool. And I would have taken up a fight against one of the most powerful people in the district

SHAHEEN
But she has been writing me letters saying she needs my help
MAGISTRATE
She is an abducted girl; will her parents accept her back to their home?

SHAHEEN
I am not sure

MAGISTRATE
What if her parents do not accept her and she is made to go back to Jabbar’s house by her own Parents?

SHAHEEN
Well her parents have accepted her marriage to Jabbar

MAGISTRATE
O Shaheen, than you are interfering in other peoples family matters, if her parents have accepted it than why don’t you accept it too?

SHAHEEN
Because Mahjabeen hasn’t accepted it! Everyone talks about her parents accepting the marriage the society accepting the marriage, but no one even thinks about what Mahjabeen is telling us.

Looks into her uncle’s eyes

SHAHEEN (continues)
Look uncle she is a fifteen year old, who has been kidnapped against her will.

43. EXT. MAGISTRATES’ OFFICE HOTAM. DAY

Shaheen gets out of her uncle’s office.

Jabbar sees her leaving out of the magistrate’s office

Jabbar makes a call
Shaheen does not see Jabbar and walks up to the Bus stop

44. **EXT .CHAK-SOMA NEXT DAY- MORNING**

Shaheen walks towards the school

Doors of her school are open; she runs in

The school has been vandalized and the place is a wreck.

She looks at her watch and tries to start moving stuff around, trying to make the place look better.

The students start arriving and look at Shaheen

Shaheen breathless sits down on the floor.

Shaheen gathers all her students at one spot

**SHAHEEN**

Dear students, looks like we will have to take today off, the school has been vandalised as you can see.

Girls groan in dismay

**SHAHEEN**

But don’t you worry we will make it up and running in no time

**STUDENT 1**

Do you know when the school will be open again?

**SHAHEEN**

I am not sure yet, but I will have to find out and I will come to all of your homes and let you know

**STUDENT 2**

Do you need our help Miss Shaheen?

**SHAHEEN**

It’s so nice of you to ask, but I will be fine, now you girls go straight to your
homes, no adventures on your way back, ok?

The girls start leaving

When the school is empty Shaheen looks around and takes a deep breath

Shaheen leaves the school

45. INT. CHAK-SOMA POLICE STATION. MORNING

AHSAN
You are back again

SHAHEEN
I need to file another complaint

AHSAN
Who is it against this time?

SHAHEEN
Against no one

AHSAN
What is it about?

SHAHEEN
My school has been vandalised, and I wanted to file a complaint

AHSAN
Do you have any idea who would have done this?

SHAHEEN
No, I don’t know anyone who would have done it

AHSAN
(Laughs)
You have no on-going dispute with anyone?
SHAHEEN
(Sternly)
I just want to complain about
the School. I am not aware who
could have done it

AHSAN
(Laughs)
I will have to come and look
at the school and then write a
report

46. INT. GIRLS SCHOOL CHAK SOMA. DAY

Shaheen finishes up cleaning the mess at her school
She starts to neatly put down floor covering in straight
lines

47. INT. GIRLS SCHOOL CHAK SOMA. DAY

Shaheen is sitting on the floor teaching her students
Jabbar and the Mayor enter the school
Shaheen looks up; all the girls get up in respect.
Shaheen does not get up and gives them a hard look

MAYOR
We are here to do an
inspection of your school

JABBAR
To see how you are running it

MAYOR
And what you are teaching our
innocent girls

SHAHEEN
I am teaching the prescribed
courses from the Punjab
Education board.

Shaheen gets up and finds a register
SHAHEEN
Most girls come from different levels of learning, so I am mostly teaching them one on one

MAYOR
Than how do you fairly divide your time between your students?

SHAHEEN
I do the best I can with the limited resources I have been given

JABBAR
These girls are our village’s future; we are concerned that your efforts may not be good enough

MAYOR
We are here to ensure the standard and quality is maintained in the school.

SHAHEEN
It’s not my fault that someone vandalized the school

JABBAR
It is your job Miss Shaheen; we are not looking for your excuses

MAYOR
We heard you send the girls back to home on Monday and the school remained closed for the next day too

JABBAR
But you didn’t mark your leave in your time sheet

MAYOR
And did not inform us about the closure
SHAHEEN
You send your thugs to vandalise my school and now you are here to harass me

JABBAR
Miss Shaheen you should stop making up these stories of yours

SHAHEEN
And you should stop disturbing me; I am trying to teach here.

JABBAR
Why can’t you send your girls home today? You obviously have a habit of doing that

The students look at Shaheen and get up to leave

SHAHEEN
Don’t leave girls; sit down, Jabbar is leaving now

Jabbar and the mayor leave the school

48. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOME CHAK-SOMA. DAY

Shaheen is sitting at her desk writing a letter to Magistrate, and the ministry of education Punjab

Door knocks, Shaheen startles

SHAHEEN
Who is it?

MURTAZA
It is your father

Shaheen gets up and opens the door

SHAHEEN
Father!

Shaheen tries to hug her father

Murtaza backs off

There is an awkward silence
SHAHEEN
How did you come here father?

MURTAZA
I was called

SHAHEEN
By whom?

MURTAZA
By the police, what have you been doing here Shaheen?

SHAHEEN
Father I have been trying to build this school but the...

MURTAZA
I told you, you couldn’t do it

SHAHEEN
I have managed quite well father

MURTAZA
But what have you done that the police have called me, I have never seen the inside of a police station but you have brought this day upon me

SHAHEEN
Father the Village landlord here is a tyrant; he abducted my friend, a fifteen year old girl

MURTAZA
Listen, you must have surely done something wrong yourself. People don’t just start harassing you for no reason

SHAHEEN
Father I am innocent

MURTAZA
No you are not; you disobeyed me and left my house in front of the whole neighbourhood. I
cannot show my face in the mosque. And here, Allah knows what you have done here. The police are asking questions about you and there is an inquiry on how you are running your school.

SHAAHEEN
Things have been so hard father, I need your support right now, don’t be so harsh

MURTAZA
You bought this upon yourself; no woman can survive on her own.

SHAAHEEN
I can survive on my own I just need you to believe in me

MURTAZA
I do not know what to believe in Shaheen, I just came here to tell you that you are no longer welcome in my house

Murtaza leaves and Shaheen slumps in her Chair
Door knocks again

SHAAHEEN
Father?

AHSAN
It is the police open the door

Shaheen opens the door to find that Ahsan is there with another police officer

AHSAN
I am here to arrest you under the charges of adultery with Omar Syed

SHAAHEEN
You do not have proof of that

AHSAN
The postman is a witness you asked him to send Omar to your
house. And you two were by yourself

49. INT. LOCAL POLICE STATION, CHAK-SOMA. EVENING

Shaheen is taken to the police station
There are three cells in the little station.
In one cell Omar is sitting.
Shaheen looks at him and he looks away

50. INT. LOCAL POLICE STATION, CHAK-SOMA. EVENING

Omar is sitting idle in his cell
Shaheen is sitting in her cell looking grim
Jabbar enters the room
Jabbar looks at Omar first and then at Shaheen

SHAHEEN
Now what do you want?

JABBAR
I am here on an official visit

SHAHEEN
To do what?

JABBAR
To let you know that the council has found that the Chak-soma girls school wasn’t running according to the governmental standards and we have decided to close the school down.

51. INT. CHAK SOMA POLICE STATION. DAY

Ahsan is sitting in his office and he can see Shaheen talking to the Farmers wife who is visiting Shaheen in the waiting area.
Farmer’s wife hands Shaheen some money. Shaheen refuses to take it and gets up in respect when the farmer’s wife leaves.

Ahsan looks impressed by Shaheen.

AHSAN
You have a steady flow of visitors, I didn’t realise people at Chak-soma admire you so much.

SHAHEEN
You must be jealous.

AHSAN
Nobody admires a police officer.

SHAHEEN
Especially one who locks up people in jail for false charges.

AHSAN
(Face falls)
I was just answering a complaint that the postman made.

SHAHEEN
And you believe the complaint is true?

AHSAN
Look, Shaheen you are a nice person and you shouldn’t be going through this. All you have to do is withdraw the abduction charges against Jabbar. I am sure you can convince Omar too.

SHAHEEN
Do you believe Mahjabeen was abducted?

AHSAN
It doesn’t matter what I believe, it matters what I can do.
SHAHEEN
You can do a lot more than you think you can.

Shaheen walks towards the cells room indicating she wants to go back to her cell

Ahsan follows her and locks her back into the cell

He turns to go back to his office but stops and looks at Shaheen

AHSAN
Jabbar is not such a bad man. Mahjabeen won’t be treated badly

SHAHEEN
You seem quite sure about that?

AHSAN
My father worked as a guard at Jabbar’s house. When my father died Jabbar took me under his wing, he paid for my schooling, made sure I did well, that’s why I am where I am today.

SHAHEEN
Yes, favours are always very hard to pay back

52. INT. CHAK SOMA POLICE STATION CELLS. DAY

Shaheen and Omar are still in the cells and Omar’s shave has grown for a day

SHAHEEN
Omar for Allah’s sake don’t be like this, you haven’t talked to me for a day

OMAR
Do you know what the sentence for adultery can be?
SHAHEEN
I know

OMAR
It can be a death sentence

SHAHEEN
But they have to prove it

OMAR
Until we prove ourselves innocent, if we can; we will have been in jail for a very long while

SHAHEEN
We will have to figure something out than

OMAR
Huh, that’s what you said when Mahjabeen was abducted

Farida enters the jail area of the police station with food containers for Omar

FARIDA
(demanding)
What about Mahjabeen? She is gone now! Omar you have to let Mahjabeen’s abduction go otherwise Jabbar will make you rot in jail forever. And You Shaheen why is it so important for you to save Mahjabeen?

SHAHEEN
What happened to her is not fair and she shouldn’t have to put up with it

FARIDA
She has to put up with it, there is nothing else she can do, and even Mahjabeen understands this

SHAHEEN
She does not, she thinks we won’t give up on her, she has
been writing me letters for help

OMAR
Mother, Mahjabeen is not happy there

FARIDA
Will she be happy seeing her brother in jail? She has to accept what fate has bought upon her... upon us. Tomorrow we will go to Jabbar’s house and meet with her. She will agree to give a statement to Inspector Ahsan that she eloped with Jabbar on her free will. After she does that Inspector Ahsan will let you two go. And Shaheen I suggest you leave Chak-soma after being released from jail

SHAHEEN
You can’t make Mahjabeen do this

FARIDA
You rather stay in jail and put Omar through it along with you? Listen, you two have to understand this, even if Mahjabeen comes back to our house she will bring a bad reputation with her. People will talk and no one will ever accept her as his wife. She will be doomed anyway

Farida touches Omar’s shoulder

FARIDA
Please accept this Omar; I can’t lose both my children

They are all deathly quiet for a moment; Omar weakly holds the cell bars for support
OMAR
(tears in his eyes)
I failed Mahjabeen

FARIDA
Mahjabeen’s kismet failed
Mahjabeen

SHAHEEN
(emotional)
Our traditions failed
Mahjabeen

53. **INT. CHAK-SOMA POLICE STATION. DAY**

Shaheen and Omar are leaving the station, they have been released

Ahsan is giving them their belongings back. Omar leaves first. Shaheen and Ahsan are by themselves

AHSAN
So are you going back to Rawalpindi now?

SHAHEEN
I am not sure yet

AHSAN
Do you want to stay here?

SHAHEEN
(annoyed at the small talk)
Let’s see

AHSAN
I think you made the right decision withdrawing the complaint

SHAHEEN
Huh!

AHSAN
It’s not his fault really either
SHAHEEN
You mean Jabbar?

AHSAN
He was only eighteen when he was forced to marry his cousin twenty years older to him. His family didn’t want the land to be married out of the family. He has been in a loveless marriage since than

SHAHEEN
That doesn’t justify his abduction of Mahjabeen

AHSAN
I am not justifying, I am explaining why he did it.

SHAHEEN
And why did you do it? Put me in jail?

AHSAN
I am sorry....

SHAHEEN
Well I am sorry that Jabbar makes you feel you owe him

54. INT. HOTA DISTRICT COUNCIL. DAY

Shaheen walks into the Mayor’s office.

SHAHEEN
I came here to talk to you about my dismissal

MAYOR
Miss Shaheen we believe that the school was not running according to the standards

SHAHEEN
The school was vandalized the day before you came; I filed a police report that also reflects it
MAYOR
Have you talked to Chauhdary Jabbar about this?

SHAHEEN
I haven’t yet

MAYOR
You should talk to him; it is his area, so it will be his decision

SHAHEEN
But I can still ask for reconsideration! Here is my appeal against the dismissal, I have all the documentation complete

Shaheen leaves the Mayor’s office

The Mayor Picks up the phone to call Jabbar

Shaheen goes to every councillor’s office

Some of them she talks to

She leaves a note for others who are not there

Shaheen leaves the council building satisfied with her work.

55. EXT. CHAK SOMA. DAY

Shaheen gets on the over loaded Truck along with other passengers

56. EXT. HOTA DISTRICT COUNCIL. DAY

Gets out of the over loaded truck

Shaheen walks towards the district council

57. INT. HOTA DISTRICT COUNCIL. SAME DAY

Shaheen walks in the meeting room full of the entire district Councillors
The mood is grim

Shaheen goes through her appeal process explaining that her school was vandalized

When she finishes she leaves for them to cast a vote

Shaheen walks back in

JABBAR
We wanted to let you know that the council voted unanimously in favour of your dismissal

SHAHEEN
Really

Shaheen looks around the room; some people bow their heads and avert their eyes. Others look straight back at her with a strong glance

JABBAR
We are also very disappointed with your behaviour Miss Shaheen

SHAHEEN
What behaviour?

JABBAR
We all know that you tried to influence our decision with you charms. You even came to my house to offer your affections

SHAHEEN
(astonished)
Are you really going to lie about this? All of you?

JABBAR
There are no lies Miss Shaheen, we village people are simple and do not appreciate such obscene behaviour

MAYOR
We suggest you leave the village
COUNCILOR 1
We also heard you were jailed for suspicion of adultery

SHAHEEN
The charges were dropped

COUNCILOR 2
Such shameful behaviour

JABBAR
We do not want city people to bring their modern ideas and disgrace to our village

SHAHEEN
I do not bring disgrace to your village, you do Jabbar!

MAYOR
Jabbar is a respected member of our district

COUNCILOR 1
Loose women always blame others

JABBAR
There is no need for making a scene, we have nothing against you, and we just want the best for the girls of our village

58. EXT. HOTA DISTRICT COUNCIL. SAME DAY

Shaheen is walking to the bus stop furious.
Jabbar follows her

JABBAR
Miss Shaheen I thought you would go back to your home after what happened

SHAHEEN
That’s obviously what you want?
JABBAR
It would be good for you; you are a girl, all by yourself far away from home. Anything could happen

SHAHEEN
You are threatening me, aren’t you!

JABBAR
I am not threatening you I am just suggesting it would be good for everyone if you went back to where you came from.

59. EXT. LOCAL BUS STOP CHAK-SOMA. DAY
Shaheen is waiting with her suit case. The farmer’s wife is there to see her off.

60. EXT. LOCAL BUS STOP RAWALPINDI. DAY
Shaheen gets off the wagon and walks up to her parent’s house.

One of the neighbours spots her going back into the house.

61. INT. SHAHEEN’S BED ROOM AT HER PARENTS HOUSE. DAY
She stares at the empty wall without the Bhutto poster.

She is looking sad and distraught.

Her mother comes inside and gives her a huge pile of mail for her

Shaheen starts going through the mail and sees an unmarked one.

SHAHEEN
Oh! Mahjabeen, you still believe I can help you

Shaheen looks through the rest of the mail
Shaheen hears her parent’s voices, they are talking outside

Shaheen opens the door to hear what they are saying

RUHKASANA
She looks so unhappy, I don’t know if we should try to push this on her now

MURTAZA
She has come back that means now she will agree to marry Humanyun

RUHKSAN
Something has changed about her completely

MURTAZA
I told her she couldn’t do it, and she hasn’t been able to. This realization is what has changed in her

Shaheen cannot listen to this anymore she walks out of her room and climbs to the roof top

Murtaza and Rukhsana see her go and they know she has been listening

62. EXT. ROOF TOP. DAY

Shaheen climbs up the roof top with Mahjabeen’s unopened letter

It is the spring season so the sky is full of kites

She looks up she sees a kite that has been cut off from her owner it flies freely swirling close to her.

Shaheen opens up Mahjabeen’s letter and sees that she has written nothing, Mahjabeen has only send her a copy of the poem Shaheen gave the school girls on her first day

Shaheen reads it out aloud with tears in her eyes

SHAHEEN
An eagle flies across the skies
The sun will shine tomorrow
The rain will come and we will run
And there will be no sorrow

Shaheen smiles

63. **EXT. HOTA DISTRICT COUNCIL. DAY**

Shaheen crosses the Hota district council and walks up to the magistrates office

**MAGISTRATE**
Oh Shaheen, I thought you had left Chak-soma

**SHAHEEN**
I did uncle but I am planning to go back

**MAGISTRATE**
Are you sure Shaheen?
Chauhdary Jabbar got you in jail last time. I worry about your safety there

**SHAHEEN**
I do too, but that does not mean that it’s right

**MAGISTRATE**
There are lot of things in this world that aren’t right, what can we really do about them

**SHAHEEN**
I am so sick of people telling me that we can’t really do anything about this or that. You can do something about it. You choose not to

**MAGISTRATE**
I think Shaheen you are not seeing things as they are
SHAHEEN
I can’t see things? I am the only one who seems to see what’s right and what’s wrong. Mahjabeen is still writing to me, her parents aren’t going to help her, you aren’t going to help her, so I guess it’s me then.

MAGISTRATE
What can you do Shaheen? You cannot fight such a powerful man on your own. Sometimes the best thing to do is to let it go.

SHAHEEN
Criminals in our society get away with horrendous crimes because people like you tell others to let it go.

MAGISTRATE
Look, if somehow you rescue the girl and go to court, it will take years before Mahjabeen will get compensation for this if any. Jabbar has strong connections he will do his best to undermine the case. Plus after you rescue her...her parents won’t accept her back, no one will marry her, and she is too young to support herself, where will she live, what will happen to her? Have you thought about that?

SHAHEEN
I am thinking of getting a small place in Rawalpindi for the two of us.

MAGISTRATE
No, that’s not good enough; you have to find a woman’s refuge, which will be much more secure.
SHAHEEN
Will you file the case against Jabbar?

MAGISTRATE
What is your main purpose, to rescue Mahjabeen or to avenge Jabbar?
Look, if you want him to leave you two alone; I suggest do not file a case. He will realise he is not going to jail for what he has done, he won’t have any reason to come after Mahjabeen’s family or your family.

64. EXT. RAWALPINDI CITY CENTRE. DAY
Shaheen looks like she hasn’t eaten for days; she has been searching in libraries and going to internet cafes.
Shaheen enters a place called ‘The Women’s Refuge’

65. EXT. CHAK-SOMA LOCAL BUS STOP. DAY
Shaheen gets off the bus.
Villagers are happy to see her.

66. EXT. CHAK-SOMA SHAHEEN’S HOME .DAY
Shaheen puts up a sign outside her house which Says ‘Shaheen’s Private School for Girls’
Shaheen goes to her student’s houses to let them know she has started another school.
Soon her student’s are gathered around her house.
She rings the school bell and they all rush in the house excited.
Shaheen has set up a room as a classroom and one for herself.
Shaheen is walking past the festival area where preparation is being made for the village Basant inauguration ceremony.

Omar spots Shaheen from the top of a pole that he is fixing; he gets down from the pole. Shaheen sees him and waits for him to catch up.

SHAHEEN
Fixing the poles again?

OMAR
I am just making sure that there are no disasters if the kites tangle with the electric wires tomorrow, which they surely will.

SHAHEEN
The festival will be big.

OMAR
I thought you would never come back.

SHAHEEN
This is my home now.

OMAR
Aren’t you afraid for your safety here?

SHAHEEN
Aren’t you afraid for yours?

OMAR
This is my village; I grew up here. I promised my father that I would come back and contribute to my village after I finished my degree; I am not changing my plans now.

SHAHEEN
Good, good.

Shaheen motions to leave.
OMAR
Wait Shaheen...
Is Mahjabeen still writing to you?

SHAHEEN
Why are you asking? Aren’t you and I supposed to have forgotten about what happened? That’s how we got out of jail remember

OMAR
Are you saying that you are back here with no intentions of helping Mahjabeen?

Shaheen motions to leave again

OMAR
Shaheen don’t walk out on me like that!

Shaheen turns around hurt

SHAHEEN
Are you asking me these questions to make me feel more miserable for the deal we did to save ourselves from jail?

OMAR
(moist eyes)
You think I don’t dream of rescuing Mahjabeen every day? You think I am here just to fix these poles I am staying here because I am patiently waiting for an opportunity for me to be able to help her

SHAHEEN
How long will you wait for that opportunity?

OMAR
Until it comes!
SHAHEEN
Don’t you think that it might come too late?

OMAR
What are you planning Shaheen? Please tell me! I want to help you.... And I worry about your safety too...

SHAHEEN
Listen, as we all know Jabbar will be busy with the Basant festival tomorrow. One of my student’s mother works at Jabbar’s house as a house servant. She has already delivered my letter to Mahjabeen. Mahjabeen will try to come out of the house

OMAR
And then

SHAHEEN
My uncle’s car will be waiting for us outside Chak-soma

OMAR
Will you file a case against Jabbar?

SHAHEEN
No we won’t, if we do he will come after you and me, and possibly our families too

OMAR
Where will Mahjabeen live?

SHAHEEN
I have arranged her and my accommodation at a women’s refuge. We will lay low for a while and then resettle somewhere else. I will find a school to teach in.
And Mahjabeen will complete her studies. Possibly far away from here

OMAR
And me and my parents?

SHAHEEN
You and your parents would pretend you had nothing to do with this. That this was all planned by me

OMAR
And Jabbar?

SHAHEEN
Mahjabeen will eventually have to file for a divorce, but we will wait for a while

68. EXT. CHAK-SOMA. DAY

The village is full of hustle bustle. Village people are busy setting up the stage.

There are swings and rides being set up for the kids. People are setting up their stalls for local products such as parandas (hair ornaments), kites, pottery and handicrafts

69. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOUSE CHAK-SOMA. DAY

Shaheen picks up a small bag of her belongings and is dressed in clothes which are very different from what she normally wears.

She sneaks out of the house and passes through the central village place where the things are starting to catch momentum. People are gathered waiting for Jabbar’s arrival

Soon he arrives and Shaheen sets off towards Jabbar’s house

Shaheen waits outside Jabbar’s house, there seems to be no one around. Shaheen waits for an hour and is becoming less convinced that Mahjabeen will turn up.
Shaheen is startled

SHAHEEN
I told you to stay in front of Jabbar so he doesn’t suspect we are up to something

OMAR
I had a feeling Mahjabeen wouldn’t be able to make it out on her own. We might have to go inside

SHAHEEN
We don’t know where she is in the house

OMAR
But I do know the house; I have fixed his electricity generator twice

Omar and Mahjabeen walk to the back side of the house and enter it from the generator section.

They enter the hallway where Mahjabeen and Shaheen met Jabbar they look into all the rooms

They find a staircase going downwards. They go downwards and can hear the sound of Music.

Omar points to Shaheen, shakes her head not sure what to do, Omar softly knocks at the door

MAHAJABEEN
Who is it?

Omar and Shaheen almost shriek in excitement

SHAHEEN
It’s me Shaheen

OMAR
And Omar

MAHAJABEEN
I am happy you came inside because Jabbar locked me in today as everyone was going to the festival.
SHAHEEN
Do you think there are other people in the house?

MAHAJABEEN
There might be one or two servants in the servant quarter but not inside the house.

OMAR
We are going to break the door

Omar and Shaheen break the door and enter the room which is quite luxurious with a Satellite TV and Air Con. The room also has a fish tank

Shaheen, Omar and Mahjabeen leave the house quickly

When they walk out of the house, a house servant sees them leaving

He runs after them. And they are forced to take the road

They run and walk into the village festival which is full of people and loose the servant. But the servant finds Jabbar and tells him what has happened

Jabbar, his servant and his thugs look around the crowd to spot Mahjabeen, Shaheen and Omar.

Shaheen, Mahjabeen and Omar have been separated because of the crowd; they try to navigate in the crowd who are all looking at a performance on the stage.

Inspector Ahsan is also there and sees Shaheen, Mahjabeen and Omar trying to get out of the crowd. Jabbar’s thugs catch up with Omar and start beating him. The crowd become aware that something is wrong and people start looking at what’s happening.

The performance on the stage finishes and the announcer (the farmer) is trying to windup the show. Frustrated that the crowd isn’t looking at him

Jabbar catches Mahjabeen and looks for Shaheen

Shaheen walks up to the stage, the farmer is confused, but he goes with it
Ladies and Gentlemen, our Local girl’s school teacher Shaheen has just walked up to the stage.

The crowd’s attention is grabbed back on to the stage and they start clapping a confused clap, half expecting a performance from Shaheen

Most of you know how hard Miss Shaheen has been working to setup a girl’s primary school in our village. She didn’t even give up when our council ran out of funding. Now you can send your girls to the school she has setup in her home

The Crowd starts clapping loudly and starts cheering

Jabbar’s thugs have grabbed Omar and are waiting for Jabbar’s orders while Jabbar is shocked at the turn of events but still is holding Mahjabeen tightly

So are you going to show us your talent today Miss Shaheen? Ladies and gentlemen, what do you say?

The crowd grows wild.

The farmer is pleased at himself for being able to grab back the attention of the crowd. He thrusts the mike in Shaheen’s hands

Shaheen looks at Jabbar and Jabbar turns white thinking that Shaheen is going to make a speech about what’s going on.

But Shaheen starts singing the morning assembly poem that she has taught her students. Some of her students run and climb up the stage and join her in singing. Soon the whole crowd is singing with her.

An eagle flies across the skies
The sun will shine tomorrow
The rain will come and we will
run
And there will be no sorrow

She looks at Jabbar. Jabbar looks at Ahsan. Ahsan pats
Jabbar on his shoulder and motions him to let Mahjabeen
go, Mahjabeen also joins Shaheen and her students on the
stage, still singing the song.

Worried about Shaheen not coming on the agreed time,
Shaheen’s Uncle (the Magistrate) comes looking for
Shaheen. He is impressed by the support Shaheen has
gained from the villagers.

70. INT. JABBAR’S HOUSE. DAY

Jabbar is in his chair, upset and crying.

JABBAR
The villagers hate me; they
will start rioting against me

AHSAN
That won’t happen Jabbar; you
have been a good chief

JABBAR
But the whole village loves
that girl so much, it seems
like Shaheen owns the land
here rather than me

AHSAN
It’s good that Shaheen and
Mahjabeen want to resolve this
in private rather than in
public.

JABBAR
I thought I could keep anyone
happy with all that I have.
But Mahjabeen doesn’t want to
be with me

AHSAN
She is a child Jabbar....
AHSAN
(Hesitates)
So it’s ok that I talk to the magistrate about this.

Jabbar nods and then drops his head

71. INT. POLICE STATION CHAK-SOMA. DAY

MAGISTRATE
I could issue a court order for Jabbar to give Mahjabeen a divorce, but as it is a personal matter, I am happy that you have agreed to resolve in internally

AHSAN
Chauhdary Jabbar does not want any trouble, he wasn’t aware Shaheen was your niece

MAGISTRATE
I also need to assure the safety of my niece

AHSAN
Everyone here loves and respects Shaheen. You don’t need to worry about that

72. INT. SHAHEEN’S HOME CHAK-SOMA. DAY

A week later

Mahjabeen and Shaheen have just finished teaching the girls.

The girls run out of Shaheen’s home based school

Inspector Ahsan enters

AHSAN
Chauhdary Jabbar has sent this for Mahjabeen

SHAHEEN
What is it?

AHSAN
A divorce and an apology

Mahjabeen starts crying with tears of relief

Shaheen hugs her and consoles her

SHAHEEN
What about our school?

AHSAN
Jabbar won’t come in your way, he is very sorry about what he did to Mahjabeen. And I am very sorry for what I did to you

SHAHEEN
Are we safe to stay here, inspector Ahsan?

AHSAN
Our village needs a girl’s school Miss Shaheen and both of you are safe here

73. EXT. CHAK-SOMA. DAY

A few Months Later

The Chak-Soma Primary School has signage saying it has re-opened.

Mahjabeen is in a school uniform with her belongings waiting for the wagon at Chak-Soma bus stop.

Omar is going with her to drop her off to her new school. Shaheen, Haider and Farida are there to see her off.

Omar smiles at Shaheen before climbing on the wagon

Ahsan walks past and spots them and nods at them.