JUNIOR AND ELENA

Novel by Victoria Howard

Screenplay by Pinaki Ghosh

**JUNIOR AND ELENA - SCREENPLAY**

EXT. A MOUNTANEOUS REGION - DAY

CLOSE on a pair of Chipmunks as they play at the edge of a cliff.

Slowly zooming out and panning, a panorama of rugged slopes, snowy peaks and deep gorges reveals itself before us.

Panning further we see a Stake Truck moving up a mountain road.

INT. STAKE TRUCK - DAY

TOM ROBERTS(30), well built with a handsome face and kind eyes, drives. Beside him his wife JOANNE (28). An attractive brunette, she too wears a cowboy hat like her husband. That she is a focussed and no-nonsense woman can be easily ascertained from her demeanor.

TOM

We should’ve brought Jellybean with us.

Joanne does not respond.

TOM (CONT’D)

Emma would’ve been so happy.

JOANNE

For God’s sake Tom, she’s a kid.

Tom doesn't push further, keeps driving.

EXT. STAKE TRUCK - DAY

In the truck’s rear we see EMMA (10) standing between two horses. Like her parents she too has her hat and leathers on, a little cowgirl with curly brown hair like her mother. The face resembles more of her dad though. Resentful, she is speaking to her four legged friends, and they seem to be listening.

EMMA

(looking at the slopes)

This is rough terrain all right but I’d have no problem managing it with Jellybean. We could’ve done it together, couldn’t we?

EMPRIZE, the mare, to whom the question is made does not respond. Knowing she wouldn’t, Emma continues.

EMMA (CONT’D)

Dad wanted to bring her along, but mom said no. Who’d argue with her... I will always remain a kid to her.

Sighing, she looks at the scenery outside. Emprize looks at her fellow stallion, SHINING STAR. Both look at Emma.

SHINING STAR You are a kid, kiddo.

EMPRIZE

Little girl not wanting to be little anymore.

SHINING STAR Daddy’s girl.

EMPRIZE Yup.

For Emma those are incomprehensible horse nickering. Not to us though. The truck moves up the mountain road, disappears around a bend.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFF - DAY

The two Chipmunks continue with their play, chasing one another.

EXI. MOUNTAIN CAMPSITE - DAY

The truck is stationed on a patch of flat grassland where Tom and Joanne are setting up tent. Emma helping mom and dad. Emprize and Shining Star stand beside the truck.

Emprize rubs her face on Shining Star’s neck.

EMPRIZE

I can’t wait for the baby to come.

SHINING STAR

What are you wishing for? A colt or a filly?

EMPRIZE

Colt. I want a son like you.

Stronger than any I bore so far.

SHINING STAR

How many you bore so far?

EMPRIZE

Why can’t you remember? I told you a hundred times.

(MORE)

# EMPRIZE (CONT'D)

I am a mother of seven. Four colts, three fillies. This one would be my eighth.

SHINING STAR

Sorry, I keep forgetting.

EMPRIZE

Why wouldn’t you? You stallions are done with once your job is over. It is us mares who bring them to earth. Even if we wish, we can’t forget our kids.

SHINING STAR

Don't say that. I remember my kids too.

EMPRIZE You do?

SHINING STAR

Well... not everyone. They are too many. But I remember quite a few.

EMPRIZE

Like whom? Name one.

SHINING STAR

Like the one I had with Missymiss. What’s his name...

Shining Star tries to remember, but can’t. Emprize chuckles.

EMPRIZE

See, what I meant? You stallions!

SHINING STAR

(annoyed)

I bet you don’t remember the names of every one of yours.

EMPRIZE

Blondie, Jaguar, Elusive Enchantment, Simply Special, Rapunzel, Vanderbilt, Skipper. I remember the names of their fathers too. Bolt, Hidden Dragon,

Goliath -

SHINING STAR

Stop! I don't want to hear about them.

Shining Star looks away. Emprize chuckles. Then caress Shining Star again.

EMPRIZE

None was like you though. You’re the best.

Shining Star is glad to hear that.

EMPRIZE (CONT’D) But the son I will bear for you will be better than you. He will win even more races. You won’t be able to forget him.

SHINING STAR What if its a she?

EMPRIZE

Then she will be a champion too. She’ll run better than any mare. Better than the colts too.

SHINING STAR

Aren't you hoping a bit too much?

EMPRIZE

Don’t I have the luxury to? Colt or filly, they would have your genes, wont they?

Shining Star can’t but feel proud. He caresses his mare. The Roberts family approach. Joanne saddles up Emprize. Tom saddles Shining Star.

JOANNE

(to Emma)

Would you like to ride with me, honey?

But Emma is already straddling Shining Star. Tom smiles at Joanne.

TOM

She is her daddy’s girl.

He straddles too, behind his daughter. They set off. A SERIES OF SHOTS with accompanying music

catches the Roberts family’s ride through the wilderness atop Shining Star and Emprize. Trotting the horses through favorable terrain and walking them on difficult ones they discover the wild.

Emma picks up interesting facets of the flora and fauna by her binocular vision. Shares them with her father. Joanne takes shots of nature on her telephoto camera. Of her daughter and husband too.

Coming to a flatter terrain they race each other and comes--EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFF - CONTINUOUS to the edge of a cliff. The scenery beyond is breathtaking.

JOANNE

Isn’t that something.

They get off the horses. Joanne clicks her camera. Emma comes to the very edge and looks down. The rocky and almost vertical slope descends into a deep gorge. A waterfall tumbling down the opposite slope splashes upon a large stone platform and into a gurgling stream. Joanne takes notice of her daughter.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Back off Emma! Emma steps back.

EMMA Dad?

TOM Yes honey?

EMMA

Can’t we get down there? It will be fun bathing under the fall.

Tom inspects. Notices a ledge some distance away descending into the gorge taking a tangential path.

TOM

I think we can.

EMMA Mom!

EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFF, ANOTHER POSITION - DAY

They have come to the point where the ledge begins its downward journey.

JOANNE

It’s too deep. Better not go there.

EMMA No we will!

JOANNE

You two go. I’m staying here.

Tom gets hold of Shining Star’s reins.

# JOANNE (CONT’D)

Would you ride him down there?

TOM

That’s the plan.

He straddles shining Star.

TOM (CONT’D) Com’on darling.

Emma straddles behind her father before her mom can stop her.

TOM (CONT’D) Hold me tight.

Emma does.

JOANNE

Are you crazy? It’s too narrow to ride down there!

TOM

I’ve done narrower ledges than this. You know that.

JOANNE

But not with your daughter on your back!

TOM

Everything has a first.

JOANNE

Don't do this Tom. Not with her.

TOM

She’s as brave as her daddy, ain't you darling.

EMMA I am.

Joanne knows there is no stopping the two.

EMPRIZE

(to Shining Star)

Are you sure you can do that?

SHINING STAR

Are you doubting my ability?

EMPRIZE

Racing is your forte. Not climbing down ledges.

SHINING STAR

I am good at everything. Don’t you worry.

Emprize has nothing more to say. As they move towards the ledge, the Chipmunks run past under Shining Star’s legs.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LEDGE - CONTINUOUS

The descent begins. The rocky ledge is narrow but just wide enough for Shining Star to negotiate. With careful steps he descends.

A few steps down, Emma is no longer as confident as she was at the start. Tom doesn’t have to look back, her daughter’s tightening grip tells him the story.

TOM

Are you scared darling?

SHINING STAR A bit.

TOM

Be brave. You’re with daddy.

They continue with the descent.

INTERCUT: CLIFF / LEDGE

CLIFF:

Joanne and Emprize watch with baited breath.

JOANNE

He never listens to me. You go ahead and prove yourself, why take the kid?

Emprize watches without responding.

JOANNE (CONT’D) And she’s turning out to be a copy of her father.

EMPRIZE

Genes. You just can’t beat them.

The Chipmunks run around Joanne and Emprize’s legs, run to the very edge of the cliff.

LEDGE:

The descent continues...

CLIFF:

Joanne and Emprize watch.

CLOSE on the Chipmunks. They have paused in their respective positions, waiting for the other to move. As one moves and the other sprints, its tail strikes a small pebble. The pebble falls down the air.

LEDGE:

The trio descending. Shining Star carefully treading his hoofs...

The pebble falling... (ominous background score)

The trio descending. The ledge has gotten even narrower...

(ominous background score)

The pebble falls... and strikes Shining Star on the head.

Letting out a loud whinny Shining Star raises his front legs. A rear leg slips.

We watch the rest in slow motion (with nothing but grim background score)

Emma is thrown off the horse’s back. Shining Star topples over with Tom still on his back. Emma falls on the ledge and slides but is able to get hold of a rock. She hangs perilously with her legs dangling in the air. Tom has fallen off Shining Star, both are headed for the gorge.

CLIFF:

Grim background score as Emprize rears letting out heart wrenching whinnies. Joanne stands frozen.

GORGE:

Shining Star falls on the gorge bed with a thud.

CLIFF:

Emprize is paralysed. Then letting out a blood curdling whinny, rears madly.

LEDGE:

Emma hangs perilously.

EMMA Mom!!! Mom!!!

CLIFF:

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT’D) Mom help... Mom...

Joanne needs to do something and fast... She gets hold of Emprize’s reins, tries to calm down the rearing, whinnying mare.

JOANNE Easy girl! Easy!

With much effort she calms Emprize. Holds her face close to hers, look into her eyes.

JOANNE (CONT’D) We need to save my girl!! We need to do it together!!

EMMA (O.S.) Mom help... Mom...

Despite her agony Emprize seems to have understood. She no longer rears, or cries. Joanne detaches a rope coil off the mare’s flank, ties one end to the saddle.

JOANNE

I’m going down. You will pull when you get my tug. Got it?

Emprize remains silent looking at Joanne.

# JOANNE (CONT’D)

(pleads)

Do it for me girl! Do it for my baby!

Tucking the other end of the rope to her belt Joanne steps on the ledge.

LEDGE:

Emma hangs perilously. Holding on to the rocky wall Joanne climbs down the ledge.

EMMA Mom help!!! Mom!!!

JOANNE

Hang on baby!! Hang on!! I’m coming!!

Emma hears her mom. Sees her.

EMMA Mom!!!

JOANNE

I’m coming baby!! I’m coming!!

EMMA

Be quick mom!! I can’t cant hold for long!!

JOANNE

(almost crying)

I’m coming!! I’m coming!!

Holding on to the rocky wall Joanne negotiates the ledge as fast as she can.

CLOSE on Emma’s hand, she is holding on to the rock as best as she can.

CLIFF:

A tense Emprize watches from above.

LEDGE:

The distance has narrowed. Only a few steps.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Hold on baby, hold on!! I’m almost there...

EMMA

Fast mom!! Fast!! I can’t...

CLOSE on Emma’s hands. A hand slips. She hangs with one hand now. Joanne is on the brink too.

JOANNE

Hold on baby!! Please hold on!!

Joanne descends even faster. Her daughter is a couple of steps away.

But Emma can’t hold any longer. CLOSE on her hand. It slips too. Joanne throws herself. Her hand catches Emma’s wrist. Laying on the ledge she tugs on the rope with her free hand.

CLIFF:

Feeling the tug Emprize turns back and begins to trot pulling the rope.

LEDGE:

The pull provides the tension needed for adequate strength. A laying Joanne presses a foot hard on the wall, grasps Emma’s wrist with both hands.

JOANNE (CONT’D)

(panting)

Now you do it baby! I know you can!

Emma has got the support she needed. Holding on to her mom she tries to lift a leg upon the ledge.

CLIFF:

Emprize has stopped. Head down and bending her knees she is maintaining the pull.

LEDGE

Emma succeeds in pulling herself up. Joanne rises on her knees. Takes Emma into her fold. Both weep.

EMMA Daddy?

They look down. Shining Star lying on the gorge bed, half of the body on the stream. But Tom is not there...

Then they see him. Tom lies stuck onto a protrusion of the wall, at least fifty feet above the gorge bed. Dead or unconscious anybody’s guess.

EMMA (CONT’D)

(weeps)

Mom! Do something!

There is no way she can get to him. Joanne is at loss what to do. Then she brings out her cellphone from her jeans pocket.

CUT TO:

A SHOT of two helicopters approaching from the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFF - DAY

Emprize watches from above as the helicopters hover over the gorge. Paramedics are lifting Tom into one of the choppers. Strapping Shining Star.

Tears roll down Emprize’s eyes. Pressing their teary faces on either side of her neck, Emma and Joanne watch too. The choppers lift themselves. Shining Star’s strapped body hangs from one. Lifting their heads, the three watch as the choppers fly away.

INT. CRIICAL CARE UNIT, HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Tom is on medical support. From the other side of a glass window Joanne watches. A doctor comes beside her.

DOCTOR

He is lucky not to have any decapitating injury. Only a couple of cracked ribs. No less than a miracle I’d say.

JOANNE

How long would it take him to recover?

DOCTOR

We will release him by the weekend.

EXT. ROBERTS RANCH - DAY

Leaning against a teary Emprize Emma sobs as Shining Star’s coffin is lowered into the grave by stable helps. Joanne stands beside her daughter consoling her. She is sad too but no tears.

Her phone vibrates. She takes it out, looks at the screen. Then leaving Emma walks some distance and answers.

JOANNE Yes George.

Joanne listens to what is being said from the other end, then responds.

# JOANNE (CONT’D)

We have lost our best horse, George. It won’t be easy to replace him, if we could do that at all. Things will no longer be what it was before...

As her voice trails off we see Emma’s gaze is on her mother.

INT. TOM’S CABIN, HOSPITAL - DAY

Tom lying on bed eyes open, looking at nothing in particular. A nurse enters, smiles at Tom.

NURSE

You will be going home today, Mr. Roberts.

Tom smiles in response. But the moment the nurse looks away, he goes grim.

EXT. HOSPITAL BUILDING - DAY

Joanne and Emma gets out of their car. Gets into the building.

INT. TOM’S CABIN, HOSPITAL - DAY

Joanne and Emma enter. Tom is not in bed.

JOANNE Tom?

She goes to the attached washroom door. Knocks.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Tom?

No answer.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Tom?

Her push opens the door. The washroom is empty. Joanne frowns.

EMMA (O.S.) Mom!!

She is holding a piece of paper, her face drained of blood. Joanne rushes to her, snatches the paper.

CLOSE on the paper: Tom’s scribble: *Sorry for everything* A stunned mother and daughter look at each other.

EXT. HOSPITAL BUILDING - DAY

SOMEONE'S POV: Joanne coming out holding a distraught Emma. They get into the car. Drives off.

Clad in shirt and trouser, a single bag on his shoulder, Tom was watching them from behind another car. CLOSE on him. He is distraught even more.

INT. CAR - DAY

Emma has her face turned to the window, sobbing silently. Joanne drives stone faced. Emma turns to her.

EMMA

Is he not going to come back ever again?

Joanne looks at her daughter.

JOANNE No.

Emma turns to the window again.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The car speeds off.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY

The sun emerges from the horizon.

Emma comes out of the house, bike rides to the stable. ROY (17), the groom, is bringing out the six mares and two geldings out in the pasture.

EMMA

Good morning, Roy.

ROY

Morning Missy. Slept tight?

EMMA Yup.

Forming a circle the horses drink from the water trough. Emma helps Roy in laying the forage. Emprize drinks a little and stands in her place as other horses go for the forage. The mares circle around a pile, the two geldings eat separately.

Emma comes to Emprize. Caress the mare.

EMMA (CONT’D) How’re you doing, girl? Emprize looks away.

EMMA (CONT’D)

Won’t you have your breakfast?

The mare remains distracted.

ROY

She’s lost her appetite. Barely eating.

EMMA

(nods in concern, turns to

Emprize)

Why are you not eating, girl? You will go weak if you don’t.

ROY

She is already. If it goes like this we will have to force feed her. The one growing inside her tummy needs nourishment too.

EMMA

Heard that, girl? It’s not about you alone.

She brings out sugar cubes from her pocket. Holds before Emprize.

EMMA (CONT’D) Here, have these.

Emprize won’t.

The other horses watch as they eat.

JELLYBEAN

She should’ve gotten over it by now. It’s been a week.

DAISY

She loved Starry too much.

JELLYBEAN

As if we didn’t? I too had a colt with him.

HONEYSUCKLE

I had two. Both fillies.

PATIENCE

Love is not merely about producing colts and fillies. It’s more than that.

One gelding to another, discreetly.

BANJO

It’s nothing but that. I don’t remember being loved since the time they rendered me ‘unproductive’.

BIGGLES

Same here.

(sighs)

That’s the price you pay of being a stallion. Reduced to ‘uselss’ geldings once the hay days are over.

Overhearing the two a young mare, IVY, can’t help a giggle.

BIGGLES (CONT’D) Stop giggling barbie doll. You look ugly when you do that.

Taking offence Ivy goes grim.

Emma cajoles Emprize to have the cubes.

EMMA

Take it, girl. Please.

Finally Emprize takes one. And the rest.

Moments later...

Emprize eats forage from Emma’s hand. The other mares watch the two.

JELLYBEAN

She used to bond with me like that. Now she has forgotten me altogether.

PATIENCE

Oh stop that Jellybean! They need each other to get over their trauma.

EMMA

(to Emprize)

Would you like to go for a walk?

Emprize looks at Emma.

A minute later...

Emma walks Emprize, then sets her into a trot.

Moments later...

Bending forward Emma is galloping Emprize with more and more speed. CLOSE on the two. Tight-jawed and eyes glistening both girls are racing themselves against the gloom of their lives.

A car approaches from the other side of the dirt road. The girls brushes past ignoring its existence.

INT. CAR - DAY

MR. GEORGE CLIFFORD, the kind looking fifty something man on the wheel, takes notice of the duo as he drives towards the Roberts house.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY

Handing Clifford his cup of tea, Joanne sits.

CLIFFORD

So, what do you say?

JAONNE

We have six already, George. I’m not sure adding another would help.

CLIFFORD

This one is like no other, Joanne. She’s been sired by none other than the great Muscle Hill.

(MORE)

# CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

If you can breed him with a stallion of similar calibre imagine what you’d get in return. A colt from her can’t but be a winner.

JOANNE

I have no wish to rear another winner, George. It’s too exhausting.

CLIFFORD

Sell it then as you do with your foals. A foal by her will fetch a fortune. Be it a colt or a filly.

Joanne is still noncommittal.

CLIFFORD (CONT’D) Take my word Joanne, you’re not going to regret it.

Joanne looks at George. Through the open window George takes notice of Emma galloping back Emprize.

CLIFFORD (CONT’D) I haven’t seen a girl of her age riding with such passion. Or a boy for that matter.

JOANNE

I’d rather want her concentrate on her studies.

CLIFFORD Is she not?

JOANNE

Her school called. Her grades are falling.

CLIFFORD

Give her some time. It’s no easy time for her.

JOANNE

What’s her name again?

GEORGE

Whose? Oh... Noble. Noble Flirt. (smiles)

You’ll fall in love with her once you see her Joanne.

EXT. A PADDOCK, ANOTHER FARM - DAY

CLOSE on Joanne and Emma and Clifford and the Prospective

Seller as they watch ---

NOBLE FLIRT, a spectacular four year old mare, trotting around the paddock. Proud and narcissistic she trots engrossed in herself without paying attention to the onlookers.

CLIFFORD

(to Emma)

Like her little miss?

A smile appears on Emma’s face, after a long while. She looks at her mother. Joanne smiles.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The four gets into Clifford’s car. Emma looks at Nobel Flirt from the window.

EXT. PADDOCK - DAY

CLOSE on Noble as she trots by herself watching the car roll away.

NOBLE FLIRT What do they think I am? A showpiece?

The manner in she says that doesn’t reflect her unhappiness about being a showpiece though.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Pasture. The mares and geldings are loitering under the sun. Emprize sitting on the grass away from others.

The geldings are grazing together. Banjo notices something.

BANJO Look !!

Biggles looks up and is mesmerized... Noble Flirt entering the adjoining paddock watched over by Emma, Joanne and Roy.

As she approaches this side of the fence with her pride laced stride, the mares take notice too. A lull falls over the herd as all look in her direction forgetting their respective preoccupation.

Sensing the change in the air, Emprize turns her head. Taking a cursory look, she gets back to her melancholic musing. The others have their gazes glued.

Pretending not to be paying attention to the lesser equines and at the same time flaunting her glamour, Noble trots.

The mares have huddled themselves.

PATIENCE

She’s a beauty, isn't she?

The others look on without responding. Cast by the spell the geldings sleepwalk to the fence. Standing side by side watch Noble.

HONEYSUCKLE Just look at those two! As if seeing a mare for the first time in life.

PATIENCE Can’t blame them.

Outside Noble’s paddock Joanne, Emma and Roy watch amused.

JOANNE

She has made an impact for sure.

ROY

Lucky for her. They are geldings.

Joanne and Emma suppress their smiles.

JOANNE

(to Emma)

C’mon. You have homework to do.

Emma is not happy to hear that. But she doesn’t argue. She leaves with her mother, eyes on the paddock. Roy gets busy mowing the grass.

The geldings watch Noble who continues flaunting herself. Finally Banjo finds his voice.

BANJO

Why don’t you call her?

BIGGLES Why don’t you?

Banjo takes a discreet look behind. The mares are watching.

BIGGLES (CONT’D) Ignore them.

As Noble comes near.

BANJO

Hey Missy. Got a sec?

Completely ignoring the two, Noble trots away.

BIGGLES

That’s not how you do it. Let me try.

As Noble comes near again.

# BIGGLES (CONT’D)

(with modified voice) You’re stunner baby.

Noble looks up, stops. That enthuses Biggles.

BIGGLES (CONT’D) You’ve got some looks you know baby. What’s your name?

Coming near, Noble takes a good look at Biggles. Then at Banjo. Both feel gratified, and enthused.

NOBLE FLIRT

Geldings, aren’t you?

The air goes out of the geldings. Noble trots away. The geldings find the mares have gathered right behind them, overhearing everything and giggling between them. Going very grim, the two walk away.

BIGGLES

(to Banjo)

It’s not a fair world.

BANJO Not at all.

Noble continues trotting flaunting her beauty and pride as the mares watch from the other side of the fencing.

EXT. ROBERTS FIRM - NIGHT

Establishing. In the otherwise dark farm, only the house and the stable stand illuminated.

Through a window in the kitchen Joanne and Emma can be seen.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Her glasses on Joanne sits before her laptop studying and clearing bills. Takes a look at Emma. Books open before her Emma sits pen in hand, her mind somewhere else. Joanne sighs and gets back to her bills.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Under the dim lights of the stable the two geldings lay depressed in their stall still recapitulating from the hurt incurred, taking intermittent glances at the hurt inflictor who stands in an opposite stall as dismissive and proud as ever.

In an adjacent and bigger stall, the mares recline on the hay. Except Emprize who sits melancholic in one corner. The rest are livid, gossiping between themselves with not exactly low decibels.

JELLYBEAN

Not all mares are as pretty as they think they are.

HONEYSUCKLE

Very true. A little shine on the coat and a bit of fluffy mane and they begin to think of themselves as show mares.

The verbal missiles reach Noble loud and clear, but she remains dismissive.

DAISY

It’s all in the hands of the grooms you know. If our groom had taken proper care of us we could have been a stunner too.

IVY

Wait till Roy lays his hand on her.

PATIENCE

Com’on, Roy is not a bad groom.

HONEYSUCKLE

Not a pro either. And he’s lazy. Better our barbie doll gets a personal groom for herself. Or else she will lose that mane in no time.

DAISY And that shine too.

JELLYBEAN

(a bit too loud)

And in no time our barbie doll will turn into plain Jane!

The other four break into giggles.

Emprize looks up. Notices Nobel trying best to control her tears. She barks at the mares.

EMPRIZE

Will you give her a break !

The loud rebuke compels the mares to fall silent. Noble throws Emprize a look of gratitude. Ignoring, Emprize sinks back into her solitude.

The geldings are relieved too.

BANJO

They can be pretty nasty to new gals.

BIGGLES

Wait. This is just the beginning.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Early morning. Emma bike rides to the stable. Roy has taken the horses out to pasture. Noble is confined to her paddock. Having lost much of her energy she stands looking faraway, her forage breakfast barely touched.

EMMA

(to Roy)

She is feeling homesick.

ROY

Every newcomer does.

Emma looks at Emprize who is having her forage at a quiet corner.

EMMA

Why don’t we put her in old girl’s company? They might like each other.

ROY

It might be the opposite.

EMMA Or it may not.

Roy smiles.

ROY

Okay, let’s try it.

Seconds later...

Roy pacifies a rearing Noble as she hesitates to get into the pasture.

ROY (CONT’D)

Easy girl, easy. They won’t harm you... easy... easy...

Noble quietens down.

ROY (CONT’D)

Now that’s a good girl.

They walk Noble to Emprize. The two mares look at each other. Emma caresses Emprize.

EMMA

Take care of her, old girl. I know you will.

Emprize gets back to eating her forage. Emma lays some before Noble. She eats too. Roy looks at the other mares.

ROY

Let’s hope they keep peace with her.

EMMA

They will. They are nice girls. Our boys too.

Minutes later...

Roy and Emma stand outside the fencing and watch. Noble grazes beside Emprize, some distance from the rest of the mares and the geldings. Everything seems calm and friendly.

EMMA (CONT’D) Told you. They will like each other.

ROY

You’re developing quite an intuition, missy.

Emma beams.

ROY (CONT’D) I’ve to stack up the hay. Wanna give me a hand?

EMMA Why not?

The two heads for the barn.

At the pasture...

Roy and Emma’s disappearance into the barn is taken note of by Honeysuckle.

Not faraway, Noble is the first to break the ice.

NOBLE FLIRT

You were very fond of Shining Star, weren’t you?

Emprize doesn’t respond.

NOBLE FLIRT (CONT’D) The geldings were talking about him at night. It was so quiet...

(MORE)

# NOBLE FLIRT (CONT’D)

and they have put me right opposite their stall, I just couldn't help hearing them... Was he -

Emprize walks away.

# NOBLE FLIRT (CONT’D)

(more to herself) Sorry.

Emprize walks off to another corner of the pasture. Honeysuckle signals Jellybean beside her. The two mares approach Noble.

Seeing that, one gelding whispers to another.

BIGGLES The show begins.

The two mares come before Noble.

HONEYSUCKLE You pissed her off, didn’t you?

Noble doesn’t respond. Feigns she is alone.

JELLYBEAN

You don’t belong here you know barbie doll. This is no place for self obsessed cutie pies like you.

No response from Noble.

HONEYSUCKLE

She asked you a question, barbie doll. Didn’t they teach you how to respond to seniors? Or are you dumb?

JELLYBEAN Or deaf?

HONEYSUCKLE Or both?

Noble looks up.

NOBLE FLIRT

Both actually. But only to dumb talk. Of shit headed, ugly mares.

The two look at each other astounded.

HONEYSUCKLE How dare you...

Bucking up she pounces upon Nobel. Nobel bucks up in defence. Jellybean attacks Noble too. A fight ensues.

INTERCUT:

INT. BARN - DAY

Roy and Emma stacking up the hay. Modern day kids, can’t do a thing without music in ear. Both have their earphones on, humming to their favorite songs. The whinnies outside doesn’t reach them.

BACK TO:

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

The fight has got intense. Noble is on the defense but holding ground. Emprize takes a cursory look and continues grazing. The other mares watch with interest.

IVY

Quiet a fighter, isn’t she?

DAISY

Won’t be able to hold for long though.

The geldings are watching too. As predicted Noble can’t put up much longer. She falls to the ground. Tries to fight from her disadvantageous position. Banjo can’t remain still anymore.

BIGGLES

Where are you going?

BANJO

We must intervene! A damsel is in distress. A stallion can’t just stand and... watch...

He goes silent realizing his mistake. Biggles smiles at him. Sadly.

BANJO (CONT’D)

Gone are those days, my friend.

Honeysuckle lifts her leg to deliver a fatal blow. But incurring a kick instead collapses to the ground. Emprize stands tall over her. Looks at Jellybean with deadly calm. Jellybean backs off. Emprize comes to Noble.

EMPRIZE Are you okay?

Noble staggers up on her feet.

NOBLE FLIRT Yeah, I guess.

Emprize looks to the other mares and geldings.

EMPRIZE

Come over here all of you!!

It’s an order. The equines gather before Emprize.

# EMPRIZE (CONT’D)

From now on she is one of ours.

She lays her eyes on each of the mares.

# EMPRIZE (CONT’D)

Anyone has any issue with that?

None has.

Roy and Emma comes out of the barn. The equines are pasturing peacefully, a picture of perfect harmony. Noble, Honeysuckle and Jellybean drinking from the same water trough with Emprize standing before them.

ROY

Seems they’ve become friends.

EMMA

(ecstatic))

Nice girls we have, don’t we?

They don’t fight like Mr. Clifford’s mares.

ROY

(not very sure) True...

A MONTAGE of Emma caressing Emprize, Noble and each of the mares and geldings.

Then she leaves for home. Seeing her riding away

EMPRIZE

(to Noble)

Good to see her happy again. She’s been through a lot.

NOBLE FLIRT

What exactly happened?

Sometime later...

Emprize and Noble sit side by side.

EMPRIZE

She wept burying her face on my neck saying daddy has left them for good. He won’t come back ever again...

(MORE)

# EMPRIZE (CONT'D)

She can’t cry before her mother, she said, so she cries to me.

Like Emprize, Noble’s eyes are glistening too. The two sit in silence looking at the horizon.

SONG SEQUENCE

Emprize and Noble pasturing alongside and chatting.

They join the other mares at the water trough. Honeysuckle and Jellybean mellow down the envy in their eyes seeing Emprize’s stern gaze over them.

Noble gallops in her free will. Emprize and Patience behold the beauty of unbound youth. The geldings too are looking at her. Seeing the mesmerized duo, Emprize and Patience exchange a smile.

Roy bathes Noble with great care talking to her as Honeysuckle, Jellybean, Daisy and Ivy wait their turn.

Honeysuckle whispers into Jellybeans’s ear. Jellybean walks to the water pipe and discreetly steps over it, stopping the water flow. As a puzzled Roy inspects the nozzle, Jellybean releases the pressure splashing Roy with the surge. Honeysuckle, Desire and Ivy giggle. Noble frowns, guessing the girls are behind it.

The moment Joanne drives Emma back from school, she gets on her bike and rides to the pasture. Dropping the bike, she runs to the horses and cuddles them. Emprize and Noble especially.

Night falls over the farm.

Roy lying on bed in his cabin beaming and chatting over phone, obviously with his girlfriend.

In the kitchen of their house Joanne cooks and Emma studies.

In the stable Noble sits in the common stall with the other mares, proudly narrating her life’s experience to others. Her exaggeration causing awe in Ivy and Desire, frowns of doubt in Jellybean and Honeysuckle, while Patience and Emprize exchange a forgiving smile.

In their stalls Banjo and Biggles yawn in boredom. When will this gibberish end...

The stable’s is the solitary light in the darkness.

It has ended finally. The horses are sleeping. Except Noble who is bearing the snoring chorus with a scowl on her face.

Roy is sleeping peacefully in his bed.

And so is Emma.

And so is Joanne.

And the horses. But for Noble. She is still painfully awake as the symphony continues around her.

The farm sleeps under a canopy of stars.

END SONG SEQUENCE

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY The first light of dawn hits the horizon.

Roy brings the horses to the pasture.

Emprize looks at Noble.

EMPRIZE

Didn’t you sleep well?

NOBLE FLIRT

No. The all night symphony kept me awake.

EMPRIZE

(smiles)

You will get used to it. It takes a while adapting to community life. Once you do, the joys of sharing will far outweigh the glitches.

The word of wisdom doesn’t thrill Noble.

Later...

Emma, Joanne and Mr. Clifford come to he pasture. Sees Noble, Emprize and Patience pasturing together.

CLIFFORD

Your horses certainly have big hearts.

(sighs)

Not like mine.

They come to the mares. Emma cuddles them. Mr. Clifford caresses Noble.

CLIFFORD (CONT’D) So Joanne, what’s your plan about our new girl? Who is going to be the Mr. Right for her?

Noble, Emprize and Patience are all ears.

JOANNE

I am thinking of Thunderbolt. He has an impressive record. And a good lineage as well.

Patience nickers to Emprize.

PATIENCE

Not Thunderbolt. He has this habit of licking his leg every ten seconds. My Ivanhoe got that from him.

Noble is all ears to the observations of both the equines and their human counterparts.

CLIFFORD What about Hannibal? His credentials are no less impressive.

Patience and Emprize look at each other shocked.

JOANNE

Well... that not might be a bad idea.

Looking at her seniors’ reaction a concerned Noble can’t be quiet anymore. She whispers to Patience.

NOBLE FLIRT What about Hannibal?

PATIENCE

He has got bad breath. Both my Lilian and Rockstar got that.

EMPRIZE My Blondie too.

CLIFFORD

But if you want to go for the best stallion available in the whole of Ontario...

The girls are all ears...

CLIFFORD (CONT’D) You should go for E.L. Titan. He’s the simply best.

Emprize and Patience brighten up.

JOANNE

I know. But he is too expensive. What is his current breeding fee?

CLIFFORD

One hundred thousand.

# JOANNE

I don't think I can afford that much money now.

# CLIFFORD

Don't worry Joanne. I will give you a loan if you need one. But you should go for the best.

Joanne nods acknowledging the suggestion.

As the homosapiens leave, the mares stroll

# PATIENCE

E.L Titan is indeed the best. I had my Huckleberry Finn with him. Such a pity he broke his leg in his first race. Couldn't run again.

# EMPRIZE

He fathered my Vanderbilt. He is doing good. Came second in the Montreal Derby last fall.

Starry never liked him though. They had a big ego issue between them.

# PATIENCE

Every stallion has. They all think they are better than the rest. (to Noble)

You won’t get a guy better than Titan, girl. He is indeed worth his price. Strong like a rock, fast as lightening. No odd mannerism. Perfect hygiene. The foal you will have from him will be perfect too.

But Noble has another thing in her mind. Of more and immediate importance.

# NOBLE FLIRT

But is he... I mean... you know... Is he good at... you know... It will be my... Is he...

Emprize and Patience stop, look at each other.

NOBLE FLIRT (CONT’D) What?

Emprize look at Noble. Smiles sadly.

# EMPRIZE

Those days are gone dear. Nowadays everything has become technical. If the stallion is from a different farm, they inseminate.

NOBLE FLIRT Insem - what?

PATIENCE

They do it by injection. You won’t get to know your guy. They will simply inject his seed into you.

Noble is astounded.

NOBLE FLIRT But...

EMPRIZE

(sadly)

That’s the way it is, dear. In our days things were different. But now technology... it’s everywhere.

NOBLE FLIRT

But that’s so unfair !!!

Furious, she hits the ground with her hoof.

# NOBLE FLIRT (CONT’D)

(almost crying)

Why do they do that to us ! It’s just not fair !! I was looking forward to it for months. It would have been my first.

What would they say, there is no word to placate the young lass. Emprize and Patience watch Noble with sad eyes.

NOBLE FLIRT (CONT’D) Do they apply the same technology to themselves? I’m sure they don't!!

Mad in fury she trots away as the other two watch.

PATIENCE

It’s really very unfair.

Emprize is thinking.

EMPRIZE

I think I have an idea.

Patience looks at Emprize.

EMPRIZE (CONT’D) Didn’t Roy say he’s taking us to the dale in our next outing?

PATIENCE

Yes. Next Sunday. So what?

EMPRIZE

Isn’t Mr. Watson’s farm in the vicinity?

Patience’s face brightens up. She’s got it.

EXT. THE DALE - DAY

A MONTAGE

Wide Angle View. A beautiful undulating meadow with a stream flowing in the midst. Roy and two other guys of same age bringing the horses out from two Stake Trucks as Emma watch.

The Roberts horses pasturing, trotting in the lush green landscape.

The geldings pasture separately, free from feminine interference after a long while.

Emma astride Noble, Roy astride Honeysuckle, racing one another. Patience and Emprize watch sitting by the stream.

The two boys preparing barbecue. Emma and Roy takes splash in the stream water. The horses too are having fun in the water. Except Emprize who watches smilingly sitting at the bank.

Lunch time. The horses are having their special outdoor treat while Emma, Roy and the two boys are enjoying the steak.

END OF MONTAGE

A soft breeze blowing over the grass.

Both the equines and homosapiens lying on grass enjoying the afternoon siesta under the soft sun.

But not Emprize. She nudges Patience to wakefulness. Nothing needed to be said. The two get up and goes to Noble. Emprize nudges her. Noble wakes up.

NOBLE FLIRT What...

EMPRIZE

Hush girl! Come with us.

NOBLE FLIRT Where?

EMPRIZE

No questions. Do what I say.

A befuddled Noble gets up. Follows the seniors. They walk out of the camp area without the knowing of the fellow campers.

EMPRIZE (CONT’D) Now run.

The girls begin trotting.

NOBLE FLIRT Where are we going?

PATIENCE No question.

INTERCUT: Camp area. Waking up, Emma finds the three mares missing. Preferring not to wake up the three boys who are sleeping like logs after a hard day’s work and not the resting horses either, she sets out to find for herself.

About a mile away: The girls stop coming to the edge of a wood from where the terrain has descended into flatter land where lies a farm. A sign board reads: *Watson’s.*

EMPRIZE

You two remain behind the trees. Don’t show yourself till I come back.

NOBLE FLIRT

What’s happening? What are we up to?

# EMPRIZE/PATIENCE

(together) No questions.

Emprize emerges out of the woods and approaches the farm under the cover of a line of trees. Coming to a pasture she looks around... and finds what she is looking for. A hunk of a Stallion pastures in his paddock. Making sure no one is around Emprize goes near the fencing.

EMPRIZE Hey Titan.

The stallion looks up. The face brightens up. He hastens to the fencing.

TITAN

Hey Emprize! Long time, no see.

EMPRIZE

You need to do me a favor, Titan.

TITAN

Anything for my old girl.

Emprize comes nearer and whispers something into Titan’s ear.

Hearing her

TITAN (CONT’D) So you want me to do it for free, old girl? You know my price, don’t you?

EMPRIZE

(pleads)

For old time’s sake Titan.

Tiatan contemplates, then smiles.

TITAN

Had it been anyone else I’d refuse straightaway. But how can I do that to you old girl.

EMPRIZE

(brightens up)

Thank you so much Titan. Can you do the fence?

TITAN

Piece of cake. They should consider themselves lucky we real ones don’t take advantage of our prowess.

Trotting back a few yards, Titan charges for the fence and taking a massive leap clears it. Emprize is impressed.

EMPRIZE

You still have it in you.

TITAN

A true stallion never loses it.

EMPRIZE

(chuckles)

I hope that’s true for everything else.

TIATN

(chuckles back)

Of course it is. Even if its for free.

Emprize smiles and leads Titan towards the woods.

Patience and Noble look up to see Emprize and Titan approaching them.

PATIENCE

(to Noble) What do you think, girl?

Noble is too flabbergasted to respond.

Titan is impressed no less.

EMPRIZE

What do you think, hunk?

TITAN

I should be paying a fee rather.

Emprize chuckles. The two come to the other two. The stallion and the mare in question gaze at each other oblivious of the two who are not; the mare mesmerized, the old ace flashing a ‘how do you do cutie’ smile.

Emprize has no time to lose.

EMPRIZE

Get over it quick you two. We will be under that willow. Come Patience.

PATIENCE Enjoy!

The two walk away. Titan brushes Noble’s nose with his.

TITAN

Aren’t you a beauty.

Noble melts under the praise.

Emma comes to the woods. Moves between the trees looking for the mares... suddenly she sees something.

CLOSE on EMMA. She is watching with her jaws dropped...

Suddenly a voice is heard from behind.

EMPRIZE (O.S.) We girls keep our secrets, don't we?

Emma looks back to find Emprize staring down at her. And Patience too. Emprize doesn’t move her mouth, speaks with her mind’s voice.

# EMPRIZE (CONT’D)

(mind voice)

One day you will have your secrets too. Would you want the world to know about them, girl?

The unspoken words seem to have made an impact. Emma looks at the mares spellbound.

A minute later...

The four girls are walking back. Emma still has not being able to digest it looks at the three mares as if she is seeing them for the first time. Not giving her any attention Patience and Emprize are focussed on Noble. The girl doesn’t seem too happy.

EMPRIZE (CONT’D) What happened?

PATIENCE

Did anything go wrong?

NOBLE FLIRT

(grimly))

Insemination would have been better.

The two seniors look at each other stunned. Patience shakes her head. All the hard work has gone down the drain.

The camp comes in sight.

INT. KITCHEN, ROBERTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Joanne busy with bills on her laptop. A bothered Emma is unable to concentrate on her homework. To tell or not to tell... she looks at her mother wondering. Finally

EMMA Mom...

Joanne looks up from her laptop.

JOANNE

What is it, dear?

A beat.

EMMA Nothing.

Emma get backs to her homework. Joanne frowns looking at her daughter. Then gets busy with the bills.

EXT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

Joanne, Emma, Roy and the VET and two other MEN enter the stable.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

Noble is being inseminated in her stall. The Vet injects her with help from Roy and one of the men as the others watch.

EXT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

The ordeal over Roy takes Noble out to the pasture where she joins Emprize and Patience.

Joanne gives the Other Man a cheque.

JOANNE

Here’s your fees Mr. Watson.

ANDERSON

Thank you, Mrs. Roberts.

Seeing that Noble sighs

NOBLE FLIRT

One hundred thousand dollars gone down the drain...

Patience and Emprize chuckle. They look at Emma who is looking at them with a ‘you girls’ smile on her face.

A MONTAGE

Of the Roberts horses pasturing as nature changes her color. And Emprize and Noble fatten their tummies.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

Dawn. Noble and Patience stand by the pasture fence looking towards the stable as the others graze. Noble is tense.

NOBLE FLIRT I hope everything goes well.

PATIENCE

Don’t worry. She’s a pro at this.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

A pained yet stoic Emprize foaling under supervision of the Vet as Joanne, Emma and Roy watch.

VET It’s a girl!

Minutes Later...

Sitting on the hay of her special stall a proud mother licks her newborn with great care, watched over by both her equine and human companions.

PATIENCE

One more addition to our girlie gang.

BANJO

(to Biggles)

And we are outnumbered by one more. (to Noble)

Better you come up with a colt missy.

A smiling Emprize listens.

NOBLE FLIRT Does it hurt?

EMPRIZE

It does. But the pain is worth what comes after.

She licks her foal who with her fresh eyes is trying to figure out what the hell is going on around her.

EMMA Elena!

Joanne and Roy looks at her. The equines too.

EMMA (CONT’D) I name her Elena.

JOANNE

But I thought of -

EMMA

No, we will call her Elena.

JOANNE

Okay... it’s Elena then.

# NOBLE FLIRT

(to her specie)

Does it always have to be *they* name our kids?

PATIENCE

That’s the way it is.

# NOBLE FLIRT

But that’s not fair. We should be allowed to name our own.

BIGGLES

Submit a petition of protest then.

Noble is not pleased at the pun.

BANJO

(philosophically) What’s in a name.

NOBLE FLIRT There’s a lot!

Her little one in her fold, Emprize enjoys the conversation.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Elena drinks from her mother’s udder as Noble and Patience watch.

PATIENCE

She is a beauty, isn’t she? (to Noble)

You don't have much time left dear. A few months from now and she will replace you as the talk of the town.

NOBLE FLIRT

(laughs)

I will happily play second fiddle to my niece.

(licking little Elena) I hope my one is as beautiful as you, little miss. Tell me what you want? A sister for you, or a naughty brother?

Leaving her mother’s udder, Elena looks a her aunt in incomprehension and then gets back to feeding again.

PATIENCE

Whatever it might be, they would make a great pair. I can vouch for that.

Drinking from her mother Elena makes a sound turning her eyes to Patience, as if in confirmation of what’s being said. Her mother and aunts laugh.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - NIGHT

The Vet examines an uncomfortable Noble in her stall as Joanne, Emma and Roy pats her.

VET

She’s in a very advanced stage. I am expecting her to foal in a couple of days.

(getting up)

I will come again tomorrow.

They leave. Noble turns to Emprize who in the adjacent stall is nursing her little one.

NOBLE FLIRT

I am really scared. I didn’t expect it to feel like this.

EMPRIZE

First time is always frightening. Don’t worry, everything will be fine. I will be at your side.

Noble smiles in her discomfort.

EXT. THE ROBERTS FARM - NIGHT

No wind blowing. Nature lies still.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE -NIGHT

Noble shifts uneasily in her stall. In the adjacent stall Elena sleeps peacefully at her mother’s feet. Emprize looks worried.

EMPRIZE Are you okay?

NOBLE FLIRT

(tries to smile) I think so.

EXT. THE ROBERTS FARM - NIGHT

The night has deepened. It has gotten stiller. Suddenly a lightening strikes, flashing up the stable. A thunder follows.

In a moment it begins to rain heavily.

A SERIES OF SILENT SHOTS

Roy sleeping in his cabin.

Emma sleeping in her room.

Joanne sleeping in her room.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Suddenly Emma wakes up. Sits up on her bed and listens. Isn't a sound coming from the stable? She gets up from her bed and hastens out of the room. Coming to her mother’s room wakes her up.

EMMA Mommy! Mommy !

Joanne opens her eyes.

JOANNE What is it?

EMMA

Something is wrong in the stable. I think I heard Emprize whining.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - NIGHT

Mother and daughter rush out of the house into the downpour. Emma picks up her bike.

EMMA Oh shit!

Flat tire. She drops the bike and runs towards the stable with Joanne following her as the whinnying gets louder and louder through the shower.

Roy rushes out of the stable, comes running.

ROY

Noble has foaled!! She’s in trouble!!

The three sprint for the stable.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - NIGHT

Gasping for air, Noble is lying in her stall in a pool of blood. Attached to her by the placenta is her justborn foal. Emprize whinnying like mad, trying to break the rails of stall with her legs. Her filly stands scared in one one corner. Patience is whinnying too from the common stall. Others stand and watch in helpless dread.

The three rush to the Noble. Kneel before her.

ROY

She won’t make it.

Tears rolling from her eyes, Noble is seeing her foal. A colt. The most beautiful boy in the the whole world. Looking at her mother with his frightened eyes. Noble looks up at Emprize.

NOBLE FLIRT Emprize...

EMPRIZE

Hold on dear, hold on!! They’ve come. Everything will be all right.

NOBLE FLIRT

Take care of my son, sister.

Taking a last look at her son, Noble takes her final breath. The eyes go dull. Emprize lets outs a blood curdling whinny. So does Patience. Emma breaks down stooping over Noble.

JOANNE

(to Roy)

Go, fetch the colostrum from the cooler. The colt needs it. Or Else he might die.

Roy rushes out.

Minutes Later...

Its quiet now. Emprize stands still in her stall looking at Noble and her colt, tears rolling down her eyes. Patience is distraught too. So are the geldings. The others not as much. Emma is still weeping and feeding the colt the colostrum as her mother cuts the umbilical cord.

Suddenly Emprize lets out a squeal. And to everyone’s surprise, the colt responds with his faint voice.

Emma looks at Emprize. A silent exchange passes between her and the mare. Emma lifts the colt in her arms and is up on her legs.

JOANNE (CONT’D) What are you doing?

Emma doesn’t reply. He walks over to Emprize’s stall with the colt.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Don't do that Emma! It’s too dangerous!

ROY

She can hurt the foal! It’s not hers!

But Emma has already placed the colt in Emprize’s stall. Seeing the new entrant, Elena scurries to her mother. Emprize assures her daughter with a lick.

EMPRIZE

Don’t be afraid, baby. He’s your brother.

She moves towards the colt. Everyone watches with baited breath.

Emprize sits by the shivering colt and begins cleaning his sticky face with her warm, soft tongue, just as she did to her daughter a few weeks back. Closing his eyes, the colt begins to make soft noises. Elena comes near and watch the colt with strange eyes.

A triumphant Emma looks at her mother and Roy. She has proved them wrong.

DISSOLVE TO:

Sometime Later...

Attempting a few times the colt stands up on his wobbly legs. Reaches for Emprize’s teats. Elena comes from behind and bites the colt’s rump making him jump.

EMPRIZE

Don’t do that. Let him drink. You come and drink from this side if you want to.

Scolded by mother Elena looks at the colt grumpily, then walks over to the other side and begins nursing. Emma, Joanne, Roy and the Vet look on fascinated.

VET

In my forty years career I have not seen anything like this!

JOANNE Let him name Junior. (to Emma)

What do you think?

Emma thinks. Emprize too looks at Emma, knowing the girl has the last word.

EMMA

I think that’s a good one!

Both Joanne and Emprize’s faces brighten up.

ROY

Junior and Elena. They’d make a great pair.

Teat in mouth the two kids look at the humans as if contemplating upon the statement, then at each other under their mother’s belly. Both frowns, not exactly liking each other for the present.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

The horses pasturing.

Following Emprize, Junior and Elena discovering the world with fresh eyes. Patience walking beside.

A chameleon on the grass fascinates Junior. As he tries to sniff it, instead of backing off, the angry chameleon unfurls its throat glands and changes color scaring Junior.

Elena comes forward. The two inspects the new creature fearful yet inquisitive. After a little stepping back and forth they are able to make the reptile run.

An over enthusiastic Elena chases the chameleon while Junior goes back to Emprize. Begins nestling. Emprize licks the colt with great affection.

PATIENCE

(softly into Emprize’s ear’s)

He has her shine, doesn’t he?

Emprize nods. Gets melancholic.

EMPRIZE I miss her.

PATIENCE Me too.

No more discussion about his mother in his presence. Emprize resumes licking Junior.

The chameleon climbing up a tree and not showing itself through the leaves, Elena decides to go back to mother. Turning, as she sees Junior nestling, she is stunned. Isn't that hers...

Elena comes running, pushes Junior.

ELENA That’s my teat!

Junior won’t let go the teat.

Elena pushes again dislodging Junior off it.

ELENA (CONT’D)

That’s mine! You go to your side.

Before she can put her mouth to it, Junior pushes her aside. A fight ensues over the teat, the two jostle to get their mouths to it. Emprize has enough of it.

EMPRIZE

That’s enough! Stop fighting you two. Let him drink Elena.

ELENA

But that’s my teat!

EMPRIZE

No teat is solely for anyone. Both are your’s and his. Come, you drink from this side.

Going grumpy Elena stands while Junior reclaims the teat.

EMPRIZE (CONT’D) Come dear.

But Elena won’t move. Patience comes to her, nudges.

PATIENCE

Go girl. Do what mother says. He’s your small brother, isn't he? You must share things with him.

ELENA Why won’t he?

EMPRIZE

You are the big sister. Show him how to.

But Elena remains grumpy.

From some distance Honeysuckle and Jellybean watch.

Honeysuckle is pregnant as her bulged tummy suggests.

HONEYSUCKLE

She’s denying her own for the one who is not. What kind of mother is she?

JELLYBEAN

Com’on don’t say that. She takes care of her daughter too.

HONEYSUCKLE

But not as much as that colt. She wants them to think they are siblings. But is that possible? Truth is bound to come out. There’s no way you can hide the truth.

Emma is seen coming bike riding.

She drops the bike and runs into the pasture. Seeing her Elena comes trotting. Junior too leaves her mother’s teat and comes trotting. Emma kneels down and cuddles both.

EMMA

How are you doing, you little brats?

The two licks Emma all over making her giggle with tickle. A smiling Emprize and Patience comes forward. Emma rises to her feet.

EMMA (CONT’D) How are you today, big girls? (to Elena and Junior) Hey you two, not troubling your mom, are you?

The two look at Emma, eyes twinkling.

EMMA (CONT’D) Keep drinking.

Like obedient kids the two resumes nestling. Elena from the side her mother told her to. Emma caresses Emprize and Patience.

Seeing that, Honeysuckle to Jellybean.

HONEYSUCKLE

I hope she loves my kid as much she loves them.

JELLYBEAN

Does it matter? They sell our kids after all, don’t they? How many do they keep?

HONEYSUCKLE True.

SONG SEQUENCE

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Elena a Junior playfully chase one another over the lush green grass. The adult equines watch.

Playing catch up, Emma runs after them riding Patience. Emprize watches with pride and affection.

The two fight over forage pulling from both sides. Seeing Emprize approaching they give up and act coy.

Emma plays with a ball with the two. The ball coming to Emprize and Patience they nudge it to the kids. Joanne and Mr.Clifford watch from the fence.

Emprize licks them clean while they sleep on hay in her stall.

Roy bathing the horses with the hose-pipe. Junior and Elena hides behind their mother not wanting to take the splash. But they had to. Once splashed, they jump in joy wanting for more.

Vaccination time. A fearful Junior watches the Vet injecting a wailing Elena. When his turn comes, he is nowhere. They look for him. Eventually Emma finds him hiding under the hay.

They drag him to the vet. Shot over as he wails in pain, Elena, despite her tears, comes over and licks and consoles her bro.

Holding a twig each by their mouth, the brats approach equine nostrils - of Banjo and Biggle’s lost in sleep. Once inserted the geldings startle up in fright making the brats roll in laughter.

An animated Banjo tells them a scary story. Fearful they snuggle under Emprize and Patience’s folds.

The two roll over the grass with Emma.

Trying to enquire what’s inside her fattened tummy, they are shooed off by irritated Honeysuckle.

Now they are adolescents. Saddling them up Emma rides Junior, Roy rides Elena.

Grown even more, not fully adults though. Elena chases Junior. Dropping to his knees Junior ducks. Elena has no option but to jump over him. Junior rises and runs in the opposite direction. Elena chases.

Roy rides Junior. Emma rides Elena. Joanne is riding Emprize. Suddenly short of breath Emprize can’t catch up. Joanne stops, gets off her. Elena and Junior surge ahead in a race.

END SONG SEQUENCE

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Junior and Elena and Patience look towards the stable standing by the fencing.

ELENA

Mother is sick, isn’t she?

PATIENCE A little.

Elena looks at Patience, not exactly believing her.

ELENA

She will be okay soon, won’t she?

PATIENCE

She will. Go, play with your brother.

Elena nudges Junior, walks him away.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

The Vet examining Emprize laying on the hay, visibly worn out. Joanne, Roy and Emma are by her side, comforting her.

VET

I’m sorry Mrs. Roberts. There’s nothing more I can do. It’s been a long life for her. Better spare her the pain by not stretching it any further.

Emma can barely hold her tears. So are Joanne and Roy.

Emprize takes in the news with melancholic forbearance.

EXT. ROBERTS STABLE - NIGHT

Sitting on the hay Emprize licks sleeping Elena and Junior with great affection.

EMPRIZE

(murmurs)

Be good you two, be good...

While the other mares sleep, Patience watches grim faced. So are the geldings.

Joanne, Vet and Roy enters. The Vet carrying a gun. Emprize looks up. She is prepared.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - NIGHT

In her room a tense and teary Emma lays on bed covering her ear with the pillow. Yet the rifle shot reaching her ears she winces and breaks down.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

Elena wakes up. Finds Emma and Roy keeling before her and sleeping Junior. Where is mother? She looks up at Patience looking down at them from the adjoining stall.

ELENA

Where is mother?

Patience looks away.

EXT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

Roy and Emma bringing out Elena and Junior to the pasture. Patience, the geldings and others follow. Elena asks turning to Patience.

ELENA

Where is mother?

A confused Junior wants to know too.

BIGGLES

(to Patience)

Better tell them. They will come to know sooner or later.

Patience nods.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Long Shot. Patience facing Elena and Junior as she breaks the news.

CLOSE on dumfounded Elena and Junior. A beat. Then Elena squeals. So does Junior.

Long Shot: The two sprint away in two different directions. Stops, bucks, squeals. Runs again, stops. Bucks, squeals...

A perplexed Emma and Roy try to pacify them, but can’t.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY/NIGHT

Dusk. The tears haven’t dried yet. Elena and Junior sit side by side looking at the setting sun. Patience stands behind them.

The sun sets.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROBERTS FARM - DAY/NIGHT The sun rises.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

The horses pasturing. Cuddling Junior and Elena, Emma leaves. The two resumes pasturing, looking lost.

Seeing Honeysuckle's colt nursing her mother, an inquisitive Junior approaches the duo. Coming to the colt he makes a friendly gesture by licking his neck. The colt doesn't like it, annoyed he nickers. That perturbs Honeysuckle.

HONEYSUCKLE Get away from him!

JUNIOR

Can’t we be friends?

HONEYSUCKLE No.

JUNIOR Why not?

HONEYSUCKLE

Because I don’t want my son to be friends with someone whose mother was a haughty big mouth show girl.

JUNIOR

My mother was not haughty! She was not a big mouth! She was kind and soft spoken.

Honeysuckle smiles.

HONEYSUCKLE

She was not your mother, kid. She only reared you. The mother that gave you birth was someone else.

Junior is astounded.

JUNIOR

That’s a lie! You’re saying this because you never liked my mother.

HONEYSUCKLE

Go, ask your aunt Patience then. *She* liked your mother for sure.

Junior sprints away.

High Angle Shot: Junior comes sprinting to Elena. A beat. They come running to Patience grazing in another part of the pasture. We don't get to hear what they say, only witness their agitated expressions. The geldings who are near are hearing though.

She has heard what they had to say. Patience looks at Honeysuckle. A cold glance exchanged. Patience turns to the geldings. Biggles nods. Better tell the truth. Patience turns to the kids.

PATIENCE It’s true.

Junior and Elena are dumbfounded.

Sometime Later ---

Sitting before Patience and the geldings, Junior and Elena listen.

PATIENCE (CONT’D) Not only she was the most beautiful of mares, she had a heart of gold. Her presence lit up our lives.

Emprize and her... they were more sisters than friends. It was so special, the bondage between the two...

Patience goes quiet. A silence follows.

PATIENCE (CONT’D) That is what matters the most. It doesn’t matter whether you were born of the same mother or not. What matters is the love that bonds you.

Seeing Emma approaching

PATIENCE (CONT’D) It’s same for them as with us. And between us.

Emma comes running and sits among the equines.

EMMA

What’s going on? Conferencing you guys? What’s it about?

She goes on cuddling Junior and Elena.

EXT. OUTSIDE PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Joanne and Mr.Clifford taking a stroll. Their gazes fall on Emma and the horses.

JOANNE

She’s developed such a bond with the two... If only I could keep both.

CLIFFORD Can’t you?

JOANNE

I have to run the farm, George. I just might be able to keep the boy, but not the girl.

CLIFFORD

Any prospective buyers?

JOANNE

People are enquiring. I’m sure she’ll fetch a good price.

She looks at Honeysuckle’s colt suckling her mother.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Prince is going to fetch a good price too. The deal is almost done.

They walk away.

A MONTAGE (ACCOMPANYING MUSIC)

The dale:

Elena chasing Junior, Junior does the ducking trick again.

Playfully they fight one another.

Cuddle one another.

Emma cuddles them.

Roy and Emma cuddle them.

Groom them.

Ride them in the vast expanse.

Bathe with them in the stream.

Sleep with them on the lush green grass waving in the breeze.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. THE DALE - DAY/NIGHT

Emma strolls with them towards the setting sun.

ELENA

(to Junior)

It’s been a great day, ha Junior?

JUNIOR

The best day in my life.

ELENA

(laughs)

Your life has just begun! Mine too. There will be many more days like this.

JUNIOR

And we will have many more fun.

A smiling Elena nods at Junior.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY/NIGHT

Dawn. Prince - Honeysuckle's colt - is loaded into a truck. The truck drives off leaving Joanne, Emma and Roy standing. Tears roll down Emma’s eyes.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

Honeysuckle bucks and wails alone in her stall in the empty stable.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Grim faced, the other horses hear the wail. Junior and Elena hear too, confused, scared.

ROBERTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Mother and daughter having dinner in the kitchen.

EMMA Mom.

JOANNE Yes honey?

EMMA

You are not thinking of selling Elena too, are you?

Joanne looks up to her daughter. Doesn’t know how to say it.

EMMA (CONT’D) Mom?

Joanne nods in affirmative.

EMMA (CONT’D) NO!!

JOANNE

We can’t keep her, Emma.

EMMA Not her mom !!

JOANNE

The deal is signed. I have taken an advance.

EMMA No !! No!!

She pushes away her plate. It breaks falling to the floor splattering the food all over. Emma runs to her room, slams the door shut. Joanne sits helpless. Unable to eat anymore, she dumps her food into the bin. Picks up the pieces of porcelain from the floor.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - NIGHT

Elena sleeps among the mares in the common stall. Junior sleeps in his. Peacefully they sleep.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - NIGHT

In her room Emma weeps burying her face on the pillow.

EXT. ROBERTS RANCH - NIGHT

The ranch sleeps under moonlight. Who can tell what lies in store at daybreak?

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY/NIGHT

The first ray of the sun is yet to hit the horizon. The horses are sleeping. Roy steps in. His face stiff as stone. Without making a sound, he goes to Elena. Nudges her.

ROY

Wake up girl, wake up.

Elena opens her eyes, looks at Roy. Confusion. Roy puts the harness on her.

ROY (CONT’D)

Come girl. We will go for a walk.

Emma rises on her feet.

ROY (CONT’D)

Slow girl, slow. Don’t wake them up.

Obediently Elena follows Roy. He brings her out of the stall, closes the gate. Walks her out of the stable.

Banjo opens his eyes. Roy is about to close the stable door, the gelding notices him and Elena. A moment’s confusion and he jumps to his feet.

BANJO

They are taking Elena!!

EXT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY/NIGHT

Hearing that Elena looks at Roy, stunned.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY/NIGHT

BANJO

They are taking Elena!!

They are taking Elena!!

Biggles startles to wakefulness. So does Junior. And Patience. And others.

INTERCUT BETWEEN STABLE EXTERIOR / STABLE INTERIOR / ROBERTS HOUSE:

EXT. STABLE:

Elena lets out a blood curdling whiney and rears, almost knocking off Roy. His two companions come running from the waiting truck.

INT. STABLE:

Junior looks for Elena. She is not in the common stall. He jumps to his feet. Raises on his hinds.

JUNIOR ELENA!!!

EXT. STABLE:

Letting out hell raising whinnies Elena rears as the three boys try to pin her down.

INT. STABLE:

Whinnies mingles with music as Junior up on his hinds hits the stall rail again and again. Patience wails too hitting the stall rail. So does Biggles and Banjo.

EXT. STABLE:

The truck is brought nearer. The incline lowered. They try to pull Elena in. Elena resists and wails.

INT. STABLE:

Her whinnies sailing through. Junior is relentless in his effort to break free.

EXT. STABLE:

Still resisting, Elena is halfway in.

INT. STABLE:

Junior is relentless. Patience wails.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE:

The whinnies sailing through. Sealing her ears with her fingers, squeezing her eyes shut, Emma lies coiled up in her bed.

Sitting on the sofa Joanne is trying hard not to fall prey to her emotions.

EXT. STABLE:

They succeed. The truck is bolted. They get in. Drives the truck away. Roy remains. He sinks on his knees.

INT: STABLE:

Junior still hitting the rails. Patience wails. Banjo and

Biggles too. The others watch mortified. A strange look in Honeysuckle’s eyes. Not of satisfaction to see them going through the same trauma as hers, but overwhelmed with the enormity of the inevitable.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY/NIGHT

High Angle Shot. Yet to be lit up by the sun, the farm reels under cries of pain. Roy still on his knees.

EXT. A FREEWAY - DAY

The Stake Truck speeds along.

In the back of the truck Elena stands whining softly, tears rolling down her eyes.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY

The horses are out in the pasture. The geldings stand lost.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - DAY

They could not be brought out. Junior stands in his stall, his gaze fixated at his feet. The tears haven’t dried yet. Patience sits on the hay, eyes flooding. Neither have touched the special food provided as compensation for their grief.

INT. JOANNE’S CAR - DAY

A grim-faced Joanne drives Emma to school. She looks at her daughter. Hiding from mother Emma weeps pressing her face on the glass pane.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Elena is now sitting on the hay, tears still rolling. The food and water lie untouched.

The truck speeds along, now up a mountainous terrain.

A MONTAGE:

Of the truck making its way up the mountainous landscape as light falls gradually, the day turning to dusk and dusk to night. A speck of luminosity in the mountain slope, it now descends down the mountain under a full moon night.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. A FOREST - NIGHT

The truck speeding along the freeway lighting the asphalt with its headlights. Dark silhouettes of coniferous trees throng the slopes on either side.

In the back of the truck Elena sits, resting her face between her hoofs. The food and water has remained untouched.

The truck speeds along... a bend on the road ahead.

From the other side of the bend a pair of headlights can be seen approaching. An ominous background score begins.

INT. A CAR - NIGHT

Ominous background score mingles with car music. A couple in the front seat. The man driving as well drinking and having fun with the woman by his side. As they near the bend a pair of headlights dazzle up their faces.

WOMAN

Watch out Frankie!!

INT. STAKE TRUCK - NIGHT

The startled driver tries to steer away. But it’s too late...

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The truck skids off the road, slides down the slope. Hits a tree trunk, upturns. Elena is thrown off the back. The car speeds away unscathed.

INT. STAKE TRUCK - NIGHT

Shattered glasses all over them, the diver and his companion lie unconscious over each other.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The truck lies upturned on the slope. Elena seems to have lost her consciousness too, she lies still on the grass beside the truck.

CLOSE on her. A beat. Elena opens her eyes. A beat. Slowly she raises herself. Dazed and scared, looks around. The truck lays upturned by her side. Her food lies scattered. Dark trees stand tall all around her. Taking in the situation she has landed into, Elena rises on her feet. Finds herself limping as she tries to move.

Coming to the front portion of the truck she sees the two men lying unconscious, or dead. She sticks her head in through the shattered windshield. Nickers. Licks the men’s faces. No response.

Elena looks around. She is standing in the middle of a forest all alone. Fortunately it’s not all dark. The full moon shines above lighting up the forest in soft whiteness. But where is she? What is she going to do now?

Elena eats the food strewn over the grass. Licks up the little water that still remains in the water trough.

What to do now?

Elena limps up to the road. Wonders which way to go. Preferring to descend, she limps her way in the direction that will take her further away from home.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY Junior strolls lost in his grief.

INTERCUT:

Junior’s thought: Elena galloping in the pasture without a care of the world.

BACK TO:

PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM Junior strolls lost in thought.

INTERCUT:

Junior’s thought: He is chasing Elena. Elena chasing her.

BACK TO:

PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM

Junior has stopped. He is looking faraway lost in his thoughts.

Emma approaches. Comes to Junior. Junior shrugs away, not letting Emma cuddle him. Emma refrains from touching him anymore.

EMMA

What could I do, tell me. I begged mommy to keep her. But she had signed the deal already... I know it’s not fair. But that’s how we earn our living... I know that’s not fair...

Junior stands his eyes fixed on the ground.

EMMA (CONT’D) She would be fine, Junior. Mommy has put her in good hands. They will take good care of her.

Junior stands with his gaze fixed.

# EMMA (CONT’D)

Would you like to go for a ride?

Emma walks towards the stable.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY

A minute later...

She saddles Junior. Straddles him. Nudges.

EMMA Com’on boy.

Junior doesn’t move. Emma nudges again.

EMMA (CONT’D) Com’on boy.

Suddenly, almost throwing Emma off his back, Junior rears and then begins to gallop. Emma holds on to him as best as he could as he gallops faster and faster racing against the gloom of his life.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Joanne and Mr. Clifford taking a stroll. They see Emma on Junior coming galloping towards them. In a moment they brush past speed raising a plume of dust. The two stand looking back as Emma and Junior speed away and disappear from sight.

CLIFFORD

Good she’s riding him. It will do him good. Her too.

They resume walking.

# CLIFFORD (CONT’D)

Have you told her about Elena?

JOANNE Not yet.

CLIFFORD

It’s been three days, Joanne. The more you will delay the more trauma you will cause her. She will come to know sooner or later.

JOANNE I will, tonight.

CLIFFORD

What did her teacher say?

JOANNE

She is not doing good, George.

They walk in silence.

CLIFFORD

Should we not let her do what she is best at?

JOANNE

What do you mean?

CLIFFORD

She has it in her, you know. You should let them do what they are best at, what they love most.

(MORE)

# CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

I did not let my boy.

His eyes getting moist, Clifford looks ahead. Joanne takes his hand in hers. They walk in silence.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY/NIGHT

Emma sitting on bed in her room doing homework, but her mind is somewhere else. Joanne enters, steels her nerves. Then sits beside her daughter.

JOANNE

I need to tell you something dear.

Emma looks at her mother. Something is wrong.

EMMA What?

EXT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY/NIGHT

Long shot of Mother and daughter through a window. Emma looking at her mother stunned. Then wails up and throws herself on the bed.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY/NIGHT

Joanne sets the plate on the kitchen table. Emma comes out of her room, comes to the table, her eyes still fluffy. Mother and daughter sit.

EMMA

Is it possible she’s not dead?

JOANNE

They have searched the entire area. If she was dead, they’d have found the body... or a carcass.

INTERCUT:

EXT. FOREST - DAY/NIGHT

Elena limping down a mountain trail. As she passes a stretch of trees, a pair of eyes is seen glowing through the dark foliage.

Elena limps...

Low Angle POV: She is being stalked.

Elena limps unaware... suddenly she stops. Something in not right. She sniffs the air. Looks back. Nothing is in sight. She resumes walking.

BACK TO:

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY/NIGHT

EMMA

I am sure she is alive. Joanne doesn’t respond.

EMMA (CONT’D)

Maybe someone has taken her?

JOANNE

That’s a possibility.

EMMA

Even if someone does, we will never come to know of her.

JOANNE

You never know. Maybe one day we will.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TERRAIN - DAY/NIGHT

Low Angle POV: Elena is being stalked again.

Elena turns. Now she sees the thing. A black cat, ready to pounce. Elena runs for her life. The cat chases.

Elena runs as fast as her injured leg allows her. The distance diminishes rapidly. The cat jumps... and just at the nick of time Elena does what Junior used to do with her. She ducks failing on her knees. The cat flies past over her, falls crashing to the ground. Elena runs in the opposite direction. The cat recovers from the hiccup, turns and chases. Shortening the distance, he is about to pounce again when ---

A deafening gunshot rings out.

Elena stops running, looks back. The black cat lies dead on the ground, blood spilling from its head. Elena looks up. Someone is approaching...

BACK TO:

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Mother and daughter eat in silence. Joanne looks up.

JOANNE Emma?

Emma looks up.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Do you want to make riding your career, Emma?

Emma looks at her mother.

EXT. ROBERTS FARM - NIGHT The farm sleeps.

Background Song begins:

SONG SEQUENCE

A MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

Junior stands in his stall sleepless. Patience looks at him from her’s. Sighs.

The night deepens.

Joanne drives Emma to a Jockey Training Institute.

The horses pasturing in Roberts farm. Junior stands at the fencing, looking afar.

In his mind’s eyes ---

Roy riding him, Emma riding Elena, chasing one another. Joanne follows on Emprize.

Emprize licking them in the stall.

Banjo telling them a scary story. They listen in their mother’s fold.

They approach sleeping Banjo and Biggles twigs in mouth. Inserting into their nostrils making them jump.

He is chasing Elena. He ducks, making her jump over him. Rising, he runs. She runs to catch him.

Clouds fly on sky. Day becomes night. Night becomes day. Seasons change. Nature changes accordingly.

Emma takes lesson in her class. The teacher teaching horse anatomy.

She and other students groom the horses of the institute.

CLOSE on Junior. He is at the dale with other Roberts horses. They are taking a splash in the stream as Roy and his friends scrub them. Only Junior and Patience sit on the bank, musing of the good old days. Patience looks old and worn out, lies on the grass.

Roy and the Vet enter the stable at night, the vet with his gun. The walk out with Patience.

Emma shivers on her bed hearing the gunshot.

She rides Junior, outrunning grief, brushing past her mother and Mr. Clifford. Mr. Clifford puts an arm around Joanne’s shoulder as the continue walking.

Seasons change color.

Emma exercises horses in the institute pasture along with other students.

She and Roy groom the horses in the stable. Steal a kiss.

Emma dines with mom and Mr. Clifford in a restaurant. Rolls in laughter as Mr. Clifford cracks a joke.

Emma learns racing strategy in class with fellow students. Raising her hand asks a question.

She rides the horses in jockey gear with fellow students at the institute track. Falls from the horse. Injures an ankle.

She is riding again.

She hot-walks horses on a racing track after a professional race along with fellow students.

Emma and Roy steal a kiss at the institute gate. Roy points at a car. Leaving Emma hurries away. Emma runs to her mother.

Joanne has noticed. She conceals her smile. Emma gets in. Joanne drives off with daughter.

SONG SEQUENCE ENDS

FADE TO BLACK.

Super: *Two year on...*

FADE IN:

EXT. A RACETRACK - DAY

The race is yet to begin. Crowd fill up the stands as commentary is heard on loudspeakers.

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*The sun shines bright over Turfway Park and we're just moments away from the 15th running of the Royal Oaks Derby...*

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *This year it will be special, ladies and gentlemen. The youngest jockey in the history of our derby will be making her debut...*

Joanne, Roy and Mr.Clifford take their seats.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *She’s turned fifteen only a couple of days ago. Yeah, you heard it right. She’s a woman! And isn’t that a first too...*

Mr.Clifford smiles at a proud and beaming Joanne.

INT. JOCKEY REST ROOM - DAY

As Emma enters the room the male jockeys getting into their gears look up.

JOCKEY#1

You are in the wrong room, Miss.

EMMA

I’ve been told there’s only one changing room for jockeys.

JOCKEY#1

Are you sure? Didn’t they make a special room for the missies? They ought to.

The other male jockeys laugh out. Ignoring them Emma goes to her locker.

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

Panning along the horses at the gate---

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Raging Fire, the favorite at 7-to-2. Dunhill, second choice at 5-to-1 and Emerald Forest, third choice at 6-to-1.*

*Now, some of the biggest long shots on the tote board. Acid Rain, Join in the Dance and Sinbad the Sailor, who is ridden by our jock belonging to the fairer sex.*

CLOSE on geared-up Emma mounting Sinbad the Sailor.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *They're all in the gate...*

Bell ringing the gates open and the horses charge out.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *And they're off in the Royal Oaks Derby!*

Emma charges along with Sinbad the Sailor.

Ariel Shot of the horses charging on.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *And it's Raging Fire racing for the lead. Emerald Forest has some early speed on the inside. Here's Sinbad the Sailor with some speed as well...*

CLOSE on charging Emma.

INTERCUT: At the Stands her team cheers

ROY Go Emma Go!

JOANNE Go girl, Go!

Mr. Clifford smiles.

BACK TO:

RACETRACK:

Ariel Shot:

The horses charge on...

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Raging Fire has to go a little wide into the turn. In behind there is*

*Emerald Forest and Join in the Dance races towards the rear. The pace is good, 12 lengths from first to last...*

Emma charges on... but she is being overtaken by others.

INTERCUT:

At the stands her team cheers

ROY/JOANNE Go Emma, Go!

Ariel Shot again:

Emma has fallen back.

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*Now they've settled in with Emerald*

*Forest leading and Sinbad the Sailor trying to catch up with the rest...*

Close on the pacing horses.

Ariel Shot again.

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*Into the far turn they go. And it's Emerald Forest still showing the way...*

Long Shot of the winner surging ahead... crossing the finish line...

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *and Emerald Foest has won the Royal Oaks Derby!! Dunhill with second!!*

Followed by the others.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Raging Fire finished third. Then came Terrain, behind Join in the Dance and Sinbad the Sailor finished last.*

INTERCUT:

At the stands Roy drops to his seat. Joanne and Mr.Clifford smiles dejectedly at one another.

BACK TO:

RACETRACK:

As Emma takes off her helmet, Jockey#1 riding Raging Fire comes up.

JOCKEY#1

Maybe they should prepare special tracks too. What do you say?

Joanne takes the jibe in silence.

INT. GAS STATION OFF A FREEWAY - DAY

Attendants filling the tanks of their car and that of the

Stake Truck that carried Mr. Clifford’s stallion Sinbad the Sailor, the Roberts team have snacks sitting around a table at the outdoor cafeteria.

Emma sits grim faced. Hasn’t touched her coffee.

JOANNE

Don’t take it hard on you, Emma. You gave your best.

MR. CLIFFORD Sinbad is not exactly in his elements recently... Maybe I should find a new trainer for him.

Emma doesn’t look up from her cup.

Minutes Later...

Roy gets into the truck. Mr. Clifford and Joanne into the front of Mr.Clifford’s car. As Emma comes out of the washroom and approaches the car, **a Stake Truck** speeds past the gas station.

SOMEONE’S POV: Emma getting into the back of the car.

INTERCUT: Letting out a shrill whinny Elena rises on her hinds ---

BACK TO:

GAS STATION:

Emma gets in, slams the door shut. The car drives off.

INT. STAKE TRUCK - DAY

The car is getting further and further away. In the rear of the Stake Truck Elena has gone berserk. Whinnying and whinnying she stomps the truck rails again and again in her effort to break free.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The Stake Truck speeds out of sight.

INT. A STABLE - NIGHT

SOMEONE’S POV:

As the person approaches we see Elena standing in the semidarkness in the only stall of the small stable. The person comes closer. Noticing the black streak descending from

Elena’s eye

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What is it dear? What’s bothering you?

Elena looks at the person before her, wanting to say so much but unable to.

EXT. A RACETRACK - DAY

Another track, another race. Emma races others.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*It's Oconee and Bryden, continuing to throw it down... Mythical Power is charging hard...*

Roy, Joanne and Mr.Clifford cheer from the stands.

ROY/JOANNE/MR.CLIFFORD Com’on girl! Com’on! Emma moves as best as she can...

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Mythical Power losing steam... falling behind the pack...*

But finishes last again.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Mythical Power finishes last...*

A fellow jockey riding past makes a jibe.

JOCKEY#3

This is no place for Barbie dolls.

EXT. A RACETRACK - DAY

Another track, another derby. Emma races others.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *With three-eighths of a mile to go it's Gallant Sun on the outside, Silent Valor on the inside going nose and nose...*

Roy, Joanne and Mr.Clifford cheer from the stands.

ROY/JOANNE/MR.CLIFFORD Go! Go! Go!

Emma moves her horse as best as she can...

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Gallant Son moves ahead with a sudden burst of speed. Silent Valor falling back as Pirate’s Cove gain ground...*

And finishes second last.

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*Silent Valor finishes ninth...*

Taking off her helmet a dejected Emma rides with her eyes closed. A passing jockey gives her a pat of the shoulder.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - NIGHT

Emma walks in, comes to Junior. Rubbing his neck talks to him.

EMMA

It’s not happening Junior. I am not being able make the connect. Unless you make the connect you can’t do it.

(putting on his harness) When would you be ready, boy? I can’t wait to ride you there. Together we will show them.

She takes him out of the stable.

EXT. ROBERTS RANCH - NIGHT

Emma rides Junior on the track. Finishing the lap, they stop before Roy who checks on the stop watch.

ROY

55 seconds. He needs to do better.

EMMA

Let’s do it again boy.

They speed into another lap.

SONG SEQUENCE

Emma speeding on Junior. Stops at Roy and the middle-aged TRAINER. The Trainer gives her instruction. She sets off again.

She enters a jockey room to be welcomed by mockery from male jockeys.

She races with a stallion. Her team cheers. She finishes last. Dejection once again.

She sits grim faced in the rear of the car. Joanne and Mr. Clifford take a look at her from the front. Look at each other.

She trains with Junior under the watch of Trainer and Roy. Mr. Clifford and Joanne joins them. They notice the determination in Emma’s face. Mr. Clifford puts his arm on Joanne’s shoulder.

Emma and Roy strolls in the moonlit night walking Junior. They kiss. Junior watches.

Lost in melancholy Junior stands in the pasture looking faraway. Banjo and Biggles come up to him. A little exchange and the three males continue pasturing.

Emma races again. Once again her team cheers. Dejection once again.

All by herself Emma gallops with Junior in the middle of the night. Both focussed and determined more then ever. As they speed away to the far end and vanishes round a bend... and with the song nearing end...

From the bend-side (of another track) another horse come galloping towards us with its helmeted rider on back. As they come closer, we recognise the horse. Elena. As she rides past a pole and us, we see **a man** by the track. The face indecipherable being covered in a broad brimmed hat, he checks the stopwatch in hand.

CLOSE on the Stopwatch. It reads 54 seconds.

EXT. ROBERTS RANCH - DAY

The sun rises in the horizon. A new day.

INT. ROBERTS HOUSE - DAY

Emma is having breakfast with Joanne and Mr.Clifford. Roy enters.

I have made your special omelette today, Roy.

She prepares a plate for the boy. Roy takes his chair. Attacks the omelette.

ROY

No one can make it better than you Mrs.Roberts.

Joanne beams at the praise. Roy looks at Emma’s plate. Nothing but fruits and salads on it.

ROY (CONT’D) If only you could have what I’m having, Emma.

Emma scowls at Roy.

ROY (CONT’D)

(looking at Mr.Clifford)

Pity isn’t it? Such good foods Joanne makes, and she can’t have any of it.

MR. CLIFFORD

(shrugging)

Perils of being a professional jockey.

EMMA

(muttering to herself) Professional jockey with only losers to run with.

Joanne heard that.

JOANNE

Don’t say that Emma. Your day will come.

EMMA

I need to have a win in my kitty, mom. Only then they would give me their good horses.

No contradicting that reality. The four eat in silence. Emma looks up.

EMMA (CONT’D)

We’re going run Junior in the Travers Cup. And I am going to ride him.

It came out of the blue.

But Jean Paul said he would like to train Junior for another six months before he could -

EMMA

He’s being trained enough. He is running Travers cup.

Joanne and Mr.Clifford look at one another.

MR. CLIFFORD

Are you sure you can handle him? It would be his first.

EMMA

(looking into

Mr.Clifford’s eyes) No one can handle Junior better than me.

EXT. ROBERTS RANCH - DAY

Jean Paul, Junior’s Trainer is not amenable to the suggestion. He argues with the team before Junior in his French accent.

JEAN PAUL

But I can’t let him run now, Mrs.Roberts. Nope. He is not running the Travers cup.

They all look at Emma. Junior too. A beat.

EMMA He is.

JEAN PAUL

The Trainer has the last word.

EMMA

The owner has it actually.

She looks at her mother. Joanne is in serious dilemma. She looks at George, at Emma, at Junior. The horse is looking at her. A beat. Joanne turns to Jean Paul.

JOANNE

Let’s try him Jean.

JEAN PAUL

Sure you can. But leave me out of it.

He walks away. Watching him walk away, Joanne turns to her daughter.

I’m not going to hire a new trainer for him. You are now both his trainer and his jockey.

Emma nods, nudges at Junior.

EMMA Com’on boy.

She walks Junior away.

As they walk ---

EMMA (CONT’D) It’s up to us now, boy. You understand how serious it is?

# EMMA (CONT’D)

I’m not asking you to come first. But we must do good. We must. I need to prove my mettle in this race. Or else it’s over for me.

She stops Junior. Looks into his eyes.

# EMMA (CONT’D)

You get it, don’t you boy?

CLOSE on the two as they look into one another.

A SERIES OF SHOTS (with background score)

Fully geared Emma galloping Junior at a track. Roy keeping the time.

EMMA (CONT’D) Com’on boy, come on...

Doing the run, she comes to Roy. He shows her the time they took.

# EMMA (CONT’D)

(to Junior)

You need to do better, boy.

She sets off with Junior one more time.

She is exercising Junior. Exercising, messaging his legs.

Doing fitness training herself. Outdoor sprint. Indoor gym training.

She and Roy grooming Junior. Bathing him. Bushing him. Exchanging a kiss in between.

Emma running Junior again, as Roy maintains the time. Knowing the time, she pats Junior.

EMMA (CONT’D)

Just give it a little more, boy.

She sets off with Junior once more time. Banjo and Biggles watch from the pasture.

The sun sets in the horizon.

EXT. PASTURE, ROBERTS FARM - DAY

Biggles advises Junior as he and Banjo walk with the lad.

BIGGLES

Don’t give everything in one go boy. Preserve your energy. Hold the steam.

BANJO

As they say, slow and steady wins the race.

Biggles and Junior look at Banjo. He realises his mistake.

BANJO (CONT’D) Sorry. Wrong quote.

BIGGLES

Remember, it’s the last surge that matters the most.

BANJO

As they say, all’s well that ends well.

(beaming)

This one’s not exactly off the mark, uh?

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

It’s night. Elena runs Junior. Roy maintaining the time.

The alarm clock wakes her up.

Wakes up Roy too.

It’s drizzling outside. Elena bike rides to the stable.

They bring Junior out.

The training continues amidst the rain.

Joanne and Mr.Clifford watch under the shade of their umbrellas.

Ivy and Daisy watch from the pasture, as does Biggles and Banjo.

IVY

He has got that fire heart in his heart.

DAISY So does she.

CLOSE on Emma. She is absolutely focussed. And resolute.

CLOSE on Junior. He is determined no less.

INT. ROBERTS STABLE - NIGHT

Emma gets in. Comes to Junior, as Banjo, Biggles, Ivy and Daisy watch from their stalls. Emma Holds Junior’s face with both her hands, looks into his eyes.

EMMA

Tomorrow we are going to Richmond boy. We will make it together, won’t we?

They look at each other for a long time.

EMMA (CONT’D)

By the way, they won’t be calling you Junior there. You have got a new name. Amazing Allurement. Like that boy?

She does not notice Junior’s frown.

EMMA (CONT’D)

Nice, isn’t it? I have raked my brains to get that one.

Banjo and Biggles look at one another. So does Ivy and Daisy.

EMMA (CONT’D)

Now you have a good night’s sleep boy. I want you smashing fit in the morning.

She kisses Junior on the nose and leaves the stable.

IVY

Amazing allurement? What kind of name is that?

DAISY

The girl is a lousy name giver.

BANJO

(philosophically) What’s in a name...

BIGGLES

(to Junior)

Don’t let yourself squeezed to the rail, boy. That can be dangerous. Stay with the pack. The moment you find an opening, breeze through it. And remember, the last surge.

BANJO

And don’t get intimidated by others. Remain focussed. Always believe you can do it.

DAISY

And don’t let any mare distract you. If there is any that is.

CLOSE on Junior as he listens. Distant crowd cheer is heard

And we are into ---

EXT. A RACETRACK - DAY

The Big Day.

The stands are full. Crowd cheers. Joanne, Mr.Clifford and Roy take their seats.

The gates would be opening any moment now...

COMMENTRY BOX:

The COMMENTATOR a funny looking, middle-aged, almost bald man delivers the running commentary.

COMMENTATOR

Ladies and gentlemen, the roll has been called. The horses are approaching the starting gate...

STARTING GATE:

Emma on Junior has lined up with fellow races. The jockey by her side jibes Emma.

JOCKEY#1

Still hanging on, little miss?

Emma does not respond.

JOCKEY#1 (CONT’D) Nice little pony you’re riding today.

CLOSE on Emma as she tries to remain focussed. She takes a handful of Junior’s mane.

KHALIFA, the horse Jockey#1 is mounting, can’t help throwing a jibe either.

KHALIFA

(to Junior)

You’re gonna get trampled into the track, pony boy.

Like Emma, Junior too remains focussed.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

They’re all in. And away they go...

TRACK:

The bell rings and the gates fly open. The horses surge onto the track. The roar from the spectators is deafening.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Pharao’s Revenge as expected sprinting to the front of the pack. Rock of Gibralter just behind. Tiffany’s Pride quickly moving into third...*

Junior drops to the rear of the field.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Khalifa and Pirate’s Cove are also moving into striking position. New kid in the block Amazing Allurement is at the back of the pack with the laggards...*

STANDS:

The Roberts’ team watch, dreading a dismal performance all over again.

TRACK:

Emma guides Junior along, focussed on the pack ahead of her. The horses ease toward the rail as they race down the backstretch.

They are all bunched in, no place for Junior to move.

The leaders vie to outdo each other.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Pharao’s Revenge and Tiffany’s Pride now vying for the early lead.*

*Flash of Thunder is right up there. Got run over by Khalifa charging toward the inside...*

*They are now past the half-mile mark...*

Junior and Emma still struggling in the back while ---

In the front the leaders surging ahead

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *The field turns for home. Top of the stretch, it's still Pharao’s*

*Revenge with a tenuous lead. Khalifa and Indian Summer strike the front, just outside the eighth pole...*

In the rear Emma surveys everything in front of her...

notices a gap widening between a pair of horses in front of her.

EMMA

Okay Junior, do it now.

As Emma chirps to his ear, Junior in a sudden surge bulls his way through the gap knocking the two horses aside.

STANDS:

MR. CLIFFORD That’s it!

TRACK:

Quickly one by one Junior overtakes the horses.

STANDS

JOANNE/ROY/MR.CLIFFORD Com’on Emma! Com’on Junior!

Junior is sprinting forward in a breath-taking surge.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

Now its Amazing Alluremet sprinting to the front!! Past Pharao’s Revenge, past Khalifa...

TRACK

Junior blows by the other horses

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Amazing Alluremet pulling away at incredible speed..*.

STANDS:

JOANNE/ROY/MR.CLIFFORD Do it guys! Do it!

TRACK:

ARIEL SHOT of Junior running neck and neck with the front runner, then pulling away...

POV FROM BEHIND (A horse’s POV):

Through the gap between the rail and the horses sprinting forward, Junior is seen surging ahead. Suddenly pace increases and distance begins to fall rapidly...

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

This is incredible stuff!! Amazing Allurement is on its way to victory - Wait! It not over yet!

TRACK:

ARIEL SHOT of a horse grazing coming up by the rails overtakes one, and another...

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Nefertiti of the Nile is catching up!!!*

CLOSE on Elena, aka Nefertiti of the Nile. Shortening the distance with electric speed, she is catching up with Junior.

With only a couple lenghth separating the two, everything slows down in time and space as Elena surges ahead to catch up with Junior.

And as she does it and their gazes meet... it’s ablsolute silence. The world comes to a standstill.

Letting out a mad whinney Elena shoots up on her hinds, a moment later, Junior. Emma and Junior’s jockey are tossed in the air.

The Commentator is dumbstuck.

Joanne is terror stricken. So is Roy and Mr.Clifford and the spectators and a bearded man in dark glasses. Looking familiar.

TRACK:

As Emma fall to the ground, it’s fast motion again.

Junior and Elena stomp the ground rising on their hinds and falling on their front letting out loud whinneys as the other horses try to bush past through the bottleneck created, almost trampling Emma under their feet.

She survives the stampede and is dumbstruck to see Junior and a beautiful mare now circling around one another rising and falling to ground whinnying like crazy.

A moment’s confusion... and Emma screams

EMMA Elena!!!

Hearing her name, Elena turns her head and sees Emma.

Whinnying she rises to their hinds again. Comes running to Emma. Emma gets up on her feet. Mad with joy Elena stomps the ground. Emma wraps her arms around Elena’s neck. Junior comes trotting too.

EMMA (CONT’D)

Elena!! Elena!! Junior its Elena!

Elena licks Emma all over. Junior jumps in joy. Brushes his head against Elena’s neck.

STANDS:

Joanee watches grasping her mouth. Roy and Mr.Clifford watch in utter astonishment.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

I can’t believe this! I just can’t believe this! Is this really happening...

TRACK:

Emma, Elena and Junior cuddle one another.

EMMA

Where heve you been girl? Where have you been?

A swarm of TV reporters come running towards the trio. In a moment they get surrounded by cameras and mics and Emma is battered with a barrage of questions.

TV REPORTER # 1 Do you know her Miss?

TV REPORTER # 2 Do they know each other?

TV REPORTER # 3 How did all this happen?

# TV REPORTER # 4

Do they belong to the same owner?

Emma doesn’t know what to say amidst the camera flashes.

Battling the crowd, Joanne, Roy and Mr. Clifford approach the trio... and so does the bearded man in dark glasses.

Seeing her team

EMMA

Mom! She’s Elena!

Seeing Joanne and Roy, Elena galumphs.

JOANNE

Elena its really you!! Oh Elena!!

Joanne hugs Elena. Roy too.

ROY Oh Elena!!

Clearing the crowd, the bearded man in dark glasses shows up, and stops dead on track.

It is Mr. Clifford who sees him first. He nudges Joanne. The eyes meet. Joanne freezes.

A beat... and Tom Roberts turns back and hastily makes his way out through the crowd.

Joanne doesn’t tell Emma and Roy. Dazed, she joins in cuddling Elena and Junior.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

No one is interested to know who won the race. Well, I’m not interested either. All eyes are now on Amazing Allurement and Nefertiti of the Nile. What’s cooking between them?

TRACK:

Emma notices Elena’s rider who has been watching the impossible scene utterly puzzled. She comes to the young man.

EMMA

Hey, who’s her owner?

YOUNG JOCKEY Mr.T.

EMMA

Mr.T? Doesn’t he have a proper name?

YOUNG JOCKEY

I know him by that name only. He is also the trainer.

EMMA

Can you take us to him?

YOUNG JOCKEY He must be around.

He looks into the crowd for Mr. T.

EXT. OUTSIDE RACETRACK - DAY

Tom Roberts get into his car. Drives off.

INT. JOCKEY REST ROOM - DAY

There is silence as Emma enters. Amused at the awed gazes on her, she takes her clothes out from her locker and heads for the change room.

JOCKEY#1

You were all set to win girl. What happened there?

EMMA Miracle!

Beaming, Emma gets into the change room.

INT. RACETRACK STABLE - DAY

Outside the stable that consists of several cabin-like separate stalls laid out in a horizontal row.

Elena and Junior chat as Roy caresses both, not understanding a bit of what they are saying between them. Neither does Elena’s groom who is brushing up Elena.

ELENA

(to Junior)

He is her father.

Junior is speechless.

JUNIOR

What are you saying?

ELENA

And she is his wife.

With her head she points to Joanne who stands some distance away with MR. CLIFFORD and JEFF, Elena’s young jockey, who is trying to call someone over his phone.

ELENA (CONT’D)

He told me everything. He was very fond of mother. Didn’t know Noble though. How would he. She came after he left.

JUNIOR

Were they right? He left because of that accident?

ELENA

Yes. He couldn’t bear to face his daughter and wife after that. He told me everything. He roamed aimlessly like a drifter in the wilderness till he met me.

# JUNIOR

Lucky, you had your accident. And that cat wanted to have you for lunch. Or else he wouldn’t rescue you and we wouldn’t meet ever again.

# ROY

What are you chatting about guys? Seems pretty important.

The two look at Roy.

# ELENA

(sighs)

If only I could tell them everything.

# JUNIOR

Don’t worry. Now that we have come together, they would be coming together too. And everything will be like before.

Elena brightens up in hope.

Jeff can’t connect. He puts down his phone.

# JEFF

Sorry Mrs. Roberts. He is not answering.

# JOANNE

Can I have his number?

JEFF Sure.

Emma comes to them.

EMMA

Is Mr. T coming?

JEFF

He is not picking up his phone.

# JOANNE

I have taken his number. I will talk to him later.

# EMMA

We are going to buy Elena from him, mother. Whatever be her price.

# JOANNE

We will see to that.

MR. CLIFFORD We should be going to our hotel now. Let Elena and Junior take rest. They need it badly. (to Emma) You too.

Emma comes to the duo.

EMMA

Now you go to your stalls and take rest. We will come in the evening. We will take you along with us Elena, I promise.

Elena licks Emma, and Junior. Roy walks Junior to his stall while Elena’s groom takes her to her’s.

Waving to Junior and Elena who are sticking their heads out of their respective stalls seperated by a few more sticking heads, they leave the place.

Junior and Emma look at each other through the row of horse heads.

A head to his neighbors.

STALLION

Have you heard guys? They have cancelled the race. Its scheduled for tomorrow all over again.

# THE STALLION TO HIS LEFT

Oh no! I thought I won it!

(ruefully, looking at

Elena)

This is what happens when you bring them into male things. They send everything into a spin.

# THE ONE TO HIS LEFT

(Elena’s immediate neighbor))

They should be banned from races. Or there should be separate races for them. For both mares, and their human counterparts.

Elena has heard that.

ELENA

(muttering to herself) Sexists!

INT. MR. CLIFFORD’S CAR - DAY

Mr. Clifford drives with Joanne sitting by her side and Emma in the back.

EMMA

Nefertiti of the Nile! What kind of name is that? Can’t Mr. T find a better name for her?

Joanne and Mr. Clifford exchange a glance.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Joanne dials a number on her cell phone.

INT. A HOTEL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE on a cell phone ringing...

In the inexpensive and darkened room, sitting on a sofa, Tom looks at his phone wondering whether to pick up or not. The phone stops ringing. Closing his eyes Tom delves into his musings again. The phone rings again. The same number. Tom wonders. Then picks it up.

TOM Who is it?

JOANNE (V.O.) It’s me Tom.

For a long while Tom doesn’t respond, then speaks

TOM

What is it Joanne?

Long shot of Tom listening. Seconds pass...

CLOSE on Tom. He listens, then responds

TOM (CONT’D)

I’ll do it Joanne. You will never see me again.

INERCUT: JOANNE/TOM

JOANNE

I have another request Tom.

Tom is listening.

JOANNE (CONT’D) Give me Elena. I will pay you any price.

A long silence. Then Tom answers

TOM

She is all I have got Joanne.

Joanne remains silent for a while, then says

JOANNE Bye Tom.

She switches off her phone.

Tom stares at his phone for a long time, then reclining on the sofa closes his eyes.

EXT. RACETRACK STABLE - DAY Roy cuddles Junior.

ROY

Tomorrow you two will be racing again. Whom should I be betting on? You two are hotcakes now, everyone’s betting on you two.

Cuddles some more.

# ROY (CONT’D)

I think I should bet on her. She was almost beating you before she gave it all away.

Junior doesn’t seem happy to hear that.

# ROY (CONT’D)

Chao boy, see you in the evening.

He comes to Elena. Looking back to make sure no one’s near

# ROY (CONT’D)

Let me give you a tip, girl. If you can pin to him to the rail, he is a goner. Don’t tell that to your jock.

(winks)

Chao girl. See you in the evening.

Kissing Elena as Roy walks out of the stable area a racing official comes walking from behind.

OFFICIAL

Hey boy, you seem to know Nefertiti of the Nile quite well.

ROY

She belonged to us some time back.

OFFICIAL

Tom Roberts bought her from you guys?

Roy stops on track. Stunned.

# OFFICIAL (CONT’D)

(puzzled)

What is it boy?

ROY

Do you know where Mr. Roberts is staying?

OFFICIAL

Anny’s Inn. He’s the only owner who has not lodged himself in some fancy hotel.

Roy paces away. The official stands bewildered.

EXT. RACE COMPLEX - DAY

Roy dials from his phone.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Emma sleeping in her room. Her phone vibrates, cannot wake her up.

EXT. RACE COMPLEX - DAY

Proceeding to dial Joanne’s number, Roy restrains himself. Hurries out of the complex.

INT. DRAWING SPACE, HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Joanne opens the door. Roy enters.

ROY Where’s Emma?

JOANNA

In her room. Resting.

Without any more words, Roy paces into Emma’s room. Joanne is puzzled. Mr. Clfford turning pages of a newspaper takes notice of the haste too.

INT. EMMA’S ROOM, HOTEL SUITE - DAY

ROY

Hey Emma, wake up.

Emma opens her eyes.

EMMA What?

INT. DRAWING SPACE, HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Emma rushes out of her room. Behind her Roy.

EMMA Mr. T is dad!!

Joanne and Mr. Clifford look up.

EMMA (CONT’D) Tom Roberts!! Dad owns Elena!!

Joanne and Mr. Clifford look at one another.

EMMA (CONT’D) You know?

They look at Emma in silence. A beat as daughter and mother look at one another. Emma rushes out of the suite. Roy follows.

INT. ANNY’S INN - DAY

Emma and Roy rush to the reception desk.

EMMA

Which room Tom Robert’s staying?

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST He’s just checked out.

Emma and Roy look at one another.

ROY

He won’t be leaving without Elena.

The two rush out, leaving the receptionist baffled.

INT. RACETRACK OFFICE - DAY

Signing a form and taking a receipt, Tom walks out of the office.

EXT. RACETRACK STABLE - DAY

Tom shows the receipt to the stable guard. Goes to Elena. Cuddles her.

TOM

Let’s go for a ride, girl.

He harnesses Elena. Takes her out of her stall. Elena turns to Junior’s stall. Doesn’t see him.

INTERCUT: Junior sleeping in his stall.

BACK TO:

OUTSIDE STABLE:

ELENA

(to the horse in the stall beside Junior’s)

Tell him I’m out for exercising.

THE HORSE Okay, cutie.

Tom walks out with Elena.

Moments pass...

Emma and Roy rush in. Doesn’t see Elena at her stall. Look in. She’s not inside.

They rush to the Stable Guard.

ROY

Where’s Nefertiti of the Nile? She’s not in her stall.

STABLE GUARD Her owner has taken her out a little ago.

EMMA To the track?

STABLE GUARD No. Out of the race.

Stunned, Emma and Roy look at each other. They rush out.

INT. TOM’S STAKE TRUCK - DAY

Tom drives, his face stern.

In the rear a whinnying Elena stomps.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The truck speeds away.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Eyes closed, resting forehead on her fingers Joanne sits on the sofa. Mr. Clifford sits beside her contemplating on the situation. Her phone rings. Joanne picks up.

EMMA (V.O.)

You have dad’s number, don’t you?

EXT. RACE GROUND COMPLEX - DAY Emma dials Tom’s number.

INT. TOM’S STAKE TRUCK - DAY

His phone rings. Driving, Tom looks at the number on screen. Unknown number. Picking up the phone with his free hand, answers.

TOM Who is it?

EMMA (V.O.) Dad!!

Tom loses control. Somehow swerving the wheel, avoiding collusion with a passing car, brings the truck to a screeching halt.

INTERCUT: In the rear, Elena is thrown to side.

Emma’s voice sail through the speaker.

EMMA Dad? Dad?

An overwhlmed Tom sits like a stone.

EXT. RACE GROUND COMPLEX - DAY

EMMA

I know it’s you, dad.

INT. TOM’S STAKE TRUCK - DAY

EMMA (V.O.) Dad...

Tom is in disarray.

EXT. RACE GROUND COMPLEX - DAY

EMMA

Answer me, dad! Why aren’t you answering?

INT. TOM’S STAKE TRUCK - DAY

EMMA (V.O.) Dad? Dad?

Unable to bear it anymore, Tom switches off the phone. Throwing it on the dashboard, presses on the gas.

INTERCUT: The truck suddenly speeding, Elena is thrown off her feet once again.

Tom drives, his jaws stiffened, eyes burning.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

The truck speeds off.

EXT. RACE GROUND COMPLEX - DAY

A distraught Emma looks at Roy.

EMMA

He’s switched off.

Jaws stiffened, eyes burning, she moves her gaze to her feet.

A song begins...

SONG SEQUENCE

Junior wakes up, rises to his feet, puts his head out of the stall. Doesn’t see Elena. The horse beside him conveys to him what Elena said.

Elena driven away. No longer stomping or whinnying, she stands absolutely still.

Tom driving, drinking, as he drives.

Stable Compound. Horses being taken out and brought to their stalls. Junior stands in his stall looking for Elena. Grows apprehensive not seeing her as the day turns to dusk.

Emma dials Tom’s number again and again. ‘Phone switched off’ the response comes from the other side every time.

Joanne taps on Emma’s door. Emma does not open up.

Joanne and Mr.Clifford appear at the Race Track Office. Sign forms.

At last Roy appears. Takes Junior out of his stall and the stable.

As he walks him to the waiting truck, sensing he would be taken away from here, Junior rears rising on his hinds and whinnies like crazy. Stable helps rush in. So does

Mr.Clifford. It takes quite an effort to push Junior into the truck. He stomps the floor madly letting out wild whinnies as he is being driven away.

Night. Mr. Clifford drives the car as they head back home. A grim-faced Joanne beside him. In the back Emma continues trying to connect to father.

Roy drives the truck.

Junior stands absolutely still.

Joanne looks back at Emma. Without reciprocating, Emma tries connecting.

The truck speeds away.

SONG SQUENCE ENDS

INT. MR. CLIFFORD’S CAR - NIGHT

Emma is asleep leaning on to a side. Joanne looks back at her. Sighs. Looks ahead again.

The phone that has slipped from Emma’s hand onto the seat begins to vibrate. Asleep, Emma is unaware of it.

Joanne hears the vibration. Turning back, she looks at the phone and sleeping Emma. Then taking her seat-belt off, she reaches for the backseat and picks up Emma’s phone. Goes grim looking at the number on screen.

EXT. FREEWAY - NIGHT The car speeds on...

EXT. A GAS STATION/MOTEL - NIGHT

Veering off the freeway, the car stops at the station. The truck too. Mr. Clifford and Emma gets out. Roy jumps out of the truck.

Long shot of the freeway with vehicles speeding both ways.

POV:

Someone’s approaching Mr. Clifford’s car. Emma who is sleeping resting her head on the window pane, comes closer and closer... A hand knocks on the glass. Emma wakes up. A moment’s confusion. Then she screams

EMMA Dad!!!

Next moment she is out and in Tom’s arms.

TOM

Won’t we be racing them tomorrow, girl?

Emma beams at smiling Tom. A smiling Joanne, Roy and Mr. Clifford approach father and daughter.

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

The gates are yet to open. The air is thick with anticipation. A hum rises from the jam-packed stands.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

We are once again at the Richmond Park for a re-run of the Travers

Cup race, ladies and gentlemen. Yesterday’s extraordinary events compelled the authorities to cancel the race...

STANDS:

Panning along the boisterous, colourful crowd, we come to the front row where Tom Roberts sits beside George Clifford. Joanne sits on the other side of Mr. Clifford. Roy beside her.

MR. CLIFFORD

Shouldn’t we put our money on them too? Everybody else is.

TOM

Let’s do it this way. You guys win, and you get my Elena. I win, and I get your Junior.

Amused at the suggestion, Mr. Clifford turns to Joanne.

MR. CLIFFORD

What do you say Joanne?

Joanne remains smiling for a moment, then says

JOANNE Deal.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

Last few left to load, Amazing Allurement goes in... Nefertiti of the Nile comes to take line up just beside...

STARTING GATE:

Elena with Jeff mounting her, comes up beside Junior mounted by Emma. She and Junior look at each other smiling.

Emma looks at Elena in pride.

EMMA

You look so gorgeous, girl. I wish I could ride you too.

Hearing that

ELENA

(to Junior)

Not the right attitude before a race. Her focus should only be on winning now. Nothing else.

JUNIOR

Can’t blame her. She’s fond of you no less.

ELENA

I hope you are rightly focussed. I’m not giving you any leeway, mind you.

JUNIOR

Did I ask for any? This time I will give you no chance to catch up.

ELENA

Wouldn’t that be the other way round?

JUNIOR

We will know in a couple of minutes.

They smile at one another and look ahead.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

They are all set at the gate...

RACETRACK/GATE:

The bell rings, the gates open and the horses charge out

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *and they’re off...*

Various shots of the sprinting horses

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*Pharao’s Revenge,*

*Pirate's Cove and Tiffany's Pride came away smartly, Khalifa came out quickly as well.*

*And that's Flash of Thunder down toward the inside in fourth position.*

*Dancing in the Rain is forwardly placed, fifth on the outside.*

*One mile remaining...*

*Look no Further is sixth, Regal*

*Ransom is now seventh.*

*Farther back on the rail is Rock of*

*Gibralter in eight position. Indian Summer is tenth on the outside.*

*And two lengths behind the rest of the field are the stars of the day Amazing Allurement and Nefertiti of the Nile..*.

CLOSE on Junior and Elena running neck and neck behind the rest of the pack.

JUNIOR

Man, we’re running last!

ELENA

Need to do a repeat of yesterday it seems.

JUNIOR

It’s too much asking.

ELENA

Do it for her sake. I’ll do it for my man.

CLOSE on Emma crouched upon Junior.

STANDS:

CLOSE on Tom.

TOM Go girl! Go!

CLOSE on Junior’s team.

ROY/JOANNE/MR.CLIFFORD Go boy! Go! Go!

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR They are heading into the first corner...

TRACK:

Shots of the race

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Flash of Thunder gone ahead to lead...*

*Tiffany’s Pride is back in third. Pharao’s Revenge is along the inside...*

*Khalifa is a long leader outside, then comes Pirate’s Cove...*

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR How things change in a matter of hours...

TRACK:

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) Yesterday’s champs are a shadow of what they were twenty-four hours earlier...

Elena and Junior are still lagging behind.

STNADS:

TOM Com’on girl!

JOANNE

Go girl Go! Go boy Go!

Tom takes note of Joanne’s cheer.

TRACK:

Shots of the sprinting horses

COMMETATOR (V.O.) *Now they're down the back stretch... Khalifa is running the perfect race. Pharao’s Revenge too is moving like an absolute champ.*

*Closely followed by Flash of*

*Thunder and Tiffany’s Pride...*

Junior and Elena running neck and neck. Emma and Jeff trying best to catch up with the rest.

JUNIOR

We need to make the move and fast. Or it’s all over.

Elena sees an opening by the rail.

ELENA

I’m charging down the rail. You follow me.

JUNIOR I hate the rail.

ELENA

You have got no option.

Elena makes the move, throwing Jeff off-guard.

JEFF Hey girl!

Somehow, he holds on to Elena as she charges into the narrow gap.

Taking the cue, Junior sprints right behind her, taking Emma by surprise.

EMMA Hey boy!

She holds tight Junior’s mane. He too charges down the narrow opening.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

This is amazing! The two laggards have made a sudden move! Are we going to see a repeat of yesterday?

TRACK:

Junior’s POV: Elena sprinting right ahead. On one side is the rail. And on the other the horses they are overtaking.

Shot From their front: Elena charging forward. Junior just behind.

CLOSE on a scared Jeff.

CLOSE on Emma. The look changes from dread to excited concentration.

ARIEL SHOT of the two charging down the narrow passage.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Past Pirate’s Cove... Past Tiffany’s Pride...*

STANDS:

Tom, Joanne, Roy and Mr.Clifford stand dumbfolded.

TRACK:

ELENA’S POV: A gap is available on her other side, between the two horses in her front.

ARIEL SHOT: Elena moves away from the rail and slips into the gap, pushing the horse on the rail-side more towards the rail. Junior charges on by the rail...

Junior’s POV: The gap has considerably narrowed. A near collision...

CLOSE on Emma. She closes her eyes in dread.

STANDS:

Tom, Joanne, Roy and Mr. Clifford gasp...

TRACK:

Junior charges on, brushing against the horse and almost the rail...

ARIEL SHOT: Junior negotiates the gap into favorable terrain...

STANDS:

JOANNE sighs in relief. So does Tom.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

This is mindboggling stuff!! Amazing and Nefertiti came up from behind with incredible speed and manoeuvring. Past Flash of Thunder...

TRACK:

COMMENTATOR (V.O.) *Past Pharao’s Revenge... past Khalifa...*

Junior and Elena are race past the leaders from their respective sides...

CLOSE on JEFF. Absolutely focussed.

CLOSE on Emma clutching Junior’s mane. Absolutely focussed.

They enter the final stretch leaving behind the rest. Elena leads, Junior right behind.

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*Into the far turn they go and its*

*Nefertiti of the Nile leading with Amazing Allurement breathing down her neck..*.

STANDS:

Half of the crowd cheering Elena, the other half Junior.

CROWD Go girl go!!

Go boy go!!

You can do it, boy!! Do it girl, do it!!

Joanne, Tom, Roy and Mr. Clifford stand on their feet overwhelmed, not knowing whom to support.

TRACK:

Elena ahead of Junior looks back. Junior is almost there. She runs with her eyes on Junior... letting him catch up...

CLOSE on Emma.

EMMA

Com’on boy! Com’on!

Junior makes the final surge... and comes beside Elena.

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*They're head-to-head now!*

*They're inside the final stages! Amazing Allurement and Nefertiti of the Nile... Both racing up towards the line...*

They cross the line too closely to be differentiated by the naked eye.

# COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

*and it’s a photo finish!!!*

Both Emma and Junior rises on their feet throwing up their arm in their air.

STANDS:

The crowd has gone wild. Amidst the thunderous applause Tom and Mr. Clifford hug one another. Joanne and Roy. Mr. Clifford and Joanne.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

(animated)

It’s a photo finish ladies and gentlemen!! No telling who crossed the line first. Al least I can’t...

TRACK:

Acknowledging the applause, taking off their helmets Jeff and Emma come at each other astride Elena and Junior.

JEFF

I’m sure I made it.

EMMA

(smiles)

Sorry mate. It’s me.

(cuddling Junior, to Elena)

(MORE)

# EMMA (CONT'D)

Hey girl, he gave a heck of a chase, didn’t he?

She cuddles Elena too.

ELENA

(to Junior) You? Or me?

JUNIOR

I don’t know... hey, did you let me catch up to you?

ELENA You think so?

JUNIOR

I’m having that feeling. Did you?

ELENA No I didn’t.

JUNIOR You did.

ELENA No I didn’t.

JUNIOR You did.

COMMENTRY BOX:

COMMENTATOR

Is it Amazing Allurement? Or is it Nefertiti of the Nile? Only technology can tell who has won the Traver’s Cup and half a million dollar that goes with it.

INTERCUT:

In a room within the racing complex, experts are analysing the footage on computer screens.

STANDS:

The crowd is going crazy with anticipation.

A tipsy beer drinking middle-aged man to the woman beside her.

MAN

If it’s not Nefertiti of the Nile I’m going to climb the Aswan Dam and jump on the Nile.

WOMAN

Shall it have to be Nile? There are a number of tall buildings by our very own river. Wouldn’t that be cheaper?

TRACK:

Tom, Joanne, Mr.Clifford and Roy com to Junior and Elena before the podium. Jeff gets down. So does Elena. Joanne hugs her.

JOANNE

I’m so proud of you girl.

EMMA

I haven’t won yet mom.

JOANNE You have.

Emma rushes to her father. Tom hugs her tightly.

EMMA

Jeff believes Elena won it. What do you think?

TOM

I’d put my money on you.

MR. CLIFFORD

You already made a deal, don’t we?

Tom? If its Elena, Junior is yours. And if its Junior, Elena is ours.

EMMA.

(apprehensive, to Joanne) You really did that deal?

Joanne smiles.

JUNIOR

(to Elena)

Win-win deal for us, uh Elena?

ELENA

They must be joking.

JUNIOR They might not.

Minutes later:

The officials come to the podium. The announcer takes the mic.

ANNOUNCER

We have the results with us ladies and gentlemen. In the third position came Pharao’s Revenge. Khalifa came second. And first came....

Emma holds tight Tom’s hand who is hugging her from behind

# ANNOUNCER (CONT’D)

Nefertiti of the Nile and Amazing Allurement, both touching the finish line in exactly 52.006 seconds.

Emma turns to her father. They look at one another in disbelief. Frame freezes.

Elena and Junior whirls at one another. Frame freezes.

Joanne and Mr.Clifford look at one another. Roy at them. Frame freezes.

Then they thaw into celebrations hugging one another.

SONG SEQUENCE

A MONTAGE

Elena and Junior brought on stage. Owners Joanne and Tom share the prize as Emma, Roy and Mr.Clifford and Jeff cheer.

Thronged by reporters they make their way out answering to a barrage of queries.

Emma and Jeff rides Junior and Elena, as Tom, Joanne, Roy and Mr.Clifford walk alongside receiving applause from the crowd lined on both sides.

Tom driving. Behind Roy and Emma stealing a kiss. Watching that on rear-view mirror Tom smiling.

Mr.Clifford driving. Joanne beside him. They exchange a kiss.

Jeff driving the Robert’s Truck.

In the rear junior and Elena licking one another with great affection.

Speeding along the freeway, the convoy goes out of sight.

END SONG SEQUENCE

FADE TO BLACK