

Scene 7

*The same day, several hours later, the time is now 1:05pm, local time in Dubai. Allisyn is sitting outside the office of the Consul General, Shahreyar Zasar, waiting to be seen. A consular Agent, Raja Mahmood, greets her.*

**RAJA MAHMOOD:**  
Ms. Davis?

**ALLISYN:**  
Yes?

**RAJA MAHMOOD:**  
The Consul General will see you now.

*He presents the Consul General, Shahreyar Zasar, and remains standing inside the door. Zasar gestures for her to have a chair.*

begin

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**  
I hear you've been busy since your arrival, Miss Davis.

**ALLISYN:**  
Thank you for seeing me, Mr. Zasar.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**  
We, at the Consulate, were notified of your denied entrance to Pakistan two days ago, and your subsequent re-entrance into Dubai.

**ALLISYN:**  
Yes, it seems that while my Lahore Visa was in good standing upon boarding the plane in Dubai, it became invalid over the course of the 4-hour flight from here to Pakistan. That is indeed interesting, is it not, Mr. Zasar?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**  
We are well aware of your articles in the Washington Post from your last foray in Pakistan, what was it- three years ago? Several of my colleagues lost their positions as a result of them.  
And then there's your most recent Sharia Law Op-ed in the Times. Seems you have a fairly one sided opinion of our Islamic Law.  
Pakistan, as you know, maintains the right to disallow anyone they wish from entering its domain. Those people who commit actions that are anti-Pakistani should be prepared to be denied entrance.

**ALLISYN:**  
A journalist's job is to present the facts, sir. If your government chooses to view that as my being anti-Pakistani- well, I don't have control over that, do I?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

No, madam. Indeed you do not.

*(Beat.)*

How long do you intend to stay here, in Dubai?

**ALLISYN:**

I had hoped you might assist me in getting back into Pakistan.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

Oh, I don't think so.

**ALLISYN:**

Then I suppose I'll be here as long as it takes, sir.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

To accomplish what, Ms. Davis?

**ALLISYN:**

To tell the unbiased story of the killing of Samira Tasneem.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

You think you already know what that is, though, don't you, Ms. Davis?

**ALLISYN:**

I've collected a few facts so far. My intention is to fully understand what happened.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

When I was a little boy, Allisyn, I was a cricketer. We lived just outside Lahore- so our team would often play against some local boys from India. My mother used to take my brother and me to play every weekend. She insisted we play. Good competitive rivalry. And then one day, my father found out that my mother had been lying to him. She'd been telling him that we'd been visiting her sister outside of Islamabad when we were actually playing on the Indian border. We had no idea we were doing something wrong. So you know what my father did? He waited until my brother and I were at school, and he threw acid on my mother's throat.... Not her face, mind you, but her throat. He disfigured her from the chin to the collarbone. Just her neck and throat. Careful not to disturb her beautiful face. And he told us, "You see sons, this is what happens to a wife when she lies, and goes behind her husband's back."

*She sits abruptly.*

**ALLISYN:**

Are you threatening me?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

To the contrary, Miss Davis. My mother is very dear to me. I was very upset by what happened to her skin.

But I am trying to explain to you that there are acceptable limits.

**ALLISYN:**

For whom? All women- or just Pakistani women?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

This is not the United States. There are systems in place that preserve the economic and social order of our country. We must all play our designated roles within this system.

*(beat)*

**ALLISYN:**

What became of your mother, Mr. Zasar?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

She is perfectly well. They are still married- many, many years now. She is still beautiful.

*(beat)*

**ALLISYN:**

You went on to become a Consul General... surely your mother had something to do with your interest in education and diplomacy?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

That is the point, Ms. Davis. My mother knew the risk she was taking and the consequences of her actions. She accepted her punishment humbly. Do you think I could come into your country and understand your people? Your traditions?

**ALLISYN:**

Were you not educated in the West, Mr. Zasar? London? And then graduate school in the U.S.?

*(He nods.)*

**ALLISYN: (cont'd)**

You're telling me that you understood none of the traditions you witnessed and participated in there?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

I witnessed some, yes. But I did not understand them all, nor did I try. I am Pakistani, and a representative of Pakistan, no matter where I am. Just as you are an *American* journalist. Therefore you view everything through the eyes of an American.

**ALLISYN:**

Facts are facts, Mr. Zasar. Not everything is subjective.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

You are incorrect, Miss Davis. Everything is indeed subjective. There is great joy and pride in Pakistan. Neither your Washington Post nor NY Times articles mentioned this.

*(beat)*

This country girl, with her simple life and her limited brain- why is she important to you?

**ALLISYN:**

Because I don't think she had a limited brain, sir. I think her family likely beat her to death in broad daylight to insure she wouldn't have the opportunity to use this brain.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

I understand you've spent a few months in Lahore before? *(She nods.)* Yes, I know. When you drove through our Salt Range, like your male reporter friend, Ben, might be doing right now.... You saw many birds on this drive, no?

**ALLISYN:**

Some birds, sir, yes...

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

One sees many birds. And the urial and the ibex, as well, yes?

**ALLISYN:**

I haven't noted those animals myself but I am sure they are there if you say so.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

This ibex, has a much bigger brain than this girl. This girl has less value than this ibex, this urial, this bird. At least these animals can be killed and eaten for nourishment. They make us strong. This girl, was nothing. This girl shamed her people and her people did what was their right, what must be done. That is truth.

**ALLISYN:**

Well, that's clearly your truth.

*She gestures to the TV screen showing the rioters.*

**ALLISYN:** (*cont'd*)

Your people are rioting in the streets.

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

It will all quiet down in a day or two.

**ALLISYN:**

Back to where everyone plays their designated roles within the system?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

Correct, Allisyn.

(*beat*)

**ALLISYN:**

May I ask you something?

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

As you wish.

**ALLISYN:**

Is that your opinion of my brain, as well, sir? That my brain is limited and small like the white bird of the Salt Range?

*Shahreyar Zasar laughs- and then thinks.*

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

No, Miss Davis. Your brain is more like the jackal's. It is a tricky brain. You're sneaky and manipulative. And your skin is tough and thin, not like our beautiful birds. "Jackal-lady". That is precisely why you were not granted entrance into Pakistan. We have enough jackals in our Salt Range, already.

*Her cell phone beeps: it's a new text message from Ben. They both hear it, but Allisyn intentionally doesn't acknowledge it. SHAHREYAR ZASAR cocks his head slightly.*

**SHAHREYAR ZASAR:**

I might remind you, Ms. Davis, that anti-Pakistani activities are punished by the death penalty in Pakistan. Please ask your friend, Ben, to bear this in mind, as well.

Good day, Miss Davis.

*end*

*The Consular Agent opens the door for her imminent departure. Her phone beeps again. He turns his head and acknowledges it.*