

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD COURTYARD - NIGHT

GRUNTS and CRASHES reverberate from the stairwell of an apartment building.

CARD: Istanbul

LALE HAVASI, 62, tough and beautiful, emerges from the building's entrance pushing in a wheelchair the frail corpse of ARA SPENDERYAN, 70, head hung and eyes covered by the rim of a straw hat.

Lale pauses to catch her breath before wheeling Ara to a sedan. She opens the back passenger door.

Lale considers Ara for a moment before bending down, hugging his torso, and maneuvering him towards the seat.

She loses her footing, yelps, and falls to the ground. Ara falls on top of her.

Lale slides out. Catches her breath. Looks at the open door. Looks at Ara. Wonders.

LALE
(in Turkish)
You fat bastard.

Lale straddles Ara and tries pulling him up by his hips but cannot get him more than a few inches off the ground. She attempts to pull him up in one fell swoop.

LALE (CONT'D)
AY.

Lale drops Ara, clutching her back.

LALE (CONT'D)
Are you trying to kill me?

Lale scans the courtyard and spots a milk crate with a shovel leaning next to it.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Lale balances the central axis of the shovel's handle on the milk crate and plunges the shovel's tip below Ara's torso.

Lale pushes down on the handle. Ara rises from the ground.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Lale slides the remainder of Ara's leg into the car. She considers him before shutting the door and walking to the driver's side.

She opens her door, stops, walks back to Ara's door, opens it, opens his eyelids with her fingers, and stares.

In his left pupil, she sees her own reflection. In his right pupil, she sees a beggar.

She shuts his eyelids, stares, and returns to her seat.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Lale drives through the street. Grabs her phone and dials.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A purple, rusting commuter bus rests in a field of overgrown grass and littered scrap metal. Dogs howl in the distance.

CARD: Yerevan

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

The robust snores of VAHE SPENDERIAN fill the gutted innards of a bus-turned-home. Vahe, 72 with a white beard and light spirit, smiles and mutters to himself in his sleep.

His body barely fits onto the narrow bed upon which he rests. Rays of sunlight illuminate dry skin on his dangling feet.

Next to him rests a worn suitcase and a small bureau with a Nokia cell phone, various medals, a trophy, and a blown up photograph of a younger Vahe twirling a colorful handkerchief in a tuxedo while Lale, dressed in a wedding gown, kisses his cheek as Ara claps from a nearby wheelchair.

The cell phone RINGS -- a burst of Russian Pop thinned out by the phone's flimsy speakers.

Vahe grumbles, smacks the phone to silence it, and resumes his slumber.

The phone RINGS again. Vahe silences it once more and resumes sleeping.

The phone RINGS again. Vahe answers. Unless otherwise indicated, all characters speak in Eastern Armenian.

VAHE

Da?

LALE (V.O.)

Vahe.

VAHE

(switches to Turkish)

Lale? How many years has it been?

Vahe sits up.

LALE (V.O.)

Your brother is dead.

VAHE

What?

LALE (V.O.)

We're driving to Kars, to your family's plot in the cemetery. The funeral is in two days.

Vahe puts his head in his hands.

LALE (V.O.)

I know this is difficult.

(Beat)

Tell me how I can help you get to Kars.

Vahe sighs. Stares at the wall.

LALE (V.O.)

Vahe. Listen to me --

Vahe hangs up, stares at the photograph. The phone RINGS again. He answers.

LALE (V.O.)

I will send you money.

Vahe hangs up and throws the phone across the bus. He sits to catch his breath, to gather his thoughts, to process.

He gets up, opens the top drawer of his bureau, and pulls out a worn SUIT.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Vahe, dressed in the suit, tightens the double windsor knot on his tie. Reaches back into the bureau drawer and pulls out two bottles. He stands before a full-length mirror opposite the bed.

He takes a hair comb out of his jacket pocket, dips it into one of the bottles, and combs his hair. He opens the other bottle, sits on the bed, and shines his shoes.

Vahe puts the bottles back into the bureau, places the suitcase on the bed and opens it. He shuffles around three clementines, a colorful handkerchief, and a honking red nose he squeezes before reaching into the bureau and pulling out a deck of cards he adds to the suitcase.

Vahe opens a drawer and snags a miniature, framed version of the blown up photograph with himself, Ara, and Lale. He pockets it.

Standing up straight before the full-length mirror, suitcase in hand, Vahe checks himself, fixes his jacket button, grabs his cane, and walks.

EXT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Vahe exits his bus-turned-home. He slides the door shut, wraps a chain around the handle, secures the lock, pockets the key, and walks off across the field.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Lale takes out her phone and dials. No answer.

LALE

(shouting at the phone)

Pick up your god damn phone, Vahe.

Nothing. Lale slams the phone on the front passenger seat.

LALE (CONT'D)

(to Ara)

I don't believe it. What, he's too good for my help? How the hell is he going to put enough money together to get to Kars? He's never been responsible with money. He can hardly feed himself.

(Beat.)

(MORE)

Raffi Wartanian "The Beggar Goes Home" Sample

LALE (CONT'D)
He made me feel so loved, that
prideful bastard. What was he
thinking? "Look at me, I moved to
the motherland like a good patriot.
Everything's okay!"

Lale rolls down the window.

LALE (CONT'D)
Fuck identity. Nationalism's no
better than vodka. Another opiate.
We're all just frozen rivers
flowing into ourselves.

Lale looks to Ara in her rearview mirror as he bounces with
the road.

LALE (CONT'D)
I'm going to strangle his ass.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Lale's sedan drives through the outskirts of eastern Istanbul
towards a sign that reads "Kars: 1500km".

CUT TO:

EXT. YEREVAN STREET - DAY

Suitcase in hand, Vahe walks down a sidewalk packed with
PEDESTRIANS and waits at a crosswalk.

EXT. YEREVAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Vahe passes a high fashion designer clothing store and stops
to consider the well-dressed mannequins in the window, his
reflection evident.

In the reflection, Lale passes by. Vahe turns to look but
she is nowhere to be found.

