I/E. PROLOGUE - DAY

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: A cacophony-ridden, toxically electronic music-track.

BLACK SCREEN:

Alphabets S A & W appear horizontally, then A & S appear vertically appended to W forming WAS, W A & N join in horizontally to S and form SWAN. A T U R A & L go up with N to form NATURAL. Alphabets O G I & C form to L’s right and we have LOGIC. In this fashion, ominously bright alphabets do a snake-dance.

The graphic play of alphabets is joined in, with numbers and Devnagari alphabets dancing and filling up open spaces on the screen and starting to blink to cause more visual confusion. The alphabets of the snaky trail too, dance while changing size and shape.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: A teacher’s voice at a distance announces the marks of the class children. A series of names and marks being announced.

1A BLUE SCREEN

LOW ANGLE: DISTORTED CLOSE-UPS OF 2 STERN FACES (IRENE TEACHER & VICTORIA TEACHER) AS THEY READ OUT ONE AFTER THE OTHER, MARKS FROM ANSWER SHEETS.

IRENE TEACHER

KABIR JOHAR... 20 out of 25
ARNAY CHAUHAN... 18 out of 25
SHAUN ALMEIDA... 21 out of 25
KARAN SADARANANI... 24 out of 25
DHHRU KHPKAR... 19 out of 25
RASHID ICCHAPORIA... 15 out of 25
ARNA KOPOOR... 22 out of 25
HUZefa LOKHANDWALA... 24 out of 25
BIPIN PATEL... 20 out of 25
AROON PODDAR... 25 out of 25
ISHAAN RAO... 2 out of 25

SUPER: blinking like a tail-light

SUPER: Fail! Fail! Fail!
IRENE TEACHER (O.S.)
CHANDRAPRAKASH SIROYA... 24 out of 25.
KAUSHIK GUPTA... 20 out of 25
RAGHAV SHAH... 20 out of 25
SANDEEP PANDYA... 17 out of 25
VEER MOHAN... 19 out of 25
AJAY VIDYA SAGAR... 25 out of 25
SUDEEP ROY... 24 out of 25

The second distorted face reads out

VICTORIA TEACHER
HARI KUMAR... 23 out of 25
PRADEEP PANCHAL... 17 out of 25
SUBODH KARVE... 22 out of 25
AFZAL SHEIKH... 19 out of 25
MALHAAR GUPTA... 16 out of 25
MANVEER SINGH... 24 out of 25
ISHAAN RAO... 3 out of 25...

SUPER dissolves in under the face of the teacher, blinking like a tail-light
SUPER: Fail! Fail! Fail!

VICTORIA TEACHER
SAURAV ROHIRA... 25 out of 25
AADIT LAMBA... 24 out of 25
SUMIT MAKHIJA... 21 out of 25

The dance of alphabets reaches screams pitch. The black screen is now full of flashing alphabets, making new, longer words, and the numbers are forming equations rapidly, all demanding the viewer's attention. They have a flashing, warning quality about them. The color of the alphabets and numbers turns to signal-red.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: A siren, shrilly accentuating the flashing red words all around the black screen. A screeching end to this finale.

Sharp cut: (120 secs)
FADE IN:

2 STUDIO - GUTTER

TOP ANGLE: CLOSE SHOT OF A NARROW FLOWING OPEN GUTTER, LOOKING MORE LIKE A RIVULET DUE TO THE FLOW OF THE WATER AND THE CLOSE MAGNIFICATION OF THE FRAME.
ANGLE ON: Weeds and worms, submerged in the little rivulet-gutter, bend elegantly to the flowing, tinkling water, little guppy fish and tadpoles among them. A crab slides sideways across the frame.

A reflection of an 9 year old boy (ISHAAN RAO), peering into this flowing, yet still, green-cast world.

ON THE SOUNDTTRACK: A calming Bach - organ in 'A' minor adds to the richness of the image. Freedom song theme.

2A EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - GUTTER - EVENING

Fade in the sound of distant cheer of post-school kids, mixed with a repetitive call for 'ISHAAN'.

ISHAAN looks on, fascinated by the micro view of this small but complete world, not reacting to the cheer or the call. Next to him, lies his open school bag, with exam answer sheets carelessly stuffed in.

The magic-hour evening light envelops the boy in its golden radiance.

A cool breeze ruffles his unkempt hair caressingly while he watches the fish in the gutter. A beatific smile plays on ISHAAN’s dirtied-by-the-day face, now reflected in the tinkling stream of swaying weeds and worms.

ISHAAN has an improvised fish-net, made out of his own sock and wire. He is in a still position fishing for guppies. He excitedly catches a guppy fish and transfers it into his drinking water bottle. Having secured his catch, he fishes for more.

Suddenly a rude hand wrenches him from his peaceful perch and drags him away into the world outside. MAADHOO, the cleaner of the school bus curses ISHAAN, dragging him away.

MAADHOO
Gutter me mundi daalke baithaa
hai Yedaai! Dus minit se bus ko
rok ke rakhaa hai!

(70 secs)

2B E/I SCHOOL BUS - EVENING

MAADHOO shoves ISHAAN roughly inside the waiting school bus. Bus starts.
3 INT. MOVING SCHOOL BUS - EVENING

Ishaan is seated next to the driver on the engine hump, water bottle in hand, bag on his back. Portrait of a busload of kids, full of energy, having fun, ...doing what they want. The children morph into Van Gogh's starry night river. TITLE: "TAARE ZAMEEN PAR" as the stars in the painting glisten.

(25 secs)

Titles follow.

(180 SECS)

4 EXT. ISHAAN'S BUILDING - EVENING

The bus arrives at a gate of a middle-class residential building. ISHAAN alights. The building bariah dogs dig their heels as soon as they spot ISHAAN. The mongrels make a run for him and bark excitedly. ISHAAN fondles and plays with them, then plays a short 'chase me' game with the mongrels, throwing answer sheets at them, making the mongrels more excited. The answer sheets are torn to shreds in seconds. ISHAAN 'yuk, yuks' at the sight, opening his lunch box and throwing them the load of his untouched chapatti bhaji roll lunch. Suddenly, his attention is attracted by a shiny element in his path. Close-up: a metal zipper. He picks it up and puts it into a small, cute potli which he extracts from his pocket.

(40 secs)

5 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM/ISHAAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

MOTHER'S callu in frame, ISHAAN enters the drawing room of his house... MOTHER'S O/S as ISHAAN about to drop his bag after two steps...

MOTHER (O.S.)
Haath-mooh dholo... aur bag
bedroom main huh!

ISHAAN pulls his bag back on his shoulders.

A two-bedroom apartment - ISHAAN's home is a cluttered space. ISHAAN runs to his bedroom cum study room, dodging the furniture in his way. He gets off his heavy school bag on to a single bed. Then picking his guppy fish water bottle he exits towards the kitchen.
5A INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/WASH BASIN - EVENING

ISHAAAN rushes quickly to a glass jar with a dozen guppy fish and quickly lets in the new guppy from his water bottle. He watches the guppy enter the guppy world with wonderment. He looks around on the kitchen platform and spots a shut bread box. He extends his (gutter/bottle) hand towards the bread-box. He opens the box to reveal neat rows of triangular cheese sandwiches.

As ISHAAN grabs a triangular piece and brings it out, his MOTHER's hand raps his hand.

MOTHER
Ishaan! Jao! Haath dhokar aao pehle!

MOTHER's tone is irritable and edgy. ISHAAN picks the sandwich nevertheless, munches on it, then laughing triumphantly, he moves to wash his hands at the kitchen sink, sandwich in mouth. His MOTHER's reaction to this defiant action is a tired sort of exasperated look. (45 secs)

5B INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - EVENING

In his bedroom, ISHAAN is sitting on the floor, sipping from a tall glass of milk. A 500 bit jigsaw puzzle open in front of him. MOTHER steps in.

MOTHER
Aaj exam paper milne wale they na Inu? Teacher ne diye?

ISHAAN looks up but doesn't answer his MOTHER. He begins blowing bubbles in the milk instead.

MOTHER
Inu... Main kya keh rahin hoon...

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The doorbell rings. (15)

5C INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - MAIN DOOR - EVENING

MOTHER opens the door. It is YOHAN, her 12 year old elder son. MOTHER looks surprised.

MOTHER
Arre Yohan...
YOHAN
Drama practice cancelled mom!
Lily teacher ko viral ho gaya!
(5)

5D INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - EVENING

YOHAN goes towards his room. He systematically gets his heavy school bag off his shoulder and neatly keeps it at his study desk. He is excited as he takes out his answer sheets and exclaims.

YOHAN
Sab subjects me first Mom!
Algebra, Geometry, Physics,
Chem, Bio, Geography, History,
English! ... sirf Hindi mein do
marks se second!

ISHAAN takes a break from his puzzle and looks up at his brother with admiration. YOHAN catches ISHAAN's gaze.

YOHAN
Inu? Tera kaisa gaya...

ISHAAN doesn't answer, quickly resumes solving the puzzle. YOHAN reacts to the puzzle ISHAAN is solving and exclaims.

YOHAN
Wow! ...Yeh to pan raha hai!

ISHAAN gleefully blows bubbles into his glass of milk, his eye on the puzzle.

SHOT OF THE HALF-SOLVED PUZZLE. CLOSE OF HIS HAND, AS IT MOVES QUICKLY, REFLECTING HIS QUICK-THINKING MIND AS HE ARRANGES THE PIECES OF THE JIGSAW.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: In the distance, the mongrels are barking excitedly.

ISHAAN reacts to the barking sounds and hastily brings down the milk glass, spilling the milk on the floor. He springs to his feet. He is still wearing his dirtied school uniform. MOTHER's stern voice.

MOTHER
Nahi Ishaan! ...Pehle Homework!
Pehle homework finish karo...

ISHAAN looks back at her, rushing out of the room. MOTHER shouts at the exiting ISHAAN.
MOTHER

Apna uniform to...

But ISHAAN has already exited. Door opens and shuts out of frame. MOTHER and YOHAN look at each other. YOHAN bursts out laughing.

(45 secs)

6. FXT. ISHAAN'S BUILDING – EVENING

ON THE SOUNTRACK: Music

ISHAAN is seen in the distance, away from the BUILDING KIDS who are playing cricket.

ANGLE ON: He is busy watching and playing with a snail in a small mud-patch skirting the concrete. The mongrels are his ready companions. The ball from the cricket game comes near ISHAAN. The GANG OF BOYS shout out to him to throw the ball back.

GANG OF BOYS
Aye ball ball ball ball ball ball...

ISHAAN picks the ball and enthusiastically throws with all his might, but misses target by degrees, the ball going instead over the compound wall. ISHAAN bites his tongue and acknowledges his mistake. One of the GANG OF BOYS (RANJEET) shouts at ISHAAN.

RANJEET
Aye Duffer! Kidhar ball fekaa?
...Jaa abhi... ball leke aa!

Hearing the invective from RANJEET, ISHAAN doesn't comply. RANJEET is insistent.

RANJEET
Aye bola na ball leke aa.

ISHAAN keeps staring at him. RANJEET cannot tolerate this defiance from a boy much smaller than him. He walks menacingly towards ISHAAN and starts pushing him around in an insulting manner. ISHAAN holds his breath and resists a fight. This submission encourages RANJEET to get more physical and abusive.

RANJEET
Kya dekh raha hai! Huh? Kya dekh raha hai?
(looking at GANG OF BOYS)
Aye idiot... bola na... ball
leke aa... Chal... Chal...
Chal...

RANJEET keeps pushing ISHAAN from 1st position to 2nd, 2nd to 3rd, till he is against the wall. An indignant ISHAAN flings himself on RANJEET. ISHAAN, the smaller of the two, is vicious in this fight. The spunky ISHAAN takes on the taller, larger bully. The mongrels excitedly scamper around the two fighters. RANJEET, who begins twisting his hand, causing ISHAAN excruciating pain. ISHAAN holds back a grimace courageously. ISHAAN won't give up. Suddenly, he darts around and manages to sink his teeth deep and hard into RANJEET's hand. RANJEET screams and lets go. ISHAAN runs off.
(90 secs)

7/7A/7B  I/E. ISHAAN'S BUILDING - STAIRCASE/ FIRST FLOOR/ TERRACE - EVENING (SUNSET)

A scratched and bruised ISHAAN runs up the stairs, his eyes moist, face grimacing with pain, he stops when he comes to the first floor and angrily kicks flowerpots arranged outside a door. ISHAAN charges up the stairs sometimes two at a time. Until he reaches the top landing.
(15 secs)

He pushes the terrace door open and runs right out. In the wide-open space, ISHAAN recovers his breath angrily, holding back his tears.

STAY ON ISHAAN, AN EXPRESSION OF HELPLESSNESS ON HIS FACE. FINALLY HE CRIES, NOT ABLE TO HOLD BACK HIS TEARS.

ON THE SOUNDPACK: Sound of kids shouting from other terraces drowns his sound.

He looks around. A kati-patang flies into the terrace. This changes ISHAAN's mood. He runs to it, wraps the manja around his fingers, bites the string off from the kite, and carries both out of the terrace.
(30 secs)

8  INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

ISHAAN pushes an open door.

ON THE SOUNDPACK: MRS. KARNIK speaks in a complaining tone...
MRS. KARNIK (O.S.)
Bachchaan hai ya raakshas! Saare plants tahas-nahas kar diye...

ISHAAN gulps. MRS. KARNIK is ranting about ISHAAN, her bully son, RANJEET, standing beside her, putting on a 'poor me' act for the benefit of ISHAAN's FATHER. ISHAAN moves back, realizing the spot he is in but unfortunately FATHER spots him.

FATHER

ISHAAN!

FATHER walks menacingly towards ISHAAN, raises his hand and tightly slaps ISHAAN on his cheek.

MOTHER winces as if she has received the slap... she holds YOHAN'S shoulder. Reaction of YOHAN.

YOHAN
Lekin Papa...

Cut back to RANJEET just as he whines out a further complaint interrupting Yohan.

RANJEET
Uncle... usne mera shirft bhi phaad dala... aur

But before he can complete his lie, ISHAAN pounces on the taller RANJEET. ISHAAN'S FATHER extracts ISHAAN off RANJEET even as ISHAAN sways his arms trying to strike.

FATHER
(distorted voice)
ISHAAN stop it! ISHAAN!!

A terrified MRS. KARNIK hastily exits with RANJEET, slamming the door behind her. ISHAAN'S FATHER lets off steam on ISHAAN, not allowing him to put his argument to test.

ISHAAN LOOKS AT HIS FATHER SHOUTING, HIS VOICE SOUNDING ALL WARPED, HIS FACE DISTORTED IN A WIDE-ANGLE CLOSE-UP.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: A drum roll accentuates the highs of his hollering.

FATHER
Har ho gayii... Har roz tumhari complaint! School se complaint! Building se complaint!... Ghar ke baahar...
paon rakho to complaint. Agli baar koi ghar pe complaint leke aya... Mai...

FATHER's hand strikes MOTHER on the nose. ISHAAN cannot resist a chuckle. This angers the FATHER further.

FATHER
Kass raha hai! Hass raha hai Besharam! ...Shameless! Bahut ho gaya!... One more complaint...
One more complaint ISHAAN...
Seednaa Boarding School me daal doonga!

FATHER turns towards MOTHER

FATHER
Dekha MAYA? Mai khadaa hoon...
tum khadi ho... phir bhi maramari kar raha hai!!!??

FATHER
Kya haalat kar dee uss bachche ki! SHIRT PHAAD DIYA!

MOTHER walks intently towards ISHAAN, crossing FATHER and sitting down on her haunches, cups ISHAAN's cheeks in her fingers and keeps looking at ISHAAN's bruised face continuously. FATHER watches her pointedly looking at ISHAAN's face, avoiding FATHER's gaze. This exasperates FATHER and he exits frame.

FATHER
Pooja karo baithkar iski!

FATHER exits frame. ISHAAN's MOTHER sees the muck on Ishaan's clothes, the bruises on his face and body.

MOTHER
Ritni baar kahaa Inu, Ranjeet ke saath mat khelo...

ISHAAN
Mama mai...

MOTHER
(softly)
Chalo, jao... garamaa garam paani se nahalo. Phir dettol lagaati hoon.
ISHAAN runs to the bathroom, stripping along the way. He passes YOHAN, who gives him a friendly pat on his bum. ISHAAN cackles and enters the bathroom.
(120 secs)

9 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

ISHAAN enters the bathroom and opens the hot-shower tap. Hot, steamy water pours on his body. He squirms as the steamy water jets hit the bruises, but he strikes a superhuman pose, repeatedly taking on, the steaming water on the bruises and snarling like an ape.
(10 secs)

10 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ISHAAN is wrapped in a towel post-bath as MOTHER applies Dettol on his wounds. ISHAAN tightens his nostrils and braves the sting of Dettol... MOTHER puts some mercury chrome on his bathed bruises. ISHAAN is brave about that too.

Suddenly he notices his FATHER packing his suitcase. He panics.

ISHAAN (endearingly)
Papa... Papa, aap kahan ja rahe ho?

FATHER continues to pack, ignoring ISHAAN

ISHAAN
Papa... Papa aap

Sharp cut.

FATHER
Jaa raha hoon mai... ghar chhod ke... waapas nahi aaoonga...

Ishaar frightened.

ISHAAN
...Sorry Papa... sorry Papa...

FATHER does not respond. ISHAAN's MOTHER intervenes.
MOTHER
Kyon dara rahe ho bacche ko?
(to Ishaan)
Inu... Papa office ke kaam se ja
rahe hain... tumhari wajah se
nahi. Sunday ko vaapas aa
jaayenge...

ISHAAN looks at his FATHER with a look of accusation for
having lied to him.

STAY ON ISHAAN'S LOOK. (45 SECS)

11 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - PARENTS' BEDROOM - MORNING
(DAWN)

ANGLE ON: Clock shows '5.30'. ISHAAN's FATHER is ready
for exit, looking dapper and businesslike. YOHAN and MOM
are there to see him off. On this action, the song
begins.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: SONG I - 'FAMILY SONG' begins. Plus
digital alarm clock that goes off in the distance.

FATHER exits. (30 secs)

JUMP CUT TO:

11A INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - MORNING

A spic-and-span YOHAN buttons his top few buttons and
brushes his hair. ISHAAN is still in bed. YOHAN picks up
his heavy satchel, a covered tennis racquet and gallantly
strides out of the house at 6.45.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The song continues.

YOHAN
Bye Mom... shaam ko tennis
practice hail

YOHAN exits. (25 secs)

JUMP CUT TO:

11B INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - MORNING

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Idli cooker whistle.

MOTHER, comes into ISHAAN's room post head bath and
shakes up ISHAAN "It's 7.30!"
HE TURNS ON HIS PILLOW TO FACE CAMERA, CLOSE IN ON HIS CALM FACE...

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The Song continues.

MOTHER

Saade saat baj gaye!!! Inu utho!!!

JUMP CUT TO:

11C INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - WASH BASIN - MORNING
ISHAAN with brush in mouth but not brushing.

JUMP CUT TO:

11D INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - MORNING
ISHAAN with milk glass to mouth but not drinking.

JUMP CUT TO:

11E INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - TOILET - MORNING
ISHAAN sitting on the potty and swaying his feet.

JUMP CUT TO:

11F INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING
ISHAAN under the shower and his blue soap is a spaceship.

ISHAAN

ZZZZZZZZZZZ ATTACK UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT... POSITION D2F7...

DDDDDDDD!!!

MOTHER (V.O.)
(exasperatedly)
ISHAAN! Jaldi karo!

(45 secs)

JUMP CUT TO:

11G INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM/ ISHAAN'S BUILDING - STAIRCASE - MORNING

ISHAAN, on the bed, in towel, solving the Rubik cube.
ON THE SOUNDTRACK: HONK! HONK! The song continues.

The sound of the school bus horn! Horrors! Obviously, this happens every morning.

IN QUICK CUTS, MOTHER MAKES ISHAAN READY... SOMEHOW BUTTONS ISHAAN'S SHORTS, TIES HIS LACES, AND BRINGS HIM OUT OF THE DOOR WITH HIS BURDENSOME BAG.

11H EXT. STAIRCASE- MORNING

MOTHER LITERALLY PULLS ISHAAN DOWN THE STAIRS.

All this while, the insistent sound of the school bus honking increases in pace.

11I EXT. ISHAAN'S BUILDING - MORNING

ISHAAN steps out of the building gate, straight into a puddle. SPLASH!!! MOTHER's reaction! She hauls up the boy with MAADHOO'S help. Now only ISHAAN'S face sticks out in profile from the bus. MOTHER gives a peck on ISHAAN's cheek.

(50 secs)

11J INT. SCHOOL BUS - MORNING

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Song continues up-tempo until the end of this scene.

In the bus, MAADHOO picks him up and makes him sit in the front, on the engine bump next to the DRIVER.

Stay on ISHAAN, from behind him, as he looks out of the front window. (30 secs)

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The prattle of kids.

12 EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - MORNING

The bus arrives in school and pours out its contents.

(10 secs)

13 EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - ASSEMBLY HALL - MORNING

As the STUDENTS gather in the assembly hall. We travel the faces of various children - each child special, each with his own eccentricity. The scene treatment is documentary. We let the children's faces speak of restlessness, stillness, naughtiness, alertness - each
face telling it's own story. Nobody seems to be listening
to the voice of the Principal, which is distorting badly
on the P. A. System. It sounds like an indecipherable
railway announcement.

13A  EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - ASSEMBLY EXIT - MORNING

Follow feet as they step out of assembly in single file.
Zero in on one pair of feet, the socks dropped to the
ankles, the shoes mucked up with 'keechad'. The step is
completely non-synchronous. Tilt up to reveal ISHAAN as
he attempts to keep time with the boy in front. He is
suddenly pulled out of line...

PREFECT
(pulling out ISHAAN)
Shoe polished nahi hai!

ISHAAN joins a bunch of improperly uniformed kids. The
appearance of this lot speaks a lot about its character.
Portrait of the misfits.  (60 secs)

FADE OUT.

14  STUDIO - POTHOLE

ANGLE ON: A pothole filled with water, reflecting the
sun, seen through the classroom window. Some vehicle or
the other splashes cyclically over it.

Stay on the puddle as the water in the pothole settles.

IRENE TEACHER (O.S.)
Class... Turn to page 38,
chapter 4, para 3. We are going
to mark adjectives today...

14A  INT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - MORNING

ISHAAN does not react to the teacher’s voice. He
keeps staring at the shimmering puddle. The sunlight
shines in ISHAAN's eyes, reflecting his wonderment. He is
lost in the world outside.

CLOSE ON: ISHAAN

IRENE TEACHER (O.S.)
ISHAAN RAO... please turn to
page 38, chapter 4, para 3...

ISHAAN'S POV: The image of the puddle.
IRENE TEACHER (O.S.)
ISHAAN RAO! Can I have your attention please...

ANGLE ON: ISHAAN. There is no response to the teacher's call. The voice turns harsher

      IRENE TEACHER (O.S.)

      ISHAAN!

ISHAAN reacts sharply and turns towards his teacher.

Sharp cut.

ANGLE ON: IRENE TEACHER

      IRENE TEACHER
I said turn to page 38, chapter 4, para 3... read the first line and point out the adjectives!

ISHAAN just doesn't seem to get the question. He looks around blankly, seeing what the others are doing. IRENE TEACHER repeats.

      IRENE TEACHER
Page 38, chapter 4, para 3. And don't start your dumb act again!

He stands up and asks

      IRENA
... w... w... w?

      IRENE TEACHER
... Page 38, chapter 4, para 3. AADIT LAMBA... just help the boy...

The boy sitting next to ISHAAN turns ISHAAN'S book to the requisite page... ISHAAN keeps staring at the page.

      IRENE TEACHER
Come on now... 3rd para... read the sentence and tell me what the adjectives are...

ISHAAN tries with difficulty but without success. The result... a stretched, intensely excruciating moment for the uncomfortable ISHAAN.
IRENE TEACHER
This won't do everyday... come on, come on...

ISHAAN looks fixedly at the book, but doesn't utter a word. The class starts snickering.

IRENE TEACHER
OK... let's mark the adjectives together... read the sentence... come on.

ISHAAN
...ye... ye... naachte hain...

Class reacts with titters

IRENE TEACHER
What??? Speak in English!!!

ISHAAN
... the letters are dancing...

More titters.

IRENE TEACHER
The letters are dancing again are they???! Well... read the 'dancing letters'!

ISHAAN tries afresh... mumbles at most... completely inaudible. IRENE TEACHER instructs...

IRENE TEACHER
LOUD AND PROPER! LOUD AND PROPER!

ISHAAN feels cornered. An expression of entrapment begins forming on his face. He looks around in panic and as if hunted.

IRENE TEACHER
Come on... we don't have all day!!! Loud and proper!!!

He suddenly looks down into the book and launches into gibberish loudly in a manner that has the class in splits. The teacher loses control over the class.

IRENE TEACHER
Enough! Enough is enough! I've had it! Out you go! ...Out! Out of the class!
ISHAAN's face falls. A moment of reckoning. Then he begins walking up the row towards the exit. As he passes the children up close, suddenly he strikes a pose of bravado.

ISHAAN

Yesssss!!

And pulling a clenched fist triumphantly, he exits the class, throwing a last look at the kids as if this was what he actually wanted!

(120 Secs)

14B EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM - DAY

Outside the classroom he gets restless. He looks around and shifts about. A class is being taken for P.T. The passing row of kids, the kids look at the punished boy.

JUMP CUT TO:

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The school-bell rings.

ANGLE ON: ISHAAN's face. It is the end of the English Grammar class. The teacher steps out.

IRENE TEACHER

Go in now.

ISHAAN moves towards the class. (30 Secs)

14C INT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Follow ISHAAN as he enters class. He is met with snickering faces. He enters the row to go to his seat. AROON PODDAR who is opening her math book accosts him.

AROON PODDAR

...ISHAAN... Maths homework kiya?

Panic on ISHAAN's face.
AAMIR KHAN PRODUCTIONS PRIV LTD

AROON PODDAR
Ha Ha... Unit Test paper sign karke laya?
(ISHAAN's fear ridden face)
Gayaa... ab tu gaya! Now you're gone!

Stay on ISHAAN's face as he moves unsure towards his seat. He sits down and thinks nervously. Then he picks up his satchel, heaving it over his shoulder.

(30 Secs)

15 EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - STAIRCASE - DAY
CLOSE ON: Tight close of satchel strapped on.
PULL OUT: ISHAAN going down the stairs.

15A EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - CORRIDORS - DAY
ISHAAN travels through St. Xavier's Corridors.

16 EXT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - COMPOUND - DAY
TIWARI GUARD is distracted as a teacher hands over some papers for him to xerox. Just then, ISHAAN comes out of the building and wanders off to the backside of the school.

(20 Secs)

17 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SCHOOL - DAY
ON THE SOUNDTRACK: SONG II - FREEDOM SONG begins.
A table-top tight-pan over boras, chikki, imli, churans, zeera gola, chana ginge, white and pink striped sticky candy being shaped into a cycle. (10 Secs)

17A EXT. ROAD CROSSING - DAY
Tight telephoto follow, ISHAAN taking on a whizzing, buzzing traffic, almost getting knocked down. (10 Secs)

17B EXT. HIGH RISE - DAY
Agile feet climbing up scaffolding erected on a tall building. The feet reach a towering height. Swish tilt down to ISHAAN's face, intense, watching the painter at work on the exterior of the high-rise. Flap! A small droplet of paint falls on ISHAAN's cheek in a tight
close-up shot as he watches the action above with great interest. (15 Secs)

17C  FXT. ROAD CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A huge earth-mover in action as it crunches into a tar road stretch. Pan over faces of people who have taken time out from their daily chores and formed a crowd to watch this momentous event; so what if it doesn't concern their mundane daily lives! The pan on the faces ends with ISHAAN's sweaty face, his eyes shining with discovery. Again, the awesome jaws of the earth-mover crunch on the tar. (15 Secs)

17D  EXT. ROAD TREASURE SITE - DAY

New locale... ISHAAN finds a shiny ball-bearing. He takes out his potli and puts the ball-bearing in. As an afterthought, he extracts a 2 rupee coin...

17E  EXT. ICE CANDY VENDOR - DAY

Shot of a hot midday sun reflecting into the lens.

A slab of ice being sliced on a manually operated ice-candy machine. The 'gola' taking shape in the seasoned wrinkled hands of a 'golawala'. Bright yellow colored syrup from a capped bottle going 'glubb glubb' on the 'gola' followed by deep red syrup from another bottle. Thick, gooey orange syrup is poured on the head of the 'gola' and the sinfully attractive stuff is ready to be had. The 'golawala' hands it to a MASON, who pays the 'golawala' and extends the 'gola' to his TODDLER SON, who is seated comfortably on his shoulders- both father and son, sparsely dressed, only in 'langoti', their healthy skin, a deep chocolate brown.

ISHAAN's POV: The TODDLER SON merrily slurps on the 'gola' as the MASON begins to move. Follow the twosome for a distance.

Shot of ISHAAN watching the happy father-son image, even as he forgets to slurp on his own 'gola'. The gola falls off the stick. (30 Secs)

17F  I/E. PET SHOP - DAY

CLOSE ON: A goldfish in a fish-tank, ISHAAN's face reflected in the glass.

WIDE: A roadside pet-shop, where he is gazing at the fish. (10 Secs)
17G EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A steady stream of water from a bent utensil ends up into an upturned open mouth of a laborer as he glug-glugs it down. ISHAAN, seated on a pile of construction sand, watches this action intently. He is eating his chapatti-roll. He picks up his water bottle, unscrews the lid and tries to imitate the laborer's action. Most of the water spills out of the mouth. Also, he chokes with the action. (15 Secs)

17H EXT. STREET #2 - DAY

Shot of a cotton beater 'twang-twanging' on the road. A couple of steps behind, ISHAAN following the twang-twang man. (10 Secs)

17I EXT. STREET #3 - DAY

Siesta time - a static composition of a foot stretched out of a stationary rickshaw. A street dog stretches, luxuriously yawning on the pavement. (10 Secs)

18 INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The SONG II - FREEDOM SONG fades out.

ISHAAN is crashed out on a seat in the school bus.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Sound of a school-bell in the distance.

ISHAAN rises. He has a window seat today. The school kids pour into the bus.

CLOSE ON: ISHAAN's face. The joy of a day well spent reflects in his mood. (20 Secs)

19 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - EVENING

ISHAAN, sitting cross-legged on the floor with color pencils and paper, a look of contentment on his face, while he works on a painting in his scrapbook. The painting is of color smudges created using color pencils, fingertips and spit.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Sounds of cutlery and crockery, setting up the table for dinner.

MOTHER (O.S.)
YOHAN, ISHAAN, haath mooh dho lo, main khana laga rahi hoon.
YOHAN is studying at his table, close to ISHAAN. Next to his table, on a smaller study table, lies a castle made out of a cardboard carton. The label on the cardboard castle says 'Export Quality Mahabaleshwar Strawberries'.

ANGLE ON: The crafted cardboard structure.

YOHAN peeps over ISHAAN's shoulder and watches his colorful painting. He smiles.

YOHAN
Wow! Ye kya hai?

ISHAAN looks meaningfully at his creation.

CLOSE ON: The painting.

FLASH INSERT: In half dissolve a gola rotates on its axis.

Both painting and gola, yellow, orange and red.

The rotating gola reflects in ISHAAN's shining eyes. (30 Secs)

FADE OUT.

20 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

In the darkness of night, the detail of two brothers in bed, YOHAN fast asleep, ISHAAN restless. He extends his arm and the next instant the room is flooded with light from the bedside lamp. ISHAAN shakes up YOHAN.

ISHAAN
Dada... Dada... Dada...

YOHAN
So jaa Inu...

ISHAAN
Dada...

YOHAN
Sorry, Inu, aaj kahani nahi... mai bahut thak gaya hoon.

YOHAN pulls the sheet over his head. ISHAAN pulls it off.

ISHAAN
Dada, aaj main school se bhaag, gaya...
Kya???

ISHAAN
Wo...wo wall... wall cross karke... bhaag gaya!

YOHAN
Hainnn???

ISHAAN flashes an ear-to-ear smile.

Kab?

ISHAAN
First period ke baad...

Kyun?

ISHAAN
Home work nahi kiya tha na... aur...

YOHAN
...kidhar gaya tu?

ISHAAN
Kahin nahi... idhar-udhar ghoomaa... Road pe...

YOHAN
Road pe?

ISHAAN nods.

YOHAN
Akele?

ISHAAN
...Bindaas!

YOHAN springs and sits up.

YOHAN
Look at your guts! ...Huh?
Maaloom hai kitna dangerous hai?
Kuch bhi ho saktaa hai road pe!
Koi kidnap kar leta to? Idiot!
Papa bhi nahi hain!!!

Silence
YOHAN
Mom... mom ko bataya?
ISHAAN shakes his head silently.

YOHAN
Mai bataaoon?

ISHAAN
(hisses)
Nahi!!! Nahi!!!

YOHAN
Phir...

ISHAAN
Dada, Dada please... absent note, likh ke do naa... please...

YOHAN
Kya?

ISHAAN
Absent note...

YOHAN
Nahi...nahi...nahi...nahi... mai nahi... Jhooth-mooth ka note mai nahi likhne wala!!! I'm sorry... Chal...Chupchaap so jaa! Kal subah Mom ko sab bataa doongaa!

And YOHAN shuts the light. Two beats... light comes on ...

ISHAAN
Dada...please...

(90 SECS)

21 INT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

ISHAAN hands over his school calendar to VICTORIA , the Mathematics and Class teacher.

CLOSE ON: The calendar page. An absent note, written and signed with the name MR.J. MAYA N. RAO.

The TEACHER countersigns it and returns the calendar to ISHAAN.

ISHAAN has a slight cough and sniffle.
VICTORIA TEACHER
(Feeling ISHAAN's forehead)

Hmm...

ISHAAN turns and smiles under obvious glee. As he moves away she starts to get up announcing loudly...

VICTORIA TEACHER
Children... surprise math test...

VICTORIA TEACHER
Ye test final me ginaa jaayegaa... to dhyaan se
(VICTORIA TEACHER distributes test sheets...)
Ye lo... take one and pass the rest...

ISHAAN peers at the quiz sheet lying in front of him. The sheet has a series of simple multiplication and division questions. He looks around himself. Everybody is busy with the quiz. He twiddles with his pencil and looks back into the paper.

CLOSE ON: The first question "? x 9 = ____"

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The classroom ambience sounds change to a suspended musical note that builds into a Sci-fi track.

CLOSE ON: The number 3.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: ISHAAN's voice speaking with mission zeal.

22 I/E. ISHAAN'S IMAGINATION

CLOSE ON: The number 3 morphs into a 3-D animated ball, namely, planet Earth, 3rd from the Sun.

PULL OUT: The other corresponding planets.

A spacecraft enters foreground, inside the bubble-headed spacecraft, is ISHAAN in command! He turns his head and looks at planet Earth.
ISHAAN (V.O.)
Bindaas CAPTAIN ISHAAN Mission
Impossible pe niklaal... Uska
mission: Sooraj se teesre
planet... planet Earth ko
kheenchkar... solar system ke
9th planet... Pluto mein "into"
kar denaa hai... 3...
"into"... 9.

Captain ISHAAN pushes a high-tech button and an anchor
drops from under the spaceship. The anchor falls and
latches on to snow.

WIDE SHOT: Planet Earth begins to move with a groaning
creaking sound.

ISHAAN pushes several buttons.

ON THE SOUND-TRACK: Ear-shattering sound of many jet
engines fills the track.

Planet Earth moves rapidly now.

The spacecraft tows the earth-ball away from its position
towards Mars, which looks like a glowing fireball.

ISHAAN (V.O.)
Arey Baap Rei! Garmagaram planet
Mars to CAPTAIN ISHAAN ki
Himalaya pakkad ko pighlaa
degaa!

ISHAAN puts the spacecraft in full throttle. The earth-
ball hurtles past Mars and the other planets and moves
speedily towards Pluto. After the successful maneuver
CAPTAIN ISHAAN sighs with relief.

ISHAAN (V.O.)
Bachaa liyaai... ab 3... 9 mein
"into" hone jaa raha hai...

The planet earth now speeds towards the 9th planet.
CAPTAIN ISHAAN jams two buttons on his panel and the
anchor chain and the winch fall off the spacecraft. The
spacecraft does a sortie and exits frame.

Earth ball is now about to collide with Pluto. The number
9 flashes on Pluto, while number 3 flashes on the moving
Earth globe.

ISHAAN watches the action from the bubble-head of the
spacecraft.
Then the collision of the two planets occurs. Pluto is reduced to dust, while planet Earth rotates around itself and shines brilliantly.

**ISHAAN (V.O.)**
(triumphantly)
Pluto is destroyed! Wo planet hi nahiin raha! Bindaas CAPTAIN
ISHAAN ne Pluto ko solar system se uda diya!

CAPTAIN ISHAAN nods his head approvingly.

ANGLE ON: The revolving earth morphing fully into the number 3.

**ISHAAN (V.O.)**
(triumphantly)
Dhoond liyaa! Bindaas CAPTAIN
ISHAAN ne jawaab dhoond liyaa! 3...'into'... 9 ka jawaab hai...

The answer blinks.

**ON THE SOUNDTRACK:** The school bell rings.

BACK TO:

23 **INT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY**

ANGLE ON: ISHAAN's quiz sheet. He writes the number 3, with a twisted grip on his pencil. All the other questions remain unanswered. A hand enters frame and takes away the sheet.

ISHAAN has a smile on his face. He looks around and meets another student's eye, who asks with a worried look.

**KABIR JOHAR**
Kaisaa thaa... test...

**ISHAAN**
Bindaas!

(140 Secs)

24 **INT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - WATER COOLER - DAY**

ISHAAN mock-drives his space-ship and comes and stands behind a BOY (LOO BULLY) for drinking water from the cooler. The LOO BULLY drinks water very slowly, hogging the only glass. ISHAAN gets restless, taps him to hurry.
ISHAAN
Aye... jaldi kar naa...

LOO BULLY shrugs him off arrogantly.

LOO BULLY
Kya re... 3rd standard fail!
Idhar 4th standard ka line hai!
... Paas hoega tab ana paani
peene ko! Bloody duffer!

Anger flashes on ISHAAN's face momentarily. Then he smiles.

ISHAAN
Ek trick dikhaoon?

LOO BULLY
What stupid trick? Shuddup!!!

LOO BULLY fills his glass at the cooler tap. ISHAAN easing out the filled glass from the bully's hand

ISHAAN
Sachchi! Nice trick... dekh...

And ISHAAN gulps down the water without the glass touching his lips glugg-glugg-glugg from above, just like the Mason at the construction site. ISHAAN finishes the glass and gives it back to the bully.

ISHAAN
Ahhhaaa!!! Abhi tu kar...

LOO BULLY fills it up and tries the trick.

LOO BULLY
Choke! Choke! Splutter!
Splutter!

ISHAAN laughs hysterically, copying the spluttering and choking action of the bully.

ISHAAN
(shouting and running off)
Aye Duffer!!!!

The bully takes a late start to chase ISHAAN.

(60 secs)
24A INT. ST. ANTHONY STAIRCASE- DAY

Documentary style shoot of end of day at St. Xaviers School staircase... kids gallop down...

(5 secs)

25 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

ISHAAN and his MOTHER are doing his homework together. YOHAN (b.g.) is at his study table. ISHAAN writes laboriously with a twisted grip on his pencil, his tongue sticking out, his face straining with the pressure. He writes slowly.

MOTHER

...Dikhaao...

ISHAAN hands over his book. She reads it and frowns. Meanwhile ISHAAN is looking at YOHAN and trying to whistle out with no success.

MOTHER

ISHAAN... sab spellings galat! 
...Idhar table... t-a-b-e-l ...
aur yahan... t-a-b-b-e... Ye kya? 
T_H_E the ki jagah sirf D? Kitni bear ISHAAN? ...Ye kya hai??
Kal hi humne ye kiya tha... 
tum kaise bhool sakte ho Inu?

No answer from ISHAAN.

MOTHER

Bahut masti ho gayi! Phir usi class mein reh jaaoge beta... 
saare dost fourth standard mein chale jaayengee... Concentrate Inu... please... concentrate...

ISHAAN cocks his eyes and looks at his MOTHER intently.

MOTHER

Bagwaas band karo aur spellings correct karo!

ISHAAN

Nahi...

MOTHER

Kya?
ISHAAN
NO! NO! NO!
MOTHER bangs the book down on the bed. ISHAAN sticks out his tongue and escapes the frame even as MOTHER calls out.

MOTHER
ISHAAN! ISHAAN! Idhar Aao!!!
ISHAAN!

(60 secs)

26 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE ON: TV screen. Channels whiz one after the other, at one point, a channel with a drummer doing a solo. Whiz back to this solo. Beat. The drummer in the middle of an awesome roll.

ANGLE ON: ISHAAN breathing deeply, immersed in the drum solo.

ANGLE ON: The drummer brings the solo to a cracking finish.

(20 secs)

FADE OUT.

27 EXT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - MAIN DOOR - MORNING

ANGLE ON: Sunday morning papers hung outside ISHAAN's house door.

The door opens and out pops YOHAN in tennis gear, ready to leave, kit-bag and all. He picks up the newspapers.

28 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM/ KITCHEN/ ISHAAN'S ROOM - MORNING

YOHAN gives the newspapers to FATHER, who is lounging on the sofa in his pajamas.

JUMP CUT TO:

28A INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - MORNING

ISHAAN is fast asleep in bed. YOHAN pops in his head.

YOHAN
Papa aa gaye Inu!!!
ISHAAN's eyes pop open! And a big smile appears on his sleepy face. Bleary eyed, he stumbles out of the bed and rushes out to greet his FATHER. Genuine joy!

28B INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - MORNING

ISHAAN
Papa... kab aaye?

FATHER
Kal raat... tum so rahe the...

YOHAN watches ISHAAN dig into FATHER's side. YOHAN smiles.

YOHAN
Bye Papa! Bye Inu!
(shouting out to mom in the kitchen)
Bye mom!

YOHAN strides off with his tennis gear. ISHAAN looks up at his FATHER.

ISHAAN
Mere liye kya laaye?

FATHER points to the dining table, an unopened carton of grapes.

ISHAAN
Dada ke liye?

FATHER points to the grapes again.

ISHAAN
Donon ke liye?

ISHAAN rushes to the table, opens the carton and picks out a bunch.

FATHER
Dho lo pehle! ....ISHAAN....

ISHAAN teases him by getting the bunch to his lips, then he drops the bunch back into the carton and rushes to his FATHER and curls up next to him. It is a happy morning.

(45 secs)
29 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - MORNING

ISHAAN is sitting alone at the dining table, eating idlis and bargaining with FATHER for a trip to the aquarium. HOusemaid is doing jhaadoo-katkaa in the (b.g.)

ISHAAN
Papa... Papa... aquarium... Papa aquarium... please...

FATHER nods noncommitally, reading the Sunday papers, sitting comfortably on the sofa. He pulls out the latest Outlook from the neatly stacked newspaper rack. A rolled sheet of paper, around which is wound a couple of meters of manja, falls out of the rack. Out of curiosity, FATHER unwinds the manja and unrolls the paper. It is the absent note torn from ISHAAN's calendar. FATHER scrutinizes the note with MOTHER's signature. Then he calls out...

FATHER
MAYA!!! Thursday ko ISHAAN ko bukaar tha?!

ISHAAN panics... freezes mid-chewing. MAYA hurriedly steps into the drawing room, wiping off her wet kitchen hands on her saree pallu.

MOTHER
Nahi to!

FATHER
To ye kya hai? (shoving the note at MOTHER)

ISHAAN tense. MOTHER's face falls.

MOTHER
Maine ye note nahi likhaa hai...

Both parents now turn to ISHAAN.

FATHER
ISHAAN!!! Idhar aao!!!

ISHAAN inches towards where his parents are standing. ISHAAN's FATHER takes back the note from MOTHER and extends it to ISHAAN.

FATHER
Ye kya hai... Iss absent note ka kya matlab hai?!!
ISHAAN has turned into a statue.

FATHER
Kya poochh raha hoon mai?
Sunaai nahi deta? Kya matlab
hai iss note ka?

A stunned ISHAAN just gapes at his FATHER. MOTHER peers at the note.

MOTHER
... Arre Thursday ko subah...
Mahabaleshwar gaye naa aap...
school bus tak chhodne mai khud
gayi thi...

FATHER continues interrogation.

FATHER
School nahi gaya... absent note
diya... Thursday ko kiya kya?
Jawab do ISHAAN... varna maz-
maar ke chandee uded doongaa!

Unable to bear his FATHER's pitch he looks down.

FATHER
Neeche mat dekho Ishaan... Oopar
dekho... Oopar dekho... Meri
Aakhon mein... and answer me...
Where the hell were you on
Thursday!!! Where? Huh?
...Kahan?? School nahi gaye to
kahan gaye?? Answer, God-damn-
it!!!!

ISHAAN
(stammering)
ITITI... Bbbbbbubunk...

FATHER
Kya? ...Kya bola??

ISHAAN
Bbbbbbbbbunnnkkk...

FATHER zapped by the answer.

FATHER
WHAT? .... School bunk kiya
ISHAAN?

ISHAAN nods slowly with his head down.
FATHER
Bunk kiya aur kya kiya? Huh? Kya kiya? Kahaan gaye??? ...Kahan?

ISHAAN
Mai... mai... road...

FATHER
Road? What road? Kauns a road?
Kiske saath? ... Huh? Kiske saath???

ISHAAN
...Aaa...a...ake...akele...

FATHER
Akele? Dimaag kharaab hai??? Are you out of your bloody mind???. . . . Sheher bhar mein akele ghoom rahe the... Hamaaraa zaraa bhi khayaal nahi aya???. Sunaa, tumne MAYA? Kuch bhi ho sakta tha... Agar ye kho jaataa to kahan dhoondhte ise?!!!

Focus shifts to the absent note which FATHER is swishing around.

FATHER
Aur ye kisne likhaa???

Silence again while ISHAAN stands stoic.

FATHER
Tum to chang se likh nahi sakte... bloody duffer... itna likh paate to paas nahi ho jaate? Bataao... kisne likha note???
TELL ME ISHAAN... WHO WROTE THE ABSENT NOTE???

ISHAAN is stoic. He won't squeal. FATHER keeps badgering him with the same question.

FATHER
FOR THE LAST TIME... WHO WROTE THE ABSENT NOTE???. WHO???. WHO???

ANGLE ON: ISHAAN's shorts - he wets them - then the trickle down.
CLOSE ON: FATHER's open palm comes crashing on to ISHAAN's cheek. Tears well up in ISHAAN's eyes. Beat. Red welts form on his cheek.

(180 secs)

DISSOLVE TO:

30° INT. ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S CABIN - DAY

CLOSE ON: ISHAAN standing in the Principal's cabin.

PRINCIPAL ANTHONY, ISHAAN's FATHER, MOTHER, VICTORIA TEACHER and IRENE TEACHER are seated.

CLOSE ON: ISHAAN.

VICTORIA TEACHER (O.S.)
Class-work aur homework... dono mein ... koi improvement nahi.
Bilkul pichhle saal ki tarah...
Books are still his enemies!

VICTORIA TEACHER
Padhnaa likhnaa jaise,
punishment! Uski English writing
to kabhi-kabhi Rusi laan jaisi
lahti hai! Jaan boojh kar
mistakes repeat katta hai!
Dhyaan hamesha class ke baahar
rehtaa hai.

IRENE TEACHER
...All the time asking
permission to go to the
toilet... I'm thirsty, I want to
do susu... tirsty-susu, tirsty-
susu... Disturbs the whole class
with his pranks all the time.

VICTORIA TEACHER
Aap ne uske exam papers dekhe
honge? ... har subject mein ande
ubaaale hain...

MOTHER interrupts.

MOTHER
Aap ne uske exam papers bheje
the??
VICTORIA TEACHER
Pichhle Wednesday ko diye!
Parents signature ke liye... aaj
tak waapas nahi aaye.

IRENE TEACHER
They were a sight I tell you
MRS. RAO!... I sent a note just
to meet you...

Silence from ISHAAN. VICTORIA TEACHER extracts fresh
evidence from her file... shows empty blanks of the math
test.

VICTORIA TEACHER
Ye dekh hiye uska Math test. 3 x 9
= 3. Buss! iske baad saare
sawaal chhod diye... ye aisi-aisi
kartootein iski... Kaun maanegaa
ye YOHAN RAO ka chhota bhai
hai!!!

Silence overcomes the room as the group glares at ISHAAN.
PRINCIPAL ANTHONY clears her throat.

PRINCIPAL ANTHONY
MR. RAO, 3rd std mein vaise bhi
aap ke bete ka ye dochraa saal
hai... agar aisa hi chaltaa raha
to... mujhe dukh hai ki mai aap
ki madad nahi kar paaoongi...
shaayad usey koj problem hai...

FATHER
Kya matlab??

PRINCIPAL ANTHONY clears throat again after a pregnant
pause.

PRINCIPAL ANTHONY
Aap uska test kyun nahi karaate?
Shaayad wo... kuch bachche
badnaseeb hote hain... aise
bachchon ke liye... alag se...
special schools bhi hote hain!

A pregnant pause settles on the group.

ISHAAN stands unsure of his fate.

(120 secs)
31 INT. MARUTI ZEN - DAY

ISHAAN'S POV. STREET KIDS selling books at the signal. ISHAAN sits alone, huddled in the back seat of the car. The car starts moving. The silent drive home is laden with meaning, with MOTHER in tears and FATHER indignantly glaring at the world in front of his steering wheel. The silence is punctured by Father's words.

FATHER
Thinks my son is a retard!
Sochti hai mera beta normal nahi hai! ...Class me saathh-saathh bachche bhare padey hain! Kya khaak dhyaan de paayegi teacher har bachche ko!

MOTHER
Kya nahi kiya maine... Bachchen ki khaatir career, job sab kuch chhed diya! Khud lessons leti hoon... Subah-shyaam... ISHAAN-ISHAAN... ISHAAN-ISHAAN...

FATHER looks ahead angrily.

FATHER
No Maya... tumhara fault nahi hai...
(Looks angrily at ISHAAN in the rear-view)
Ye aise nahi sudhrega...

Silence in the car.

32 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

FATHER is on the phone.

FATHER
Mai kal subah hi aa jata hoon...
Thanks. Thanks a lot SURESH!
Good night!

MOTHER, standing at the passage asks apprehensively.

MOTHER
Lekin... term ke beech me?
FATHER
(confidently)
SURESH KAPADIA ke chacha school
ke founder trustee hain... kal
hi Head Master se milke... fees
vagairaa bhar doongaa.

ISHAAN's horrified face. He bangs the table...

ISHAAN
Nahi!!! ...main nahi jaaoongaa!

FATHER
ISHAAN!

YOHAN holds ISHAAN'S hand under the table, trying to give
ISHAAN comfort. MOTHER has a look of serious worry on her
face, she pauses and speaks in an unsure sort of way, a
lump already knotting itself in her stomach:

MOTHER
...Ye saal pooraa kar lena dete
hain... phir... I mean...
Nandu... aaj tak wo mere
bagair...

FATHER defends his decision

FATHER
Aadat daalni hogi usey! ... Aur
tumne Principal ki baat nahi
suni? Wo to usey agle saal
school mein rehne nahi denge!
Dubaaraa fail karke nikaal
denge...Phir kahan jayenge hum?

A defiant looking ISHAAN stares angrily at his FATHER.
FATHER reacts.

FATHER
Dekho... kaise ghoor raha hai!
No bloody regret on his face!
Nasik Public School mein thok
peetke seedhaa kar denge! Aaj
Yohan se absent note
likhwaayaa... kal pataa nahi
kya!

Pause. An unsure MOTHER's face.
FATHER
mera yakeen karo MAYA... mai
baap hoon uska! ...Fees hamare
budget ke baahar hain... lekin
adjust kar lenge...

Pause. MOTHER reflects.

FATHER
Divali ke baad term shuru ho
jaayegi...

ISHAAN looks at his MOTHER, who looks at his FATHER.
ISHAAN has tears in his eyes as he pleads.

ISHAAN
Papa... mujhe mat bhejo... i
don't want to go...

(90 secs)

33   EXT. RAILWAY STATION - DAY

<DREAM>

ISHAAN and his MOTHER are at a crowded railway platform.
A suburban train enters the platform. ISHAAN's MOTHER is
able to enter the train, but in the tug and pull of the
crowd, ISHAAN loses grip of his MOTHER's hand and is left
behind on the platform just as the train moves and
gathers momentum. ISHAAN screams hysterically, calling
out to his MOTHER.

ISHAAN
Mama... Mama...

(30 secs)

34   INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - MORNING

ISHAAN is screaming in his bed.

ISHAAN
Mama! Mama!

He has wet his bed. ISHAAN's MOTHER runs to him. She
notices the wet blotch on the bed. Also, he is dripping
with sweat. She hurriedly shakes him to wake him up. He
sobs. MOTHER tries to calm him without success. MOTHER
has a lump in her throat. ISHAAN breaks down. He looks
most vulnerable.
ISHAAN
Mujhe boarding nahi... nahi jana mama... I am trying Mama... I am knowing Mama... really... see...
A B C D H I K M L O V U X Y Z...
Dekhaa Mama... I know! Mujhe aataa hai Mama! ...aur bhi aayegaa! Sab study aayegaa...
Main crackers nahi phodoongaa Mama... No Diwali... lekin mujhe boarding nahi... I don't want to go Mama... mujhe boarding nahi jana hai... mujhe boarding nahi jana hai...!

The poor kid sobs like hell. MOTHER holds him tightly. She too has tears in her eyes.

35  EXT. ISHAAN'S BUILDING ALT - TERRACE - NIGHT

ISHAAN sits alone while the building kids burst crackers. RANJEET comes to light a sparkler next to ISHAAN, where a diya is lit. He snickers at ISHAAN.

RANJEET
Kya ISHAAN... Phataka nahi phod raha hai? ...Darr raha hai naa... boarding school jaaneko?

ISHAAN gets defiant.

ISHAAN
Chup be!... Mai nahi dar raha hoon! ... Dekh!

And he lights up a tavangi-mala in his hand and pointing it towards RANJEET, sends it in his direction. RANJEET has to scamper in order to dodge. ISHAAN shouts out to RANJEET.

ISHAAN
Mai nahi jaoongaa... mai nahi jaaongaaa...

(30 secs)

DISSOLVE TO:

36  INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

ISHAAN is weeping into his brother's chest, holding him tight and pleading.
ISHAAN
Mujhe nahi jana... mujhe nahi jana... Dada... please Papa ko bolo naa... wo tumhari baat sunenge... please... please Dada... Papa meri baat nahi sunte... please... mujhe nahi jana hai...mujhe nahi jana hai...

He sobs.

The night sky outside the secured bedroom window has crackers bursting. (15 secs) FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

37 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

WIDE: Boarding School campus.

A hired Qualis, laden with luggage and carrying the Rao family enters campus.

March-past practice is in progress on the wide school ground.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Sound of bugles and drums give the school an army-like feel.

(20 secs)

38 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - DAY

If ISHAAN had any intention of starting afresh, the warning note of the HOUSEMASTER swiftly kills it. Though he is not 'mean', he is firm and authoritative.

HOUSEMASTER
Aap ke Papa bataate hain ke aap bade ziddi hain... Ek baat saaf-saaf sun lo... Iss Boarding School mein ek hi sikkaa chalta hai ...discipline.

(to ISHAAN's FATHER)
...Aap fikar mat kijiye MR. RAO... Yahan bade-bade bigde ghodon ko naai pahanaayee hai hum ne...

ISHAAN's frightened face speaks volumes of his fear.
ON THE SOUNDTRACK: A harsh bell rings somewhere, announcing the end of classes.

(25 secs)

39 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ENTRANCE - EVENING (TWILIGHT)

Doors of the hired Qualis shut firmly.

Faces of FATHER, MOTHER and YOHAN inside the Qualis, looking like convicts, not meeting ISHAAN's eye. The driver starts the engine.

The effect of the engine starting on ISHAAN's face as he suppresses his emotions and raises a hand to wave his family goodbye.

ISHAAN's MOTHER cannot hide her tears, so also YOHAN.

The car moves away from ISHAAN until it is but a speck.

Only then, in the twilight, ISHAAN's chin quivers with emotion as his eyes well up. HOUSEMASTER in (b.g)

(45 secs)

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: SONG III 'SONG OF SEPERATION 1' takes off.

40 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - EVENING

ANGLE ON: Depressing yellow lamps lighting up in a row, the dark dorm corridor.

ISHAAN is seated on his bed, dressed in kurta pajamas.

In the b.g., other kids are changing into kurta pajamas for dinner.

A sad, dreamlike quality about the image. Slo-mo.

40A INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

ISHAAN at the dining table, not eating a single morsel of food from the served plate.
40B INT. TOYOTA QUALIS - NIGHT

MOTHER, looking out of the window, tears flowing freely from her eyes. YOHAN, passed out beside his MOTHER, his cheeks still wet with tears.

40C INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - NIGHT

ISHAAN sitting huddled in bed.

INSERT: A huge dorm clock as it strikes 10.

Lights out.

Other children of the dorm covering themselves with blankets.

INSERT: Shot of the clock. It is 2.

ISHAAN is seated on his bed, knees pulled up, his face hidden underneath, his shoulders shaking.

40D INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

MOTHER's hand opens Ishaan's Flip book. A series of ISHAAN's drawings of a family of 4 animate and end up with a drawing where the smallest of the family separates from them and exits the page. A tear drops on the page.

40E INT. BOARDING SCHOOL.

The dying strains of the song... Tie up the lace of life... baby learn to survive... Blind... to... your... beauty... This world... is... really... naive....... The guitar picks up, as Ishaan gets ready with a degree of difficulty, wrongly buttoning his shirt, not able to tie up his laces.

(180 secs)

41 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S CLASSROOM. DAY

A despicable character, the Hindi Teacher, MR. TIWARI, points a finger at ISHAAN.

MR. TIWARI

Bachchon... ye hai... ISHAAN
NANDKISHORE RAO!!!

MR. TIWARI commands ISHAAN...
MR. TIWARI
Yahan aage aao... apna bastaa
uthaaloo! ...Aaj se tumhari jagah
yahan...
(points to the 1st
bench next to RAJAN
DAMODARAN)
...Meri aakhon ke theek
saamne... RAJAN DAMODARAN ki
baqal mein. RAJAN DAMODARAN
class mein first ata hai...
RAJAN ki sangat ka achcha
parinaam tumpar ho... aisi
apeksha karta hoon.

ISHAAN'S bench partner, RAJAN DAMODARAN, is polio-affected.
He smiles warmly at ISHAAN, who looks tense...

MR.TIWARI
Kavita pathan aur vyakkyaa...
aaj ka kaarya-kram...
Atthaaiswaan panna... "Kshama,"
RAJAN... kavita paath karo...
aur ISHAAN NANDKISHORE RAO...
aap... aap kavita ka arth
samjhaayenge!

RAJAN
Copar se dekhooon
Tu hai Khulaa aasmaan
Bandalon se bharaa bharaa
Tera Yeh Jahaan
Jab tak na taras jaay
Peene ko maathi
Ya khoon ke dikhaye
Ye mere saathi
Cykli ki ghanti
Ya kankad ya maati
Ye tujh pe baras jaay
Andhe ki laathi
Tab sab ko tu dikhe hai
Paani se ladee
...Tu to hai tu
Apni pyaari si nadi

MR.TIWARI
...ISHAAN NANDKISHORE RAO...
kavita ka matlab samjhaao!

ISHAAN stands up unsure... and...

VERSION 1
40B INT. TOYOTA QUALIS - NIGHT

MOTHER, looking out of the window, tears flowing freely from her eyes. YOHAN, passed out beside his MOTHER, his cheeks still wet with tears.

40C INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - NIGHT

ISHAAN sitting huddled in bed.

INSERT: A huge dorm clock as it strikes 10.

Lights out.

Other children of the dorm covering themselves with blankets.

INSERT: Shot of the clock. It is 2.

ISHAAN is seated on his bed, knees pulled up, his face hidden underneath, his shoulders shaking.

40D INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

MOTHER's hand opens Ishaan's Flip book. A series of ISHAAN's drawings of a family of 4 animate and end up with a drawing where the smallest of the family separates from them and exits the page. A tear drops on the page.

40E INT. BOARDING SCHOOL

The dying strains of the song... Tie up the lace of life... baby learn to survive... Blind ...to... your... beauty... This world... is... really... naïve.......... The guitar picks up, as Ishaan gets ready with a degree of difficulty, wrongly buttoning his shirt, not able to tie up his laces.

(180 secs)

41 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S CLASSROOM. DAY

A despicable character, the Hindi Teacher, MR. TIWARI, points a finger at ISHAAN.

MR. TIWARI
Bachchon... ye hai... ISHAAN
NANDKISHORE RAO!!!

MR. TIWARI commands ISHAAN...
ISHAAAN
Jo dikhta hai humko lagta hai
hai aur jo nahnin dikhta humko
lagta hai nahnin hai. Lekin
kabhi kabhi jo dikhta hai woh
nahnin hota aur jo nahnin dikhta
woh hota hai. Matlab...

MR. TIWARI
Arre Kya dikhta hai nahnin dikhta
hai kar rahe ho? Minoo
Patel... tum sambhao.

ISHAAN turns and looks at MINOO PATEL as he rises.

MINOO PATEL
Kavi kehta hai ki jab wo nadi ko
dekhta hai usme aakash ka
pratibimb dikhta hai... is
pratibimb ko vo alag alag
vastuon se bhang karta hai aur
nadi ka chitr phir se ubhar aata
hai

MR. TIWARI
Uttam MINOO PATEL! Baikh Jao

ISHAAN feels snubbed. Sits down dejected.

(120 secs)

TRANSITION

41A  BOARDING SCHOOL CLASS-DAY

The class has ended. RAJAN smiles at ISHAAN as he clicks
his calipers into locking position. In the background,
kids are getting up and moving towards the door.

RAJAN
Actually Kavita ka asli matlab to
tumne samjhaya. Baaki Sabne ne to
rate hue uttar diye... TIWARI SIR
bahut strict hain... Jaisa wo
bataate hain vaisa hi yaad karke
sunana padtaa hai...
(pause as RAJAN thinks)
Tum... saal ke beech mein kaise aa
gaye?

ISHAAN
Wo... mera papa...
(Ishaan shuts up...)
RAJAN heaves himself out of the seat.

RAJAN
Chalo, chalo... Art Class hai...

... Then ISHAAN moves with RAJAN.

ISHAAN
... Tum to class mein first atey ho... Phir tumhare papa-mama ne tumhe yahan kyun bhej diya?

RAJAN
Matlab?

ISHAAN
Matlab boarding mein... punish karneko...

RAJAN
Mai boarding mein nahi rehta...
Mere Appa school ke estate manager hain... mai staff quarters mein rehta hoon... mere amma-appa ke saath... aur tumhe kisne kaha ke yahan ke sab bachche punishment mein aate hain???

An emotional Ishaan takes a pause...

(70 secs)

DISSOLVE TO:

42 INT. BIRD'S NEST- DAY

ANGLE ON: Bird's nest with newborns, the parent birds hovering around, coming and feeding the impatient mouths.

ISHAAN is watching this activity with a lot of interest from his window seat in the Art Room.

42A INT. BOARDING SCHOOL- ART ROOM - DAY

A very severe looking Art teacher (MR. HOLKAR) has placed geometric objects to form a composition for still-life study. He is announcing pompously to the class.

MR. HOLKAR
Bagair Phoot-patti istamaal kiye... Kaapi Karo... lakeeren
bilkul seedhi kheenchol Zaraa si bhi tedhi ho gayi...
(showing a ruler)
Daahine haath pe Paanch!

MR. HOLKAR spots ISHAAN looking out of the window and not paying attention to him. He chucks the ruler and picks up a full chalk piece. He taps the blackboard with the chalk piece, creating an almost invisible point. He then throws the chalk piece at ISHAAN with ferocity and shouts

MR. HOLKAR
Oye New Boy! ...Nazar idhar...
Blackboard pe! ...Dikhaa...
Point Dikhaa!

ISHAAN looks at the blackboard purposelessly... as he doesn't understand the teacher's instructions.

MR. HOLKAR
Maindak ki tarah kya dekh raha hai??? Point Dikhaa!
Kidhar banaya maine point???

ISHAAN looks at the blackboard. It has several academic drawings of geometric shapes. He can't spot any point on the blackboard. He peers harder but it is of no use to him.

ISHAAN
...Nahi dikhtaa...!

MR. HOLKAR
Nahi Dikhta??? ... Point Nahi Dikhta??? Huh??? ...KIM HARTMAN!

A nerdy white-skinned boy (KIM HARTMAN) gets up to the call.

MR. HOLKAR
Come here and show him where I made the point on blackboard.

KIM HARTMAN walks up to the board and using a pointer, shows where the point is. MR. HOLKAR, satisfied, shouts out to ISHAAN.

MR. HOLKAR
Ab dikh gaya point???

ISHAAN nods.

MR. HOLKAR
Good! Idhar aao! ...Idhar aao!!
ISHAAN leaves his seat. MR. HOLKAR picks up the wooden ruler.

MR. HOLKAR
Band muthhi pe paanch!!!
...Taaki... blackboard par se attention na hate!!!

MR. HOLKAR methodically shows ISHAAN how to hold his clenched fist then he strikes him on his knuckles with the narrow side of the ruler. ISHAAN camouflages his pain behind a brave face, but RAJAN winces every-time the teacher strikes.

MR. HOLKAR
Jaao... Ye still-life study
daap kar... Shape perfect
chaahiye mujhe! Varna... doosri
mutthi pe paanch!

IMAGES: ISHAAN looking fearfully at the arranged geometric shapes.

SFX: The shapes grow to daunting proportions on the screen. From the shapes emerge alphabets and numbers. These too, grow large and exit frame after filling it.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The cacophony of the toxic track from the prelude adds meaning to the visual.

(120 SECS)

43 HALF DISSOLVE- MR. SEN's face grows large.

SONG IV - SONG OF DYSLEXIA.

43A INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S CLASSROOM - DAY
Sharp sound of MR. SEN...

MR. SEN
ISHAAN RAO!!!

ISHAAN startled. MR. SEN fires rat-a-tat...
MR. SEN
A noun is a naming word! A pronoun is used instead of a noun! An Adjective describes a noun! A verb describes the action of a noun! An adverb describes the action of a verb! A conjunction joins two sentences into one! A preposition is a word which shows the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and a noun or a pronoun! An interjection is a word thrown in to express feelings! You got it? You got it?!

Throughout the 'grammar' soliloquy of MR. SEN, ISHAAN recedes back in fright of the onslaught. And finally tears at his hair in sheer desperation as the frame fills up with alphabets and numbers.

43B I. E. BOARDING SCHOOL – D/N

From the numbers and alphabets emerges MR. TIWARI’s face, grows big, just like the numbers and alphabets.

MR. TIWARI
Why? Why can’t you read ISHAAN RAO?

43C INT. BOARDING SCHOOL CLASSROOM– DAY

ISHAAN’s face emerges from frame-center in a canted, stilted way...

43D INT. BOARDING SCHOOL CLASSROOM– DAY

Tight close-up of Ishaan, trying to write with great difficulty, labored pencil grip, tongue sticking out.

Flashes of red pen underlining miss-spelt words.

43E EXT. GROUNDS– DAY

Close-up of ISHAAN’s feet as they try to keep up with other marchers’ feet. Pull-out as the P.T. teacher MR. AGASTI pulls out ISHAAN roughly from the marchers.

A process of two captains selecting their teams – the captains shout out name after name –
CAPTAINS 1/2 ALTERNATELY

SATISH... RAJU... YEZDI... HOODA... SUNIL... TANMAY...
ADIL... ROHIT... SOHAM...

(The respective faces falling out of the crowd to join their respective sides)...

SIVARAMAN... PARMAR... TOMAS... KIM etc...

ISHAAN is the only kid left out from the crowd.

The next shot from behind ISHAAN's back, as he and RAJAN sit quietly, the two teams playing football in the background.

43F INT. DORMITORY- NIGHT

Night time in the dorm... ISHAAN struggles with his homework.

43G INT. BOARDING SCHOOL CLASSROOM- DAY

A teacher condescendingly talks down to ISHAAN...

TEACHER EXTRA
Tck tck tck tck tck... Dekho bachche... aise nahi chaleegaa...

Tableaus of teachers as they ask questions in song... the cuts staccato, hellish distorted close-ups of the accusers.

SONG OF DYSLEXIA
Tumhara problem kya hai ISHAAN?
'Why can't you do sums? Why
can't you add? Why
the Dickens' your writing so
bad?
Grammar pathetic and spellings
all wrong!
Can't march to beat! Can't learn
up a song!
Blank! Lazy!
Idiot! Crazy!
You fumble, you stumble, you
stutter, you mumble,
This child can drive anybody
mad.
Cad! Duffer! Call up his dad!
Cad! Duffer! Call up his dad!
This dreamer's rightful place is
the zoo(laughter)
(Bully) - With monkey and donkey
and the kangaroo
Lash him! Thrash him! His face makes us sad!
Cad! Duffer! Call up his dad!
Cad! Duffer! Call up his dad!

The last chorus has ISHAAN trapped in a classroom. He is the camera as he finds himself surrounded by tormentors. Some faces are familiar - The HOUSEMASTER, the English teacher, MR. SEN, other rowdies in school uniform etc. The tormentors' faces are distorted by the lens. They look frightful, as they increase the volume of the chorus...

(120 SECS)

44 I/E. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - EVENING

ISHAAN falls face down on the bed and sobs.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Persistent knocking on the shut door.

ISHAAN does not react to the knocking.

On the other side of the door, ISHAAN's parents are knocking urgently and shouting.

MOTHER
ISHAAN! ISHAAN! Please darwaza kholo ISHAAN! ...Please beta darwaza kholo...Dakho... dada bhi aya hai... Dada... you tell...

YOHAN
Inu... champ open the door...

Suddenly the door is thrown open and ISHAAN runs out without warning. MOTHER, FATHER and YOHAN watch with astonishment.

45 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - GROUNDS - EVENING (TWILIGHT)

A frenzied ISHAAN runs as if possessed, round and round the empty playground, giving vent to his despair.

The twilight adds to the bizarre image of ISHAAN's protest. His parents arrive at the playground.

ISHAAN's MOTHER steps forward to hold him, but he dodges her and runs off, rejecting her.

(60 secs)
46  I/E. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - NIGHT

ISHAAN is sitting, holding YOHAN's hand in silence, looking down. ISHAAN's grip tightens involuntarily. YOHAN reacts.

YOHAN
Kya hua Champ?

ISHAAN doesn't answer. FATHER and MOTHER enter frame...

FATHER
Chalo.. let's go..maine housemaster se permission lay lee hai...

MOTHER
(soothingly)
Inu... abhi gussaa chhodo.. chalo...

(30 secs)

47  INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The plush interiors of a modern-day hotel.

Family eating. ISHAAN not eating, looking down. MOTHER reacts.

MOTHER
Inu...

ISHAAN looks up.

MOTHER
Khao beta...

ISHAAN looks down again. MOTHER looks at FATHER with concern. FATHER makes a reassuring gesture as if saying 'It's a phase'.

(20 SECS)

48  INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

PULL BACK: YOHAN is extracting a brand new drawing book, a box of color tubes and brushes. ISHAAN takes the stuff and limply keeps it aside.

(10 secs)
48a INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are out.

In available light, we catch detail of ISHAAN tossing and turning on the bed, his fist tightly gripping MOTHER's night-wear, her eyes open, watching her fretting son. YOHAN is on ISHAAN's other side. FATHER is sleeping on a mattress on the floor.

(15 secs)

49 EXT. TENNIS COURT/HOTEL ROOM - DAY

YOHAN is playing tennis energetically with FATHER. ISHAAN is quietly watching the activity from their room above.

(10 secs)

Dissolve to:

50 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

SONG PART SEPARATION - "there goes your heaven go back to your shell... your tears have all dried up there's no one to tell"

ISHAAN, lifeless face, as he sees his family off...

50A INT. dorm - night

ISHAAN puts the art gifts into the locker...

(30 secs)

51 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - CORRIDORS OUTSIDE ART ROOM - DAY

Valley..... ISHAAN is dangerously poised over a railing off the corridor. A fall from the height would mean instant death. RAJAN has spotted the danger ISHAAN has courted. He shouts...

RAJAN
ISHAAN!!! Kya kar rahe ho? Kya kar rahe ho?
RAJAN walks slowly towards ISHAAN...

RAJAN
Neeche utaro... neeche utaro...

ISHAAN keeps looking at RAJAN from his height. RAJAN leaps forward and his crutches fall to the ground and RAJAN too crashes to the ground. This brings ISHAAN down with sudden urgency... He holds up RAJAN from under his arm-pits. RAJAN looks into ISHAAN’S eyes.

RAJAN
Oopar kyun chadhe the??? Huh?

ISHAAN ducks RAJAN's probing gaze. ISHAAN has dark circles around his eyes.

RAJAN
Come... we're late...

But ISHAAN doesn't move or speak.

RAJAN
Kya ho gaya?

ISHAAN doesn't move. RAJAN soothes him.

RAJAN
Arre? Tumhe maaloom nahi? Woh gaya! HOLKAR SIR gaya! Pooraa New Zealand ko drawing sikhaane gaya!

No difference on ISHAAN’S face.

RAJAN
Uski jagah ek naya temporary teacher aya hai... I hope ke wo HOLKAR SIR jaisaa nahi... Chalo late ho raha hai... Chalo naa...

(85 SECS)

RAJAN tugs at an unwilling ISHAAN's elbow.

52 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

ISHAAN and RAJAN are the last to enter the class. They take their seats on the front bench. There is no sign of the new teacher.
SUDDENLY... a melody played on a flute captures the attention of the class!

They all look at the shut door of the art teacher's room that is inside the art class. Hold on their faces.

The volume of the melody shoots up, suggesting the door has opened.

The expression on the kids' faces changes instantly to awe!

Reveal NIKUMBH SIR as he sings a song! He is dressed like the Pied Piper of Hamelin! Wig et al! He has a red joker's ball stuck on his nose, whiskers peak on his cheeks, has long, elephant ears. He is smiling radiantly at the kids. He does a flip in the air and lands on his feet...

The kids too break into spontaneous smiles of wonderment, never having seen such an incredible sight in the classroom.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: SONG V - 'NIKUMBH SIR'S SONG' begins.

NIKUMBH SIR
Bhrrrrummm Bhrrrrummm
Sheekey sheekey Pik Pok
Chik Chok Chek Chik Tiki Tiki
Tik Tok
Honky Ponky Suppanoodle
Dayki Docky Pikadoodle
Hayki Mayki Hoki Poki
Toki Doki Hookaboodle!

The children burst out laughing. The PIED PIPER says "SSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

FREEZE FRAME: Pied Piper.

(60 SEC)

INTERVAL
53 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

SOUNDTRACK: SONG V - 'NIKUMBH SIR'S SONG'

NIKUMBH SIR plays the flute. Children have a look of wonderment on their faces as they watch with joy.

He shuts the door of the classroom and turns around and continues the song.

NIKUMBH SIR
Shhh... arey bhai zor se na karo
shor... Maine 'Muchchad'
chowkidaar ko window se dekhaa...

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Kids' laughter

NIKUMBH SIR
Shhhhh...

KIDS
SHHHH... SHHHH...

NIKUMBH SIR
Mai hoon apka naya Chitrakala
Shikshak - Yaani New Art Teacher
- RAM SHANKAR NIKUMBH
Ab ye bataao...
Ye kaisi balaa
Jise kehte hum Kala
Hmm... What is this balaa called
Art?

Pause... silence of wonderment

NIKUMBH SIR
Arey Bhai... Ye balaa called Art
is simply the Kala to give a
loud...

He purses his lips and blows out his tongue real hard.
Laughter. This sets a chain reaction in the class. He
picks up his flute and plays a run to the amazed kids.
Then he sings.
NIKUMBH SIR
Ye Balaa jo hai Kalaa isse banti
meri roti...
Hoon mai Zero, Nahi Hero, hai
akal apni motee
To meri madad karo... please help
karo...
mujhe sikhaao, mujhe padhaao,
Khidki-darwaaze kholkar
meri mental umr badhaao!
Rubber ki tarah... kheencho aur
lambi-lambi kar do manzilen...
Kitna kuch karna hai zindagi
mein...
Jaanaa hai jaan lo...
Ye kalaa hai...Pehchaan lo...
(plays a riff on the flute)
ise bhi
(showing a cartwheel)
ise bhi...
(showing his actor's
make-up)
ise bhi!!!!!

The kids cheer loudly.

ISHAAN is not a participant in the cheer. He looks
emaciated and tired. His eyes lifelessly blank.

NIKUMBH SIR jumps on to the raised platform and goes to
the laden art table and picks up large sheets of art
paper and color tubes and jumps back. He begins with the
first bench, distributing the art material to the kids.

NIKUMBH SIR
Ye diljiye... Ye aap ka...

He gives paper and paint box to ISHAAN, RAJAN, then moves
on to the next row.

NIKUMBH SIR
Ye aap ka... Ye aap ka... Ye aap
ka... Ye aap ka...
Draw karo... paint karo... Jo
jee mein aaye vo karo!
(Systematically he gets
off his disguise and
makes a pile of it in
his hands while the
kids look at him with
surprise.)

mai zara ye rakhke ata hoon...
The kids protest.

KIM HARTMAN
lekin kya paint karen Sir? Table pe to kuch nahi hai...

The table of geometric objects lies empty.

NIKUMBH SIR
Ha Ha! Wo table... Wo table meri jaan... bahut chhotaa hai... itna chhotaa... ke tumhaare khoobsurat khayaalon ka wazan utthaa hi nahi paarefaa! Apne dimaag mei jhaanko aur ek zabardast technicolor tasveer kheench kar baahar nikaalo, aur patko paper pe!!! Looto... maze lootoo! Yahan tumhe koi nahi rokne-tokne walia!

NIKUMBH SIR exits through his room door.
The kids start sketching with pencils.
ISHAAN keeps staring at the white paper for a long time.

JUMP CUT TO:

54 INT. ART ROOM- DAY

NIKUMBH SIR emerges. ISHAAN hasn't started yet. NIKUMBH SIR looks at him, whistles and smiles and gestures to him with his eyebrows. ISHAAN looks down.

NIKUMBH SIR walks towards ISHAAN and observes ISHAAN with a serious, pondering face. Then he asks gently.

NIKUMBH SIR
Kahan kho weye dost... Khayaalon mein kuch dhoondh rahe ho?
...koi baat nahi... koi jaldi nahi hai...

And NIKUMBH SIR moves further.

CLOSE ON: Children happily working on their sheets.

One kid looks up and smiles. NIKUMBH SIR smiles back. The kid extends his hand to touch NIKUMBH SIR where his moustache was. Both laugh. The kid goes back to his drawing, that of a pied-piper with a moustache.
JUMP CUT TO:

NIKUMBH SIR's POV: A hand-held sweep over the children's creations. There are clowns, mamas and papas, flowers, and houses, and clouds, and golden sunsets.

NIKUMBH SIR comes to ISHAAN and stops. ISHAAN's sheet of art-paper is untouched. NIKUMBH SIR looks perturbed.

NIKUMBH SIR
Kya hua bachche? ...Painting karnaa achchaa nahi lagtaa??

ISHAAN keeps looking down, shoulders shrunked. NIKUMBH SIR asks gently.

NIKUMBH SIR
Aap ka naam kya hai?

ISHAAN keeps looking down. Finally to break the pause, RAJAN answers on ISHAAN's behalf

RAJAN
Sir... iska naam ISHAAN RAQ hai...

NIKUMBH SIR
Thanks...

NIKUMBH SIR speaks involuntarily, even as he keeps staring at ISHAAN.

(120 secs)

55 EAT. BOARDING SCHOOL - POND - EVENING (SUNSET)

ISHAAN sits in solitude. He can see himself as a dark shadow silhouetted in the pond, the setting sun behind his head. Gloom has set in.

(15 secs)

56 INT. NIKUMBH SIR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Golden sunlight envelopes NIKUMBH SIR's studio apartment. Impressionist images on canvasses mounted on improvised easels.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: A Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan qawwali plays. Table-top Shot of an overused chai bartan with black tea boiling on a single gas burner.
NIKUMBH SIR in deep thought keeps looking unconsciously at the boiling tea.

(20 secs)

FADE TO BLACK.

57. INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - EVENING

The house is in study hour. The HOUSEMASTER is upset with ISHAAN.

HOUSEMASTER
Kahan gaye the tum? Huh? Kahan gaye the? ...Tumhari maa ka phone aya tha... Jao... phone ke paas khade raho... Wo dobara karnewali hain... Go!

ISHAAN walks away.

(15 secs)

58. INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HOSTEL RECEPTION - EVENING

ISHAAN walks up to the attended phone and stands deadpan.

Beat.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The phone rings after a while.

The ATTENDANT picks it up.

ATTENDANT
Hullo... Hullo... Ji... Ji... Baat kijiye... ye lo...

He hands the receiver to ISHAAN. MOTHER speaks

INTERCUT WITH:

59. INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

MOTHER
Hullo Inu... hullo...

58. INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HOSTEL RECEPTION - EVENING

But ISHAAN doesn't speak.
59 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

MOTHER
Hullo bolo beta...

58 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HOSTEL RECEPTION - EVENING

ISHAAN keeps holding the receiver tightly without uttering a word. An audio leak from the dorm, a bell or a clock...can be heard over the phone.

59 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

MOTHER
Dekho Inu... hum log... hum log iss Saturday ko nahi aa sakte
Inu... Sunday ko Dada ka Inter-
school Tennis Final hai!
(pause)
...Main jaanti hoon tum Mamaa se bahut gussaa ho... bahut buri hai mamaa... mamaa is very bad!
...I'm sorry Inu... Lekin mamaa bhi kya karey? Dada ko finals ki tension hai naa...!
(again no reply from ISHAAN)
Ye lo Dada se baat karo... Wish him all the best...

MOTHER gives the receiver to YOHAN.

YOHAN
Hullo Inu... Yohan bol raha hoon... Hullo... Hey! Are you there? Inu bol na kuch... tujhe bataaanaa tha... mai tujhe bahut miss karoonga final mein...
Hullo...

MOTHER takes the phone back.

MOTHER
Hullo Inu baat karo mamaa se...
58 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HOSTEL RECEPTION - EVENING

ISHAAN keeps the receiver down, even as MOTHER’s voice can be heard through the receiver. ISHAAN walks off from the reception. The attendant picks up and says...

ATTENDANT
Hullo... Wo to chalaa gaya...

59 INT. ISHAAN’S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - EVENING

MOTHER keeps the phone down worried...

MOTHER
Baat bhi nahi kiyee usne...

FATHER
Fikar mat karo... agle Sunday chale jaayenge...

(90 secs)

60 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - STAFF ROOM - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR has carried the paintings of yesterday’s class to be kept in the staff room cupboard. He opens the cupboard and slides the lot of paintings in. MR. TIWARI notices this.

MR. TIWARI
Arre arre... wahan kahan rakh rahe ho...?

NIKUMBH SIR turns around.

NIKUMBH SIR
Bachchon ka class-work hai...

MR. TIWARI
To kya hua? ...HOLKAR kabhi nahi rakhtaa tha... Wo jagah kitaabon ke liye hai.

NIKUMBH SIR
To inhe kahan rakhoon...

MR. TIWARI
Lautaa do waapas... bachchon ko... vaise bhi... kis kaam ke hain ye!

NIKUMBH SIR is appalled by the remark, but holds himself back. MR. SEN, the English teacher looks up and reacts to
MR. TIWARI'S barb positively. He speaks further... definitely in the mood to spoil NIKUMBH SIR's day.

MR. SEN
What a racket they're making in your class Nikam! ...Pukkaa Machchi Market ban gaya hai!!

NIKUMBH SIR
Bachche bain Sir... shor to karengi hi... aur phir 'Art Class' mein bachche apne jasbaat nahi dikhaayenge to kahan dikhaayenge?!

MR. SEN
Wo sab theek hai... just go easy... Head Master ko school mein discipline chaahiye...

NIKUMBH SIR keeps the drawings on the table. A lady teacher (SENIOR SCIENCE TEACHER), who is seated at the table, looks up and joins in.

SENIOR SCIENCE TEACHER
Sunaa hai...kal class mein... aap gaa rahe the... (aur... aur...) flute baja rahe the??

NIKUMBH SIR
(in a matter-of-fact way)
Haan... Gaa raha tha... flute bhi baja raha tha... bachche khush ... mai bhi khush!

MR. TIWARI looks up at NIKUMBH SIR.

MR. TIWARI
lekin iss school ke bachche unn bachchon jaise nahi hain...

NIKUMBH SIR looks surprised

NIKUMBH SIR
Unn bachchon jaise?

MR. TIWARI
Tulips School mein padhaate ho naa? Mentally retarded... Abnormal bachchon ko??
NIKUMBH SIR looks appalled by the politically incorrect sound... hisses under his breath.

NIKUMBH SIR
Wo abnormal... to kya aap normal?

MR. TIWARI
Kya kaha?

NIKUMBH SIR
Nahi... nahi... kuch nahi...

NIKUMBH SIR stares angrily at MR. TIWARI who adds insensitively...

MR. TIWARI
Uss tarah ke schoolon mein... man chaahie vaise padhao... Kya fark padta hai! ...Koi bhavishhya to banaanaa nahi hai unn bachchon ka!

NIKUMBH SIR's eyebrows go up in response as if to say 'really?'. He picks a paper on the table and starts making a sketch.

MR. SEN
No... seriously NIKUMBH! Ye ek formal school hai... Tumhara ye singing dancing style yahan nahi chalega! Idhar hum bachchon ko taiyaar karte hain life ka race ke liye... Kids have to compete, succeed, make a future!

MR. TIWARI
Hamaare Vidyalaya ke teen siddhaant... Niyam! Anushaasan! Parishram! Safaltaa ke teen stambh! Sampoorna Shiksha ka aadhaar!

NIKUMBH SIR
(handing over a caricature)
Hail Hitler!

(120 secs)
NIKUMBH SIR is walking down the school corridor, carrying the drawings back to the art class in a ponderous mood.

Suddenly he spots ISHAAN kneeling down outside a classroom. NIKUMBH SIR stops in his steps.

ISHAAN spots NIKUMBH SIR looking at him. He cringes in his position, turning his neck away.

NIKUMBH SIR walks up to him and stops near him. NIKUMBH SIR looks inside the class.

PANDE SCIENCE TEACHER is practically reading out from a science textbook. There is pin-drop-silence in the class.

NIKUMBH SIR looks back at ISHAAN.

NIKUMBH SIR
Kya hua Ishaan?

ISHAAN behaves like a wet chicken in a corner. He tries to shrink into the corner and disappear from NIKUMBH SIR's sight.

NIKUMBH SIR is disturbed by the boy's trauma. He doesn't want to disturb him more.

NIKUMBH SIR
I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

NIKUMBH SIR takes a step away and walks.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The recess bell rings.

Children run down the corridor.

NIKUMBH SIR looks back. ISHAAN has disappeared.

(30 secs)

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - GROUNDS - DAY

TOP ANGLE: Recess shot of the playground with children shouting and playing.

TELE SHOTS: Kids in recess.

(10 secs)
63  EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - GROUNDS - DAY

High-jump session in progress for ISHAAN's class.

A nervous ISHAAN in the queue of boys. The line progresses as the kids finish their turn. By the time there are only 5 kids ahead, ISHAAN breaks into sweat, he looks back.

RAJAN seated with his crutches and calipers, offers moral support in the form of a gesture of solidarity to ISHAAN. That is not enough.

By the time it is ISHAAN's turn, his feet have frozen.

A long pause.

MR. AGASTI is impatient...

MR. AGASTI
Chalo chalo... nahi kar sakta to
RAJAN ke paas jaake baith jao
please... next!

NIKUMBH'S POV: LONG SHOT - ISHAAN walking dejected towards RAJAN.

NIKUMBH SIR has been watching the above scene from his Art Class window.

(30 secs)

64  EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - PATH FROM SCHOOL TO DORMITORY - AFTERNOON

TRACKING: Hand-held camera at adult height walks along with children leaving the school building. Up ahead, RAJAN is walking with the help of his crutches. Camera catches up with RAJAN.

NIKUMBH SIR
Tumhara dost kahan hai?

RAJAN turns around to encounter NIKUMBH SIR.

RAJAN
Maaloom nahi Sir...abhi tha
idhar... suddenly bhaag gaya...

NIKUMBH SIR
Apne naye pakaou art teacher ko
aate dekh liya hoga...
RAJAN smiles

RAJAN
Nahi nahi Sir... dining hall
gaya hoga... lunch ke liye.

NIKUMBH SIR
Yaar tumhara naam kya hai?

RAJAN
RAJAN DAMODARAN Sir.

NIKUMBH SIR
Ek baat bataao RAJAN... Ye ISHAAN ka kya chakker hai?

RAJAN
Sir?

NIKUMBH SIR
Koi taqleef hai usko? Daraadaraa sa lagta hai hameshaa...

RAJAN
Sir... usko ghar jana hai...

NIKUMBH SIR
Kyun?

RAJAN
Sir New Boy hai...

NIKUMBH SIR
Saal ke beech mein?

RAJAN
Problem hai Sir usko... Kitna bhi try kare... padh nahi pata- likh nahi pata... har waqt punished rehta hai... Poore book mein red marks red marks... what to do?

A thought registers on NIKUMBH SIR's face. He turns around and walks back rapidly.

(75 secs)

65 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - STAFF ROOM - AFTERNOON

NIKUMBH SIR enters the empty staff-room with urgency. He quickly opens the 3rd Standard cupboard. He fishes out ISHAAN's notebook and quickly flips through it. Anxiously
he sieves through the pile of books and pulls out all of ISHAAN's, gathers them in a heap and moves towards the table.

Shots of him fishing out ISHAAN RAO's class-work books.

Shot of NIKUMBH SIR hastily sitting at the table with the books.

CLOSE ON: Pan in extreme close up over an English scribble. Capital B R J and D are inverse mirror images of the alphabets. The handwriting is inscrutable. Almost every spelling is wrong.

SLOW PAN on page after page of ISHAAN's botched-up class-work - English grammar, Mathematics and Sciences.

NIKUMBH SIR's face shows more and more anxiety.

He keeps reopening the same books over and over again. Conjunctions and prepositions are incorrectly used. A logic sum like 'If 5 boys have 2 candies each, how many candies do they have together is misconstrued as an addition problem 5+2=7 is written with an unsure hand.

NIKUMBH SIR keeps sitting at the table, staring at the clock on the wall.

(60 secs)

66 EXT. PANCHGANI - STREETS - AFTERNOON

A troubled NIKUMBH SIR walks on the streets, deep in thought. As he passes a vegetable vendor, a cabbage slips off the hand-cart. NIKUMBH SIR, unconsciously picks up the cabbage and puts it back on the cart, then exits frame.

(15 secs)

67 INT. TULIPS SCHOOL - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR is moving around a group of CHILDREN, some affected by Downs Syndrome, some autistic, some spastic.

Full of care and gentleness, he holds their hands and guides them, using clay, paints, wax crayons and other artists' materials. The children are creating large colored petals of various flowers.

The children return his affection by touching him.
A girl with Downs Syndrome (PRAARTHNA), looks up at him and flashes a radiating smile at him. With eager eyes, NIKUMBH SIR plays a charade of popping out his tongue by pulling his ears and chin. PRAARTHNA responds to his charade.

It is evident that this class constitutes of children with multiple disabilities. NIKUMBH SIR helps a child with material and wistfully ruminates. NIKUMBH SIR moves slightly away from the group, pensive.

NIKUMBH SIR's thoughtful face

JABEEN, a sweet sensitive girl-woman, walks into the class and sits besides NIKUMBH SIR. She senses NIKUMBH SIR's mood and inquires

JABEEN
Pyaaaz kaatkar aa rahe ho kaha se?

NIKUMBH SIR pauses, looks at her and shakes his head sadly.

NIKUMBH SIR
Insaan bhi naa...

She completes...

JABEEN
...jaanvar se badtar hai. Jaanti hooi....

NIKUMBH SIR
Aur...Andhaa hai! Androoni khoobsuorti se bilkul parey....

JABEEN
Kisse paalaa padaa wahan?

NIKUMBH SIR
Apne aap se. Saalon baad apne aap ko sheeshe mein dekh raha hoon.

JABEEN
Jaate hi kisine sheeshaa dikhaa diya? Hamesha kehti hoon dekhone ko... Kitni achchi shakal hai tumhaari....

NIKUMBH SIR
Wo khatre mein hai JABEEN...
JABEEN

Kaun?

Nikumbh doesn't answer. JABEEN insists.

JABEEN

Kaun RAM?

NIKUMBH SIR looks around at the children. Pan on the children.

NIKUMBH SIR

...Hai ek ... uss school mein... aath-nau saal ka bachcha... naa holta hai... na kuch... daraadaraa sa rehta hai... uski aankhen... jaise madad maang rahi ho... mujhe darr hai... wo doob jaayegaa...

JABEEN

Tum to jaante ho RAM... Duniya bedard hai... Jo dhara ke saath-saath nahi taarre... "Plop" ...doob jaate hain!

NIKUMBH SIR

Jaantaa hoon... Gab jaantaa hoon...

PRARTHNA pulls NIKUMBH SIR away... All the CHILDREN hold each other's hand.

NIKUMBH SIR and JABEEN too, form separate links in the chain.

NIKUMBH SIR, JABEEN & CHILDREN

INCLUSION SONG... The metaphor of the rainbow and its colors...the song of inclusion.

MONTAGE OF PREP TO PERFORMANCE most of the children are just swaying, clapping and nodding, some in and some off-tempo, not even having the faculty to speak.

(150 secs)

DISSOLVE TO:
68 INT. TULIPS SCHOOL - DAY

The CHILDREN are now dressed up as flowers enter the stage to the music. A short performance of the children as the parents and guests watch. The guests' eyes are moist, the parents' eyes running with tears.

NIKUMBH SIR is standing behind a girl-child, helping her to clap on beat, while he sings with JABEEN and teachers and a few other children who can.

At the end of the performance, parents rush to their children to embrace them.

NIKUMBH SIR cannot control his tears.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: INCLUSION SONG CONTINUES
The song takes up NIKUMBH SIR's concerns about children... his description of what a child means to the world vis a vis what is the child's hidden contribution to life.

From NIKUMBH SIR's face MATCH DISSOLVE to ISHAAN's face.

68A I/E. BOARDING SCHOOL - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - DAY

ISHAAN is alone in the hostel corridor, dressed in kurta-pajamas.

68B I/E. BOARDING SCHOOL - MONTAGE #2 - DAY

IMAGES: ISHAAN in various places of the empty campus.

INTERCUT WITH:

68C EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

A tennis match in progress, YOHAN missing shots. FATHER grimacing in the stands.

68D I/E. ASIAD BUS - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR in an Asiad bus, traveling away from PANCHGANI, the bus entering Bombay.
68E EXT. DHABA ON HIGHWAY - DAY
NIKUMBH SIR befriends RAJU at the dhaba. TEA & BISUITS for RAJU.

68F INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - DAY
ISHAAN alone in the dormitory, the other kids having gone for the weekend.

68G EXT. ISHAAN'S BUILDING - NIGHT
NIKUMBH SIR alights from a TAXI outside ISHAAN's house.

68H INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT
NIKUMBH SIR introduces himself to ISHAAN's parents and YOHAN.

YOHAN brings the cardboard castle to NIKUMBH SIR.

NIKUMBH SIR inspects ISHAAN's cardboard castle, his load of paintings appreciatively, especially the flip-page series of paintings where the youngest figure of a family of four disappears from the last page.

NIKUMBH SIR's eyes well up.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK:

SONG - 'INCLUSION SONG' ends. (300 SECS)

69 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT
NIKUMBH SIR's throat is choked.

NIKUMBH SIR
Paani milega please...

MOTHER gives him a glass. He gulps it down and keeps the glass down. He clears his throat.

NIKUMBH SIR
Kyun bhej diya usko...

Nobody answers.

NIKUMBH SIR
Huh? ... Kyun bhej diya?

FATHER looks at NIKUMBH SIR.
FATHER
Koi raastaa nahi tha... Pichhle saal woh 3rd Standard mein fail ho gaya... yakeen karenge... 3rd Standard! ...aur sudharne ke koi aasaar nahi... sochiye... badaa beta har class mein har subject mein first! ...Aur doosra???

NIKUMBH
Aap ko kya laqtaa hai... uski problem kya hai??

FATHER
Problem? Uska ravaieya aur kya! Padhai ki taraf... Har cheez ki taraf... Hamesha badmaashi... tevar hi tevar... kabhi koi baar hi nahi sunega!

NIKUMBH SIR
Mai aap se uski problem pochh rahe hoon... aap symptom bataa rahe hain... Aap bataa rahe hain bachche ko bukhaar hai... jab ki mai pochh rahe hoon usko bukhaar kyun hai?

FATHER
Haan to... Aap hi bataaiye naa...

NIKUMBH SIR
Kya uske padhne-likhne ki galatiyon mein...aapne koi pattern dekha? Koi galati... jo wo doharata hai?

FATHER
Kya pattern? Saari galatiyaan hi galatiyaan!!!

NIKUMBH SIR
Phir aap pattern pehchaan nahi paaye hain...

NIKUMBH SIR opens his satchel and brings out ISHAAN's class-work books. MOTHER comes to his side quickly.
NIKUMBH SIR
Dekhiye... B ki jagah D... to D ki jagah B... aur ye Animal...
Ek hi shabd... ek hi page par...
ai & aag spelling... Dekhaa? A-n-m-l-l-e -Animal... phir A-n-i-
m-l - aur... E-n-a-m-l... ek hi page par! Doosri baat... ek jaise shabdon ko mix up karta hai... T-o-p top ban gayaa p-o-t pot... Dekhaa?
S-o-l-i-d solid ban gayaa...
s-o-i-l-e-d soiled... Ryun karta hai wo aise? ...Aalsi hai?
Bewaqooof hai? Naa... mera khayaal hai... usey akshar pechchaanne mein dikkat ho rahi hai

MOTHER looks on anxiously.

NIKUMBH SIR
Jab aap 'A-p-p-l-e' apple padhti hain... aap apne dimaag mein ek laal-laal apple banaa lieti hain... Ishaan wo a-p-p-l-e apple padhi nahi pata shaayad... isi liye matlab samajh nahi pata...

FATHER begins paying attention.

NIKUMBH SIR
Padhaai likhaai ke liye alfaazon ka matlab samajhnaa zaroori hai... ye ahem zaroorat shaayad Ishaan poori nahi kar paa rahaa...

FATHER shrugs off the argument.

FATHER
Aisaa kuch nahi hai! Sab bahaane hain padhaai taalne ke!

NIKUMBH picks up a beyblade box from around and gives it to FATHER.

NIKUMBH SIR
Zaraa... ye padhiye... MR. RAO...
FATHER is astounded because there all the instructions are in the Chinese script on the box.

NIKUMBH

Padhiye naa

FATHER

Ye kaise padhoon ... ye to...
Chinese mein hai...

NIKUMBH

Arey koshish to kijiye... zaraa dhyaan dijiye...

FATHER

(dropping the box)
Kya baqwaas kar rahe hain! Nahi nahi...

NIKUMBH

Dekhiye aap shaitani kar rahe hain... Aap ka ravaieya theek nahi hai...

Reactions of FATHER, MOTHER and YOHAN as they get the drift of NIKUMBH SIR's words.

NIKUMBH

Kuch aisi hi kaifiyat hoti hogi
ISHAAN ki... Akshar hi samajh mein nahi aate honge...
Iss padhe likhne ki taqleef ko Dyslexia kehte hain.
Kabhi kabhi Dyslexia ke saath saath bachche ko aur bhi taqleefen ho sakti hain jaise poor fine and gross motor skills... kya ISHAAN ko apne shirt ke button, ya joote ki ladaa bandhne mein taqleef hoti hai?

MOTHER

Haan...

NIKUMBH

Yohan... agar tum ISHAAN ki taraf ball phenkte ho... kya wo pakad pata hai?

YOHAN shakes his head.
YOHAN
Kabhi ball judge hi nahi kar pata wo...

NIKUMBH SIR
Kyun ki wo Size, Distance aur Speed inn teenon ko ek saath samajh nahi pata! Kitni badi ball kitni doori se kitni tez aa rahi hai... jab tak wo jaan le... gaadi chhoot jaati hai...

NIKUMBH SIR takes a breath and resumes

NIKUMBH SIR
Sochiye... ek bachcha... mahaz aath ya nau saal ka... Padh nahi pata, likh nahi pata, roz-marraah ke maamooli kaam nahi kar pata... Wo saari cheezen nahi kar paataa jo uske saath ke bachche badi aasaani se kar dete hain... kya beeti ti hogi uspar? Uske Self-confidence kito dhajjiyaan udti hongi har roz! Apni khaamiyon ko... tedhepan ke libaas mein laapekar... duniya se ladhtaa hoga har roz! Gadar machaataa hoga gadar yahan!!!

(MOTHER mods smiling)
Kyun bataadon duniya ko ...ki mujhe ata nahi... Nahi karna keh kar na taal doon? ...Badon se hi beekhte hain bachche... Ab to wo gadar bhi kuchal diya gaya hai wahan!

NIKUMBH SIR shows the paintings.

NIKUMBH SIR
...Mujhe afsos hai...... usne painting karna band kar diya hai... bade dukh ki baat hai...

MOTHER can't take it. The fatalistic tone returns

MOTHER
lekin ISHAAN hi kyun?
NIKUMBH SIR
Iska koi jawab nahi hai... it's a neurological disorder... 
kabhi-kabhi genetic hota hai... 
aam aadmi ki zabaan mein 
kahoon... to brain mein... zaraa 
si wiring ki problem hai...

FATHER
To aap ye keh rahe hain... Mera 
beta normal nahi hai! Mentally 
Retarded hai?

NIKUMAH SIR opens out the paintings frantically

NIKUMBH SIR
Ye dekhiye... Ye dekhiye... Ye 
tez dimaag hazaaron khayaal bunn 
raha hai rangon mein... aap ki 
aur meri qaabileeyat se kai 
aage?

FATHER
Lakin iskaa faaydaa kya?

NIKUMBH SIR
Aap isme faaydaa kyun dhoondh 
rahe hain?

FATHER
To kya dhoondoon? Kya banega wo 
bada hokar, kaise baraabari kar 
paaegaa duniya ke saath? Kya 
saari umar khilata rahoonga mai?

NIKUMBH SIR gets up, paces and looks around the house, 
then looks out of the window and points.

NIKUMBH SIR
Jaantaa hoon! Wahan... ek be-
raham competitive duniya basi 
hai! Uss duniya mein sabhi ko...
apne-apne gharon mein toppers 
aur rankers ugaane hain! Har 
kisiko awal number chahiye! 
Doctor, Engineer, Management, 
I.T. se kum jaise baraasht hi 
nahi hoga! 95.5% 95.6% 95.7% 
Isse kum to... gaali ke 
baraabari! Arey zaraa samjho har 
bachche ki apni khoobi hoti hai, 
apni chaahat hoti hai apni 
kaabileeyat hoti hai ... Lekin
nahi... har ungli ko kheenchkar lambi karne me lage hain sab! Lage raho! Chahe ungli hi kyun na toot jaay!

NIKUMBH fuming. (420 Secs)

70  INT. BOARDING SCHOOL FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR
No options! Kehta hai... No options!? Koi chaaraa nahi hai!

NIKUMBH SIR recounts to JABEEN.

NIKUMBH SIR
Agar ghode daudaneka itna hi shauk hai, to breed race horses dammit! Bachche kyun paidaa karte hain?!! Apni ambition ka wazan apne bachche ke kamzor kandhon par rakhna... shyaa! This is worse than child labour! Aur bachcha wazan uttha nahi paya to?

NIKUMBH SIR sighs.

NIKUMBH SIR
Kab samjhenge... ki har bachcha apne hisaab se wazan uthata hai... aaj nahi to kal seekh hai jata hai. Apni-apni raftaar hoti hai... Paanch-apni ungaliyon ka haath bantaa hai...

JABEEN
Aur kahan hum inh nanhe-munnel ko mainstream mein settle karne ke sapney dekh rahe hain...

PAN: THE TULIPS CHILDREN. (50 secs)

DISSOLVE TO:

71  INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

MOTHER watches a short musical montage of baby and toddler ISHAAN - mixed media - photos, VHS and DV home videos.
71A INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - PARENT'S BEDROOM - DAY
Infant ISHAAN gurgling in MOTHER’s arms.

71B INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY
ISHAAN takes his first step. #find

71C I/E. KINDERGARTEN - DAY
ISHAAN's 1st nursery day video - crying for mom. #veer

71D I/E. KINDERGARTEN - DAY
ISHAAN climbs up a jungle-gym and balances.#veer

71E INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY
ISHAAN's first big bruise on his arm.#veer

71F INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - DAY
ISHAAN completely covered with colors, only in chaddu, finger-painting on a large sheet of white. He looks up and grins ear to ear.#veer

71G I/E. KINDERGARTEN - DAY
ISHAAN being given a medal on the sports field.?

71H INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY
The current ISHAAN running around the house, chased by YOHAN and MOTHER. The TV shuts off.

(60 secs)

BACK TO:

71I INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY
CLOSE ON: An emotional MOTHER, TV remote in hand.

72 INT. NASIK PUBLIC SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY
ANGLE ON: ISHAAN's flipbook painting. The pages flip and the boy disappears from the page.

The book lies in front of ISHAAN. He looks up with surprise.
NIKUMBH SIR is looking intensely into his eyes. Meaningful silence shared by the two. Then NIKUMBH SIR turns around and steps up the platform.

NIKUMBH SIR
Doston... Aaj mai tumhe ek kahani sunaaonga...

CLASS CHORUS
YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEYY!

He looks at ISHAAN.

CLOSE ON: ISHAAN-tense.

NIKUMBH SIR
Ek ladke ki kahani.....

CLOSE ON: ISHAAN looks anxious.

NIKUMBH SIR
Suno...
Ek ladkaa tha...
Mat poochho... kidhar...
Wo padh-likh nahi pata tha...
Le-kh koshishon baad
Usko rehta naa tha yaad
Ki Y... X ke baad ata tha...
Alfaaz uske dushman...
Uski aankhon ke saamne naachthe the...
Dance karkazke jee bharbhar ke bechaare ko bataate the
Likhnaa-padhnaa thakaa deta usko
Dukhde apne sunaataa wo kisko?
Bhejaa full tha Starter gull
tha gopar se ABC Disco
Fain ho gaya... ek din bechara
Padhne-likhne ke bojh ka mara...
Logon ne usey Gadhaa, Bewakoof
khaa...
Bachche ne sara apmaan bahaaduri
e saaahaa...
Phir ek savere usne sone
uglaa... Theory jo suni jahaan
ne... Sara Jahaan pighlaa...
Bolo...Bolo... kaun hai wo...

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Booming heartbeats, ISHAAN's tense heart.

There is silence in the classroom.
ISHAAN has withdrawn deepest in his shell, afraid of the answer.

NIKUMBH SIR starts unraveling a large poster, slowly the picture of Albert Einstein reveals itself to the class.

RAJAN shouts out loudly

RAJAN
Albert Einstein!

NIKUMBH SIR nods.

NIKUMBH SIR
Correct! RAJAN! Albert Einstein! Genius, mahaan Scientist...
jisne duniya ko apni 'Theory of Relativity' se hilaa ke rakh diya! ...'The Brownian Motion' 'The Photo-electric Effect' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1921.

NIKUMBH SIR unfurls another poster. It is a print of Da Vinci's sketch of a helicopter.

NIKUMBH SIR
Ye kya hai?

KIDS shout in chorus.

CLASS CHORUS
Helicopter!

NIKUMBH SIR
Na Na Na... Koi ordinary helicopter nahi hai ye... The Great Artist-Inventor...
Leonardo... Da Vinci... kaun?

CLASS CHORUS
Leonardo... Da Vinci!

NIKUMBH SIR
Haan... unhone ye tasveer banaayi! A working sketch of a helicopter...Lekin kab? In the 15th Century! Pandrahyi Sadi mein... Pehlaa havaaijahaz uttaa uske Chaar-sau saal pehle!
Jaante ho? ...Leonardo Da Vinci
ko padhne likhne mein badi
tagleef hoti thi... ulta likh
dete the Vinci Saahab... right
to left... mirror image...

NIKUMBH SIR illustrates the laboured style by writing 'My
name is RAM SHANKAR NIKUMBH' right to left.

The KIDS are awestruck by the effort. They start
clapping.

NIKUMBH SIR
ISHAAN... zaraa light on karo...

A baffled ISHAAN gets up and switches on the light.

NIKUMBH SIR
(to ISHAAN)
Kis mahaan hasti ne duniya ko
electricity se raushan kiya?

ISHAAN unwittingly answers

ISHAAN
Edison... Thomas Alva Edison...

NIKUMBH SIR
Bilkul sahi ISHAAN! Wo bhi
bechaaraa... tha A B C D ka
mara... Aao baitho
Ishaan... nahi light rehne do...
Edison Bhai ki raushani hum par
padi rahe....

NIKUMBH SIR opens yet another poster.

NIKUMBH SIR
OK, Isko to sab jaante hain...

KIDS
(echoes the class)
...Tom Cruise!

NIKUMBH SIR
Ek aur badnaseeb... jise alfaaz
naachte nazar aate the...

ISHAAN looks relieved for the first time since he came to
BOARDING School.
NIKUMBH SIR
Aur bhi hain... asli namoone...
Picasso, the famous cubist
painter... usko... seven number
kabhi samajh mein nahi aya...
kehta tha...

He demonstrates on the black-board

NIKUMBH SIR
Ye to mere uncle ki ulti naak
hai...

Children laugh at the caricatured nose

NIKUMBH SIR
Tom & Jerry ka Baap... kaun?
(quizzical looks of
kids)
...Walt Disney... aksharon se
pareshaan... daal di cartoonen
mein apni jaan!
Neil Diamond, the popular
singer... laal-laal report-card
ki sharm mein doobaa... gaane
likhtaa...
Agatha Christie, the best
mystery-books writer... Yakeen
karoge? Lekhika jo bachpan mein
padh-likh nahi paati thi!
Lekin... lekin aaj suddunlee...
ye sab mai kyun keh raha hoon?

Silence in the ranks. ISHAAN is listening with keen
interest.

NIKUMBH SIR
Tumhe ye bataane... Duniyaa mein
aise-aise heere paidaa hue hain
jinhone saari duniya ka hi
naqsha badal diya... kyunki wo
duniya ko... apni alag nazar se
dekh paaye... Dimaag unke zaraa
hatke the... aas-paas waalon ko
bardaasht nahi hua... taqleefen
khadi kar di... iske baavajood
wo jeete... aur aise jeete ki
duniya dekhti reh gayi! Inn
saare Bilandaron Kalandaron
Sikandaron ke naam... aaj ki ye
Art Class. Unko yaad karte
hue... iss chaar-diwaari ke
baahar kadam rakhenge... kuch.
alaq banaayenge...different! Jee mein aye wo uttha lo... pathhara, lakdi, kachraa, kuch bhi!

ON THE SOUNDRACK: Laughter.

NIKUMBH SIR
Unn mahaan inventors ko yaad karke... Kuch different banaa lo... Chalo... chhote taalaab ki taraf badhnaa shuru karo...

The KIDS jump up with joy. Clearly, they have begun loving this teacher.

NIKUMBH SIR sees the kids leaving the class. ISHAAN too, is walking off with RAJAN. NIKUMBH SIR calls out.

NIKUMBH SIR
ISHAAN... ek minute...

ISHAAN turns back, terrified and walks to NIKUMBH SIR with unsure steps, just as the class gets empty. He comes and stands in front of NIKUMBH SIR, the flip-book in his hands, looking down. NIKUMBH SIR tousles ISHAAN's hair and takes the flip-book from ISHAAN.

NIKUMBH SIR
Jaante ho... unn saare logon mein... ek aadhaar naam tha... jo maine nahi liya... shaayad is liye ke wo naam itna mahaan nahi hai... lekin taqleef usko bhi wohi hai...Wo naam hai............. ......RAM...
SHANKAR... NIKUMBH.

ISHAAN looks up sharply.

NIKUMBH SIR
Haan mujhe bhi bachpan mein padhne-likhne ki taqleef thi... Mere pitaji mujhe samajh hi nahi paaye... unhe lagtaa tha mai shaitaani kar raha hoon, jaanboojhkar nahi padh raha hoon.... unko lagaa aage chalke mera kuch nahi hoga...
...Jo hoon aaj tumhare saamne hoon Ishaan...

ISHAAN keeps looking at NIKUMBH SIR.
ISHAAN
Aap mere qhar gaye the?

(360 secs)

73 EXT. NASIK PUBLIC SCHOOL - POND - DAY

LONG SHOT: ISHAAN walking silently with NIKUMBH SIR towards the pond, where other children have reached.

DISSOLVE TO:

ISHAAN laboriously collects the right shaped leaves, dried kernel and twigs and starts off.

NIKUMBH SIR notices ISHAAN's craft skills.

ISHAAN turns his collected material into a boat-plane with the help of string and pins and buttone that he carries like treasures in his pocket. What's more, his boat-plane floats when tested in the pond.

NIKUMBH SIR
Wow! Ye to chalne lagi!!!

ISHAAN shies away from him and hides behind others.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The school bell rings in the distance.

The KIDS don't want to disperse. But NIKUMBH SIR has to do his duty.

NIKUMBH SIR
Chalo... apne class chale jao...
(Kids protest)
Jaa Bachchon... please... Warna principal mujhe nikaal denge!

The KIDS are disappointed. They begin exiting from the pond site.

(75 secs)

74 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - RIVULET - EVENING

ISHAAN sits on his haunches and peeps into a rivulet. Little guppy fish are swimming among the gracefully swaying weeds.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Bach's organ in A-minor plays soulfully to the uplifting image.
75. INT. NIKUMBH’S STUDIO APPT - EVENING

NIKUMBH SIR enters and puts ISHAAN’s boat-plane on his shelf fondly.

(15 secs)

76. INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - HEADMASTER’S CABIN - EVENING

NIKUMBH SIR enters the Headmaster's office.

NIKUMBH SIR
Good Evening Sir...

HEADMASTER
Hmmm NIKUMBH... Come in.

NIKUMBH SIR
Sir mujhe ek student ke baare mein baat karni thi... ISHAAN RAO... IIIB... nayaa student hai...

HEADMASTER
Oh! I know... I know... Doosre teacheron ke bhi complaint aa gaye hain... Baithe... Hamen nahi lagaa wo saal bhar bhi tik paayega...

NIKUMBH SIR
Nani Sir... wo badda aqalmand bachcha hai... He is a bright boy! Buss... reading-writing mein bhodi tagleef hai... Aap to jaante hi honge... Dyslexia ke baare me.... Usey...
(interrupted by HEADMASTER’S exclamation)

HEADMASTER
Ahh...Oh... I see. Tumne hamara kaam aasaan kar diya NIKUMBH... Soch rahe the... uske father se kya kahenge hum... Bachchaa trustees ke through aya hai you see... Good... Good... Good... to phir... special school hi sahi jagah hai uske liye...
Kyun... Le jana chahte ho usko apne school... Tulips?

NIKUMBH SIR
No Sir... He is child with above average intelligence... bahut tez bachcha hai wo... usey poora haque hai ek normal school mein padhne ka... usey bass zaraa si madad ki zaroorat hai hum se...

HEADMASTER
Lekin chaalis bachchon ke beech usey padhnaa badda mushkil ho jaayega teachers ke liye... Ye nahi ho saktaa

NIKUMBH SIR
Lekin sir... Duniya bhar mein... har kism ke bachche, chaahie bhi unki problem ho... ek saath normal school mein padhta hain! ...Balki mere Tulips ke bachchon ko poora adhikaraar hai... kisee bhi saashtaran school mein padhnekaa

HEADMASTER'S reaction.

NIKUMBH SIR
Maaf kijiye Sir... ye mai nahi keh raha hoon... ye hamare Maharashtra State ka kaanoon kehta hai... Do% reservation hai aice bachchon ke liye... ye aur beta hai ke bahut kum schools iise kaanoon ka amal kar rahe hain...

The HEADMASTER changes tracks...

HEADMASTER
Nikumbh... tum mujhe ye bataao... ye bachchaa yahan kaise manage kar paayega? ...Maths hai, history hai, geography, sciences, languages...

NIKUMBH SIR
Wo kar lega Sir... Teachers zaraa sa haath bataa den to ho sakta hai...
HEADMSTR
Kahan hai time teacheron ke paa... 

NIKUMBH SIR
Sir aap jitna soch rahe hain utna time nahi lagtaa! ...mai karke dikhata hoon... Zyada nahi Sir... poore hafte mein sirf teen ghante mujhe chahiye...

HEADMSTR ponders about it...

NIKUMBH SIR
Waise bhi inn saare subjects mein sirf usko paa shona hai...
uski asli manzil kahin aur hai...

HEADMSTR
Achchaal To aap ka subject chhod ke... baaki saare subjects jo hum sikhaate hain wo betuke hain?

NIKUMBH SIR
Nahi Sir... mai ye nahi keh raha hoon... lekin har bachche ka apna hunar hota hai ... Aur vaise bhi... as Oscar Wilde says, "Who wants a cynic who knows the price of everything and value of nothing!" Har cheez ka daam jaanaa lekin uski keemat na samajhna? Kya faaydaa??

The HEADMSTR raises his eyebrows toasting NIKUMBH SIR's wonderful metaphor. NIKUMBH SIR takes advantage of this.

NIKUMBH SIR
Sir please Sir... Zaraa bachche ki paintings dekhiye Sir...

NIKUMBH SIR opens up a folder of ISHAAN's creations for the Headmaster's benefit.

NIKUMBH SIR
Ye dekhiye... Jung ka maidaan...
sipahi surang khodtaa hai...
khodte-khodte panna palat ke surong se udanchhoo! Kya soch hai Sir... Ye confident brush strokes... such bold use of
color...bedhadak! Aur Ye dekhiiye
Anokhaa flip-book... ghar se
bichhad jaane ki daastaan -
mahaz aath saal ke bachche ki
banaayi!

NIKUMBH SIR demonstrates and meets the HEADMASTER's eye.

NIKUMBH SIR
Sir patari ke baahar bahut kum
log soch paate hain... ek
chance...Sir
Usey ek mauke ki zaroorat hai..
warna uski ummeed toot
jaayegi...

PAUSE. The HEADMASTER scratches his chin for want of a
gesture.

HEADMASTER
To kya chaahte ho humse?

NIKUMBH SIR
Sir thode samay ke liye uske
spellings, uski likhaawat ko
nazarandaaz kiya jaay.. uske
tests zabaani poochhe jaay...
gyaan to gyaan hota hai...
chaahhe zabaani ho... ya
likhaawati! Utne mein mai uski
likhaai-padhani pe kaam kar raha
hoon... dheere-dheere wo bhi
sudhar jaayegi...

HEADMASTER
Pataa nahi... temporary teacher
ki baaton mein aakar... kahin
hum permanent damage na kar
baithen!

(270 secs)

77 INT. ISHAAN'S HOUSE - ISHAAN'S ROOM - NIGHT
Page after page, on Dyslexia, opening on the monitor.
MOTHER and YOHAN are watching attentively.

(20 secs)
NIKUMBH - ISHAAN MONTAGE-INT/EXT

78 EXT. NIKUMBH - ISHAAN MONTAGE AT BOARDING SCHOOL

-SCHOOL SAND-PIT OR OPTIONS

(In rice, rava, red mud. (tray in contrast colour from its material)

NIKUMBH SIR traces the letters and as he traces, he explains the sound to ISHAAN.

NIKUMBH SIR
a makes the sound 'aa'

In this way, NIKUMBH SIR goes over a few vowels and consonants in order a, i, o, e, u and b, t, g moving from distinctly different sounds.

78a INT. ISHAAN'S DORMITORY-DAY

-NIKUMBH SIR traces the letters on ISHAAN's forearm and forms their sounds

-NIKUMBH SIR traces the letters on ISHAAN's back and ISHAAN guesses. ISHAAN recognizes the letters.

78b INT. ART ROOM-DAY

-NIKUMBH SIR dips fingers in paints and writes words. ISHAAN copies

-NIKUMBH SIR writes three letter words with a wet brush on the blackboard. The words dry up and ISHAAN repeats them from memory.

-NIKUMBH SIR gives ISHAAN clay to work with. The process is fun for ISHAAN.

-NIKUMBH SIR gives ISHAAN 3 dimensional kits to work with. They join with the help of magnets and ISHAAN is able to make enormous structures.
78C Ext. Corridor Outside Art Room - Day

- NIKUMBH SIR draws an enormous number line and ISHAAN walks on it gauging the numbers and their values.

78D Int. Ishaan Dormitory - Day

- NIKUMBH SIR gives ISHAAN the magic cube to work on his multiplication and his tables.

- ISHAAN starts writing math in his math book, where 4 blocks have been combined into a single one to give ISHAAN room to write large letters. Gradually, the blocks reduce in size and Ishaan finally fits letters within the normal block.

- NIKUMBH SIR takes compound words and ISHAAN has to break them up. "If you remove rain from raindrop, what do you get?" "If you remove corn from popcorn, what do you get?" "If you remove the b from ball, you get all."

78E Int. Boarding School Classroom - Day

- RAJAN reads to ISHAAN

- RAJAN asks ISHAAN questions

- RAJAN puts carbon paper in his book for ISHAAN.

78F Int. Art Room - Day

- NIKUMBH SIR shows ISHAAN the way around his laptop. ISHAAN learns and loves to play Pacman.

78G Int. Boarding School Classroom - Day

- NIKUMBH SIR gives ISHAAN a series of work sheets to help him improve his math and reading.

Work sheet********+******** =********

Sentences... This is a _____ (dog/god)

-was/saw and other such words all jumbled over the page. Ishaan has to circle the 'saw'
78H INT. ART ROOM - DAY

-NIKUMBH shows ISHAAN impressionist painters... Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' in particular.

78I EXT. STAIRCASE (TREE HOUSE??)-DAY

-ISHAAN learns to read. ISHAAN reads simple three letter words. NIKUMBH SIR looks pleased.

-NIKUMBH SIR has broken up words as per their spellings. All similar spelt words are clubbed together.

"Feel, reel, green, bee"
"moon, soon, cool fool, drool".

Then the more complicated spellings; the 'magic a words... "hat becomes hate, tap becomes tape, at becomes ate",

Then the magic o words...

"hole, pole, role, stole..."

-We see him in various stages of reading from books now...first books with larger print and pictures. ISHAAN gradually moves to smaller print, lesser pictures.

78J INT. ISHAAN DORMITORY-NIGHT

-NIKUMBH SIR's voice from a cassette recorder, as ISHAAN reads the Hindi reader

NIKUMBH SIR (V.O.)

Oshar se dekho...

(12 secs)

78K INT. ART ROOM - DAY

-NIKUMBH SIR shows ISHAAN his style of water coloring. ISHAAN is impressed.
78L INT. THEE HOUSE - DAY

-ISHAAN being supervised by NIKUMBH SIR... A worksheet with a printed paragraph with a fair amount of spelling mistakes. ISHAAN is circling the mistakes with a pencil. NIKUMBH SIR shows ISHAAN the magic of the RUBIC CUBE.

78M INT. HEADMASTER'S CABIN - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR AND HEADMASTER.

NIKUMBH SIR
Sir aap ne... school pass hone ke baad... kabhi painting kiya hai?

79 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - NOTICE BOARD AREA - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR is pasting a huge handmade hoarding.

INSERT: Hoarding reads: For All Students and Teachers! Come and paint at the Art Mela on Sunday, 24th December from 9 AM to 12 Noon, at the School Gymnasium!

CHILDREN are gathered around the hoarding.

KIDS
Sir kya hai... Sir kya hai?

NIKUMBH SIR
Painting Competition Sunday ko! Teachers, students sab ke liye!

(15 secs)

80 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR is addressing a different, much older class.

NIKUMBH SIR
Kalaa ka maqsaad kya hai? ...aap ke andar chhipe jasbaaton ko chhoot dena... Aaj khush ho? Haath bright colors ki taraf badhtaa hai! Lunch baqwaas tha? ...saare kaale gardoole rang paper pe nikalte hain!
FATHER

Excuse me...

ISHAAN's FATHER is standing at the door.

NIKUMBH SIR

MR. RAO... please come in...

(to the class)

...Doston... zaraa do minute mai
abhi aya... Tab tak Apne-apne
bench-partner ka chehara
banaao... aur naak mat phulana
... khamaakhaa naaraaz lagoge.

The boys laugh. NIKUMBH SIR takes FATHER inside his room.

(30 secs)

80A INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ART ROOM ANNEXE - DAY

NIKUMBH SIR

Yahan kaise?

FATHER

Factory ke kaam se aya tha...

NIKUMBH SIR

Ishaan se mile?

FATHER

Nahi... abhi nahi...
miloonga... pehle aap se kuch
baat karni thi

NIKUMBH SIR

Haan... Baithiye...

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The laughter from the class outside is audible.

FATHER is tense.

FATHER

Meri wife internet surfing kar
rahi hai kuch dinon se...
Dyslexia par chhapi saari
jaankaari usne padh daali... aap
ko bataanaa tha...

NIKUMBH SIR

Mujhe kyun bataanaa tha?
FATHER
Nahi... shaayad aap ye soch ke baithe hon... hum unn logon me se hain jo apne bachchon ka khayaal nahi karte....

Silence.

NIKUMBH SIR
"Khayaal karna"... bahut zaroori hai MR. RAO.
Isme mein ilaaj ki shakti hai... ek marham hai... jisse Dard mit-ta hai.... bachche ko tasalli ho jaati hai ke uska koi khayaal karta hai... ekhaad jhappi ... pyaar bhari pappi... ye dikhaneko ke mai khayaal kartaa hoon... Beta mai tumse pyaar karta hoon... Agar koi fikar ho to mere paas aao... kya hua, agar tum phisle, galati hui... Mai hoon naa... ye dilaasaa... Khayaal Karna... isi ko kehte hain na MR. RAO? ... Mujhe khushi hui ye sunkar ki aap ko laagtaa hai... aap khayaal karte hain...

FATHER is frozen. It is evident that was not the drift of MR. RAO's boast. He feels small now.

FATHER
Theek hai phir... mai chalaa...

He gets up. NIKUMBH SIR throws his salvo.

NIKUMBH SIR
Aap ki wife ne Solomon Islands ke baare mein kuch padhaa??

FATHER is unsure.

FATHER
Pataa nahi... Mujhe pataa nahi...

NIKUMBH SIR
Solomon Islands mein... jab adivasiyon ko jungle ka koi hissaa kheti karne ke liye saaf karna hota hai... wo ped-darakhton ko kaat-te nahi...
Mahaz us ped ke paas saare
pahunch jaate hain aur jee bhar
ke ped ko gaali dete hain...
koste hain... dekhte hi
dekhte... kuch hi dinon mein ped
murjhaa jata hai... apne aap hi
mar jata hai...

NIKUMBH SIR keeps looking at the receding figure of
FATHER. His shoulders have dropped.

CLOSE ON: NIKUMBH SIR

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The laughter increases in volume to
suggest that the door has opened.

(150 secs)

81 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - NOTICE BOARD AREA - DAY

FATHER'S POV: LONG SHOT. ISHAAN stands alone, with hands
folded at his back, watching the boarding, trying to read
the announcement.

CLOSE ON: FATHER, his eyes have welled up. His chin
quivers, as he hastily turns around and exits in the
opposite direction.

(30 secs)

82 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - MORNING
(PRE DAWN)

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: An Indian bamboo flute plays a soulful
rendition in Raag Bhopali to the accompaniment of chimes.

It is not yet dawn.

IMAGES: A freshly bathed ISHAAN is buttoning his shirt
with a degree of difficulty. He tucks his shirt into his
pant, then, wears his socks. He slips into polished shoes
and ties his laces. He walks towards his study desk with
an empty canvass jhola. He opens his desk and takes out
the brand-new box of color-tubes. He looks at them,
stoic, then, puts them in the jhola. He puts crayons,
color pencils etc into the jhola. Then he shuts the desk
and leaves through the silent empty corridor.

(30 secs)
83 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ISHAAN'S DORMITORY - MORNING (DAWN)

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The sound of morning birds.

ISHAAN as he steps out of the hostel building.

It is the break of dawn.

(5 secs)

84 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - POND - MORNING (DAWN)

LONG SHOT: ISHAAN makes his way to the pond.

The early morning sky behind him, silhouetting his form, with the pond in foreground.

He comes and stands at the pond.

(15 secs)

FADE OUT.

85 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - DAY

Fade in. Funny caricatured signboard. "Aiyiee...rango ke mele me kho jaye- TURN LEFT." Other such whacky signboards undulate into the last one which says "rango ka mela yaheen to hai"

86 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - AMPHITHEATRE

Open wide to reveal the amphitheatre. A festive mood in the space.

NIKUMBH SIR, is dressed for the occasion, looking as if he has just stepped out from a luxurious bath. HEADMASTER enters with his WIFE and greets NIKUMBH SIR.

HEADMASTER

(guffawing)
Ye dekho... Hum aa gaye NIKUMBH!
You have finally convinced me to become a Sunday painter!

CHILDREN of all ages are entering the gymnasium in hordes. MR. SEN and MR. AGASTI also arrive.
MR. SEN
(jokingly)
NIKUMBH! I've already decided!
I'm going to make a wordy
painting... Itna alphabets
daaloonga... Poora alphabets
se bhar doonga!!! Ha Hah!

NIKUMBH SIR
You seem to be limited by your
language MR. SEN!

MR. AGASTI
Kya NIKUMBH! Phasaa diya apne ko
bhi!

NIKUMBH SIR laughs.

NIKUMBH SIR
Karke to dekhiye AGASTI Saab!
Mazaa ayega! Chaliye Chaliye aap
ke liye khaas jagah bani
hai...aap ke liye bhi MR. SEN!

Montage of other teachers entering with more children
following...within the montage, teacher caricatures
marking the sitting spaces for them.

SUDDENLY NIKUMBH SIR'S attention is drawn to a graceful
old man in a short-sleeved kurta and pajama (SHRI. BADRI
NARAYAN), entering the hall.

NIKUMBH SIR moves to the man and folds his hands with
respect. He ushers the man to the HEADMASTER and
introduces.

NIKUMBH SIR
Sir... aaj ke khaas mehmaan...
SHRI BADRI NARAYAN... painter,
teacher, inspirer... Mere
Guru... Aur ye hain hamare
Headmaster... DR. P. N. SATHU.

SHRI BADRI NARAYAN notices the caricatures of the
principal and his wife and chuckles.

BADRI NARAYAN
NIKUMBH...kheel kood jari hai
huh? Good!

He looks towards the PRINCIPAL.
BADRI NARAYAN
WAH SADHU SAAB! SACH MUSH
RANGEEN MELA LAGA HAI AUR JAGAH
BIHADI KHOOSURAT CHUNI HAI.

PRINCIPAL SMILES IN RESPONSE.

DISSOLVE TO:

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: THE BELL RINGS LONG AND LOUD TO
ANNOUNCE THE BEGINNING OF THE ART MELA.

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ARE SEATED SIDE-BY-SIDE, LARGE
WHITE SHEETS SPREAD IN FRONT, COLOR BOXES AND PENCIL SETS
LYING OPEN.

NIKUMBH SIR IS PACING UP AND DOWN. THERE IS NO SIGN OF
ISHAAN.

DISSOLVE TO:

NIKUMBH SIR IS ALSO SEATED WITH A WHITE ART-PAPER SHEET
EMPTY IN FRONT OF HIM. HIS EYES ARE SEARCHING.

OTHERS ARE BUSY DRAWING AND PAINTING.

NIKUMBH SIR SHOUTS ACROSS TO RAJAN, WHO IS SEATED AT A
SPECIAL TABLE.

NIKUMBH SIR
RAJAN! WO KAHAN HAI?

RAJAN
PATAA NAHI SIR... SAB KE UTHNE SE PEHLA HI HOSTEL SE NIKAL
GAYA.

THAT BRINGS WORRY LINES TO NIKUMBH SIR'S FACE. HE FIDDLES
INVOLUNTARILY WITH HIS BRUSH. HE GETS UP AND STARTS
WORRIEDLY PACING AROUND THE CHILDREN.

JUST THEN ISHAAN'S FIGURE APPEARS AT THE TOP OF THE
AMPHITHEATRE. FROM POV ISHAAN, HE SPOTS NIKUMBH SIR.
ISHAAN MOVES DOWNWARDS TOWARDS HIM. NIKUMBH SIR SENSES
ISHAAN'S PRESENCE AND TURNS TO SEE THEM.

NIKUMBH SIR JUMPS UP AND RUNS TO ISHAAN WITH A FRESH
SHEET OF ART PAPER AND MAKES HIM SIT DOWN COMFORTABLY.
NIKUMBH SIR LEAVES ISHAAN TO HIMSELF AND GOES BACK.

MONTAGE:

MONTAGES IN THREE STAGES
AGASTI’S MONTAGE
PRINCIPAL’S MONTAGE
SEN’S MONTAGE
TIWARI’S MONTAGE
AGASTI’S MONTAGE
BADFI NARAYAN’S MONTAGE

Kids, who have finished, are peeping into others’ drawings.

MR. AGASTI’s drawing gets the most laughter from the naughty spies.

ISHAAN is immersed in his painting, his back bent, his head nearly touching the painting.

NIKUMBH SIR eyes ISHAAN’s work-technique – most unique, no pencil work, no outline, no brushwork. Colors flow out directly from the tubes on to the paper, then it is fingers and water.

ISHAAN’s painting forms on the screen, a silhouette of a boy against the morning sky, his reflection in the pond.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: The flute plays again.

ISHAAN looks for NIKUMBH SIR in the crowd, sees him rising, his back to ISHAAN.

ISHAAN takes his painting to show NIKUMBH SIR. He offers his painting to NIKUMBH SIR, and while Sir is watching the details of his painting, ISHAAN steals a glance at NIKUMBH SIR’s painting and he freezes.

It is a portrait of ISHAAN, a happy, smiling ISHAAN, rendered with bold strokes of warm colors.

ISHAAN cannot hold back his tears, while he watches himself in the mirror created by his Teacher and sobbing uncontrollably he crashes into NIKUMBH SIR and holds on to him, his shoulders shaking with sobs. NIKUMBH SIR slips down to his knees and embraces ISHAAN tightly.

(300 secs)
87 INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - AMPHITHEATRE - DAY

The HEADMASTER on stage, the mike in his hand. He taps it.

HEADMASTER
Wah! Kya guzri hai subah!
Rang mein khidkiyon ke sheeshe paar kar ke...guzarte-guzarte
pahunch gaye apne bachpan mein...
Subhanallah!
Aur doorsron ka bachpan bhi khoob dekhaa... AGASTI SIR se to vada liya humne... compulsory lesson lenge wo NIKUMBH SIR se! Kyun AGASTI SIR!

AGASTI SIR holds his ears and smiles.

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Laughter.

HEADMASTER
...Khair... ab jiskaa aap sab ko intezaar hai... wo announce karne ja rahe hain... let me come to the results of the Art Mela!
Hamare Khaas Mehmoo SHRI BADRI NARAYAN was in a real fix! Badi uljhan mein oopar heechhe kar raha the... Do paintings ke beech mein phanse the... It was a tie! Wo to keh rahe the... donon ko 'Best Painting of the Art Mela' ka khitaab do! Lekin ye mumkin nahi tha kyun ki... Jo painting chunaa jaayegaa, hum ne school ke Yearbook ka front-cover ban jaayegaa... Ab do front cover to nahi ho sakte...
Kya karen... kya karen... kya karen... BADRI NARAYANJI dharamsankat mein... Khoob soch vichaar karke wo nateeje pe pahunch gaye hain... Aiyee, aiyee sahab. Bachon, SHRI BADRI NARAYANJI ka swagat ki jeeye.
Char shabd humare bachon ke liye..

BADRI NARAYAN takes the mike.
BADRI NARAYAN

Zindagi mein bahut kam baar kisi school ke Principal ko ye kehte suna hai kya guzri hai subah painting karte karte...Wah!
Kya Mahaul Hai...ek simple si baat hai.
Padhai likhain apni jagah lekin agar bachon ko unke andar chupe hunar se wakif karna ho, unke hunar unhe sheeshe me dikhane ho to mahaul ka hona bahut jaroori hai.

Soliloquy continues and BADRI NARAYAN shares his vision. A day when schools realise that every child is special, that every child's skill should be celebrated, that every child has different abilities and its time we accept and cheer them...

(300 secs)

Aur rahi year book ke cover ko sajane wali painting ki baat.Maine guru ko naa Chunke shishya ko chunaa hai! Jee haan bachon... Ye jo aapke NIKUMBH SIR hain na, wo haar gaye hain... aur unko chit kar denewala shir saya hai... nanhaa-munna main saal ka ISHAAN NANDKISHORE RAO from III B! A big hand for ISHAAN RAO!

ON THE SOUNDTRACK: Thunder of applause.

The Crowd of children look around to spot this unknown wonder.

ISHAAN, in line, is shuffling restlessly, unable to come to terms with the moment, he moves about his space, looking up and down, up and down.

BADRI NARAYAN

ISHAAN RAO! Come to the stage and receive your citation please...

The KIDS from ISHAAN’s class fall back and form a path for ISHAAN to move forward. The sea has parted. But ISHAAN won't budge from the circle he has created for himself.
Right across the path, NIKUMBH SIR is standing.

ISHAAN meets his eye and NIKUMBH SIR beckons him to come forward with a gentle gesture.

ISHAAN begins moving, almost in a daze, stumbling a couple of times.

Children go up on their heels to get a better sight of him.

The cheer of claps starts building up as the little boy gets closer and closer to the raised platform.

ISHAAN stumbles up the stairs.

BADRI NARAYAN has the Citation in his hand, and tears in his eyes.

The school resounds with applause, when ISHAAN takes the Citation from BADRI NARAYAN. And ISHAAN breaks into sobs in Nikumbh Sir's arms...

FADE OUT.

EPILOGUE

88 I/E. BOARDING SCHOOL - ENTRANCE - DAY.

The school is in a festive year-end mood. Children are accompanied by parents. It is obvious that it is the end of the year. Families are loading the luggage into their cars and moving out of campus.

89 INT. ISHAAN'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Parents are talking to MR. SEN, MR. TIWARI and other teachers. ISHAAN'S PARENTS approach MR. SEN. He greets them warmly and indicates his surprise and pleasure at ISHAAN'S progress. ISHAAN'S PARENTS look pleasantly happy. ISHAAN'S PARENTS are given the year book with ISHAAN's painting on the front cover. NIKUMBH SIR's impressionistic painting of ISHAAN's face is printed on the back. FATHER and MOTHER are overcome by emotion.

90 EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL - ENTRANCE

ISHAAN'S PARENTS move towards NIKUMBH SIR surrounded by kids in the distance. As ISHAAN and YOHAN play together in the background, ISHAAN'S PARENTS talk to NIKUMBH SIR.
ISHAAN'S FATHER is overcome with tears. NIKUMBH SIR hugs ISHAAN'S FATHER and comforts him. NIKUMBH SIR says his byes to the family, extracting a promise from ISHAAN that he will be back in two months. The family leaves, as NIKUMBH SIR watches in fore-ground. As the family walks some distance, ISHAAN turns back and runs into NIKUMBH SIR's arms. NIKUMBH SIR flings him into the air. FREEZE on ISHAAN'S image mid-air.

END