ÇAĞRI

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A schoolyard in September heat. Twenty miserable teenagers file into a classroom for the re-sits.

Forty minutes later, the door opens and Çağrı strolls out. First one finished. Hands in his pockets.

Özden is waiting at the gate, arms crossed, pretending she just happened to be passing.

ÖZDEN
Well?

ÇAĞRI
Numbers.

He walks past her. She watches him go. Then, when he can't see, a smile she would never let him see.

INT. MUHARREM'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Thursday night. Dinner. The power stays on for once. The radio plays. Muharrem pours a little rakı for himself and, after a look from Özden, a splash of water in a glass for Çağrı, as a toast.

MUHARREM
To numbers.

ÇAĞRI
To numbers.

ÖZDEN
(raising her tea)
To the dentist.

Çağrı laughs so hard he has to put his glass down. It's the happiest we will see this kitchen.

INT. MUHARREM'S APARTMENT - ÇAĞRI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Late. Çağrı asleep face-down in his Beşiktaş shirt. His transistor radio lies on the pillow by his ear, playing a late-night music programme, very low. A slow song. A woman's voice.

SUPER: Friday, September 12, 1980. 3:00 a.m.

The song stops. Mid-word.

Static.

Çağrı doesn't wake.

Silence from the radio. A long, empty hiss. The longest hiss in the world.

Then, out of the static: a MILITARY MARCH. Drums and brass.

Çağrı's eyes open.

INT. MUHARREM'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAWN

Grey light. Muharrem and Özden stand in front of the kitchen radio in their nightclothes. Özden holds a coffee cup she has forgotten she is holding.

The march ends. A formal VOICE announces that the armed forces have taken over the administration of the country. Parliament is dissolved. A curfew is in effect. Citizens are to remain in their homes.

Then the march starts again.

Çağrı appears in the doorway, rubbing his eyes.

ÇAĞRI
Why are they playing this?

Nobody answers.

ÇAĞRI (CONT'D)
Where's the music?

Özden looks at her husband. Muharrem looks at the radio. The march plays on.

MUHARREM
(gently)
Sit down, son.

Çağrı sits down. For once, without being told twice.

INT. MUHARREM'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Curfew. The street outside the window is empty. No cars. No vendors. No simit seller. A military truck rolls by slowly, the only sound in the city.

Çağrı lies on the floor, spinning the RADIO dial. Static. March. Static. A bulletin. Static. March.

He spins past every station. No Ajda Pekkan. No anything.

ÇAĞRI
They took all the songs.

ÖZDEN (O.S.)
They didn't take the songs.

ÇAĞRI
Then where are they?

Özden comes in and sits on the arm of the sofa. She looks out the window at the empty street, the truck, the shuttered bakkal.

ÖZDEN
Hiding. Like everybody.

INT. MUHARREM'S APARTMENT - STUDY - NIGHT

Çağrı pads down the hall for water. Light leaks from under the study door. He pushes it open a crack.

His POV: Muharrem on his knees on the rug, surrounded by BOOKS, sorting them into piles. He picks one up, reads the spine, opens it, reads a line, closes it. Decides.

Left pile. Right pile.

A small SUITCASE sits open beside him. The left pile goes into the suitcase. The right pile goes back on the shelf.

Then he reaches for his own PAPERS, the thick yellowed sheets, and holds a stack of them in both hands, feeling their weight.

ÇAĞRI
Baba?

Muharrem looks up. And smiles, warmly, immediately, the way you smile at a child who has woken from a bad dream, so they won't see that you're awake for the same reason.

MUHARREM
Ah. The great mathematician is up.

ÇAĞRI
What are you doing?

MUHARREM
Spring cleaning.

ÇAĞRI
It's September.

MUHARREM
I'm a little late. Come, come. Sit.
I could use a strong young man to
hold things.

He pats the rug beside him. Çağrı sits, cross-legged, among the piles.

ÇAĞRI
At two in the morning?

MUHARREM
It's the only time the house is quiet enough to hear what the books want.

ÇAĞRI
What do they want?

MUHARREM
(holding up a book)
This one wants a little holiday. In the suitcase.
(holding up another)
This one is happy where it is. This one...
(considering)
...this one has always been dull. It can stay on the shelf and think about what it's done.

Çağrı almost laughs. He picks up a book from the suitcase pile. The title means nothing to him.

ÇAĞRI
What's wrong with this one?

MUHARREM
Nothing is wrong with it.

ÇAĞRI
Then why is it going in the suitcase?

Muharrem takes it back, gently, and lays it in the suitcase.

MUHARREM
Because there's nothing wrong with it.

Çağrı doesn't understand. Muharrem sees that he doesn't understand and decides, tonight, that's a gift.

He picks up his own papers again.

ÇAĞRI
And those?

MUHARREM
Those are Dede Korkut.

He lifts the top page toward the lamp. The light comes through it, yellow, like through a leaf.

MUHARREM (CONT'D)
Twelve stories. Shepherds and khans, a one-eyed giant, a boy who fights a bull. People sang them around fires for hundreds of years before anyone wrote them down. And when someone finally did, only two copies survived. One ended up in Dresden. One in the Vatican. Two, out of every mouth that ever sang them.

ÇAĞRI
And you're copying them?

MUHARREM
I'm carrying them. From the old Turkish into the Turkish we speak now. The words they used have changed. Some have died. So I walk each one across, so that a boy like you, today, can open the book and hear the old man's voice as if he were sitting in this room.

ÇAĞRI
Do you lose any? On the way across?

MUHARREM
(touched that he asked)
Always. You try to lose less.

He leafs through the pages and stops on one. Reads it silently. Then out loud, slowly, in the old Turkish, the words strange and round:

MUHARREM (CONT'D)
"Oğul atanın yetiridir. İki gözünün biridir."

ÇAĞRI
What does it mean?

MUHARREM
"A son is what grows from his father. He is one of his father's two eyes."

Çağrı thinks about it. He doesn't get it. Not really.

ÇAĞRI
So you only have one eye?

MUHARREM
(laughing)
Without you, I'd be half blind. Yes.