

12/11/12

THUMBPRINT

ROAD: Mukhtar walks a dusty road,
followed by the voices of Reporters. Her
head is bowed. She does not look up.

SHE is dressed in traditional trousers
and tunic, or *shalwar-kameez*.

VOICES OF REPORTERS

Mukhtar! Mukhtar Mai! Islamabad News. Le Monde. New York Times.
Tell us what happened.
Pravda. Daily Raj. Who do you blame? What happened. Saahiba?
What happened that night? Were there witnesses?
BBC. Al Jazeera. Tell us, Mukhtaran Bibi.
ETC.

The voices of the Reporters blur, overtaken by
snatches of music and words that play like an
obsessive loop in her mind. The soundscape of
the rape is most prominent, though we don't
yet know what it is.

Phrases and voices from the scenes that lead
up to the rape ride the music and pop out .

POLICE CHIEF:	Sign. Sign here.
MOTHER:	A mother gives life
FAIZ:	In the Name of Honor
MUKHTAR	I ask pardon and beg
WOMEN:	<i>Tauba, tauba!</i> God forbid her fate come to us!
SHAKUR:	I should have come home
FAIZ:	Here is Mukhtar
	Here is Muktar
	Here is Mukhtar

She stumbles in the road, almost faints.

The Judge catches her before she falls.

JUDGE
(overlapping Faiz)
Ah, here is Mukhtar.

SHIFT SCENE. Court - or anteroom.

Could be a section of the road or a separate space.

The Judge offers her a chair.

JUDGE

Please. Sit down.

(She shakes her head, frightened)

You must be tired

You have traveled far.

Please. sit here.

(She does)

Do not be afraid.

Your Imam has spoken to me.

I will write down what you say.

We must know what happened.

MUKHTAR

(anxious jumble of words)

The Mastoi

Brother

Men, four men

My mother

In the name of honor, they said

Honor honor

JUDGE

Do not rush

We have time

Start at the beginning

We must know everything.

You live in Meerwala?

MUKHTAR

Yes.

JUDGE

With your family?

MUKHTAR

Yes.

JUDGE

I hear you have a fine hand
With a needle and thread.

MUKHTAR

I do embroidery.
When I was eight,
A lady from Karachi taught me.
But I do the chores that all girls do
Like my mother and her mother and her mother before her:
Clean the lentils, boil the rice,
feed the chickens, sweep the floor,
hang the laundry out to dry
rock the babies when they cry
and make chapattis before the sun is high-

SEGUE: The clap-slap rhythmic beat of
chapattis being shaped.

Mother, Mukhtar, and Annu sit together,
making chapattis and singing a folk song,
accompanied by BIRDSONG.

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, ANNU

The larks eat the grain and the crows are blamed
Tee-oo, tee-oo
The crows steal the fish and the loons are blamed
Kaw kaw, kaw kaw
The cuckoo sings boo-ko-ta-koo
And the chukar makes love to the moon
Chuck chuck
Chukar chukar

MOTHER

Shakur! He has been away so long.

ANNU

Maybe he stopped at the river for a swim.
It is so hot! I wish I could do that, too.

MOTHER

Don't be foolish, Annu.
Girls are girls and boys are boys.

ANNU, MUKHTAR

(teasing her – equivalent of rolling eyes)
Girls are girls and boys are boys.

MOTHER, ANNU, MUKHTAR

The larks eat the grain and the crows are blamed
Tee-oo, tee-oo
The crows steal the fish and the loons are blamed
Kaw kaw, kaw kaw-
And the chukar sings to the moon
Chuck chuck
Chukar chukar

ANNU

Please, *Ammee*, do not choose a husband for me
Who sounds like that crow!

MOTHER

Crow or goat, lion or mule,
Handsome, ugly, foolish or sly --
Pray Allah he be kind to you.

ANNU

But what if he is kind and ugly?

MOTHER

Beauty is a light that shines from within.

MUKHTAR, ANNU

(teasing, as before)
Beauty is a light that shines from within.

ANNU

What if his light shines but he is OLD?

MOTHER

A man is never too old
For a girl with no dowry

ANNU

Oh! I just heard the cuckoo! Did you?
boo-ko-ta-koo –
Bride, come to me –
Boo-ko-ta-koo-
Oh who will he be, who will he be?

MUKHTAR

I see him, I do, I do.
Oo, oo.
He laughs like a hyena
And smells like the chickens in our coop.
He has hair in his ears
And none on his head
And his hands are as wet as soup.
Oo, oo.

ANNU

Eu, eu!

Annu and Mother begin to laugh during this litany of the prospective groom's charms. They may intersperse sounds and "oo, oo" or "eu, eu" as Mukhtar continues.

MUKHTAR

His nose meets his chin,
He has boils on his skin
Next to him an elephant looks thin
Yes, all his beauty is within
Oo, oo, oo, oo
He walks like a duck
And dances like a truck-

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, ANNU

Oo, oo, oo, oo

Mukhtar pulls Annu to her feet and dances with her, faster and faster.

Mother keeps rhythm with the clap-slap of the chapattis.

MUKHTAR, ANNU

Crow or goat, lion or mule,
Handsome, ugly, foolish or sly—
Pray Allah he be kind to me!

They fall down laughing.

The fierce music of the Mastoi Faiz and Abdul break into their merriment.

The three women freeze in dread.

VOICE OF FAIZ

In the name of honor, **in the name of honor, in the name of honor**

MOTHER

Go, run, hide!

Annu and Mukhtar flee in opposite directions.

Over the stacatto sounds of the men growing nearer, Mother pulls a burqa over her head.

Faiz and Abdul enter.

FAIZ

In the name of honor
In the name of honor
We come with shameful news.

MOTHER

(gesture of respect)
Faiz Mohammed.

FAIZ

We have thrown your son in jail.

MOTHER

My son? Shakur?

FAIZ

He has committed *zina* with a girl of our tribe,
Zina with a girl of the Mastois!

ABDUL

Zina with a girl of the Mastois!

MOTHER

This cannot be! He is only twelve years old—

FAIZ

Twelve or twenty, he raped the girl!
She has named him – Shakur –
The boy who brought shame to her.

ABDUL

-brought shame to her-

FAIZ

He has committed *zina* with a girl of our tribe,
Zina with a girl of the Mastois!
Better a man should cut off his hand
than touch a woman who does not belong to him.

ABDUL

-cut off his hand!

FAIZ

He cannot marry her –
A Gujar is too low to marry a Mastoi.
But her honor must be restored.
We have thrown the boy in jail.
He shall be punished as the laws of Sharia decree -
Whipped, lashed a hundred times, even if it means his death!

ABDUL

-even if it means his death!

MOTHER

No, no! Please, Faiz Mohammed, what must I do
To help my son?

FAIZ

A woman of your tribe must ask our pardon.

MOTHER

(prostrates herself)

I will do it, now, here, I beg your-

FAIZ

No! The woman must come to US and ask forgiveness
Before all the men of the Mastoi –
Or we shall enforce the laws of Sharia, even if it means his-

Mukhtar steps forward.

MUKHTAR

I will do it. I will come to you
and ask forgiveness for my brother's sake.

FAIZ

You, Mukhtar Mai?

(SHE bows her head. HE is pleased)

Good. Let it be tonight.

MUKHTAR

I will be there, Faiz Mohammed.

FAIZ

Tonight, Mukhtar Mai.
But if you fail, we will tear down your house
And slit the throats of the chickens and goats –
and your little brother.

ABDUL

-And your little brother!

FAIZ

Tonight, Mukhtar Mai, tonight.
(exit both)

JUDGE

You were not afraid?

MUKHTAR

I was afraid they would kill my brother.
I was afraid my mother would die of grief.
For myself, I had no fear.
I had done no harm to anyone.
I have faith in God.
I know the holy Quran by heart
And Shakur – I did not believe
He touched that girl of the Mastoi-
I would bring him home.

Lights on Shakur, bruised, in jail.

SHAKUR

I should have come right home.
I stopped at the river for a swim.
The day was so hot, the water so cool
I pulled off my clothes and jumped right in
And when I climbed out – when I climbed out—
I should have come right home
Home
Home

MUKHTAR

I will do as they ask and bring Shakur home.

MOTHER

You cannot go alone to the house of men.

MUKHTAR

I am not alone.
Allah is with me

MOTHER

Even Allah sometimes needs help.
Your father –
(turns to Father, who enters with Annu)

FATHER

The Mastoi were here?

MOTHER

They took Shakur.
They accuse him of *zina*.

FATHER

Zina? Shakur? It cannot be true.

MOTHER

If the Mastois say the sky is below
and the earth above, it is true.
If they say the sun shines at night,
it is true, they are right.
When they say the moon shines by day,
It is true, they are right.
Truth dies in the mouth of power.

FATHER

It is true, you are right.
Truth dies in the mouth of power.
(to Mukhtar)
You cannot go alone to the house of men.
I will come with you.

MUKHTAR

Thank you, Abba.

MOTHER

Wait.

She wraps a shawl around Mukhtar

ANNU

I want to go, too.

MUKHTAR

No. Stay with Ammee.
And keep the goats away from my trees.
They are eating all the mangoes.

ANNU

Allah wants even the goats to taste
The sweetness of a mango before they die

MUKHTAR

I think He does not know how much I love that fruit.

MOTHER

What foolishness.

Allah knows everything.

Allhamdulillah

The sky is his window; He sees without eyes...

The ROAD: Father and Mutkhar walk again.
She holds the Quran against her breast.

MOTHER, ANNU

All beings on heaven and earth

Even the birds sing of his glory.

Alhamdulillah.

There is good in this world for those who do good,
but for those who do evil -- beware!

Allah will strip the glow from your face,

rip the strength from your body

and throw you to the flames of hell.

ANOTHER ROAD: Faiz and Abdul are also
walking. Their fierce music and rhythms
enter and grow louder, colliding with the
hymn.

FAIZ

There is good in this world for those who do good,

but for those who do evil -- beware!

Allah will strip the glow from your face,

rip the strength from your body

and throw you to the flames of hell.

VOICES OF MOTHER, ANNU

Allah knows everything.

Allhamdulillah

The sky is his window; He sees without eyes.

Allhamdulillah.

The voices of Faiz and Abdul are multiplied
by a chorus – drone or vocal – of Mastoi men.

FAIZ, ABDUL

In the name of Honor!

He has committed *zina* with a girl of our tribe,

Zina with a girl of the Mastoi

The male music overpowers the hymn.

Faiz and Mukhtar meet.

Silence. She does not look at him, slowly kneels.

JUDGE:
And then?

MUKHTAR
I spread my shawl at his feet
As a sign of my submission
And kneeled before him.

FAIZ
She spread her shawl at my feet
As a sign of her submission
And kneeled before me.

MUKHTAR
(with bowed head. lays down her shawl.
If my brother has offended you
I ask pardon in his place
and beg you to set him free.

(Faiz does not respond. Mukhtar is confused, hesitates,
thinks perhaps she is supposed to repeat the apology)

If my brother has offended you,
I ask pardon in his place
and beg you to set him free.

Again, no response. She raises her head and
looks into Faiz's face.

Sound goes dead – not a birdsong, not a
creak.

JUDGE:
And then?

MUKHTAR
And then—

FAIZ
And then- I told my men: Here is Mukhtar.
We will forgive her and set the boy free.

MUKHTAR
No, no.
That is not true.

Faiz bends his face over hers, almost looms
over her, and transforms into the Police
Chief.

POLICE CHIEF

We know what is true.
Sign. Sign here, Mukhtar Mai.

MUKHTAR

But- what does it say?

POLICE CHIEF

It says what is true.
Faiz told his men: Here is Muktar.
We will forgive her and set the boy free.

MUKHTAR
No, no.
He told his men:

The Police Chief becomes Faiz again.

He snaps his fingers and calls to his men.

FAIZ

Here is Mukhtar. Do what you want with her!

Hands grab her by the arms and hair.

MUKHTAR

Yaa Allah, Yaa Allah!
Let me go!
In the name of Allah,
Let me go!

FATHER

(emerges from the background, rushes to her aid)
In the name of Allah,
Let her go!

FAIZ

(bars his way)
Stand back, old man!

MUKHTAR

Do not hurt me. Please-

FATHER

Please! Faiz Mohammed!
Tell your men to stop!

MUKHTAR

Yaa Allah, Yaa Allah...

The soundscape of the rape rushes in - the rough guttural breathing of the men, her muffled cries, etc. – as she is dragged away.

Her shawl and the Quran fall and are left on the ground.

Against that background

FATHER

In the name of Allah, let her go!
She has done nothing wrong-
She begged your forgiveness-

FAIZ

She will have it.
Later.

FATHER

You must not do this.
I will tell the elders –

FAIZ

The Elders? They are the ones who gave the order!
They are the ones who gave us Mukhtar!
Your woman for ours,
Your dishonor for ours.
Stand back, old man!

The RAPE: heard but not seen.

We can imagine what is happening through sound and expressions.

And that is all we hear and see until silently,
one by one, Women, including Mother and
Annu, appear throughout the space – on
screen and / or on stage.

GIRLS, WOMEN

Day and night, night and day,
Every girl fears this fate will come to her.
It is like a vulture flying right above our heads
When we walk or work or play –

We know a man can grab you,
take you to a dark place
throw you down, break into your body
and your life is over...

MOTHER, ANNU

Day and night, night and day,
Every girl fears this fate will come to her...

Mukhtar, half-naked, is thrown to the
ground.

FAIZ

Justice has been done.
Take your daughter.
We forgive her and Shakur.
(exit)

Father covers Mukhtar with her shawl,
helps her to her feet.

MUKHTAR

Do not touch me,
Do not look at me.
I am disgraced, I am unclean.

And the Girls and Women – except for
Mother and Annu - transform into the
Villagers (Women and Men)

VILLAGERS

Do not touch her,
Do not look at her,
She is disgraced, she is unclean.

REVERSE: The **ROAD** again.

Mukhtar stumbles down a gauntlet of Villagers.

VILLAGERS, MUKHTAR

Innocence last a day, shame forever
What is done cannot be undone

MOTHER, ANNU

Innocence lasts a day, shame forever
What is done cannot be undone...

VILLAGERS

She has brought shame to her family
Turn away, do not speak to her;
She is disgraced, she is unclean.
Tauba, tauba! God forbid that her fate come to us!

MUKHTAR

(fragmented; with pauses between thoughts)

I have brought shame to my family...
People will spit on my mother and me...
My sisters will never marry...
What is done cannot be undone...
I will never be the same

MOTHER, ANNU

What is done cannot be undone
She will never be the same

ALL

Innocence lasts a day, shame forever.
What is done cannot be undone.
Tauba, tauba! God forbid that this fate come to us!

FATHER

(to Mother and Annu)

They dragged her away
like a goat to the slaughter.

MOTHER

My lovely daughter, my smiling daughter

FATHER

What could I do?

MUKHTAR

What should I do? What should I do?

MOTHER
My lovely daughter, my smiling daughter

FATHER
What could I do?

FATHER, MOTHER, ANNU
We are Gujars, they are Mastois.
They are rich, we are poor
They crush the weak
--and we are the weak.
What can we do?

MUKHTAR alone. The family nearby.

MUKHTAR
What should I do? What should I do?
Walk into a river, hang myself from a tree,
Or stay in the house for the rest of my life –
*(the injunction from Quran 4:15, in the voices of an off-stage male
chorus, echoes through her mind)*

MUKHTAR, FEUDAL MEN
Till death releases me/her...

FEUDAL MEN
“If a woman commit lewdness,
lock her up inside her house
till death releases her.”
That is what the Quran decrees.

MUKHTAR
That is what the Quran decrees.

FEUDAL MEN
Let not compassion move you
She is disgraced, she is unclean,

MUKHTAR
Only I, I, can restore honor to my family -
and to do that I must die.

LIGHTS/TIME progress through
night to morning.

MUKHTAR (cont'd)

What sorrow to leave this earth...
Never to see the fields at dawn,
Never to see the rising sun,
 all that I love
 all those I love.
What sorrow to leave this earth...

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, FATHER
What sorrow, what sorrow..

MUKHTAR

Never to hear the children's songs,
Never to know the jasmine nights,
 all that I love
 all those I love...

MOTHER

She has been in her room for two days
She will not eat or speak to me
I am afraid, I am afraid
My lovely daughter, my smiling daughter...
What will she do?

FATHER

 What can she do?
The people know her shame.
If she goes outside, shows her face
They will spit on her –

ANNU

People will spit on me -
And on you, *Ammee*.

MOTHER

Spit can be washed away.

ANNU

I will never marry...
I will die an old maid...

MOTHER

You want your sister to die
so you will not be an old maid?

ANNU

No, no- but – she is shamed – I don't know –
I love her but- the Quran decrees –
That is what girls must do-

MUKHTAR

I will do the same as other girls
Who have shamed their families...
(to her mother)

Ammee, please, go to the store
Buy me acid, buy me lye.
They say it tastes like fire -
But I will not suffer long.
I will drink... die...
Restore your honor.

MOTHER

My honor? My honor is you!
(goes to Mukhtar)
How can you ask me to help you die?
Blood of my blood, flesh of my flesh,
Your pain is mine. I heard your first cry
How can you ask me to hear your last?

MUKHTAR

I must do the same as other girls
Who have shamed their families

MOTHER

You are not other girls

MUKHTAR

What is done cannot be undone.
I will never be the same.
Please, buy me my death.

MOTHER

A mother gives life;
She does not take it away.
I will not let you die.

MUKHTAR

How can I survive the shame?

MOTHER

You are stronger than you know
Remember your name - Mukhtar.
Powerful, self-respecting - Mukhtar.

MOTHER (cont'd)

A mother gives life;
She does not take it away.
I will not let you die.
Remember your name – Mukhtar.
(embraces her; exits)

MUKHTAR

Powerful? Self-respecting?
How can I respect myself?
Those men took everything from me.
They killed my name, they killed my honor –
It is the same as though they took my life...
They killed— THEY killed-- !
(Again she hears the Quranic verse that condemns her)

FEUDAL MEN

“If a woman commit lewdness,
lock her up inside her house
till death releases her.”

MUKHTAR

But why? Why should I be the one to die?
I committed no lewdness.
THEY did, the men who raped me.
The animals who raped me.
They committed the crime, not I!
Why should I be the one to die?
They should be punished, not I!
The crime... the sin... is theirs, not mine!
Not mine!

AMPLIFIED VOCAL to reach the whole
village: The local IMAM chants a SERMON
in the Mosque against a SOUNDSCAPE of
traditional prayers.

IMAM

The crime, the sin, is theirs -
The Elders who bowed to the Mastoi
And ordered the rape of Mukhtar Mai,
And the men of the Mastoi who violated her.
As your Imam, I command you to do as the Quran says
and speak out for what is right
even against rich or poor, parents or child.
I therefore call on Mukhtar Mai
And her family to go to the police
And bring these evil men to Justice.

ANNU

The Imam is right.
The crime, the sin, is theirs.
(to Mukhtar)
Do not die, please do not die...

MUKHTAR

How can I die? I am going to dance at your wedding
– even if you marry a crow!

ANNU

Oh, Mukhtar, you always make fun.

MUKHTAR

Is it better to cry?
Allah is Almighty and could fight this fight for me.
If He does not, it is to teach me to fight for myself.
I will do as the Imam says, speak out -

MUKHTAR, ANNU, MOTHER

And bring these evil men to justice!

LAUGHTER from FAIZ and his cronies,
continuing on and off through scene.

FAIZ

Justice! She is going to 'fight for justice!'
Ridiculous!

MUKHTAR

Ridiculous, they said –
A girl like me,
Going to the police.

JUDGE

Did they try to stop you?

MUKHTAR

The Mastoi? Oh no.
The people of my village
Did that for them.

VILLAGER/S

She should not have left home
She has brought this trouble on herself
Innocence lasts a day, shame forever.
What is done cannot be undone.

VILLAGERS (cont'd)
Follow the tradition, Mukhtar.
Do what is expected
End your shame with suicide.

MUKHTAR
I will not do that, I said.
It would be stupid to kill myself.
If I have to die, I told them,
Let my death have meaning.
I am going to the police, I said.

Laughter from the Mastoi.

She readies herself for the journey: changes clothing, puts on one of her embroidered garments, does her hair, etc.)

VILLAGER/S
The Mastoi are angry; they will take revenge on us.
Do not go against them, Mukhtar.
Follow the tradition.
Do what is expected
End your shame with suicide.

MUKHTAR
No, I told them. If I must die
Let my death have meaning.

SPOTLIGHT on MOTHER: to
Villager/s (and herself)

MOTHER
Do what is expected.
I believed that, too.
Follow the tradition.
I believed like you -
A girl used by men is shamed forever
But the rapist feels no shame
 Why did I believe that?
 How could I believe that?
 My lovely daughter, my smiling daughter...
A girl who is raped should kill herself
But the rapist can live forever
 Why did I believe that?
 How could I believe that?
 My smiling daughter, my lovely daughter...

FAIZ

She is going to the police!
A girl who was shamed in front of everyone!
Who has never been outside her village!

MUKHTAR

I am outside my village now,
Faiz Mohammed. I am on the road.

(She has finished dressing and taken her first steps toward Jatoi.
N.B. If a road is used as the basic set, it may begin to open ahead of her)

I am going to the police.
I am going to make my statement.

FAIZ

And when you return, Mukhtar Mai,
What will you do then?
Pick up your embroidery?
Who will buy from you?
(walks toward her)
Go back to teaching the Quran?
What mother would send her child to you?
You are unclean.
You are the fate
Every woman prays to escape.
(They come face to face on the road)

MUKHTAR

That fate is called rape –
And it is men like you who do it.

FAIZ

We took back our honor.

MUKHTAR

Honor? To force your lust
On a woman?

FAIZ

We follow the tradition.
You should do the same.

MUKHTAR

I am making a new tradition.
(She tries to walk past him; he obstructs her – little dance of intimidation
and bravado)
You will not stop me.
I am as stubborn as my goats.

JUDGE

Ahhh. I have heard that about you...

MUKHTAR

(to Judge and Faiz both)

In one hour on the stable floor

my old life turned to dust

I am not the same Mukhtar

who kneeled to the Mastoi -

(in her stronger voice – directly to Faiz)

You saw, you were there.

You smiled and gave the order.

You think I will turn back?

You think I will give up?

FAIZ

Where is the proof?

Who saw, who was there?

MUKHTAR

My father. He saw-

JUDGE

-he was there. He testified:

(and transforms into FATHER)

FATHER

They dragged her away

Like a goat to the slaughter

That is the fate of goats, you know,

and sometimes of daughters.

FAIZ

The daughter lies, her father lies.

FATHER

(reliving the moment)

She cried for Allah

And she cried out for me.

What could I do,

With a gun at my head,

FAIZ

We stone a daughter

Who brings shame to us.

FATHER

Some men do not love their daughters.

FATHER/MOTHER

(reprise)

A father/mother gives life
He/she does not take it away.
I will not let her die.

FATHER

(more determined

I am not helpless today.
I have come to get justice,
justice for my daughter.
The law helps the powerful
A father helps his child.

(He reverts to his role as JUDGE)

JUDGE

The court shall study
The evidence.

FAIZ

Evidence? The word of her father?
No! She must produce four witnesses, four eyewitnesses
four male witnesses...

(and FAIZ leaps into his role as POLICE CHIEF.

He turns the interrogation lamp on her, drawing her into
the harsh glare of the police station)

POLICE CHIEF

Where is your proof? Your witnesses?
The four eyewitnesses?

MUKHTAR

The men who raped me...
THEY ... they are my witnesses -
The four men of the Mastoi.

POLICE CHIEF

That cannot be your report.

MUKHTAR

It is true!
Two men held me down.
Another climbed on-

POLICE CHIEF

You cannot say you were raped!
We know what happened.
Faiz Mohammed told us.
Sign. Sign here, Mukhtar Mai.

MUKHTAR

I did not take this long journey
To sign my name to a lie.

(She is about to storm away when the Judge stops her)

JUDGE

Wait, Mukhtar.
I have spoken to your Imam.
Sign this.
(hands her the sheet)

MUKHTAR

...there is nothing on the page...

JUDGE (sternly)

Your Imam asks you to sign.
Then I will write down your story
Exactly as you tell it.
Trust me, Mukhtar. Sign.

POLICE CHIEF

(overlapping; gives her a pen)
Sign the paper. Just your name. Sign here.
(She is rattled, embarrassed. After a pause:)

MUKHTAR

...I do not know... How...? What...?

POLICE CHIEF

Use your thumbprint,
like all the women.

THUMBPRINT: He presses her thumb onto an inkpad, then onto the paper: a revelatory moment. Everyone else fades away for her.

SPOTLIGHT on Mukhtar.

MUKHTAR

'Use your thumbprint,
like all the women...'

I cannot write, I cannot read,
I know nothing of the world
Like all the women.

Like all the women
I was taught silence, I was taught fear.
Taught to hide my face and bow my head,
Obey my parents and stay away from men -
Like my mother

(Mother and Annu, in person or as voices, join Mukhtar.

*N.B. While the lyrics are the same as in scene one, the tone is quite changed,
especially with the added last lines)*

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, ANNU

And her mother, and her mother before her:
Clean the lentils, boil the rice
feed the chickens, sweep the floor,
hang the laundry out to dry,
rock the babies when they cry...

We cannot write, we cannot read,
We know nothing of the world...

MUKHTAR

Use my thumbprint,
Use my thumbprint,
Use my thumbprint-

(hands the JUDGE her thumbprinted paper)

*N.B. Her testimony could be projected upon her body – a technique
that might be used elsewhere – and also on the sheet of paper –
copies of which might later be sold in the lobby to benefit her school)*

JUDGE

Thank you, Mukhtar Mai.

(The JUDGE looms up, dominating the stage, no longer part of the 'frame' but the main event. He pounds the gavel (or its equivalent in Pakistan court))

JUDGE

This court charges the Mastoi and Village Elders
with the rape of Mukhtar Mai
And orders their immediate arrest.

An eruption of **SOUND**: cheers, voices of
reporters and others, perhaps in many
languages, clicks and snaps of cameras,
whirrs of video cameras, the excitement of
domestic animals – we are back at scene one.

*N.B. From this point, scenes speed up and the
world swoops in on her in the form of
contemporary media.*

VOICES OF REPORTERS*

Mukhtar! Mukhtar Mai!
Islamabad News. Le Monde. New York Times.
Tell us what happened.
Pravda. Daily Raj. Who helped you?
How do you feel today? When will you have a verdict?
BBC. Al Jazeera. Tell us, Mukhtar Mai. ETC.

REPORTER*

We are outside the home of Mukhtar Mai in Meerwala.
This is our first sight of her since the momentous events
Of yesterday.

(**NOISE, LIGHTS, CAMERA, VIDEO** focus on her.
She freezes, deer in headlights, as questions rapid-
fire at her)

... She looks rather... terrified..
(moves toward her with camera)

MUKHTAR

They are so loud.
Why do they all talk at once?

MOTHER

I don't know...
It must be part of their culture.

*Match to reporters in first scene

The barrage of questions and sound continues. Out of it comes the persistent voice of the REPORTER.

REPORTER

Mukhtar Mai, Mukhtar Mai –
Talk with me, Mukhtar Mai.
I am writing about the trial.
How do you feel about the indictments?

MUKHTAR

He follows me everywhere.
I send him away, he smiles –
then does what he likes.

MOTHER

He must be American.

REPORTER

Faiz Mohammed was eager
To talk to the press.

FAIZ

The decision is a plot of the West -
Against the Quran, against tradition-
Mukhtar Mai has been seduced by our enemies
They use her against Islam
May God forgive her
Allah Yusa'amah, Allah Yusa'amah

MOTHER, MUKHTAR

Allah Yusa'amah, Allah Yusa'amah
May God forgive him
For these lies.

MOTHER

Go. Talk to the reporter. If he IS American,
He will have a big voice.

The Reporter moves to the periphery,
or frame, takes the same position,
physically and dramaturgically, the
JUDGE had occupied.

MUKHTAR turns to him, nervous.

REPORTER

Take your time.

I will report what you say.

MUKHTAR

I love Islam and know the words
of the Prophet by heart.

(reprise)

I followed the tradition
Did what was expected
And believed like you:

MOTHER, ANNU

We believed like you

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, ANNU

A girl used by men is shamed forever

But the rapist knows no shame...

Why did we believe that?

How could we believe that?

VILLAGERS

Allah Yusa'amah, Allah Yusa'amah

Allah forgive her.

The woman knows no shame

She has lost her modesty.

The whole world knows she is unclean

Allah Yusa'amah, Allah Yusa'amah

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, ANNU

Allah has put this pain in our way

So we stop and ask:

Why do we believe that?

Should we still believe that?

MUKHTAR (to herself)

...Allah has put this pain in my way...

(the SOUNDSCAPE of the rape floods back)

..."There is Mukhtar! Do what you want with her!"

REPORTER

Ms. Mai, are you all right?

MUKHTAR

'There is Mukhtar...

'There is Mukhtar' –

(Mother puts a shawl around her. Almost unconsciously
Mukhtar lays it on the ground, as she did at the Mastoi compound)

FAIZ

She paid a debt, a debt of honor.
We accepted her payment.

REPORTER

In the entire history of Pakistan,
Only women, not one man,
have ever been punished
For a crime of honor –

FAIZ, MEN

That is how it is done in Punjab.
That is justice, honor justice.
Mukhtar Mai knew the rules.
She has lost her faith
She is in love with the West

MOTHER

(grabs shawl back)

Faiz Mohammed is like many men.
He will say anything,
Except that he is wrong.

FAIZ

Wrong? Then why did the Elders
Give us their blessing?
Because they were not wrong.
And neither are we.

TO BE WRITTEN

Aria for FAIZ: a lyrical hymn to continuity, love of forefathers)

FAIZ (cont'd)

The case will be dismissed like THAT!

The SNAP of his fingers becomes the
GAVEL. The JUDGE looms up again.

JUDGE

Men have raped women before
But never has a council of Elders,
The men sworn to protect all women,
ORDERED a rape, a gang-rape.
This shameless abuse of power
constitutes an act of terror

REPORTER

'...act of terror'

JUDGE

And shall be prosecuted
In a court of anti-Terrorism.

REPORTER

(excited)

And!?

JUDGE

Witnesses are not required
In a court of anti-terrorism.

REPORTER

YES!

FAIZ

What?! You cannot pull a new definition
Of terrorism from your hat...!

REPORTER

The Judge is not wearing a hat.

MUKHTAR

(walking into a brighter light)

And that is not a new definition of terrorism.
It is a new definition of rape.

(to herself)

Did I say that?!

VILLAGERS

She DID – she said the word – rape.

Allah forgive her. She said rape.

She has lost all decency.

MUKHTAR
I DID say that...

REPORTER

(into mic, or on screen, as headline, etc)
Yesterday, in Punjab province
A three-year-old girl was given
to a man of thirty-five as payment
for a gambling debt.

VILLAGERS

Mukhtar, we feel sorry for you,
But do not blame Pakistan,
And give Muslims a bad name,
Do not not wash this dirty laundry
for the whole world to see.

MOTHER, ANNU separate
themselves from the Villagers.

ANNU

I am afraid to ask what YOU do
With YOUR dirty laundry.

MOTHER

We are all Pakistani.
This is our 'dirty laundry -
Who else do you think should wash it?

REPORTER

You are not very popular
With your old friends.

MUKHTAR

If I wanted to be popular
I would not be here,
talking with you-
(realization)
I would not be here at all
talking at all-
(taking a larger stage)
like the thousands
Buried in the earth
Without a stone
To show they lived -

The GAVEL interrupts her.

The JUDGE rises up.

JUDGE

We have reached a verdict.
The defendants will rise.

FAIZ stands.

HUBBUB again: Lights, cameras, cheers,
applause, etc.

And more **MEDIA** - video, projections, live
action animation, instant replay.

REPORTER

For the first time in Pakistan,
A woman has won a conviction
Against her rapists.

FAIZ

If we are guilty, half of Pakistan is guilty, too!
You cannot undo centuries of tradition
In a courtroom. The verdict will be reversed.
Wait and see.

REPORTER

Half the country is celebrating;
The other half is in shock.

MUKHTAR

Finally men will understand
that rape is a crime and not a team sport.
(a gasp; to herself)
Did I say that?
(very pleased with herself)
I did. I DID say that!

JUBILATION: Foot-tapping dance.

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, ANNU

(reprise, very upbeat)

The larks eat the grain and the LARKS are blamed
Tee-oo, tee-oo
The crows steal the fish and the CROWS are blamed
Kaw kaw, kaw kaw
The cuckoo sings boo-ko-ta-koo
And the chukar makes love to the moon
Chukar chukar chukar-

FOOTSTEPS of the Mastoi break in, just as they did in the opening scene. They grow louder and more frightening.

MUKHTAR and FAIZ freeze: she looking back in memory to that moment, he looking ahead to the fate marching toward him.

Out of this: the GAVEL.

JUDGE

The defendants will rise
To hear their sentence.

FAIZ faces the music: his own footsteps bearing down on him.

FAIZ

What? WHAT?! WHAT?

The JUDGE steps down, becomes FATHER again.

MUKHTAR, MOTHER, ANNU, FATHER

The cuckoo sings boo-ko-ta-koo
And the chukar makes love to the moon
Chukar chukar chukar-

ANNU

Look. Over there – the tall one –
He is son of our second cousin,
come to Meerwala to find a bride –
I think he looks kind. Maybe he is the one
He is the one Allah means for me-

(Sudden male LAUGHTER – loud, like a crow)

Oh no. No. I don't think so.

FAIZ (alone)

Allah have mercy

REPORTER

A woman who wanted to divorce a husband
was murdered today in her lawyer's office.

FAIZ
(reprise – Qawalli version)
What sorrow, what sorrow...

REPORTER
Acid was thrown in the face of a teen-aged girl

MUKHTAR
What sorrow, what sorrow

REPORTER
A young mother was stoned to death-

FAIZ
What sorrow to leave this earth...
Never to see the fields at dawn,
Never to see the rising sun,
all that I love
all those I love.

REPORTER
Two little girls were raped on a bus

FAIZ
What sorrow, what-

MUKHTAR
(turning on Faiz)
I thought the rape was the worst thing
That ever happened to me –
Now I see it is also the best.
Allah is great. *Allahu Akbar*.
He has taught me that a curse
Can become a blessing:
It has given me a voice.

REPORTER
Mukhtar Mai has become the voice
Of all women who suffer violence.

The dusty ROAD widens beneath her
feet, becomes a MAP of Pakistan, later
the world.

MUKHTAR

Before the rape, I was like a dumb animal
I knew nothing, nothing

WOMEN (together and/or individually)

I knew only to agree
To say yes
And to obey
(on one breath)

obey my father brother uncle husband
every man in the village province district
and all of Pakistan

WOMEN TWO

And when the children are grown,
we must obey our sons, our own sons
we have nursed and raised...

MUKHTAR

We are like dumb animals
We cannot read, we cannot write
We know nothing of the world...
I knew nothing, nothing

(REPORTER is reporting, MUKHTAR learning the lesson by completing his sentences)

REPORTER

She did not know that Pakistan

And a democracy has

The people of Pakistan

even the women

And citizens

MUKHTAR

Pakistan is a democrac

A democracy has a Constitution and laws

The people of Pakistan are citizens

even the women?

Even the women!

And citizens have rights

FAIZ

What rights? Where will you find them?
Who will enforce them in Pakistan?
If you do not know your rights
You cannot fight for them.
This decision will never stand.
You will see.

MOTHER steps forward as Minister.

MINISTER

I gave her a check for her pain.
Half a million rupees...8000 dollars...
She could have bought a hundred things –
a tractor, a car, a new roof for the barn

MUKHTAR

...I want a school!

MINISTER

she cried

a school for girls. We know nothing,
nothing of the world.
Girls must learn to read and write,
to sign their names with pens
instead of their thumbs.

MINISTER

I gave her the check and in 3 weeks
(transforms back to MOTHER)

MOTHER

-she had 5 proposals of marriage.
And the Mastoi were out of jail.

GUARDS bar her way.

GUARDS

Stay inside.
The Mastoi are out of jail.

(She is forced to step back, until)

The Mastoi are back in jail.

(She takes another step– and)

The Mastoi are out of jail

(And so on – a loop of reversals. She walks on)

MUKHTAR

God will dispense justice
in his own time. I cannot hurry him.

(She is joined on the road by a YOUNG WOMAN, then several)

MUKHTAR

Do not worry. I will be with you.
The Judge will write down what you say
You will sign with your thumbprint.
Then you will return to Meerwala
And study in my school!

The young women become the students,
soon joined by others, including men.

STUDENTS

Pakistan is a democracy
A democracy has a Constitution and laws
The people of Pakistan are citizens
And citizens have rights.

MUKHTAR stands, revealing herself among
them.

MUKHTAR

For the rest of my life,
I will never have to sign my name
with my thumbprint again.

(She shows the paper. Her name, in Urdu and English,
is written over the thumbprint)

Mukhtar. Powerful. Self-Respecting. Mukhtar.

All the students – that is, everyone on
stage - hold up their signed papers.

By a magical feat of lighting and video, we
see behind them a long disappearing
perspective of schoolroom desks.

And superimposed over the students
are the faces of other women – some known
to us, others not.

The REPORTER intones their names.

REPORTER

Malala Yousafzai
Nirbhaya
Shaheen Baduri
ETC.

More names and more names are added from all those involved in the opera, who come out on stage to participate in the finale:

A **CHORALE** of Women's Names

TO BE WRITTEN

Ending with "Mukhtar Mai."