

THE SCALE

Short film script

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INT. BUTCHER'S SHOP - MORNING

A small butcher's shop. On the wall, a framed master's certificate; the ribbon on its edge has faded. The glass of the counter is empty.

CEMAL (60s, big hands, straight back) raises the shutter from inside. Morning light falls across the empty hooks.

Cemal dusts the scale. Wipes the pan with a cloth. Wipes it again.

He hones the knife on the strop. One. Two. Three.

He looks across through the window. On the far side of the pavement, a giant shop window with a poster: OPENING IN 2 DAYS.

Cemal looks at his own reflection in the glass and tightens the strings of his apron.

INT. BUTCHER'S SHOP - NOON

The door bell rings. NEVIN (70s, string shopping bag) comes in.

NEVIN

Two hundred grams of mince.

Cemal takes the meat from the hook, cuts it, feeds it to the grinder. He puts the mince on paper and sets it on the scale.

The needle stops at 220.

Cemal takes a pinch of mince back. The needle: 200.

NEVIN (CONT'D)

Oh, come on, Cemal. It's twenty grams.

CEMAL

You said two hundred.

Nevin leaves the money on the counter. On her way out she stops at the door and looks at the shop window across the street.

NEVIN

They're opening on Friday, they say.

Cemal doesn't answer. He wipes the knife.

INT. BUTCHER'S SHOP - AFTERNOON

The empty shop. Cemal sits behind the counter and opens his account book. Three lines on the page, all the same

day.

The door opens. EMRE (24, backpack) comes in. He pauses on the threshold.

EMRE

Dad.

Cemal closes the book.

CEMAL

Have you eaten?

EMRE

I have.

Emre drops the bag in the corner and takes the apron from its hook. He starts to put it on.

CEMAL

No need. There's no work today.

EMRE

I'll clean the glass, then.

Emre takes the cloth and starts cleaning the window. The light from the shop window across the street falls in through the patch he's wiped.

INT. BUTCHER'S SHOP - EARLY EVENING

Cemal steps up to the scale. He calls to Emre without looking at him.

CEMAL

Come here.

Emre goes behind the counter. Cemal points to the scale's zero.

CEMAL (CONT'D)

Empty, it shows zero. If it doesn't, you weigh nothing.

Cemal takes Emre's hand and puts his finger on the adjusting screw.

CEMAL (CONT'D)

You weigh wrong once. Nobody comes back.

EMRE

Dad, I...

Emre reaches for his bag. Pulls the zip.

A blue vest hangs out of the bag's mouth. On its chest, the logo of the supermarket across the street.

Cemal sees it. He doesn't raise his eyes. His hand stays on the scale.

A long silence. The hum of the fridge.

CEMAL
How much are they paying?

EMRE
(hesitates)
Minimum wage. Plus meals.

CEMAL
Count the meals. They won't.

Cemal adjusts the scale. The needle settles on zero.

Emre stuffs the vest back into the bag.

EMRE
Three months. Just till winter.
Then back here...

CEMAL
You did the glass well.

Cemal unties his apron and hangs it on the hook. He goes to the till.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BUTCHER'S SHOP - NIGHT

Cemal pulls down the shutter. The metal echoes down the street.

Emre waits a few steps away. The light of the shop window across the street turns both their faces blue.

EMRE
Do you want me to come tomorrow?

Cemal fits the padlock. Turns the key.

CEMAL
I open at seven.

Emre nods. They walk off in opposite directions.

Cemal walks a few steps and stops. He looks back.

The end of the blue vest is hanging out of the bag on Emre's back.

INT. BUTCHER'S SHOP - NIGHT

The dark shop. The door opens and Cemal comes in. He doesn't turn on the light.

From under the counter he takes a folded blue vest — Emre

has forgotten it.

Cemal unfolds the vest. Looks at the logo. Then folds it neatly.

He opens the drawer where his knives are kept. Puts the vest inside. Closes it.

The scale is empty. In the dark, it shows zero.

FADE OUT.