The Secret of the Grain

By Abdellatif Kechiche
We're crossing the fishing port.
Starboard is a tuna boat
with its heap of nets in the back
and the skiff on the poop deck.
The skiff holds one end of the net
as the boat circles a tuna shoal.
Most tuna boats are at sea now.
They make 3-month excursions
off the coasts of Libya, Malta, Cyprus,
Turkey and the Balearic Islands.
There, on the right,
those are trawlers.
Those boats over there.
On either side of the seine
are grids
to hold the nets open horizontally
when it's dredging behind the boat.
They go out on day trips,
Monday through Friday,
from 2 in the morning
to mid-afternoon,
until the boss says
they have enough.
That's the fish crier's compartment.
It got its name
because there once was a man
yelling what fish they had,
and the price.
Now that's all over.
Everything's on computer.
THE SECRET OF THE GRAIN
That's the scrap area.
That's where scrapiron is stored,
before being shipped to Turkey.
There used to be ovens in France.
We lost the matches.
Unless it's a manpower problem.
Marie, take over a minute!
God damn!
Over there,
concrete blocks are piled,
forming a breakwater.
This is crazy, Madeleine. Stop!
What's crazy? This?
I'm working.
This is no time.
It's exciting!
Hurt me.
It's not the time.
If you look behind you,
on the left
you can see
boats pulled ashore for repair.
This is called
the harbor careening area.
That's where repairs are made
to the boat's underside,
meaning every part
which is immersed.
Rudders,
paint, propellers, etc.
Slimane!
What is it?
So a schedule is toilet paper?
What schedule?
I made one up.
You weren't on it this morning.
You talk schedules and deadlines.
How can I finish?
You don't finish the job!
This project is stagnating.
We've been at it 3 days!
- Exactly! It's been 3 days!
- Talk about schedules.
That's the problem.
This project's going nowhere.
If you can't move these jobs,
what do I tell the others?
Jose, quit it.
I'm talking to Slimane.
It's not your business.
Keep out of it.
Everyone stops.
When does the job get done?
You play me for a fool!
What's the idea?
What's up with this job?
It should be done!
You read the schedules now.
Don't ask questions
and things will be simple.
You're making my life difficult.
I'll read that schedule...
I had to cut your hours.
It's early. Things are still slow.
I don't get it.
Look on the bright side.
You'll have time
with your grandkids.
To go fishing.
Who asked you?
I got my orders.
We're over quota for man hours.
Listen, we're trying
to stave off the worst.
Anybody who's not happy...
Don't give me that stare.
I said don't!
You want me out, is that it?
I only said it's slow now.
Can't pay you to loaf.
I work.
I know.
- I do my job.
- I know.
I've worked 35 years.
In salt.
Between the sea and the yard.
So what?
You're not profitable anymore.
You're tired and you're tiresome.
That's the truth.
You had 2 days to finish that boat.
Two days is two days.
Not 2 1/2, not 3.
Know what you're costing me?
There's work to be done
on that boat.
I don't know.
I'm not a businessman anyway.
You don't know what work
that boat needed. You don't.
I'm sorry for you, Slimane.
I don't get you.
Ren made you a good offer.
You said no.
Ren!
I've been on the yard since '69.
Ren says I got 16 years in.
Not even half of the truth.
Not our fault
you were off the books.
We took over in '90.
What happened before...
- I don't get it.
- You don't?
I don't. Tell me.
You know, but you won't say it.
How long have I been on the yard?
You have to choose.
You want to go on working,
you accept flexible hours.
- Otherwise...
- What?
You know our conditions.
How many times do I have to tell you?
All right, I got it.
You got it.
I hope you got it.
How are you?
Guess what happened to us?
What?
Got stopped in the no fishing zone.
Really hurt us.
The fat guy who used to be a crier.
- Right, Henri?
- He hates us.
Bastard.
He had a field day.
Smiling, from ear to ear.
I said, "Come on, be reasonable.
I got overhead."
and banned for a week.
Stubborn ass.
We all got a job. We fish.
He gives out fines.
You better be careful.
There's no more work.
Now I've got work trouble.
I told you, they want us out.
I told you to get out.
Either get out,
or they'll throw you out.
Anyway,
till you get fed up...
Hey, that's how life is.
Life is not all rosy.
What did Michel say last night?
He needs help to break up
that old boat, La Source.
- Lots of work.
- An old freighter.
Yeah, I'd say two weeks.
Honest boss, he'll pay you.
You got no worries.
I worked for him. He's straight up.
Give him some fish.
I'll just sort it and I will.
Aziz, pass me the crate.
Pass me the fish, please.
Jeremy, sort a while
so I can serve Slimane.
Not a lot.
That OK?
Just 2 or 3 mullet and that's fine.
I'll clean them.
Give him more.
I give him the crate?
I'm not kidding.
That's all I needed.
I got to pay the diesel bill.
Riadh!
Out of the bathroom!
Turn that shower off!
I just got in!
You don't pay the phone,
the water, the electric!
End of the month,
nobody helps me.
Shoes!
Smells like fish.
No, it doesn't. It's fresh.
It smells like the sea.
The sea...
Then I clean it
and I smell like the sea.
It's cleaned, don't worry.
Clean or not,
it won't pay the bills.
You never eat fish here?
We do. You think we're cats?
All day long, fish and more fish.
What good is bringing me fish?
Bring caviar while you're at it.
You missed two alimony payments!
All selfish!
Everyone around me is selfish!
What am I supposed to do?
I am not happy!
Don't look at me like that.
You know what you did.
I said, "Pee?" You said, "No".
Ask for the potty.
Bad girl. Sit on the potty. Go!
Sit down!
Sit, or I'll get mad.
Hi, Dad.
She didn't ask for the potty.
So here we go again.
- She's little.
- No! She knows what she did.
Hi, honey.
Got a kiss for Grandpa?
- Come.
- She stays on the pot!
Leave her alone.
What's done is done.
Don't you move!
Let her be.
It's nothing.
Don't yell.
She gets on my nerves.
I keep telling her.
Want to stay in diapers forever?
Dad!
Let her be.
Let me wash the dirty girl.
I didn't wash her!
Let her be.
Bad girl.
Lucky she didn't get spanked today.
Pretty girl.
She's not pretty, she's bad.
A very bad girl.
She knows she's off the hook.
Look!
You're disgusting.
Little piggy.
You lucked out.
You'll see next time.
- Hi, Grandpa!
- Hi, hon.
Give Grandpa a kiss.
Finish eating.
Sit down here.
Did you eat?
This isn't over!
I'm not too hungry.
No more peeing in diapers!
A little coffee.
Answer me. It's over.
Now it's the potty.
See that? When she's in your arms...
And she knows it!
You lucked out. We'll see later.
Mom, leave my sister alone.
She still pees in diapers,
at her age!
You were out of diapers.
Wait, Dad. Eat first.
Why the coffee?
I'm not hungry.
You ate before?
What did the cowboy want?
Come on, eat. You keep talking
and you're not done.
What did he want?
They made schedules.
I'm on half-time.
You asked for it?
Tell them no.
Anyway, they're reviewing personnel.
They want no Frenchmen.
The old guys are out.
No, the French.
Rather have migrants.
That way, no hassles.
Sugar? Dad, the doctor...
I had sugar.
Dad, you put sugar in it.
He didn't, I did.
Why'd you put sugar out?
I've worked there
since Jose was born.
Did they give me a contract?
They could have.
They don't want Frenchmen.
- It has been a while.
- What can I do?
You got to act.
It's like you're afraid.
- Afraid of what?
- Exactly!
What should I say?
- You say nothing. You stay...
- What?
You could keep this up 10 years.
Till your hair turns white.
Then they'll fire you. Great.
At the cannery...
Safia, enough!
Want to go potty again?
Want to go potty?
It's all right.
No, you stay here
or you go potty.
So, at the cannery, we get bonuses.
They tried to eliminate them.
The guy they sent, the VP,
said they'd lost American markets.
Just like that, one day they say,
you lose this cause we lost that.
So just like that, we organized.
Everyone in the cafeteria.
We made signs.
We went on strike, stopped working.
When they saw the line stopped,
they needed us,
they all came out of the woodwork.
They watched how they spoke to us.
We were all there,
ready to go the limit.
We said if we have to set a fire,
we'll set a fire.
But our bonuses don't go.
Don't even try it.
Considering what we get paid...
So when they came...
We'd elected... what's her name?
- Your co-worker's wife.
- Lionel?
His wife. I don't know her very well.
Melanie?
Melanie was our spokesperson.
She went to them and said,
no one goes back to work
until we get our bonuses.
I swear, quick as lightning,
we got our bonuses.
They got scared.
- They can't just do anything.
- Yes, they can.
- Ask your father.
- No way.
They're tired of benefits
and withholding.
They outsource.
Somewhere guys get 10 bucks a week.
- Anybody in there?
- Yes!
They take advantage of people
who are making a pittance.
They're the best.
They do that very well.
And they keep lining their pockets.
So every year,
you hear the same line.
On TV, that's all you hear.
- You watch too much TV.
- People are too passive.
No, it comes down from above.
It's shameful.
That's how it is.
Half as many boats in 10 years.
Then one day, no more boats.
Just a marina.
No more fishing boats.
No more yard. Only tourists.

For them:
They take advantage of people.
I brought some fish.
Again?
You just brought us some.
That's a lot.
It's good for the kids.
Not even a thank you.
Thanks.
But I get some at the cannery.
Not the same.
This is fresh, for the kids.
That's true, you're right.
Don't look at me like that,
you little piggy!
She'll remember this day.
I'm running late.
Dad, can you drop me off?
- We'll go together.
- Fine.
Don't want a bite first?
No. Tonight I...
Give Grandpa a hug.
Hug Grandpa
and I won't be mad anymore.
I'll hug him, too.
Good thing I have you, Dad.
Don't worry. It'll work out.
They can't change your life.
You too, give Mom a hug.
Oh, you're a sweetheart.
And Grandpa.
My kids adore you!
Jose, come here.
Show them Grandpa's nice fish.
He thinks of us.
Careful, don't fall.
- Can I touch?
- Are your hands clean?
I'm going.
Nice, right?
Don't touch too much.
Look at the fish.
Show her the fish.
In water, he moves this.
Look at that fish.
See that?
It's Nemo.
They got big teeth.
Hi.
How are you?
I brought fish.
Sure you're OK?
- Hi, Slimane.
- Hello, Rym.
You OK?
- Some fish.
- Let me see.
Haven't had any in a long time.
Mullet. The yellow kind!
That is super cool. Thanks.
- Make it tonight?
- No problem.
How are you?
Mom see this?
What did she say?
Coming back down?
Come, let's go to sleep.
I don't get it.
It doesn't matter.
I didn't really want to either.
Come and sleep.
What are you doing?
I'm going back to my room.
What's the matter?
What's going on?
Not in your room.
I don't feel right.
How long do we go on this way?
The guests...
That's your place.
Then I come here...
It's just that the bed is bigger.
You know, I'm just a guest.
Stop.
You're independent.
You're young.
You like life, you like freedom.
I've done nothing, left nothing
to you and Rym, to my children.
Why are you saying this?
It's not moist enough.
I put it in already.
I can't take it out now.
Like this?
A little less.
Another potato peeler
headed for the trash.
Can't go any faster?
Mom, she's not great at dishes.
- I'll get it.
- Go.
Don't forget, shoes off.
What took so long?
Scared you?
- Shoes!
- I took them off.
Hi, honey.
Wow, lots of work.
How are you?
- Easy on the harissa.
- We know.
And the kids?
On the balcony. Go ahead.
Thanks. Nice change from fish.
Hi, honey.
Hey, sweetie.
- What are you drinking?
- I'll have...
Olfa!
Bring a glass and a beer.
Give him the big plate.
That's the plate.
- She's pretty!
- Pretty, right?
- Hi, Henri.
- Hi, Lilia.
- Your daughter's pretty.
- Thanks.
How old is she now?
Almost two.
Time sure does fly.
Tell Auntie how old you are.
Show her.
Two. Just two fingers.
Five?
She's so smart.
Incredible.
And still in diapers?
I can't get rid of them.
And I work at it every day.
- Try the potty?
- Sure. I put her on it.
She won't go on the potty.
Just to sit her down on it,
she has a fit.
Soon as I take her off,
then she goes.
Cause she yells at her.
I don't yell.
It's not her fault.
It's the diaper companies.
The new diapers
absorb a whole quart.
Kids get used to it.
They don't get it.
Even wet, they feel dry.
See what I mean?
They're shock absorbers.
They fall, get right back up.
It's true.
That's why they do it.
Take one out, throw it away.
Take another...
See the price at the supermarket?
She uses 5 a day.
How long does one pack last?
Not even a week!
- How much is it?
- 15 euros.
Olfa, the calculator!
Fifteen is a lot.
That's not even a week!
Thirty to a pack...
Here comes the details.
This will take all afternoon.
The diaper budget!
Six times three...
Math and me...
Wait.
Six a day. A pack is five days.
That makes 6 packs a month.
- 6,200.
- 7,200.
Imagine in 2 years.
Look at the face he's making!
OK, everybody! Let's go.
Hurry up.
Julia, go get dressed. Please.
Everyone's downstairs.
They made couscous.
What the hell is this?
Julia!
Serguei!
Serguei, tell your sister
or I'll get crazy.
All right.
Stop talking in Russian.
Look in my eyes, go get dressed.
I said no! That's French!
I'm not coming!
- Why are you yelling?
- You don't listen!
Come back to earth.
Go down to your mother's!
Go eat!
You wait for your brother
to pull this shit?
Hi, Serguei.
- What's going on?
- They're manic.
I just got here. It's crazy.
What set it off?
I don't know.
I got here, Julia was upset.
I think Majid got in
about six or seven in the morning.
Julia found stuff in his jacket.
Condoms or girls' phone numbers.
I don't know.
You know your brother.
Let's go get dad.
Come on, get up!
I've had enough!
Leave me alone!
What the hell is this?
Get out before I go crazy!
Get out! Your mama's calling!
Stop yelling.
Look at her!
And I'm crazy!
You're crazy, yes!
Majid, there's a baby in the house.
A little respect.
- You just wait!
- Who do you think I am?
Get out! You're a pain in the ass!
Majid!
Garbage!
What? What's going on?
When your sister's here!
Big man!
Go downstairs
or I swear I'm going to lose it.
Mom's waiting.
You'll see tonight!
What will I see?
Shut the fuck up!
He went downstairs. It's over.
Put this off a day.
It's hard. Sorry.
Come downstairs, Julia.
Go change. Do it for me.
The marital fights are later.
This is not the time.
Lilia wants to see you.
She asked for Hakim.
Everyone's there.
It's good vibes, good times.
- Yeah, good times.
- Easy.
Everyone's waiting for you.
We're all happy. Come downstairs.
Don't worry, it'll be all right.
Please. Get up and change.
We'll see about this later.
Come on, Julia. Please.
OK, Karima. But only for you.
Fine, no problem.
Cause it's hard.
- I'll get dressed.
- Go ahead.
Serguei, come have dinner.
I'll come down with her.
I'll just change the baby.
OK, see you there.
Hakim, let's go.
Let's go eat Grandma's couscous.
Let's go.
All right, what is this crap?
It's nothing.
We all know about your bullshit.
What bullshit?
I went out for a drink.
- And all those girls?
- What girls?
What is this shit?
We all fucking know!
- I'm talking here.
- You heard rumors?
You're too stupid to be discreet.
Get out. I didn't do anything.
I got in late one night.
Late one night?
Like I don't know
where you hang out?
- Get out.
- Like I don't know?
You got a kid. You're married. You forget?
Now stop acting like a kid.
And get it straight that you got a family.
- Hello Mrs. Jilali.
- Hi, kids.
Been to the market? Not too crowded? Not too bad.
And your health? How's your mom? Your dad? Just fine.
- Say hello to them for me?
- I will.
Bye now. Take care. You piss me off!
Want some onions? Mom, one more place. Serguei's coming.
Honey, give me the kids' plates. Serve the kids first.
You're looking peaked! Give me your plate.
You can bone the fish. Everybody got some?
Did everyone get sauce? And vegetables?
Enjoy your meal, everybody. It's prepared with love.
Love. The couscous of love. It's absolutely delicious.
The vegetables are just right. Souad, you're talented for couscous.
Julia! It's about time.
Sorry we're late. Sorry, Souad.
You go through midtown?
We've been waiting.
Hey, handsome. He's a little warm.
Yeah, his bottom's all red.
I can't settle him down.
I went through hell
when Thomas was a baby.
Want your mommy?
Azza honey, got everything?
Are they eating?
No worries.
Safia, listen to your auntie.
I thought it was Slimane.
Hi, everyone!
The most beautiful!
You OK?
It's a family day today.
Where is he?
Henri, the girls!
My fault. I had car trouble.
I needed his help.
Like I don't?
I completely forgot.
We'll talk later.
Where do I sit?
I'll get you a plate.
When you got nice cold ones,
you forget your woman.
And you turned your cell off.
Voice mail!
Now you're dead.
Souad, serve her. She's starving.
Just a little. I'm on a diet.
- Don't start with me today.
- I didn't say a word.
- Your couscous is great, Mom.
- Got that right.
- No peppers?
- I can't eat without that.
Go get them. They're in the pan.
Orange juice.
Here, Majid.
Majid's not talking.
Something wrong?
Yeah, today he's pretty silent.
All that partying last night.
See? He eats at Grandma's.
Here's Grandma's couscous.
All smiles, so happy.
See that?
Better than fish sticks.
Quit arguing.
Have some. Enough for everyone!
I don't want any.
I'll leave my share.
- Riadh special!
- Very nice!
Olfa, some bread!
- I love it.
- How do you do it?
I made the peppers
and helped with the couscous.
When she does something,
she says so. It's so rare!
She has helped her mom
all day long.
May I have some more grain?
With pleasure.
Weren't you on a diet?
Give her a break. Women and diets!
She said so.
Right away, "I'm on a diet."
Now she's changing.
Good. I'm getting fat,
but it's good.
No. When you start to eat,
you say Besmellah.
Gesmela!
Not a "G", a "B".
There. You got it.
Know any other Arabic words?
Barafemuk.
One of my first!
- That's all you taught him, Lilia?
- A few others.
We don't speak Arabic at home.
With your wife,
you must have learned some things.
Curse words!
You learned a few words.
You know, when...
- What?
- When we're alone.
Naturally.
When we make love.
Get out of here.
Don't believe him.
She often says...
Mezze, Mario...
- Often!
- It's not true.
- Don't believe it.
- He's shameless.
He's going wild.
But you do teach the kids?
- Not...
- Yes.
- More Thomas.
- The boys understand.
A little bit.
When does your mom speak Arabic?
When she's mad.
Then you understand, when she's mad?
What does she say? Remember?
She says lots of things.
Only when she's mad?
That true, Lilia?
They understand my mother.
- They're used to it.
- My aunts.
They're exposed to it.
Easier for them than for me.
When your mother was visiting...
they spoke Arabic all the time.
I couldn't stand it.
I kept saying, "What?"
Remember?
I didn't understand.
I had to constantly translate.
She made an effort.
She did, yes.
It's handy for secrets
with my friends.
So he doesn't understand.
Right. And I don't.
They're all there...
They're having tea.
It's true,
sometimes I feel uneasy.
It's like I get the feeling
they're talking about me, like...
they're making fun of me.
You never made the effort to learn.
I keep offering.
- True.
- You never did.
- I don't have the time.
- I taught you a few words.
What did you teach him?
"I love you," and "darling".
So?
Don't remember?
Close.
That it?
Listen to her say it.
He'll never get it right.
I'll get it.
Yeah, you can.
Maybe in 5 or 10 years...
- Can I have a plate for the kids?
- Of course.
One for the neighbor. I'll bring it.
Already did it.
I saw her before.
She says hi, asked for Dad.
There's a plate for your father.
Bring it later, boys.
I'll go with Riadh.
You two are going?
Least he's worth it. Not like some.
We miss him around here.
What do you want? That's life.
Love, love!
Love, huh?
That's not love.
Sure it is, Mom.
It's a gesture of love.
Then what is it?
- Love...
- It is love.
That's ichra.
It's stronger than love.
It's habit. It's all in there.
Love, friendship, everything.
Own your feelings.
You love him, that's all.
Souad, if I may,
from that plate,
I know there's still love.
There's a difference
between Dad's and the neighbor's.
- It was made with love.
- You can tell.
I make the couscous with love.
Love...
takes everyday maintenance.
It's getting along.
But... you have to earn it.
Dad's a good man.
He deserves better.
Isn't he? He worked 35 years
for his family.
- What else you want?
- It's not a mzia if it's a duty.
But he did his duty.
We never wanted for anything
when we were little.
He was always there.
Now I can get by on my own, but...
He was around!
Listen, all of you.
Either you quit messing around
or I get the laundry list out!
Every Sunday, laundry list.
Every Sunday,
she tells the same story.
Enough.
- Don't fight now.
- We're not.
I love Dad and Mom.
Majid,
get those peppers away from her.
A husband like that,
I would never let him go.
Take him!
Look, Mom's jealous.
You're jealous. You still love him!
How's the couscous?
Mom did good.
We sure loved it.
I had two plates full.
Yeah, it was good.
They're a fucking drag.
I don't know how you live in this dump.
How can you stay here?
Go back to the old country.
Majid's right, Dad.
You got nothing here.
It's all there.
- Sunshine, friends.
- And the house.
Yeah, Mom said she'd leave you the house.
Go whenever you want.
You just leave it for her when she comes.
Don't need it.
You'll feel good there now.
It'll be great.
You'll be super healthy, I know it.
You live in a dump.
Even Karima said you'd be better off there.
She'll bring the kids on vacation.
I'll bring Hakim.
We'll stay together.
Put in some time.
I'll think it over.
Yeah, think.
- Hey, Rym.
- Leave me some?
I did. Come in.
- I won't interrupt.
- Come in.
- No, I'm OK.
- Come in.
Not long.
How are you?
How you doing?
Sit down.
I could smell it downstairs.
How are you, Majid?
Good.
I saw your son, with your wife.
- He's bigger.
- Yeah.
How old is he?
- 10 months.
- He's beautiful.
- Thanks.
- Your wife looked a little tired.
- A little.
- She lost weight.
- Yeah, she did.
Worries, huh?
Delicious.
Haven't had couscous like this
in a while.
Sorry. When there's couscous
the world disappears for me!
Eat the fish.
Here, some peppers.
They're good.
Really nice.
Super good.
- Have some squash.
- Give me.
Not talking?
Lost your tongues?
Dad.
Think about what I said.
Nothing's keeping you here.
You should go back home.
You could start a business,
with the severance pay.
Severance talk
going around town already?
I swear I didn't say anything.
People talk.
People love to talk.
They say the yard's over.
That you got severance,
like severance payments?
Good?
Great. Never had one so good.
Tell your mother.
No problem.
I could eat this every day.
I've done that.
I could explode. I'll sleep good.
Your sons are really hard.
Especially Majid.
Why?
They want you to go back home.
What does that mean?
They want to get rid of you?
Are they messing with you?
Like you need them
to tell you what to do.
- Like it's for your own good.
- I let them talk.
Yeah, you do.
I noticed you let them talk.
I swear! No respect.
You're home. This is your room.
And we're your family.
You're like my father, I mean it.
What's that?
"Nothing's keeping you here."
The gall. Right in front of me.
People have no respect.
Who does he think he is?
Don't pay him any mind.
I can't accept that.
No way. What's France, a whore house?
Let him go back. Good riddance.
He thinks France is a whore house.
I'd have told him, but out of respect
for you and the couscous...
Only because he's your son.
He really got on my nerves. Really!
You like Riadh?
He's OK.
Gets on my nerves!
Don't mind what he says.
Why'd you say you'd think it over?
Because I don't mind what he says.
He thinks that means yes.
Let him talk.
Say nothing, let him talk.
You'll see what happens.
He gets confident,
talks about it again.
Don't let him, OK?
Make some more coffee.
Yeah, but just by letting him...
You have to talk.
You just sit there.
Bastard.
He gets me crazy.
- Why doesn't he sing?
- I don't know.
Sing.
Remember how he used to sing?
He almost never does now.
I don't know.
What's wrong with him?
Look, he's eating couscous.
I didn't leave you much.
People!
See how children are?
Acting big.
That's not right.
Such a traitor.
Funny seeing him here.
Most Sundays he's with his whores.
I know stuff about him
I don't tell you.
Lots of talk I heard.
He should go hide back home.
Don't be mad, it's nothing.
He's lost it.
Your son's got a problem.
It's nothing. Forget all that.
Says my hotel is a dump.
Like his face isn't?
Don't tell your mother.
If Mom heard that...
we'd be in deep shit.
Worked all her life to buy this.
She's a woman. Not a man.
All he knows how to do is talk.
Least we got a hotel.
You making the coffee?
There's the boat, my child.
Want to board?
Lots of work.
Come in.
Hello, Mr. Beji,
Miss...
Please sit down.
Well?
What brings you here?
I'm here to ask for a loan.
My father wants to open a restaurant
on a boat he's just acquired.
We prepared a dossier
to present our project.
Congratulations.
Let's have a look.
There are some mistakes.
I see that.
Is that all?
We only just started working.
You realize it's a little light.
Especially in view
of the sum you request.
We need it for the renovation.
That sum will only cover
the renovation costs?
No. It also covers equipment,

decor, tables, chairs. All that.
How about operating costs?
How will you cover that?
Have you thought about
start-up funds?
No, but we can work it out.
It's no problem.
My stepfather worked on the yard.
All his co-workers will pitch in.
And when it comes to personnel, we'll have free labor. It's all family. So we'll save a lot of money, right? Yes, but you must understand, I can't put that on paper. I have to satisfy my superiors. If I go in saying, "Mr. Beji and all his friends and family will do it all," it won't fly. I need a projected budget, with much more detail, with estimates from established and serious professionals. How did you come to these figures anyway? Did you do any market studies? No, we just got the application from the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Beji, if I recall correctly, you're now unemployed. You were laid off? Yes, but I got my severance pay. And I get unemployment. Right. You want to change careers. Very commendable. But let me ask you a few questions. Your chosen business, restaurants, is a very difficult one right now. First of all, where would it be located? Actually, we'd like it to be located on the Quai de la Rpublique, if possible. Have you asked for an authorization? It's pending. Sure there's a spot open? But the tuna boat guys told me there's a spot open. They said so. Perhaps, but you need the permission of local authorities.
There are many restaurants already.
Yes, but none
that makes fish couscous.
That's true.
So I want to try my luck.
It is an original idea.
Is that the only specialty?
For now, fish couscous
is the house exclusive.
But, of course, we'll make up
a full menu,
with various combinations.
And we'll rent it out
for parties, baptisms,
circumcisions, weddings.
And we had another idea.
During Ramadan, we'll turn it into
a warm meeting place
for our community to gather
share ideas, our culture,
and to eat. Because...
they don't have much
in this city. We've got ideas.
Of course, even people outside
our community are welcome.
I see. How old are you, Mr. Beji?
Sixty-one.
Look, this all seems a little fresh.
Though your project
doesn't seem uninteresting at all!
It just needs fleshing out.
So I suggest you come back to me
with a complete work-up.
With a detailed projected budget,
with professional estimates,
including operating expenses,
personnel you wish to hire,
a target number for meals served,
and how many meals per day
will put you in the black.
And have a CPA sign off on it.
And of course the additional
paperwork we spoke about.
The customs license,
the docking authorization,
and the collateral you can put up.
The collateral is the boat.
That's all.
That's it.
I'm afraid that won't be enough.
It's in bad shape.
I saw the photo.
How much is it worth?
Seriously. That's not enough.
Ten thousand.
Compared to the sum
you want to borrow, that's nothing.
It'll be worth much more,
once we renovate.
Perhaps, Miss.
Maybe I lack imagination
to speculate on such a project
but I can guarantee you,
with this plan,
Maybe!
Those folders are great.
We can print them.
- What is it?
- Hello.
Tell them OK. Forget the rest.
- Are you Mr. Dorner?
- Yes.
We have an appointment.
An appointment? With me?
Yes, they do.
OK, what about?
For an authorization.
An authorization? For what?
I have... a boat.
Let me explain. We want to open
a restaurant on a boat.
Turn a boat into a restaurant.
So we came to see you to obtain
the authorization.
- I heard about that. That the file?
- Yes, here.
And this boat-restaurant,
where is it now?
At the G-0 dock.
"The Source".
Got some work to do.
Where do you want to put it?
Quai de la République.
That's not easy.
Quai de la République.
Everyone wants to be there.
I don't know if there's room.
Did you inquire?
Yes. The tuna boat guys said
there was a spot.
Yes, there's a spot open.
Might be one for a tuna boat.
But a restaurant?
A couscous place at that.
Not easy.
Might be a spot,
but you have to ask
the port authority.
The tuna boatmen don't decide.
We'll verify that.
And the customs license?
We see them next week.
- I need that license.
- We'll bring it.
And you're getting a bank loan?
Did you get it yet, or not?
The bank is waiting for the city
to grant authorization.
They want the city's opinion?
Right.
The city wants financing
before granting authorization.
Look, we at the city
will study the feasibility,
to see if it's viable.
If it is, we'll transfer it
over to the police authority.
But right now
I can't tell you anything more.
Check back with my secretary.
Get what's missing to her.
Sorry I didn't have more time,
but I'm running late today.
- Have a nice day.
- See you soon.
Make sure they get everything
I requested.
From the bank. They'll be back.
A letter stating they've applied.
Without the loan,
where are they going with this?
What's keeping you?
I'm done.
I don't have much time for lunch.
I've got yoga today.
- Ever run a restaurant?
- No, ma'am.
And your kitchens
are up to safety standards?
French law is very strict
about that.
We're renovating.
Renovating or not, I'm warning you:
To be licensed,
and to keep that license,
you need
the Health Dept. Certificate.
That's how it works in France.
You're going into a business
with very strict rules on hygiene.
In France anyway.
Anything concerning
a new restaurant opening,
the kitchens must be up to code.
We... I can give you the license
in one day.
I can deliver it to you right now.
But if you have an inspection,
and if the inspector judges
that your kitchen's not up to code,
you can get permanently shut down.
And my hands will be tied.
You understand what I'm saying?
So, you have to go back
to the bank and explain
what I just told you,
that you came to see us,
and since you're
putting up the boat,
I don't see why
they wouldn't finance your plan.
Especially since you have property.
In any case, as for us,
it's French law
and there are no exceptions.
That's it. Do you understand?

Hey, Riadh.
Hey, how are you?

Good.
- Making progress.
- Little at a time.
- Not too rough?
- It's all right.

Come and eat.

Yeah, thanks.

How are you, Slimane?
Kitchen's looking mean. Real nice.
You like the blue?
Gorgeous.
Really nice.
- Not too tired?
- I'm all right.

The paint works wonders.
Looks great.

Come sit down and eat, two minutes.
Oh, I saw Rabah, the grocer.
He said if you want to shop
on his card, it's tomorrow.
- Riadh!
- I told him.

Call him.

No, let it go. I called him.
- Riadh!
- Coming!

Come and eat.
I bet you didn't eat at all.
That's no good.
Cigarette, coffee...
You work hard. You have to eat.
- You like it?
Gorgeous. Totally.
Really?
It's clean now.
There's a little tidying up to do.
But that'll go quick.
I'll sleep here tonight.
Mom won't like that.
- She gave me lip.
- I know.
You don't care. You're above that.
Don't mess everything up, OK?
Tell her.
- I got a head full of worries.
- I know.
I'm not sure I can get
the authorization, the loan and all.
I keep explaining.
Yeah, I know.
Your mother's got to understand.
She does. She's pretending.
Look, you got all this work to do.
Don't get caught up
in all this stuff. Who cares?
So you'll come home after, OK?
- We'll see.
- Stop.
Do it for me. Who cares about her?
We don't care.
What good is it?
I get back, she looks at me crooked.
We'll look crooked
right back at her.
Come on.
Please come home tonight.
- We'll see.
- Please.
That sandwich any good?
Oh yeah, it's good.
You made it?
Then it's good.
Thanks.
You OK, Dad?
Fine.
- Finished up there?
- Yeah, almost.
Then you come down.
We'll finish the kitchen tonight.
Yeah, it'll be quick.
Don't forget to close everything up.
If no one's watching,
turn the TV off!
What's with her?
She's pitching another fit.
A fit?
Pitching a fit?
You're not in her shoes.
She's got reasons.
You know,
since this restaurant thing...
What restaurant?
You know Slimane's opening
a restaurant on a boat?
That's why she's like that.
He bought a boat?
What do you mean, bought?
He picked up a wreck
ready to be junked.
That boat, still in the same place.
- Falling apart.
- Right.
At the end of the dock?
That's the one. That's right.
Make a restaurant out of that boat?
What's he got, a screw loose?
Seriously.
A couscous place, he said.
Couscous on a boat?
It's an old idea of his.
He's right. Life is tough.
It's a good idea.
Hang on, hang on.
Fixing up that boat takes dough.
That's not easy.
You need a lot. It's not free.
He got something on his layoff.
Not much.
His age, he wants
to take a shot at a restaurant?
Hostesses, kitchens, hours...
Not easy.
It's complicated.
Yeah, but he does have
his two kids.
Those two!
- They're lazy!
- We know them.
Counting on them...
Of course he's counting on them.
And what's more,
his ex-wife is doing the cooking.
I get it now. Souad!
That's why Latifa is...
Now you see?
I've seen them.
They had an all-out.
She broke the place up.
All over the place.
He was going to leave.
The girl stopped him.
Yeah, for her it's a humiliation.
He betrayed her.
He humiliated her.
Right.
Just imagine.
Because when he lost his job,
she thought,
maybe with the severance he gets,
he could help her
fix up the hotel and all.
No. Now she sees him,
he wants to open a restaurant on a boat,
put his kids to work.
It's a revolution.
Wait.
With his ex-wife's couscous!
Imagine the situation.
She's like a crazy person.
She's like crazy.
But you got to understand him.
You know Slimane and his pride.
He doesn't want to be a kept man,
or look like a pimp.
See what I mean?
This situation is very serious.
It's no good for one,
no good for the other.
It's a really weird situation.
It's not easy.
Just between us...
You know one time
I tasted Latifa's couscous.
It was inedible. Terrible.
We ate it anyway, out of friendship.
But I mean it was awful.
Totally tasteless.
But Latifa's nice. I like her.
She's nice
but she can't make couscous.
She's very nice.
Did his wife say yes?
She's no picnic either.
Yeah, but how he put it to her.
For the good of the kids...
Yeah, because he's got no money,
no authorization.
In the bargain!
Tough. Starting with nothing.
That's tough.
He's putting together
like a party, to raise money.
He invited some big shots.
Like a test.
To show he can do it. See?
When's his party going to be?
That I don't know.
The girl must know.
I'll ask.
Rym?
- Come here a second.
- Coming.
What is it?
Tell me, have you seen Slimane around?
You know when his restaurant party
is going to be?
When he's done renovating.
It's tough. Only Riadh's helping.
He's no pro. Slimane has to be there, 
tell him what to do.
Right.
Tell him we'll help. He's a friend. 
Tell him we're here.
He didn't dare.
- No, really.
- I'll tell him.
We'll all help.
What is this test evening?
No, he means the big party.
It's not a test.
They turned him down.
The bank, the customs, 
the money, the authorization.
So he decided to give
this big, big dinner party.
And invite all the inside people, 
the big shots.
He'll present his project right, 
show them it's a good idea.
So they'll invest.
- See?
- That's good.
Good idea.
He can't give up.
Got to go for it.
It's like us, 
when we audition for gigs?
Right, sort of.
I get it.
Does he want musicians 
for his audition?
He didn't say. I could ask him.
I think he wants pros.
You are professionals.
We are professionals.
Why go looking? Here we are.
- Why go elsewhere?
- Don't be hurt.
Hey listen,
if he wants this party, 
how about doing it free?
Why not?
All you talk is money.
Hey, he's a friend.
Forget money. What's that?
I'm just asking.
Money. When he gets some
he'll pay you. Now he's got nothing.
- Debts up to here.
- Can't talk to you.
We're just talking here.
Quiet down.
Who doesn't have money?
If he's got money, great.
Otherwise, we'll eat a good couscous
and that's that.
I'll shake on that. You said it.
I respect you. Really.
- The city liked his project.
- How do you know?
- Good news.
- My cousin works sanitation.
I hope it's true.
For those people,
as long as it isn't a mosque,
the plan will go through.
You say a prayer.
Julia, come with me.
The vegetables in these 4 things.
- There?
- Yeah.
Want to teach me to make fish?
I don't know.
I never made it for 100 people.
Well, at my sister's wedding.
- About 30?
- I don't know.
Three.
Four.
Five.
Souad, the carrots are done.
Still got the potatoes.
You sure about this?
You made too much.
It's too much.
There's 100 people or more.
I think it's too much.
It's 35 pounds.
That's 12 oz. A head.
- It's a waste.
- No.
For a wedding,
it's 100, even 200 pounds.
For a wedding.
There will be leftovers.
There will be leftovers.
If there's any left,
there's always the poor.
Always got charity.
That's good.
God knows how many poor there are!
That'll keep the ain away
from your family.
Stop talking curses.
It's true.
- What do you mean?
- The ain exists.
You keep talking about it.
A car that breaks down,
it's the evil eye.
A door slams - the evil eye.
And that's not all.
Always happens at the wrong time.
Majid!
Majid's not here.
It's not Karima.
It's not Olfa.
It's not logical.
It must be the evil eye.
That's just life.
Lots of illogical stuff happens.
At the wrong time.
Right.
It's superstition.
Who's calling?
Soussou?
Soraya.
Want to leave a message?
Souad, the evil eye exists, right?
I don't know. All I know is,
a little charity is good.
I'll tell him.
You're both superstitious.
It's not superstition.
This is different.
You're confused.
What do you call it?
The ain, whatever.
Not superstition.
Who was that?
It is superstition.
A wrong number.
Wrong number?
I'm sick of that phone.
Always ringing.
It's the ain.
Even a phone call is the ain.
See what I mean?
If that's not superstition, what is it?
Finish the fish.
That's all.
Let's get the fish done.
Hurry up, night has fallen.
- Got to finish.
- Almost done.
- You're done?
- Almost.
- I'm done. Got the eyes out.
- Come on, quick!
- Saha, that suit!
- Thanks.
Glad you're here.
- What?
- Come here.
- What is it?
- I'm having trouble.
The bow tie.
Don't strangle me.
Don't be a child.
Stop moving.
There you go.
You look good!
You like it?
Yeah, it's class. No kidding around.

What else?

What about you? Go get dressed!
I'm not going.

What do you mean?
She's not going.
If she's not, I can't.

Hurts deep.

I understand.

You can't go if she doesn't.

And Slimane? Thought about him?
I know, but what can you do?

You know why he's doing all this?
It's for you, for his children.

It's not for himself.

He couldn't care less.

All that's behind us now.

We're old now.

We try to hang on,
bust it a little more.

For you.

If it was only about us,
a few olives and a hunk of bread
would be plenty.

But when we see you,

happy and all,

that's fantastic for us.

We live again. You see?

Solitude, exile, humiliation...

All that's behind us.

We think at least we didn't,

we aren't just...

We didn't immigrate for nothing.

See my point?

What can you say?

You know...

Slimane sees no difference

between you and his daughters.

He doesn't, but do they?

They what?

They see a difference.

That's what you say.

They do. I know what I'm saying.

- What did they do?
- Nothing.
They never did anything to me!
Some things don't lie.
Sometimes it's in your head.
Slimane will be disappointed.
What can you do?
Try to convince her. I know you.
She's hard-headed.
It's rough.
- It'll be rough.
- Try.
Try to find the words.
That's all I'm asking.
Let's go. Pass me my cigarettes.
Kader's here.
How are you, handsome?
Looking good.
- Getting married?
- See that?
Quit it. Don't start.
Look at him, a real gentleman.
I'm always a gentleman.
What do you think?
Why don't they open?
We are not going
to keep waiting like this...
Lots of people!
Thank you for the invitation.
- How are you?
- Fine, and you?
- Very nice place.
- Thank you.
Good luck.
How are you, Olfa? It's nice.
It's my father mostly. Like it?
- Lovely.
- Very nicely done.
It's super. With those palms. Great.
Azza!
- Azza!
- Coming.
The children's plate.
- Mind the bones for them.
- I know.
- That's the poor man's plate.
- Whose?
- A poor man. Go out and find someone.
- No, it takes too long.
- All the way into town.
- Find someone outside.
No, I'm not going.
You go.
All right, I know you.
- Took the garbage out?
- Yes.
Get out of here. I'll manage.
Go ahead, sit down.
You go over there.
Nadia, serve there.
I'm here?
Some people haven't been served yet.
My daughter.
Oh, she's your daughter.
Nice to meet you.
- Welcome.
- Thank you.
Should I seat them?
- Have a nice evening.
- Thank you, see you later.
I put you at that table
in the back.
Olfa!
Go get the couscous.
Majid!
Mom!
What is it? What are you doing?
What's the matter, Mom?
Come on, let's go.
Please.
Me, go there? That'll be the day.
Come on. Why do you do this?
There's lots of people there.
Come on, please.
What is it?
What is it?
Tell me.
What is it? He had to put it there?
Couldn't find another dock?
He wanted Quai de la Rpublique.
Think he wanted this crappy place?
That's all they'd give him.
It's just one evening.
Then he's going.
You think it was to upset you?
It was just chance.
To humiliate me.
Humiliate you? He wouldn't.
Stop thinking everyone's
against you, that they wish you ill.
People don't just think about you.
You're a joke. Fuck, I swear.
We'll go bad if you keep this up.
Disgusting.
People will say you got dumped.
Fingers will point at us again.
When I think about that Souad.
She's so annoying.
She'll get ideas again.
I heard the girls already.
They said stuff.
It's just gossip.
That's why we should go.
Or they'll get in Slimane's head.
They'll say,
"Dad, only your children are here."
She's nothing.
She's never there for you.
Always moping, acting important.
She's never happy.
You'll see.
Let them talk. Who cares?
Right, cause Slimane doesn't care.
Wait till he starts wondering.
How will that feel? Weird?
I don't care.
How can you let them?
Why do you let them talk?
If I were you, frankly...
Not just cause you're my mother,
you're gorgeous.
Young, pretty. You got it all.
In your place, to get them jealous,
I'd put a mean dress on,
some make-up,
I'll brush out your hair.
Put on some jewelry.
You go there,
look them in the eye.
You walk in there,
and you act like a star.
Like a hypocrite.
You know how they act.
Asking how you are, all that.
Do the same.
You don't care about anyone.
At least you'll screw them.
- Just do that.
- No.
Do it for real. Why not?
You're not a woman?
Fuck them.
Just to get on their nerves.
Show who you are.
You're gorgeous, compared to them.
No comparison. Night and day.
Did you see her face?
All fat, doesn't know how to dress.
She's disgusting.
She wears flea market stuff.
She disgusts me, really.
She's so ugly, with that hair.
You got nice hair.
All she can do is criticize people.
She wags her tongue
and she can cook. That's it.
I'd rather be the gorgeous one
than know how to cook. I mean it.
Am I right?
Everybody's expecting you.
I saw Hamid, Kader.
They all asked for you.
And Slimane!
That really pains me.
He'll be crushed.
- You go.
- Crushed.
His kids will be happy as shit!  
He'll be crushed.  
You go, you earned it.  
I won't go if you don't.  
You invested in it.  
No. I invested with the heart.  
I don't give a fuck about parties.  
You don't go, I don't go.  
You'll represent me. It's fine.  
- I won't.  
- It's the same thing.  
No, it doesn't work like that.  
The most important day of his life,  
you drop him like a dog.  
What are you, ashamed of something?  
He doesn't care.  
He does so. He asked me before,  
if you were coming.  
He did not.  
I swear. He said, "Is she coming?"  
I said, don't worry,  
I'll try to convince her.  
I shouldn't even tell you that.  
You disgust me.  
Damn it!  
There's lots of people.  
Shit.  
We never go out.  
I'm sick of being all cooped up.  
You go.  
Go, you're not even dressed.  
I go, then you say I ditched you.  
I know you.  
Come on, Rym.  
Enough.  
It's no big deal.  
It's nothing. You go.  
Me or you is the same.  
So just go.  
You'll have fun, get off my case.  
You're so selfish.  
It's disgusting.  
All you think of is yourself,  
and your shitty hotel.
What would it cost you?
Will you die if you go?
Explain it to me. What?
It's not for me to go, that's all.
Disgusting.
That woman...
With all those people there.
Everybody served?
You all right, Dad?
- What's in this?
- Tuna.
Tuna.
Those are Fatma's fingers.
Fatma's fingers.
- Not bad.
- Yeah, it's good.
Like egg rolls.
Hey, Mom.
- Going OK?
- Yes.
How's the couscous?
The sauce, vegetables, fish,
and the grain.
It's really good.
If this fish couscous catches on...
We've got worries.
Unfortunately, we'll find out,
in our restaurant business,
we'll have less clientele.
People will come here.
And I heard their pricing
will be very, let's say, reasonable.
We wouldn't be able
to do that sort of thing.
Follow his lead.
Stop, he's not from here.
I won't follow
a guy who's not from around here.
- Got it?
- Yeah.
It's heavy.
Riadh!
Come help us unload!
We're late.
Well, let's have a toast.
Mr. Beji!
- He's the owner?
- Right.
Do you know Mr. Dorner?
Yes, we met at City Hall.
A little hurriedly.
Right.
Congratulations. It's lovely.
Mr. Dorner is deputy mayor.
Future mayor!
No, deputy is hard enough.
A stepping stone!
I know what I'm saying.
Say you don't want to.
It would be good.
Municipal advisor, cultural affairs,
owner of our largest vineyard.
Which you manage admirably.
Honorary member
of the "Give A Net" Foundation,
which is managed, just as admirably,
by Madeleine Dorner.
Flattery!
Whatever it takes.
Get a grip.
You're melting on the ground.
Speaking of humanitarians,
Mr. Beji here
is a fine example of merit
and perseverance.
A fine human adventure.
Exactly. A fine human adventure,
I must say.
When you came that first day,
with your daughter,
or your friend's daughter,
you had your plan in your head.
You knew what you wanted.
But you had nothing
to invest in it.
A very thin application.
Personally,
I would not have bet on it.
But when I see the result,
all the effort you put into it,
I am bowled over!
Congratulations.
To your success!
Inch 'Allah, as they say.
That how you say it?
Very hip, Madeleine!
How's my accent?
To your success!
I'm fucked.
Seen Julia?
No.
- You seen her or not?
- I said no.
Anybody asks, say I left.
A friend got a flat on the highway.
What?
A friend is in trouble.
I'll be back
in an hour or two, or three.
Give them the message?
What a mess.
Those shoes in the stairway!
Hurting?
Got it, Olfa?
- Look at those vegetables.
- And I'm hungry.
- I tasted it, it's good.
- Waiting tables makes me hungry.
Smell it.
She always cooked for us.
Now it's for them.
We'll eat later.
I'm jealous.
Look at that.
I don't want to give them any.
- They don't deserve it.
- That's good mullet.
She said to broil it one more time.
She only pre-cooked it.
So it wouldn't be crumbly.
I see.
Wait for the last minute.
She said at the very last minute.
OK. I'll heat the sauce meanwhile.
Olfa, help me.
This will break my back.
Careful.
One, two, up.
Up!
- You're crazy!
- We spilled it!
- My shoes!
- I better clean it or it will stain.
My God.
And we're in a rush.
That's all we needed.
I'm laughing my head off.
First second with the sauce!
Try to keep
the same height as me.
- Wait, let me help.
- Naturally, if your side's higher...
We better clean up.
No big deal. It's nothing.
Over there.
That's good.
We put it in the platters?
What a mess.
- Should we...?
- Get the plates out.
I'll put this underneath.
We'll put it in the fridge.
Let me wipe the table.
Don't lean over too much.
Or else we'll get absorbed
by your breasts, too!
Did you see when you were serving?
They were hungry!
One calls me "darling" now!
- Really?
- Serious?
- Yeah, he got brave.
- For real?
For real! He was asking questions
about Lilia's breasts.
- He asked if they were real.
He did?
Yeah! I was dying.
His wife was right there.
He was asking me, I swear.
You said they were.
I said maybe you're used to silicone,
but those are real!
- Totally natural!
- Right. That's how we are.
I'm telling you. Starting right in!
Unbelievable.
And the grain? Do we heat it?
Mom heated it enough.
With the sauce, it'll be fine.
What do we put out? The couscous!
Where's the couscous?
Look under the table.
Riadh brought it down.
Look underneath.
- Who got it?
- Riadh.
These plates don't match.
Did you put it in the fridge?
No, can't be.
I mean it's grain.
Although, with them...
Look below.
Can't have put it there.
Do we mix it?
And we'll put sauce on each table.
Riadh!
Riadh, come down!
Come down, please.
Thinks he's here for the music.
- Where's the couscous pot?
- The couscous pot?
- Over there.
- Get it, we're serving!
Find it, hurry up!
That's not it?
That's not couscous. Where is it?
- What's that?
- The sauce!
- I brought everything down.
- Apparently not! I looked.
  That's the vegetables!
- Underneath?
- Vegetables!
I got it all.
Riadh, you're in the way.
- I brought it all down!
- I got sauce, vegetables.
- What's missing?
- I got it all.
You must've left it up there.
You left the couscous pot.
Go get it, hurry up.
Come on, we're ready here.
I put it all here, Karima.
Then show me.
Go ahead, I'm waiting.
I don't know.
Go get it. There are people waiting.
Go get it.
Maybe you left it in the car.
- People are waiting.
- It's not here?
No! Stop looking for nothing.
- Want me to get angry?
- Move over!
It's not here!
Move it! You want me to yell?
You OK, girls?
- Fine.
- Let's go.
I'm waiting for the grain.
It's not here.
I brought it all down.
That can't be.
- What's going on?
- I don't know.
I told him to look in the car,
he just stands there.
Did you get it from Mom's?
Yes, I'm sure of that.
I put it in the back of the trunk.
The vegetables and sauce in front,
and the mullet on the back seat.
I'm positive.
So go get it. Come on.
I'm talking to you.
Wake up!
The car's not here.
Where's the car?
- Majid left.
- Where'd he go?
- On the highway.
- What highway?
What highway?
He went to help a friend.
- What friend?
- He broke down.
He told you that?
I can't believe this.
What's going on?
He drove off with the grain.
Shit.
Call him, quick.
He left the grain in the car.
He went to help a friend
who broke down on the highway.
What did he say exactly, Riadh?
No signal. Be right back.
He went to get his friend
who had a flat.
What is this? Not again.
Did you believe him?
I don't know.
How many times
has he used that story?
Unbelievable. Where did Majid go?
To help a friend who got a flat.
But the grain is in the car!
I don't know.
Did he leave alone? Did you see?
Where the fuck is he?
What is it with him?
He's a fucking moron!
You sure? You sure that grain
was loaded in the car?
I trust Olfa. She said she got it
from Mom's. Has to be true.
My mother wouldn't let them forget.
Well?
- Voice mail.
- There. See?
I knew it was bullshit.
I left a message.
He must have shut it off.
I kept calling, same thing.
Now what do we do?
- Sure you got the grain?
- Positive.
I saw the couscous pot in the trunk.
I know I did.
A couscous pot is enormous.
It's pretty obvious.
You didn't see it?
You couldn't miss it.
Why did Majid go?
Where was he going?
How long to make another grain?
An hour, easy.
An hour? That's optimistic.
There's 100 people.
A little longer.
- Much longer.
- Longer.
He'll be back.
He has to come back.
He'll see the grain is in the trunk.
Call your mother, tell her to make more.
I'm on my way.
Are you serious? Make another one?
She'll scream. She'll go wild!
What can I do?
You have another idea?
All we needed!
And call that idiot.
That idiot Majid!
No use. He turned it off.
Doesn't even ring. Voice mail.
Olfa, call your mother.
Your father's telling you.
Here comes the couscous!
All those people waiting.
Now my mother's going to yell.
They're going to fight.
She'll blame him, he'll blame her.
It's the ain.
Get out of here.
Turn the stove off. It's no use.
What now?
Serve drinks.
I saw liquor there.
Let's serve drinks.
Only way.
What choice do we have?
You know, alcohol is nourishing.
Especially for the French.
Give them drinks,
they forget their wives. I know.
- It's in the car?
- We'll do it quick.
- Have you called him?
- Voice mail.
What a fucking idiot!
Hello, Latifa.
How are you?
Thanks.
Karima, we've got people here.
- Change these glasses?
- No problem.
- Welcome.
- Thanks.
You both look gorgeous.
My father will be happy.
That's nice.
- How are you?
- Fine, and you?
Good. Pretty good right now.
We're a little... It's crowded,
but we can handle it.
It's beautiful.
- You like it?
- Great.
That's Slimane.
Where is he?
He had to go run an errand.
Won't be long. We're waiting.
Not long.
Where's your mom?
My mother's not coming.
She's discreet.
She doesn't like big crowds.
Too bad.
Must be tired.
Right. I mean, she did it all, from start to finish.
Now it's our turn. It's up to us.
Want help?
If I need you, I'll let you know.
You're part of our party, so let's find you a spot.
Riadh, want to seat them?
I got stuff to take care of.
See you later.
Bitches, I can't stand them.
You see her strut? She thinks she's the bride.
Really.
Lilia, I swear...
It's nothing.
Who's that?
Your dad's friend and his daughter.
That's the daughter?
Like his daughter.
That's insulting to Mom.
Olfa, please.
They're embarrassing us.
Want to go against your father?
That's all!
- They're here, it's done.
- Keep serving.
Olfa, what you're doing isn't good at all.
Think of your father.
Don't give them the satisfaction.
Take a bottle and serve.
And smile.
Smile, Olfa.
Hi, some date liqueur?
- The grain's in the trunk.
- What?
He left with the grain.
Shit.
You know where he is?
My father went looking for him.
Shit.
They said it's ready.
They're heating it up now, ma'am.
They want fig liqueur.
Beji comes to see me.
For one night.
We're not animals.
Give him a shot.
He won't leave.
Put a wolf in the henhouse, he stays.
I completely agree. Completely.
It's not something that can last.
It can't hold.
This structure can't hold up.
Let's be honest.
If in 3 months it doesn't work, it's his problem.
He needs a permanent spot.
We can't give him permanent.
Only temporary spots.
Authorizations for one to three days.
You know those guys like I do.
If he gets the permits he needs in 3 days,
we'll find him a place near the station, no problem.
Less heat on it.
We can put him there easy.
Preference always goes to any commercial boat.
You know that very well.
In four days, the Belem puts in.
The Belem is docking in this spot.
That boat in, they clear out.
Nothing to be done.
Everything all right?
- Is my wife here?
- No.
What is it?
What?
Did something happen to Souad?
Something happen to my wife?
Talk!
Talk!
Julia called me this morning
at the yard.
She said, "Come quick."
I find her like this.
Today, she was at your wife's house,
helping with the couscous.
Again, some tramp calls Majid
to make a date.
- Which means...
- Julia picked up the phone.
Majid gets calls at his family's house.
Calls from his mistresses,
he takes them at Souad's.
She's encouraging him to do this,
protecting him.
She takes their numbers.
She knows her!
His sisters know. Riadh, too.
You, too! Everyone!
What am I?
Is that a family man?
Never there for his kid.
Constant yelling and problems.
She knows it!
Your Souad downstairs knows.
And she acts like it's nothing.
I'm the one
who has to swallow my pride.
Now you've trampled me.
What am I?
I'm a piece of shit.
Souad... I'm not surprised.
I don't know what she has against me.
I'm not surprised.
But your daughter.
Karima comes here...
They don't respect Julia.
Hang on, calm things down,
instead of inflaming.
I'm not inflaming.
All day long,
I clean house,
waiting for my husband like an idiot!
She's always like this.
He tells me
he's got to work late.
Even she... she threw him out...
She said he...
At six in the morning, as usual!
Know what time he gets home?
When I'm asleep!
You're not breathing.
Calm down.
The kid.
I have to shut up,
go down and say,
"Yeah, I'm fine."
Souad talks to the neighbor,
with her big mouth.
She says it's me.
That I make no effort, never go out.
Like I'm the problem?
It's never him.
Never!
You never look at yourselves?
Easy. The kid's here. Easy.
The kid's used to it!
It's not me. I'm a human being.
- I can't take it!
- We'll leave, that's all.
How many Sundays downstairs going,
"And how are you?"
"Yeah, I'm fine."
It's not fine!
I can't be like you.
- I'm not a hypocrite.
- He's a momma's boy.
You know Majid. You know how he is.
You know what your son is like?
He's not a man.
He's a madman.
He's not a father to his child.
He never sees him.
My child never sees his father.
When he sees his kid, he's drunk!
And he's not a husband.
And not a friend either.
He's a stranger when he comes here.
And I have to shut up
because he pays the bills.
The so-called man of the house.
He's got the money.
I'm not a whore.
I am not a whore, see?
I have a kid to raise.
I have a home.
I need love, I need respect.
That's not family.
What is that?
He's a father, he's never there.
That whore who called
is across the way!
He's all over town.
She sees me. She must laugh
when she sees me suffer.
Alone, in front of the TV.
Like a poor wretch. Like I'm useless.
You're downstairs.
And there's talk, talk.
You don't like us.
You wouldn't do this if you...
If Souad had any self-respect...
Calm down, Julia.
How can I calm down? How?
With this stuff?
Is that right?
That my husband's mistress
knows my sister-in-law,
and my other sister-in-law?
And my mother-in-law? Calls her up?
She calls her house!
She takes messages,
helps him cheat!
Every time he does it,
working late, home at 6,
he's with that whore!
I see her at her window!
I won't calm down. I can't.
Of course I'm yelling!
What the fuck else?
It's been eating at me!
But that's it. Now it's...
You know. This couscous,
your project,
I thought it would help a little,
I thought I was part of the family.
I really thought so,
but I was wrong.
All that for your party, and now look.
I was with you.
But now, forget it.
I'm out of the family.
Look at the kid, might be your last.
You'll see.
Look at him.
You'll see.
Breathe.
It's not a life for a kid.
I don't drink turpentine.
I only drink champagne.
It's coming, don't worry.
I can't resist a little champagne.
Didn't drink the boura?
"Slight delay"!
We've been waiting all this time.
- So long.
- Your business is starting badly.
Be right back.
Stop smoking! For your health!
Stop!
Run! Come catch us!
Come on, run!
Look, he's running.
He looks like a marionette.
He's going 2 MPH.
Get some Gatorade!
You hit the accelerator.
You're gonna kill him.
Children!
That's enough now!
- I'm not in your shoes.
- I understand, and I'm sorry.
I've come once, but I won't be back.
I guarantee it.
I'll never eat couscous again, ever!
Don't say that.
Give me some explanation.
I told you. The fish came late.
The trawlers came back late.
- Where'd it come from?
- From the boats. It's fresh.
- The boat was late.
- That's not right.
You should have changed the time.
Why not invite us an hour later?
We just found out!
I was told 9, I get here at 9.
And I'm waiting.
I know, I'm sorry.
Easy to be sorry.
It's going to get sticky.
On opening night, making us wait
two hours for a fish couscous.
She knows what's going on
back there.
- It's too long.
- Really too long.
Bad weather.
Intimate ambiance.
Good evening.
What a surprise.
Where were you?
I've been looking all over.
I changed places.
What have you brought me?
Couscous.
Haven't had any in a long time.
- It looks delicious.
- Eat while it's hot.
Thank you.
For my father
For Mustafa Adouani
For Francis Arnaud