

# Shades

Genevieve Patel

Milly Foley Gemma Stones

Athira Menon Ananya Seth

Krrisha Chhillar

Judy Zhang

Chloe Lim Nuel Intan

# of Summer

# **SHADES OF SUMMER**

## **Copyright**

Published by UWU FURRIES, **Box Hill High School** 1180 Whitehorse Rd, Box Hill VIC 3128  
Genevieve Patel, Athira Menon, Milly Foley, Gemma Stones, Ananya Seth, Krrisha Chhillar, Judy Zhang, Nuel Intan, Chloe Lim

Copyright © **2023** Box Hill High School

All rights reserved. This book is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. Enquires should be made to the publisher.

Age recommendation: 12-16 years old

**A zookeeper, a film maker, a cow, a failed test, and a film. Will it end in love or heartbreak?**

**STATE: VIC**

**DIVISION: MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**SCHOOL: BOX HILL HIGH**

**TEAM NAME: UWU FURRIES**

**TEAM ID: 896**

**PRIMARY CHARACTER 1: ZOOKEEPER**

**PRIMARY CHARACTER 2: FILM MAKER**

**NON-HUMAN CHARACTER: COW**

**SETTING: BARBEQUE**

**ISSUE: FAILED TEST**

**RANDOM WORDS:**

**RUBY, MELTS, SHIVER, TASTY, SPONGE**

# 1



The midday sun is ceaseless, and it sends the flies feral. Sweat-slick smiles and giddy laughter reverberate off the walls and out to the patio. Smoke from the barbecue chokes the air, amplifying the already stifling heat.

Jorge stays inside the relative cool of the house and watches the party unfold through the glass patio doors. He holds his camera in one hand - like it's going to shield him from social interaction - and an unwanted drink in the other.

Brushing hair out of his eyes, Jorge sighs. He should be working on the documentary that would dictate his entire future. Masters has been hellbent on him coming a town over to work on it, but living in some town full of people far too happy for their own good, is hardly what Jorge would call ideal. The only thing of note is the tourist getaway, The Midnights Hotel.

*What am I doing here?*

Out on the patio, there's a whole gaggle of people around the birthday girl, Valerie, (Jorge has to admit, when he received her invitation, he'd wasted a whole day being surprised she remembered him at all. They'd hardly been close). Cheers erupt from the crowd as the cake is brought out. It's a pretty thing - iced tiers of Victoria **sponge** decorated with bright wildflowers and strawberries. The cake's far too extravagant for a small barbecue birthday. The icing is going to start melting any second now.

The icing doesn't get time to melt.

The very second the cake lands on the table, a loud sound rips through the forced pleasantries – a sound akin to wood splintering. From the near distance comes the sound of a disgruntled farm animal, hooves thrumming on packed dirt and clay. Jorge watches with polite bemusement as what appears to be a cow with anger issues ploughs straight into the birthday cake.

The guests cry out in shock; people scatter and start running in every direction, pushing others aside in their desire for survival. Strawberries and sponge cake chunks fly like bullets through the air. Very slowly, pinching himself with one hand to make sure this isn't a dream, Jorge gets his camera ready and begins to film. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity - he steps outside onto the veranda so he can view the chaos firsthand.

Most of the guests have retreated from the danger, in a show of incredible bravery. That's why the one making his way towards the cow stands out so much.

He's tall (*taller than me*, Jorge's thoughts supply helpfully), long dark hair falling out of its ponytail, gaze focused. The man begins to mutter quietly to the cow, who slows the flicking of her tail and seems to calm down. She snorts into the man's hand. He smiles and scratches her head, cooing gentle words at her.

It's a peaceful scene. The rest of the birthday cake wobbles beside them, surprisingly put-together for a victim of a hit-and-run.

“PEACHES! PEACHES, YOU IDIOT, WHAT'VE YOU DONE THIS TIME?!” an exhausted voice yells. It sounds as if whoever it is has given up on life; apparently this cow, Peaches, has had a long history of chaos. At the thought, Jorge cracks a ghost of a smile.

The dark-haired man is trying to disengage himself from the cow's tongue, which is now happily occupied in licking his face. “She's alright,” he says fondly. “Just got a bit spooked by the noise, I think.”

The owner of Peaches rushes up, hair stuck to her face. “Thank you so much-”

Calmly, inevitably, as if the scene were in slow motion, the cake topples over.

Right onto the cow-whisperer himself.

There is a moment of silence, as the woman looks at the man covered in Victoria sponge, who looks at the cow, who starts eating the cake.

Jorge bursts out laughing.

Startled, the man jumps and whips his head around, tiny particles of cake flying off him. Jorge can't stop laughing, a deep belly laugh, something he hasn't done in a long time.

It feels good.

The man blinks once, twice, then starts laughing too. The woman shakes her head and throws a rope over Peaches, leading her away. When the cow-whisperer makes his way over, Jorge stops recording. Bubbles of stray laughter die away on his lips. The threat of social interaction hovers over his head like a rain cloud.

The man seems to notice. With a wink, he plucks a piece of cake off his sleeve and tosses it into his mouth. “tasty,” he says.

Jorge has to put a hand over his mouth to stop himself from giggling like a teenager. “You’re ridiculous,” he says.

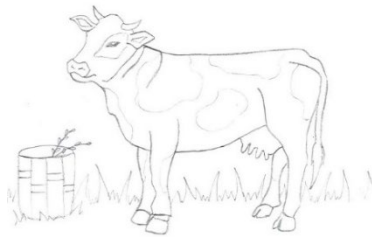
“No, actually.” At Jorge’s questioning look, he grins. “My name’s not Ridiculous. It’s Krish. Krish Segal.”

And he can’t do anything else but roll his eyes, can he? “I’m Jorge. Jorge Ortega.”

Krish’s eyes look him up and down. With another grin, a grin that’s straight-up addictive, he throws an arm around Jorge’s shoulders. “I think we’re gonna be friends, you and I.”

Maybe this whole affair isn’t so bad after all.

## 2



This whole affair is definitely very, very bad.

The car is stifling, the air hot, the stench of body odour filling the small, enclosed space. Everyone’s silent.

Jorge slumps in shot gun, eyes glazed over, vaguely aware of plains and trees moving past the window. He fiddles with the ruby necklace hanging around his throat. His nerves sing.

In the back seat, Krish is awkwardly upright as a tripod leg digs into his lower rib. He’s causing a very minor part of Jorge’s current anxiety – he just so happens to be a keeper at the regional zoo, and just so happens to be the exact one who volunteered to work with them on their documentary.

Jorge is trying very hard to not feel happy about that.

The main cause of his current anxiety is Jonathan Masters, who’s driving with his eyes firmly fixed on the road. His mentor. His one opportunity to make it in the film industry.

Jonathan Masters. The illustrious filmmaker, the one and only, renowned for his groundbreaking techniques and all-round genius. After his last project, he decided to set up an apprenticeship - an exclusive chance to debut in the film industry. To Jorge, who'd grown up with this guy as his idol, there'd been no doubt he'd apply.

Somehow, Jorge had stood out. The response had been better than he could've ever imagined. His use of lighting? Immaculate. His spatial awareness? Unmatched. His portrayal of character and emotions? Beautiful. His name? Jorge Ortega.

He's been given the opportunity to help film a documentary a town over from where he lives in rural Victoria, to record the devastation and the landscape ravaged by drought, to work with Masters to create the next *Bowling for Columbine*. "We're gonna make history, boy," the old man had said to him earlier.

Heaven.

On second thought, heaven with hell seeping in.

The opportunity comes with a price. If Jorge so much as blinks the wrong way, Masters is going to banish him from the creation of the documentary. He has the power to ruin his reputation, so he never steps foot in a studio again.

So yeah. Maybe not so ideal.

Masters seems to get bored of the silence and switches on the radio. 'Cruel Summer' by Taylor Swift starts playing, and Krish visibly relaxes.

"*So cut the headlights, summer's a knife,*" Krish sings softly to himself, looking out the window. It's the first time Jorge's ever heard him sing.

"*I'm always waiting for you just to cut to the bone,*" joins in, singing the higher harmony.

"*And if I bleed, you'll be the last to know, oh...*" Krish looks to Jorge, both anticipating the chorus. Their karaoke continues for the rest of the car trip, Masters stubbornly ignoring the sensational singalong occurring between apprentice and zookeeper.

---

The burn of the sun is harsh, and Jorge's sweat soaks his clothes - it makes the long walk to the farmhouse even worse than expected. Flies buzz all around him, the battle against them trying and fierce. Krish staggers along behind him, hefting the tripod away from the dust and the grime, with the panicked expression of someone who knows they are one stumble away from annihilation.

Entering the farmhouse is like entering a fridge, the cold harshness of the air conditioning hitting him like a slap in the face. Masters is standing in the kitchen with a camera and a frown. He looks up as they walk in.

"Hurry up kid, the documentary won't film itself." Masters strides past, out the door and back into the heat. He grunts in Krish's general direction. Sharing a glance of resignation, they follow.

Pulling out his camera, he positions it for the cutest picture of Peaches. Crouching down, he moves back and wiggles from side to side for a while, looking like a complete idiot in front of Krish.

Not that he cares what he looks like in front of Krish.

Peaches' fluffy hair moves around in the breeze; her tail does its best to flick the flies. Krish holds out his hand with a carrot, and Peaches quickly eats it before trotting away, happy as sunshine. Jorge snaps a quick picture and smiles down at the result.

“Oi! Boy, you useless idiot, start filming!” Masters bellows from where he's standing by a fence. Fingers fumbling, Jorge begins recording. The world narrows down to the shot in front of his eye, a world of lines and colour and pixels and a story waiting to be told. Everything else quietens.

This is where he belongs.

He finds Peaches in the shot. She's moving over to the shade of a tree and laying down. He wishes, in a moment of sudden clarity, that he could be a cow. Living without responsibilities, avoiding the excruciating sun beneath a tree, crashing birthday parties.

Even in the partial shade of a tree, Jorge and Krish are sweating unimaginably. With her fur coat and restricted access to air conditioning, Peaches must be hotter than hell right now in the drought.

The day of filming progresses well, in Jorge's opinion. Masters says otherwise - he's beginning to understand that the man loves complaining more than he loves his wife.

Peaches refuses to move from the shade. Krish looks at Jorge, eyes rolling in a blend of exasperation and sarcasm. *Well, what now?* He raises an eyebrow and shrugs his shoulders. *Heck if I know.*

They sigh at the same time and turn to Peaches in sync. Jorge wishes they had internet. If they did, he could Google Search “*How to move a cow who doesn't want to be moved.*”

Krish stops before the cow. He places his hands on his hips, and they spend a minute staring each other down like two cowboys in a Western film. Reading his mind, the zookeeper slowly reaches into his pocket and takes out a carrot. “There isn't room enough in this field for the two of us,” he mutters, then turns to hold out the vegetable to Jorge.

“Could you try coaxing her with this carrot?” Sweat gleams on his forehead. Jorge tears his eyes away and nods, grabbing it.

“Sure.”

*Uh.* He hasn't quite thought this through, has he, because now Krish is staring at him, and his palms are getting sweaty and *how on earth do I convince this warmonger to listen to me?*

Maybe, like, how you talk to a cat?

“Psst, come here Peaches! Come here! Don’t you want a carrot?” he coos, feeling and looking like an idiot.

Krish starts laughing.

“Shut up,” he mutters, smiling, face warming in embarrassment.

Krish leans on the tree beside Peaches, arms crossed. “Have you ever actually worked with animals?”

Jorge shifts. “Uh... I’ve run away from the odd murderous magpie before, but apart from that... no?”

He winces. “Yeah, the magpies around here are ruthless. I don’t think I’ll ever get that chunk of helmet back.”

A raised eyebrow. “You’ve seriously lost a helmet to those things?”

“Not the *whole* thing, just... most of it.”

“*Right*. Definitely.”

Krish scowls at him, opening his mouth to defend himself. Jorge can almost see his fragile ego shrinking in real time. “Hang on a sec,” he says before the other can talk. With a simpering smile, he grabs his camera and takes a picture.

“What were you gonna say?”

The guy huffs. “Nothing. Come on Peaches! The film crew are waiting. Up you go!” His voice is bright, excited. With a look of disdain, she slowly rises, and plucks the carrot out of his hand.

“How did you *do* that?” Jorge asks, disgruntled. He mouths *traitor* at the cow’s back.

Krish winks. “Magic.”

They stay quiet for a while, watching the yellow grass wave.

“Hey, Jorge?”

“Yeah?”

“Where’re you staying?”



“The Midnights Hotel. Room 38.”

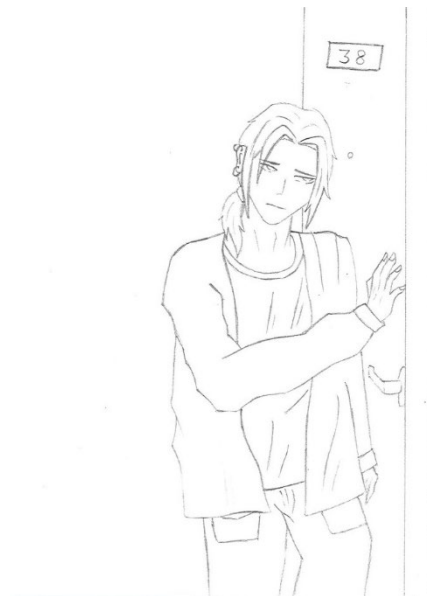
Krish almost looks... *nervous*, hands running through his hair and messing it up.

“Cool. Er... do you wanna catch up soon? I could come to your hotel room, or you could come to my house if you want! I don't mind!” his voice is steadily rising, panic edging in. Jorge reaches out to steady him, worried.

“I can see you overthinking this, idiot. *Yes*, I would love to hang out. Wanna come over this evening?”

“Yes!” Krish shrieks. He proceeds to do a small victory jig that Jorge watches with a sort of fond fascination. *Weirdo*, he thinks to himself, a smile playing at his lips.

### cp 3



Krish panics his way through the hallways of the hotel, glancing at every door. *How did I forget his room number?*

He's got no idea why he walked all this way to see him, why he just wants to hear his voice. There's an inexplicable, paralysing little thrill he gets whenever he sees Jorge. He doesn't understand it yet.

He tunes back into his surroundings in time to hear someone shouting.

“I know what I'm doing - remember who's in charge here, boy. It's not you, so stop bloody *arguing* with me.”

With a sinking feeling in his gut Krish recognizes the voice. *Masters*. And that must mean-

He creeps closer, stopping outside the door labelled with a big 38. Someone – Jorge – murmurs words that lose their way.

“It’s fine, boy. What would you know about film making?”

His tone is cold, dismissive.

Rage stirs in Krish, something dark and deep and hateful. The old man is nothing but a liar. A pathetic liar. Picking on someone with less power, less money, less influence.

It *hurts* him.

Krish shakes his head. He’s met his fair share of bullies - people who take and take and never give back, who revel in other’s pain and only amplify their own. No-one deserves to be treated badly. *No-one*. And Jorge isn’t just anyone, he’s *Jorge*. Somehow that makes this a hundred times worse.

A crash, like something falling or something being thrown. Footsteps. Krish quickly hides behind a couch lounging in the hallway as Masters’ shoes stride past him, down the stairs and out of the hotel. A beat passes. Krish knocks on the door.

It creaks open to reveal a dishevelled Jorge.

*I would do anything, he thinks, to make his pain go away.*

Krish closes the door behind him.

The air inside the room is cold. He grins a bit as Jorge sprawls like a starfish on the sagging sofa, muttering to himself about masterpieces and judgemental old white men, getting out his camera and starting to film. *Mood*.

He sits next to Jorge on the sofa; immediately, the camera fixates on his face. He doesn’t really know how to go about this, the comforting, and the conversation because *this isn’t right, and you know it*.

Krish squeezes his hand three times.

“Why do you let him treat you like that?” Krish whispers, voice breaking along cracked lines. “You’re my friend, Jorge. I know we haven’t known each other for long, but I’ll stay when it’s hard, anyways. I’ll stay when it’s just all wrong, when we don’t know how to put everything back together again.”

Jorge peers up at him, eyes dark and unbearably dull. The camera drops limp against his chest.

“The whole thing’s a flop, Krish. He’s using some fancy techniques that don’t work with this documentary, and he won’t listen to me when I say we should change it.” He looks so, so tired. “And if the critics don’t like it, they’ll circle like sharks. Master’s won’t hesitate to throw me to them.”

“He’s an ugly old coot, you know that?”

A soft laugh and a shake of the camera. “You really want that on record?”

“It’s the truth.”

Jorge flips onto his side, gazing out the small hotel window like a prisoner in a cell. “I don’t think,” he murmurs, “that the truth will save me now.”

There's a *click* as he stops recording.

4



It's a grey sky, grey land, grey mood sort of day; the sort where the wind picks up in freezing gusts and hisses, '*why are you here,*' and no one knows if there are really any clouds or if the heavens have just bled slowly to a dull silver overnight.

The air is dry. His lips are cracked.

Jorge makes his way down Main Street, shoes dusty. His camera bag bounces against his leg as he turns the corner, sees that familiar beaten door, reaches out a hand and knocks. When there is no answer, he enters anyway.

He stops outside Masters' room – vaguely, he realises he should be feeling something, the thrum of a heartbeat five seconds too fast, the prick of tears too numerous to contain, the words in his head saying *idiot* and *turn back* and *they hate you he hates you everything is gone*.

For the first time, there's silence. And it's far, far worse.

“Boy, get in here.” The snarl comes, quick and deadly through the flimsy wood. Numb, and plain exhausted, Jorge complies.

Masters is seated in his chair. Jorge cannot bring himself to look him in the eye, so he focuses on the name tag in front of him - “Jonathan Masters, Film Director and Professor” *when would he get that?* Staring is manageable, that is containable, that is the safety of non-judgement.

The other man rises. Jorge flinches back.

“You ruined us, boy, you know that?”

*I didn't. I tried to tell you, but you didn't listen-*

“My reputation cannot afford this; my legacy cannot afford this. How *dare* you take this away from me.” Masters begins pacing, footsteps heavy as a walk to the gallows. Back and forth go those feet. Inevitable. “Never have I had an apprentice so wilful, so clumsy and stupid and self-destructive and *vile*.”

*Vile. Stupid.* Everything the words in his head have been telling him for years. It's like they have been given human form, shaming him, because he is useless, and everyone knows it.

“This documentary was meant to revolutionise the film industry. It was meant to put Australia back in the game, to shine a light on how drought is burning everything in this country to the ground. And you, *you-*” a shaky breath. “You come in here and burn down *everything* - my life, and yours as well. You *disgust* me, boy.”

Here are the tears Jorge has been missing; here they come, in waves and trickles and an ache in the throat and a **shiver** down his spine. *Don't cry.* “Sir, I-”

A harsh laugh. “Are you *crying*? Man up. Stop acting like you're the damn victim, Ortega. *You* ruined this documentary. *You're* the reason the critics have deemed us the worst directors to ever film, and I'm going to tell *everyone*.”

Panic soars in a leap of adrenaline. “That's not fair, sir. You can't do that; I didn't do anything-”

“Didn't you?” Masters cuts in. Jorge's heart falters in his chest. The old man's feet stop, the last step echoing with finality - like the drop of the guillotine. “And who knows that? Not me. Certainly not the critics. You're alone.”

Maybe Jorge whimpers. He honestly doesn't know, because the noise of his sadness is overwhelming the noise of the present.

“Don't think of me as a villain, boy. Only one of us will make it out of this crash alive and kicking, and I have simply weighed each of us up against the might of the industry. Think of it as a test,” he says.

“A... test?”

“A test – who'll survive and who'll be discredited. Unfortunately, you've already failed.”

*No.*

“My PR team is working on this right now. Tomorrow morning you’ll be the shame of Australia, Ortega.”

Masters’ voice rasps like sandpaper, triumphant. “You’re fired. Get out of my sight, get out of this town, get out of this life because it’s not yours anymore.”

*It’s not yours anymore.*

*Your life isn’t yours anymore.*

Jorge’s feet are frozen. His mind is blank. This all makes a cruel, faint sense, like listing facts about himself at a first date: he is a disappointment, he is nothing, he is twenty-three, and his career is gone. Nice to meet you.

He glances up at Masters’ face. Its red. Veins are popping. His eyes hold a world of hate in them, and it’s all directed at Jorge.

“If you don’t get out of here in ten seconds, I’m calling the cops,” he says.

Jorge should add that to his list. Criminal. Arrested in the renowned filmmaker’s hotel room after being framed for the failure of his documentary. The end of a rising star. Just another story in the paper.

“You have five seconds left,” Masters warns.

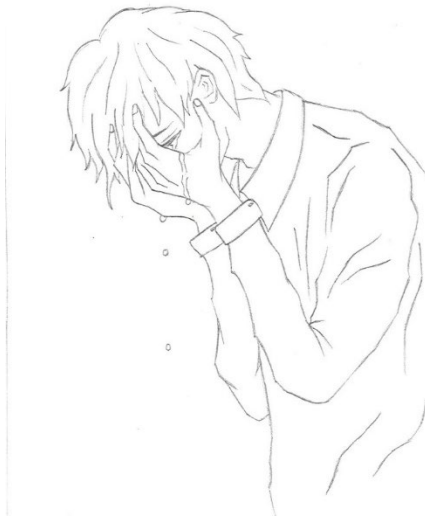
He turns on his heel and leaves. Outside, the air is still dry, and the heat is still clinging to the street. His camera bag still bounces along at his side, reminding him forever that he will never take it out again, never press play or zoom in or see something beautiful and record it in colour and pixels.

*He is useless and an idiot failure you’re wrong and this isn’t your life anymore, is it, because you’ve ruined it, and they hate you they hate you they hate you I’m so tired.*

The wind hisses *why are you here.*

He doesn’t know.

Everything is grey.



Krish finds him sitting on a fence, staring at Peaches. Jorge has been looking at the same spot for minutes, or maybe hours, or maybe days. Black stains splatter on perfect white. Sometimes everything blurs together and just looks grey.

For the first minute, neither says anything - there is a peace in shared silence, when a finger curls over another and hands creep together and heads rest, one on top of the other.

Together, they watch the cattle graze.

Another minute passes. Peaches lumbers slowly over to them, tail flicking away buzzing flies. Jorge starts crying again, though he doesn't quite know why; maybe he doesn't need a reason, other than there is a creeping sadness in his heart that wants to tear free.

"I was avoiding you," he admits, quiet, broken. Guilt frays his edges, and he knows one tug at the threads binding him will make him fall apart. Why was he avoiding this wonderful man, the only person who could possibly make him feel better, *be* better?

Because he's said he'll never take out his camera again, even to record something beautiful. And around Krish, that is impossible.

"What happened?" Krish asks - so softly, so gently, as if the world is laid out at the man's feet and he's scared of breaking it.

Jorge blinks, lashes clumped together by tears. Maybe he *is* scared of pushing him too far. Maybe he cares. Maybe he's not as alone as he thought.

Jorge tells Krish everything.

And it's hard, and it sucks, and they're both sweating in the heat and then Krish starts crying with him, arms looped around him in comfort, and gradually *this isn't your life* morphs into *this could be your life*: they are here together, and Peaches is snuffling around their feet, and even pixels could not capture this moment.

"I'm not going to tell you it's going to be okay," Krish whispers, running a hand through Jorge's hair. "Because it's not. But I am going to tell you this – there is a reason I want to spend every day with you, and there's a reason why you're the strongest person I have ever known. Old cishet white men have a history of winning – but people like us have a history of fighting back."

"I don't wanna fight back," Jorge mumbles into Krish's shirt. Tired. So tired, still. "I just wanna be the person I need to be, you know."

Krish's fingers stop in his hair. Peaches senses a change in the mood and nuzzles her way upwards, licking her tongue at their arms. Jorge frowns. "What."

"Where's your camera?"

He fumbles with his camera bag, opening the flap and gazing at the lens for a few seconds. He peers back up at Krish, voice musty with long-shed tears. "Why?"

Krish smiles - and it's freedom, and joy, and the promise of a future he's never even thought of before, and suddenly the grey is clearing, disappearing, replaced by colour, and colour, and even more colour.

His fingers itch to film him.

He's never seen anyone so beautiful.

Reverently, he holds the camera up to the grey sky. Watching the light reflect off every surface. Watching Krish looking at him with that something in his eyes that makes his heart race with a feeling so very different to anxiety.

He clicks through the memory. Images and videos race by, close-ups of laughing faces and long shots of the smouldering grass and love and pain and satisfaction and want. Every day, talking to a screen, feeling silly, a diary all of his own because writing was never enough but wanting was. Krish leans in over his shoulder to watch as Peaches crashes the birthday party, as the cake topples over onto him, as they work together on the documentary, as Jorge cries on screen and Masters berates him and his whole world falls apart.

Every emotion, every memory, every thought, his story, *their* story, meticulously recorded in pixels and sound.

Krish cups his face in his hands – so large, so comforting, eyes a warm brown. “You’re *amazing*, Jorge Ortega.”

The words settle deep within him, drowning out the *useless* and the *idiot* and the *don’t cry*.

*You’re amazing.*

And he- he's happy.

He’s happy.

He switches the camera off and hops down from the fence, patting Peaches on the nose as he goes. The cow gives a low moo of happiness in thanks.

“Where are you going?” Krish calls after him, a laugh in his voice.

*Your life isn’t yours anymore*, Masters says.

*You’re amazing*, Krish tells him, louder.

Jorge throws out his hands and swings around, unable to contain his smile. “I’m going to get my life back.”





The recording opens on a park. It's a bright sky, bright land, bright mood kind of day. Everything is beautiful.

Here it is, pixels on a screen: A red gingham picnic blanket under an oak tree. Smiles and heads tilted to gentle sun.

One of the boys turns to the other. Grins an addictive grin. "You did it, Jorge," he says.

"Yeah."

"You took your life back."

There's a pause. Jorge frowns slightly.

"I made a short film. And people liked it, Krish."

"They did."

"They like my work."

The other boy takes his hand. "They *love* your work."

A silence comes over them.

"Do *you* love it?" Krish asks, studying their intertwined fingers.

"I do. I love it." Jorge pauses. Considering. "I love *you*."

He tucks a stray strand of hair behind his ear and kisses him.

It's a fleeting moment. The only thing that reminds both of them it is real is the gentle whisper of the wind tousling their hair. Krish hesitates, startled, then **melts** into the kiss.

They part, breaths short, hearts large.

“What was that?” Krish whispers, glancing towards the screen. Looking back, he’s met with soft eyes glowing in the sun, the ghost of a smile.

Jorge points to the camera. “It’s a memory.”

Quiet. The camera picks up the sound of leaves rustling in the wind, the murmur of families, a cocoon of restless noise. The two boys stare at each other. Their hands are curled in the grass.

This shot is a masterpiece. The climax, the magnum opus. The purest expression of art - two boys framed against sunlight, happy, in love. Them against the world.

Jorge leans over.

With a click, the recording ends.

