

Wild World *The Cat Stevens Story*

What ever happened to Cat Stevens?

Many know him as a pop icon from the 1970s whose songs and lyrics spoke to a generation. Some know that he disappeared from the music scene, became a Muslim and switched his name to Yusuf Islam. But few know the real story. The story of one man who walked away from stardom at the height of his career for a greater calling.

From humble immigrant roots to the apex of musical success, Cat Stevens had more than one comeback and more than one brush with death. But the essence of *Wild World* is how a music idol became Yusuf Islam, turned away from the material world and found peace in what many former fans consider an exotic and unknowable religion. What ever happened to Cat Stevens? *Wild World* tells the story. . .and takes you on an unforgettable journey through popular music, personal struggle and stunning religious conversion.

Prologue

We see someone in the ocean from his or her point of view. The person is struggling in the water's undertow. Going beneath the water line and returning to the surface. It appears this person is drowning. There are some views of the person under water as well as a few from behind. All we can see is dark, long hair and the constant battle with the powerful current. We then hear the voice-over of an Englishman: "God! If you save me, I'll work for you."

London, 1956.

We see Steven Georgiou, eight-years old, playfully running up and down the back stairs of his family's Greek restaurant, Moulin Rouge. His mother opens the stairwell door from the restaurant's kitchen and asks him to please fold more napkins. "Yes, Mummy," answers the polite boy. We see a montage of restaurant scenes: His father, Stavros, cooks in the kitchen. His mother, Ingrid, rushes food out to patrons. His older sister, Anita, seats customers. His older brother David clears off a table. Steven emerges from the kitchen with a stack of folded napkins and places them on the counter. As he returns to the kitchen, his father asks him to get more lamb meat from the freezer. Stevens runs to the stairs. But instead of going down to the freezer, he opens the back door to the alley where he listens to the sounds of a George Gershwin tune emanating from the next-door theatre. His eyes are closed. He smiles as he listens. His father yells "Steven! The lamb?" "Coming Papa!" He closes his eyes once more and takes in the music for one last moment before closing the back door.

Music/Opening Credits

"Oh Very Young" by Cat Stevens plays. Night. We see the restaurant from across Shaftsbury Ave. in London. The inside is alive with people eating and the family working. Patrons are coming and going. Opening credits roll.

Act I

The restaurant closes as we see the last guests leave and the neon sign in the window go dark. Steven's mother, Ingrid, tells her children to please have a seat at one of the tables. She proceeds to tell them that she and their father, Stavros, are getting a divorce. We see Steven's sensitivity as he wells up with tears. She says, "But we will still see each other everyday working at the restaurant." An upset Steven runs out of the dining room, through the kitchen and upstairs onto the roof above their apartment. He sits with his head in his hands.

His brother, David, joins him on the roof to talk about the divorce. Steven doesn't understand, "Mum and Dad made a commitment to God to stay married." David explains that not everyone follows God's words. But he advises Steven to make sure he always follows his own heart. They continue to sit on the roof and listen to music coming from the nearby theatre. Steven looks at David and says, "It's music that's in my heart."

London, 1963.

A now 15 year-old Steven is practicing his acoustic guitar in the corner of Moulin Rouge's kitchen. His father yells, "Put it down and help those customers who just walked in." Steven begrudgingly acknowledges the request and leans his guitar against the wall. After taking the patron's order, he is standing in front of the order-window. His mother approaches to pick-up food for another table. She asks him about the phone call she received from his teacher. Steven isn't doing well in school and says, "I'm bored. Art and music are the only subjects I like." She tells him that art and music may not pay the bills, "You have to concentrate more in school." His father injects his idea of opening up a textbook once in a while instead of playing the damn guitar, "Don't make me regret buying it for you, Steven."

Moulin Rouge is closed and Steven is reading by the restaurant's front window. His parents tell him to turn off the lights before he comes upstairs. Once the kitchen lights go off and his parents are out of sight, he sets down the textbook book and plays his guitar.

Steven is now at school. There is an attractive girl, Katharine Watson, who sits several rows over from him in class. They are smiling and staring at each other while the rest of the class settles in before the bell rings.

Steven quietly sings a song to her. A few class bullies tease him. He yells, "Piss off!" just as the Teacher/Sister walks in. He's told to go see the head nun as the rest of his classmates laugh.

After school, he is walking with Katharine through an alley on his way home. They are talking about him getting in trouble. Suddenly the bullies from class surround him "Hey, Artist Boy, are you going to sing us a song?" They start to rough him up pretty good. Katharine yells for them to stop. This scene cuts between him getting beaten up and the drowning scene we saw in the movie's opening. The voiceover of "God! Please save me," comes in just as his older brother, David, arrives and scares them off. Steven tells David the story of his bully classmates. David tells him "Hey, at least they noticed you." They all laugh as they walk back to the restaurant.

London, 1965.

Steven is now 17 years old. He is practicing a song in his room. Unbeknownst to Steven, his brother, David, enters the room and listens to him play "Back To The Good Old Times," a song he has written. At the end of the song, David begins to slowly clap. Steven blushes. David says, "You really should record something." He mentions he might be able to get him into Regent Sound Studios at a cheap rate. Steven says he has been saving up money for a new guitar, but might be willing to spend it on a demo.

In the studio, we find Steven recording a two-song demo. David is in the control room. Some frustration sets in, so David takes Steven outside. He asks him if he remembers the time on the roof when he was eight years old and said that music was in his heart, "just play from your heart, Steven." Steven records a very clean, mistake-free version of the song with which he was struggling.

That night, Steven is playing the demo for his family in their living room. His friend Katharine is also there. While a song plays, his father, Stavros, extends his hand out to his now ex-wife, Ingrid. She hesitates at first, but gives in after encouragement from the children. They dance while the family laughs and enjoys the music.

Katharine and Steven end up on the roof above the apartment. They are sitting and talking. She looks at him and says: "You know Steven, you have eyes like a cat. Maybe you should call yourself 'Cat.' It's sexy." She

says she has school the next morning and must leave and kisses him on the cheek. While walking down the stairs, she passes Stavros, who asks where Steven is. Stavros comes up on the roof. He is talking to Steven about how proud he is of him. How he doesn't want Steven to get disappointed if things don't work out the way he hopes. "But if they do, you better buy me a shiny new car." They laugh. Stavros puts his arm around his son as they listen to the music coming from the theatre next door.

Steven is washing dishes in the back of the restaurant. David comes in and shows him a flyer from The Black Horse Bar, "They are having a talent showcase next Friday night." He tells him Ardmere and Beechwood, a publishing company, is sponsoring the night and it might be an opportunity for Steven to get some notice in front of industry people. "I already dropped off your demo and they said they'd be in touch." Steven is excited and picks up his guitar and begins playing in an 'Elvis-like' style. His father yells, "Shut up and finish the dishes." Steven says, "But I'm going to be a star, Papa." He continues to play like Elvis. Making up lyrics he sings, "Papa says wash these dishes. But if I had three wishes, I'd be the one shinin' while Papa was dining on the last two wishes from me." David begins to sing with him. Stavros looks up, shakes his head and walks out of the kitchen.

It's the night of the showcase and Steven is EXTREMELY nervous back stage. He's sweating, watching the preceding act finish up. We again see clips of the drowning scene just as the M.C. announces: "Now let's give a big Black Horse Welcome to Steven Adams." We see him close his eyes and swallow as he walks on stage. David and Katharine are in the audience watching. Steven sings a bit off key at times, messes up a few guitar chords and looks completely uncomfortable. The audience gives a courteous applause when he finishes. An upset Steven walks off stage and right out the back door. We see a rep from the publishing company looking for him backstage and around the club with no luck.

Once at home, Steven again retreats to the roof. He is upset. His brother arrives, asking what happened to him after the show. "We waited for you to come out afterwards and you never did." David consoles Steven and gives him encouragement. "That was your first time on stage. Anybody would be nervous. You have a great demo. You'll get another opportunity."

Several days later, the publishing rep from Ardmore and Beechwood comes to Moulin Rouge for lunch. However, no one knows who he is. There are several times we think he might see Steven, but he never does. Steven takes his lunch break and goes upstairs on the roof and begins practicing and singing. The rep thoroughly enjoys his meal and leaves. When outside, he hears music coming from the roof. He listens and seems to like what he hears. He goes back into the restaurant and asks Ingrid if she knows that somebody is playing on her roof. "It's probably my son, Steven." He tells her he likes what he heard, "I'd love to hear more." She takes him up the stairs and out on the roof. Steven's back is to the publishing rep and he doesn't see him. He continues to play and sing his song "I Love My Dog." When he finishes the song, Steven smiles, sensing David is behind him. "Aren't you going to clap?" he asks the rep, thinking it's his brother. The rep begins to clap. Steven begins to turn around. The clap dissolves into hundreds of claps as Steven performs "I Love My Dog" on *Top of The Pops*.

As the song plays, we see a montage of, now, Cat Stevens over the next couple years. His single, "I Love My Dog," rising on the charts. His song "I'm Gonna Get Me a Gun" rises to #4 and "Mathew and Son" goes to #2. He surprises his father by hanging keys to a new car on the order spindle. He is playing many shows, drinking heavily, smoking, partying with girls, etc. He looks tired, like he is on the verge of burnout.

London, 1968.

Steven is very ill and at the doctor's office with his mother. The doctor informs them that Steven has tuberculosis and must be hospitalized at once. With Steven out of the room, the doctor tells his mother he may only have a couple weeks to live.

ACT II

Steven is in his hospital room. He looks out the window and smiles as he sees the beautiful grounds. A few young children play under a tree while their mother talks to their ill grandfather. We see his smile turn to sadness as he watches a draped body roll past the family on it's way out. The curtains then begin to close as we see a nurse pull back the drapes and tell him he needs rest. He asks her about the body. She tells him, "It's from the

4th floor—a place you don't want to end up. So you need to get your rest.” As he falls asleep, we see him dream about the dead-person being rolled out. He sweats and tosses and turns in his bed. Again, the drowning scene is relived. The voiceover of “God! If you save me, I'll work for you,” comes in once more.

Steven is lying down and his mother sits on the edge of the bed. “I'm scared, Mum. I don't want to die.” He tells her that he can't get the image out of his mind of a body being rolled out yesterday. She comforts him and says he'll be fine. Steven answers, “I wouldn't fear death so much if I knew where I was going--what was going to happen to my soul.” She speaks of her relationship with God, which leads to a discussion on religion, heaven and the afterlife. We learn of Steven's skepticism of Christianity and religion in general. He says he is longing to find something in which he can really believe.

We now see Steven's brother, David, saying, “You have to believe in yourself.” He hands him a copy of a book that he thinks will help. The book is “The Secret Path” by Paul Brunton. David reads a quote from the book: “Man contains rare and unexpected resources within himself, wherewith to meet and overcome the hard trials for which few can escape.” David tells Steven that he can overcome this and to read the book. We then see a montage of Steven, which takes place over the next couple of months. The Cat Stevens' song “Miles From Nowhere” begins to play as the shots go back and forth between him reading the book, walking around the room, looking out the window and looking perkier. The montage ends with him dressed and collecting his belongings in the hospital room. Katharine is there with him. He tells her about the book and the influence it's had on his recovery.

Upon arriving at home, his parents have a small party for him. His whole family is there, along with a few friends, including Katharine. During the party, his father takes him out in the hall to show him a flat he has given for him in which to live. Steven loves it and tells him he will paint it red—“Papa this will be perfect for me to work on my music and writing.” His Dad says, “it will be perfect because you will be close to the restaurant when you're feeling good enough to start working again.” An argument ensues over the subject of Steven's career path. His father tells him “that” lifestyle is what got him sick in the first place and he should reconsider his choices.

But Steven is determined to make a comeback—“This time I will make a million pounds!” Steven slams the door to his apartment room.

Cat’s Steven’s “But I Might Die Tonight” plays while we see a montage of the next nine months. Steven is still at home but getting noticeably healthier. He is studying Buddhism, meditating, writing music (both on his guitar and his family’s baby grand piano). Katharine helps him paint his room red and Steven decorates it to his now semi-hippie liking. His beard and hair are growing.

London, 1969.

A now bearded Cat Stevens is in the office of Island Records where he is discussing a contract with Chris Blackwell, founder of the label. Cat tells Chris that he has written over 30 songs the past year and is ready to get back into the studio. Chris says, “I’m looking for someone to team-up with Paul Samwell-Smith. You may know him from the Yardbirds. He might be a good producer for you to work with.” Chris asks Cat to play him something he’s written lately. There is a guitar in the office and Cat picks it up, “it’s a song about an ex-girlfriend.” He plays “Lady D’Arbanville.” This dissolves into Cat in the studio recording the song. It is here that he meets guitarist Alun Davies.

Back in his red room, he and Katharine watch the news. “More deaths as the fighting escalates in Vietnam,” is the lead story. Cat has his guitar in hand. Katherine is reading. He messes around with the idea of a song: “Peace Train.” The phone rings. It’s Chris. Katherine walks into the bathroom. Cat’s phone conversation continues as Chris informs him “Lady D’Arbanville” has cracked the Top 10 in England. He also tells him, “I have a handsome check waiting for you. I think you’re back, Cat.” He hangs up the phone and Katharine stands in the bathroom doorway. He tells her of his news. She moves into the hallway and puts her hands on each side of the bedroom doorway. Backlit, she smiles.

Cat makes himself lunch in the restaurant kitchen. He tells his mother through the order window that he’s moving into his own place. The news upsets her. An argument ensues and Cat ends up on the roof with his sandwich. His father comes up on the roof and tries to smooth out the situation. By now, Cat’s father is much more understanding of his desires to continue with music and is all behind him getting his own place. Stavros

explains, "It's always difficult for a mother to face her child leaving the nest."

Fulham, London 1970

Cat is in his new house. His brother helps him build a music studio in the basement. They talk about how their Mom is handling the situation. Cat also speaks of his meditation and how Buddhism has helped him. He again thanks David for turning him onto the book, "It's had such a positive affect on me." Steven is now a vegetarian and asks David if he wants a veggie sandwich. "No thanks," is his reply.

Cat is in his home music studio working with guitarist Alun Davies. Cat shows Alun the song "Father and Son" which he wants to put on his next album. They work out some guitar parts. You can see their immediate connection both musically and as friends. While having a vegetarian lunch after their rehearsal, Cat shows Alun the album cover design he has drawn for the next album "Tea For The Tillerman."

New York, NY 1970

Cat and Alun open up for the band Traffic at the Fillmore East in NYC. They play "Father and Son" together on stage. The audience LOVES them. After the show, they are backstage. Chris Blackwell from Island Records comes into their dressing room. As he tries to keep girls from pushing down the door he says: "Not bad for a US debut." "Oh? No need for us to cut our hair into mop-tops?" is Cat's response. They laugh as Chris finally gets the door closed. Chris asks if they want some company, referring to the women outside the door. "Maybe a few," says Alun.

We see a montage of Cat's hits in America over the next year while the song "Peace Train" plays. They are playing the song in live shows: We see that "Peace Train," "Where Do The Children Play," "Father and Son," "Moonshadow," "Wild World" and "Morning Has Broken" are all charting in the U.S. During this, we see Cat meditating in hotel rooms, riding in limos and spending time with beautiful women, etc. He is clearly having fun.

London, 1972

Cat is back at the restaurant. It's a homecoming of sorts after several American Tours. There are some high school-aged girls who enter the

restaurant. As he grabs an apron, Cat tells his mother, “ I’ll get this table.” While he approaches, the girls are whispering to each other: “Is that Cat Stevens?” “Don’t be stupid. Why would he be waiting tables?” He takes their order. As he walks away, the girl who doubted it was Cat says, “It really does look like him!” Aware of their conversation, he comes back with their drinks and hums one of his own tunes. He sets the drinks down and sings a few lines from

“Moonshadow” as he walks away.

The restaurant is closed and he talks and catches up with his parents. He tells them he has been asked to do a movie soundtrack for “Harold and Maude.” He also mentions that he’s working on a cartoon called “Teaser and the Firecat.” He once again talks with his mother about his spirituality. He explains to her that the title of his next album will reflect his Buddhist beliefs: *Catch Bull At Four*. Katherine knocks on the restaurant window and Stavros lets her in. She gives Cat a long hug. The two head out for a coffee.

Paris, France 1972

Cat is in the midst of recording *Catch Bull At Four*. Some creative tension is begins to ensue during a session while recording the song “Can’t Keep It In.” So they take a brief break in recording. When Cat comes back in the studio, he overhears Alun talking with Paul Samwell-Smith. We learn that Alun is recording his own solo album, which Paul is producing. The session starts up again only to have Cat stop it abruptly. “This is bullshit! Is your head here or in your *own* project?” is what Cat asks Alun. Cat walks out of the recording studio.

In his hotel room, Cat is meditating/chanting. His curtains are drawn and candles are lit. He listens to classical music. Paul knocks on his door. Cat comes to the door wearing only his jeans. “Am I interrupting something?” asks Paul. Cat invites him in. Paul apologizes for not being upfront with him about Alun’s album. “His head and heart’s with *you* and this album,” Paul reassures him. By his facial expression, we can tell that Cat doesn’t seem too convinced. He just leans back and listens to the meditation music still playing. “I love the sound of strings. I want an orchestra on the next tour, “ is all is says to Paul. “We have to finish the album first, Cat,” Paul answers.

Los Angeles, CA 1972

A live show opens with the screening of the “Teaser and Firecat” cartoon film, which includes the song “Moonshadow.” Upon it’s ending, the band, complete with orchestra, begins to play Cat’s song “Sitting.” The song continues as we see a montage of the tour. During this, we see that *Catch Bull At Four* goes #1 in the U.S. and also tension mounting within the band. In the montage there is once again cut-away shots of the drowning scene (a metaphor for him drowning in the unhappiness of the current tour). We see women, limos, different venues where he is performing the same song as it continues. He doesn’t look very happy. We also see him on the phone with Katherine, telling her that he’s getting tired of these guys. In a hotel room, the band watches the news announcement of the Munich Olympic Massacre. “Fuck them,” is the reaction from the drummer. They all walk out except Cat, who says, “Why can’t people just get along.” The montage ends with the band finishing up the same song at a sold out Royal Albert Hall in London.

The show is over, and he is backstage with his brother, David. Cat tells him he is done with these guys: “The next album will not include ANY these sods.” “Not even on a tour?” asks David. “I’ve got my number one album. Let them fucking tour with Alun!” is Cat’s response.

London, 1974

Alun stops by Moulin Rouge and is talking with David. He says that he has been calling Cat’s house for the past week and there has been no answer. David informs him that Cat’s in Jamaica recording his next album. Apparently Paul Samwell-Smith was not made aware of this either. We see that Alun is crushed that Cat went ahead doing the album without him. David tells Alun that Cat is going through a lot right now and might just need some time.

The Cat Steven’s song “Trouble” plays as Cat travels back to the UK. While on the plane, Cat has an epiphany. On his fold-down seat tray he has emptied out his pockets. He picks up a small Buddha and a small box of chocolate. It is here he realizes he is caught between the spiritual world and the material world. Perhaps this is the root of his problems. David picks him up at the airport and Cat tells him of his epiphany. David mentions that Alun misses him and is worried about him: “you really need to ring him up.”

Fulham, London 1974

Alun and Cat are having tea at Cat's home. It is here that they completely reveal their feelings. Alun speaks of his album. Cat says he feels trapped in the eye of a hurricane. He also speaks of his epiphany. There are tears. He tells Alun that his trip made him realize he needs more time away and alone to strengthen his spirituality. "I may move to Brazil after the next album." From this "heart-to-heart," their bond of friendship has become stronger and Cat says he's ready to resume their working relationship, as well. "And you can visit me in Rio as often as you'd like," says a smiling Cat.

Rio de Janeiro, 1974

Cat's song "Another Saturday Night" plays. We see shots of Rio: The Christ The King Statue, the beautiful beaches, etc. Cat is alone. He walks on the beach at night. He looks rather depressed. He sees a couple kissing. This only adds to his sadness. The montage includes shots of Cat crying in his bed. We also see him on the phone with his brother David. He mentions that he misses the family, the restaurant, etc. "I thought I was going to have a self-realization here, but I feel lost—spiritually and mentally," Cat explains. "Maybe it's time for you to come home," David's voice tells him.

Malibu, CA 1975

Alun, Paul Samwell-Smith, Cat and a few others hang out in a beautiful home on the ocean. The weather is overcast and breezy. Cat is explaining to them about numerology—his latest spiritual interest. Meanwhile, Alun asks Paul when lunch will be ready. Paul tells him "15 minutes". Cat says he's going for a swim before lunch. "What would numerology say about a 15 minute swim?" Alun asks sarcastically. "It means you got to make it a quick one," answers a smiling Paul.

Cat is now on the beach and takes off his shirt and begins to wade out in the water. The waves are fairly strong. Once out far enough, he begins to swim. He sees something out in the water and swims towards it. But the undercurrent is very strong and we see him get further and further from the shore. An undertow continues to pull him out. He begins to struggle to get back in. By this time, he is more than a ¼ mile out with no let-up of the current. Cat begins to get scared. He yells for help. No one is on the beach. No one hears him. He gulps some water as he begins to panic. Tears well up

in his eyes. The shore is getting further away. He looks up and says “God! If you save me, I will work for you.” Suddenly a wave comes along and he begins to swim as fast as he can—with all of his might—and washes up on the shore. Gasping for breath, he crawls up on the beach and rolls over on his back. Tears flow from his eyes. He looks up at the sky and says: “Thank you, God.”

ACT III

Athens, June 1976

Cat is in his hotel suite with Katharine, whom he invited to meet up with in Greece. He tells her that his near-death experience has really made him do a lot of thinking. He has come to realize what is really important to him. He’s also tired of touring and living in hotels. He’s tired of making albums and being under pressure from his record label. He says he wants to be free. “Until I know better, until I know how music can fit into this whole thing or how I can express myself in a new way, perhaps I should take a break.” Katharine is a bit surprised, “You’re going to at least wait until the tour ends, right?” He says he’s not sure if he can wait that long.

Cat is about to take stage and is informed that the venue is only half-full due to student exams the next day. This only adds to his frustration. He demands to speak with the tour promoter. When he comes up to Cat, an argument ensues over the promoter’s “lack of planning,” and Cat walks on stage VERY upset. While playing the opening song “Where Do The Children Play,” his monitors are cutting out. This upsets Cat greatly. He’s now on stage yelling at the sound guy. When he plays “Father and Son,” we can see there is no energy on Cat’s part. He does not want to be here. Upon the final lyrics, “I know, I have to go,” Cat almost has a dazed look. He drops his guitar and walks off stage leaving his band members shocked and surprised. Alun tells the band to play the instrumental song “Was Dog a Doughnut.” “He’ll be back. He’s probably just cooling off.” We then see Cat walking very determined through the bowels of the theatre. He walks out the back door and proceeds to hail a taxi.

London, July 21 1976

Cat’s mother, Ingrid, comes out of the kitchen of Moulin Rouge carrying a cake with lit candles. The family, including Katharine, is all

there. They sing “Happy Birthday.” It’s Cat’s 28th and they are celebrating, laughing and all enjoying themselves. Cat looks the happiest and least-stressed we have seen him in quite sometime. David gives him a gift he said he picked up while making his journey to the Middle East. Cat opens it, to find the Qur’an, the holy book of Islam. David goes on to tell him about a mosque he visited in Jerusalem. “I know how much you appreciate learning about different religions. But I bet you haven’t read *this* book,” he says laughing.

It is night and Cat is back in his red room, a bit barren from when he last lived there. He lies on a single bed with only a dim light next to him. He reads the Qur’an.

It’s the next morning and Cat is on the roof of the apartment. He eats breakfast while reading the Qur’an. David comes up and joins him: “It looks like you’re really enjoying the read.” Cat says he’s blown away by the book: “All of the prophets are mentioned in here: Jesus, Abraham, Moses, Noah—it’s really quite amazing.” Cat goes on to tell him that he feels that the book is almost speaking to him. “Do you want me to get a towel from downstairs for you to put on your head?” jokes David. Cat says, “I’m serious, man. Of all of the spirituality I have studied: Buddhism, Astrology, Numerology, Christianity...this seems to make the most sense to me. Who knows? Maybe it’s the structure and path I have been looking for.” He asks David more about the mosque he visited in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, 1976

The Cat Stevens song “On The Road To Find Out” plays as a Mercedes taxi pulls up at the New Gate. We see The Dome of the Rock Mosque on top of the hill. Cat gets out, enters The Old City and begins walking towards the Mosque. Once there, he takes a moment to look at amazing structure. He smiles and walks up to the front entrance. Just as he’s about to open the front door, two men step in front of him. “What business do you want at this place of worship?” asks one of the men, bearded and wearing full Muslim attire. Cat can tell these men are protecting the entrance. He looks up at the temple and looks back at the men. “I’m Muslim,” Cat answers.

The song continues under as he walks around the inside of the mosque, viewing the artwork and absorbing the history. He retreats to the lobby, pulls out his Qur’an and begins reading. An Arabic man approaches

him and they talk about his journey. The man takes him to a room where he gives him a kutra shirt and kufi headdress to wear. “Come pray with me,” the man says.

London, 1976

Cat is waiting inside the lobby of Island Records. His beard has gotten a bit longer and his hair a bit shorter. He is reading the Qur’an. Chris Blackwell comes out to greet him: “Cat! You look great! Did you get that much-deserved rest?” Cat rolls his eyes as he follows Chris into his office. Chris informs him that leaving in the middle of the Majikat Tour has brought a lot of pressure on the label from the promoter, both financially and business-wise. “We either need to reschedule those dates or you’re going to have to come up with a big-chuck of change, Cat.” Chris says that between the performers contracts (both musically and the Majikat theatrical production), the sound and lighting crew, the roadies, the venues themselves, the promotions company, it’s close to a million pounds. Not even hesitating, Cat answers, “I’ll pay for it. I’m not touring again, Chris.” As Cat gets up to leave, Chris goes on to inform him that he still has the obligation of one more album. “Fine. Whatever, man,” is Cat’s response as he walks out the door.

London, December 1977

Cat walks up to the Regents Park Mosque in London. Sleet comes down as he walks quickly to the entrance. Upon opening the large wooden door, there is a family exiting. He makes eye contact with a very attractive woman dressed in Muslim attire. They share pleasantries as Cat holds the door open for the family. Once inside, Cat enters the prayer hall (musalla). He looks up at the dome on the ceiling as a black gentleman approaches him from behind, “May I help you?” Cat introduces himself as ‘Steven’ and tells him that he’s here to embrace Islam. “I’m the Emam of the mosque. Why don’t you come into my office,” the man says.

Cat is inside the office of the Emam. He says he is ready to formally embrace Islam. The Emam explains to Cat that Islam is more than just a religion—it’s a way of life. “What also makes Islam so beautiful is the fulfillment one gets out of helping others.” He goes on to explain about the tight-knit Muslim community. Cat smiles and nods as if to say, “this is what I’ve been missing in my life.” The Emam tells Cat that he just has a couple of questions: Do you believe there is just one God? “Yes. Absolutely.” Do

you believe Muhammad is a messenger of God? “This book was not made up by human beings—it’s too perfect. And Muhammad was the last prophet to receive this book. So, yes, I believe that Muhammad is a messenger of God.” He asks Cat to say that in Arabic—to repeat what he says. After that, the man shakes his hand and welcomes him to The Mosque and to the Islamic Faith.

London, December 1978

Cat has cut his hair. His beard has gotten noticeably longer. He wears Muslim attire and in the lobby of Regent’s Park Mosque. He is speaking with the Ali family (the ones he saw when he first came to the mosque last year). They are referring to Cat as “Yusuf.” We realize he has now changed his name. There is a definite energy and attraction between Yusuf and the Ali’s daughter, Fauzia. They smile and look at each other while Yusuf converses mostly with her parents. Suddenly, the Imam walks up. “I’m so sorry to interrupt, but you have a phone call, Yusuf. It appears to be quite urgent.”

The Cat Steven’s Song “Into White” begins to play. The eulogy of Stavros Georgiou is being read in a cemetery. The weather is overcast and cold. Yusuf is seated with his mother, brother and sister. Katharine sits right behind Yusuf with her hand on his shoulder. The song continues under the eulogy, as we see a montage of Yusuf remembering his father: clips of past scenes in the restaurant, on the roof, arguing, laughing and dancing. All this while we see the family mourn. The montage ends as Yusuf walks away with his arm around his mother.

London, 1979

Yusuf is having lunch with Katharine. She asks what’s the exciting news he said he had to share. “I’m engaged to be married!” he says excitedly. Katharine can’t believe what she has heard and is both saddened and shocked at the same time. “What? To whom?” she asks while shaking her head. He explains that it’s a woman he has met at the Mosque. “Her name is Fauzia Ali. She’s beautiful. I know her parents quite well. I asked her father’s permission to marry her. And he granted my wish.” This upsets Katharine. She can’t understand what he is doing. He explains that it’s the Muslim tradition of marriage. She is completely bemused and looks at him. “I don’t know you anymore, Steven. Or YUSEF!” She gets up and walks out of the restaurant.

Hampstead Garden, London 1979

Yusuf and Fauzia have tea with his mother, Ingrid. “The wedding was so lovely. I’m so happy for you both,” Ingrid tells them. Yusuf tells her that they have a surprise. “You’re expecting?” is her response. Yusuf and Fauzia laugh. “No, mum, we are purchasing the house next door so we can be closer to you,” Yusuf says. She is delighted. He also tells them both he has agreed to perform at a benefit concert for UNICEF. “Is Cat Stevens rising from the dead?” asks Ingrid. “No. Yusuf Islam will make one last performance to help out children,” he answers.

We see TV footage of an English talk show. The host says, “Cat Stevens has gone mad!” He shows a clip of Yusuf after his performance at the UNICEF benefit saying: “I enjoyed the show but my heart was with Allah.” The TV host says that his heart should have been with UNICEF. They show more of the Yusuf interview: “I don’t think I’ll be performing on stage again...that’s not the way I want to go from now on.” The host asks if we really care, “It’s obvious he’s turned into some Muslim radical...” We then hear Yusuf interrupt the footage: “Turn it off, Fauzia, please.” We see Yusuf and Fauzia have been watching the show in their living room. Yusuf tells Fauzia that he feels hurt, frustrated and misunderstood. She comforts him. “They may never understand, Yusuf. Allah tells us ‘he who brings the Truth and he who confirms it—such are the men who do right.’” She tells him that this man, the media, the nay Sayers are not speaking the truth. She tells him to just continue to do what is right in the eyes of God. It’s all that matters. Yusuf smiles: “I love you, Fauzia.”

London, July 1980

In the waiting room of a hospital, Yusuf is there with his mother, sister and brother. Yusuf sits with his head in his hands. David tells him to step out of the room for a cup of tea. By the mood, we are not sure what’s happening. They walk to the cafeteria while talking. Yusuf tells David, “I’m very nervous and worried about Fauzia.” He also tells David he is planning to make his pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca (Makkah) next month. Upon returning to the waiting room, a female doctor enters: “Congratulations, Mr, Islam, your wife has given birth to a lovely, healthy baby girl.”

Yusuf, Fauzia and their new baby girl, Hasanah, are in a London park. It's a nice summer day. They sit under a tree on a large blanket. Yusuf tells Fauzia how much Islam means to him. "I thank Allah every moment I get. If it weren't for Islam, I would not have met you. I would not have this beautiful gift of life in Hasanah. I would not feel so grounded." He goes on to explain to Fauzia how he wants to make sure he does everything right in the eyes of God, "But I have so much more to learn." He says he would love to write a song for Hasanah, but wonders if music is forbidden in Islamic culture. Fauzia explains there is no mention of music being forbidden in the Qur'an. "There is one mention of music in Muhammad's teachings." She tells a story of how Muhammad was walking with a boy and they heard the sound of music. Muhammad covered the boy's ears until they passed and the music could no longer be heard. When he took his hands away from the boy's ears, he said, "that music was *haraam*" or forbidden. Fauzia tells Yusuf that it could have just been that *particular* music which was *haraam*, because there's no further mention of music in his writings or to the followers at his Mosque. Yusuf replies smiling, "well, maybe *that* music they heard was rock n roll. I probably shouldn't take any chances."

We now see Yusuf at an auction house. All of his musical instruments, gold records and equipment are being auctioned off. Alun and Paul are in attendance. When one of Yusuf's guitars is being auctioned, we see Alun bidding. Once the auction is over, Alun walks through the lobby carrying the guitar. Yusuf immediately questions Alun: "why did you buy that guitar? If you wanted it, I would have given it to you." Alun tells him that he wanted to help out: "I know this money is all going to charity and I wanted to contribute. Besides, I know this is your favorite guitar. Should you ever decide to play again, I'll have it right here for you."

Mecca (Makkah), Saudi Arabia, 1980

There is no dialog in this scene. Just the Yusuf Islam song "Maybe There's a World" plays as we see a montage of his trip to Makkah. We see Yusuf in awe of the holy mosque. We see him walking and talking with people. We hear the call to prayer. We see him pray along side many other Muslims. We see him read the Qur'an in the Mosque. The montage ends with Yusuf, at dusk, alone, looking over the city. It's very obvious in this moment he has found bliss.

Hampstead Garden, London 1981

Fauzia is in the attic of their house. She has discovered some boxes containing old Cat Stevens records. She plugs in a turntable and begins to listen to the music. She smiles as she listens and looks through the albums, reading the inside covers. Suddenly we see an angry Yusuf surprise her from behind. He drags the needle abruptly off the turntable and takes the records from her lap. “This is haraam and will not be allowed in this house!” She tries to explain that she was curious about his past and wanted to hear his music: “It’s beautiful, Yusuf.” He’s very upset and yells, “Cat Stevens is no more! This kind of music is no more! It is haraam and belongs in the dustbin!” He takes the box behind the house and throws it in the trash. Fauzia watches, crying, from the upstairs window. Once back in the house Yusuf yells, “I am off to the Mosque for my Islamic Circle. I’ll speak with you later.” The door slams. Fauzia cries on the bed. She holds her stomach with both hands. We see she is once again pregnant.

Yusuf wraps up his weekly Islamic Circle. “This group, this circle of people learning, sharing, asking questions and helping is just another example of the beauty of Islam.” He thanks everyone for attending and asks: “if you know anyone who wants to learn more about Islam, this meeting is open to all. Assalamu alaikum.” The Muslims in attendance all respond: “wa alaikum assalam.” A white-haired, elderly British Muslim, Rashid Farah, approaches Yusuf. They greet each other and begin to talk about the success of Yusuf’s weekly Islamic circle. They leave together walking and stop underneath one of the large trees at Regent’s Park. Rashid tells him he thinks it might be time to take this circle a step further. “There is no school here in London for our Muslim community. Perhaps we should look into starting one.” Yusuf says how he and Fauzia have spoken about this: “we want our daughter, Hassanah, to have the opportunity to be schooled in a Muslim environment. And we’re expecting another child this year.”

Yusuf returns to his home. Fauzia is in the bed lying down with Hassanah. He apologizes for getting so upset: “I’m so sorry I yelled at you, Fauzia. I just don’t want our family to have anything in our house that is forbidden by Allah.” Fauzia once again explains that music is not “haraam.” “I don’t want to take any chances. I believe Arabic music is probably OK. As a matter of fact, I am writing a song for Hassanah—to help her learn the Arabic alphabet. But I will not use any instruments.” He begs Fauzia to please understand that he has to close his mind to everything else in order to achieve his spiritual goal.

Hampstead Garden, London 1983

The A capella Yusuf Islam song “A is for Allah” plays as we see the ribbon cutting ceremony in front of the new Islamia Primary School. In front of the old Victorian mansion, Rashid Farah, speaks to the large group. He tells of Yusuf’s continued involvement in charities and that Yusuf is an ambassador for UNICEF: “This brother has been helping children around the world, donating and raising money for charities. Today he sees his dream come true. His dream of a place for *his* three, beautiful children to study and learn in a positive environment. A place for our entire Muslim community to call home for our children.” The audience applauds as Yusuf cuts the ribbon officially opening the school.

We see fundamentalist Iranian students marching with posters of Ayatollah Khomeini and burning ephiges of US President Ronald Reagan. This zooms out to reveal a reporter covering the scene. This zooms out further to show an English newscaster at the news desk who says “The Globe Newspaper reports: Yusuf Islam, formally, Cat Stevens, is devoted to Imam Khomeini and that he is living in Iran with a begging bowl in a school for aspiring Ayatollahs.” This zooms out even further to show a Middle Eastern man cooking in the kitchen of a restaurant and looking up at a TV. The shot pulls back once more to reveal Yusuf and his family eating a celebratory dinner at a Middle Eastern restaurant, talking about the school. The man cooking rushes out to tell Yusuf he must see what’s on the TV.

Yusuf and Fauzia are at home discussing the false rumours. “I have never even been to Iran,” Yusuf shouts. “Here I am, trying my best to help people. Help children. Help my fellow man. I’ve given away most of my wealth to charities and noble causes. Isn’t that what Allah teaches us to do? It’s a free world isn’t it? Can’t I do these things while being a Muslim? Can’t I?” There are tears. Fauzia tries to comfort Yusuf.

London, 1985

Yusuf walks alone in downtown London. He runs into Katherine. They hug. Yusuf and she are catching up. He mentions his fourth child was born in April. She seems very happy for him. She tells Yusuf that she was at the Live Aid concert at Wembley Stadium the week before, “I thought you were supposed to perform?” He explains that he was to perform an A capella song he had written for the occasion, but the promoters allowed Elton John to overrun, leaving no time for him. “Well, I guess having turned

my back on the music business, the music business has also turned its back on me.” Katharine tells him: “Don’t let those people get you down, Yusuf, you’re a very special person with a heart of gold. And I’ll always love you.” They hug and Yusuf watches her walk away, a bit surprised by her genuine happiness—much different from the last time they saw each other.

Kingston University, London 1989

Yusuf speaks to students in a large lecture hall. He talks about how he once thought the music was forbidden by Allah. But says he has since realized that he was being, perhaps, too strict: “I think my children appreciate the changes around our home.” The group laughs. Yusuf says, “I’ll take one last question.” A student mentions the recent fatwa calling for the death of author Salman Rushdie. Yusuf explains that, “like the Bible, the Qur’an defines blasphemy as a capital offence.” He never mentions that he believes Rushdie should die, but tries to explain where many devout Muslims may be coming from in their views.

Los Angeles, CA 1989

Tom Leykis, a radio personality, is on the air reading the cover of The USA Today, which reads “Cat Says Kill Rushdie.” He goes on to tell his listeners to gather all the Cat Stevens records they can find and to bring them down to the radio station parking lot. “If there’s a construction company out there who would care to let me borrow a bull dozer, we’ll show Yusuf Islam what we think of him.”

London, 1989

Katharine reads in her robe while having coffee and toast at her kitchen table. As she hands the paper to a man sitting with her, she says “I can’t believe poor Yusuf has to continue to deal with this kind of bullshit.” The man, who appears to be her husband or boyfriend, reads aloud Yusuf’s response in the paper: “I never called for the death of Salman Rushdie; nor backed the Fatwa issued by the Ayatollah Khomeini – and still don’t. The book itself destroyed the harmony between peoples and created an unnecessary international crisis...”

Bosnia 1992

We see footage of the bloody civil war in a montage. Yusuf is being interviewed near the front lines for a news report. “Two years ago I travelled to Iraq as part of a peace delegation. We were able to secure the

release of four hostages. I am here today to get a first-hand look at this terrible war and see what we can do to help these people in their suffering.” The reporter asks Yusuf if there is any truth to him funding Afghan militants. Yusuf responds, “Ever since I became a Muslim, I’ve had to deal with attempts to damage my reputation. Countless insinuations seeking to cast doubt on my character. Trying to connect me to causes, which I do not subscribe to.” He pauses. “Almost a billion and a half people practice Islam. What if we assumed that because Charles Manson was a hippie, that all hippies were cold-blooded killers? Or that Jim Jones’ People’s Temple represented all Christians? Do you see my point? Islam is a faith of love and peace. I’m just doing my part.”

Hampstead Garden, London 1999

CNN correspondent Christiane Amanpour interviews a badly burned refugee who said he had been placed in a pile of 112 bodies that were covered with petrol and set on fire by Yugoslav forces. He says he survived and made it out to the border. Yusuf watches this with Fauzia on television. He says he can’t stand seeing the suffering of the Kosovo refugees and is going to visit Macedonia and Albania to help. He tells her he has plans of leaving in the morning. As he begins to pack his bags, Fauzia says how very proud she is of his continuing dedication to helping others. “The happiness Islam has brought you shines through everyday. Your willingness to help others is amazing. But there is a war going on in Kosovo and I am worried. Something tells me you shouldn’t make this trip, Yusuf.” He reassures her that everything will be fine: “The ethnic cleansing going on there is tearing at my heart, Fauzia. God is telling me I have to make this trip. You must understand.”

Macedonian 1999

Yusuf, accompanied by several other people, get out of a van. They approach a house where they have heard a Macedonian family is sharing their home with Albanian refugees. A translator with them announces at the door in Albanian: “we are here to help”. A man slightly opens the door. The translator continues to explain that Yusuf Islam has money to help them house and feed the refugees. Hesitating at first, the man opens the door all the way. The house is completely packed with refugees. Sitting on the floor, some asleep against the walls. There are children, babies, elderly—all with a hopeless look on their face. As he enters, Yusuf pulls out a handful of deutsch marks and begins handing money to the family. Smiles emerge

from the hungry faces in the room. People come and kiss Yusuf's hand, bowing and thanking him in Albanian. Yusuf tells them that they need to have faith and hope: "by God's will, you all will get through this." As Yusuf's party leaves, the Macedonian man says in Albanian: "thank you. You have no idea how much this means to us." Upon getting the translation, Yusuf tells him "you have no idea how much all of you mean to me."

Yusuf and his party arrive at the Macedonia/Albania border. They are told to get out of the vehicle. Yusuf looks worried. A man with him tells him "it's procedural. They should let us cross into Albania once they know why we are here." They are all being questioned—almost interrogated. Men holding machine guns push them up against the side of the van. The translator tells them, in Albanian, that he's with Yusuf Islam. "He's here taking part in a relief effort for Kosovo Albanians. We come in peace. Just to distribute funds to those in need." Two of the Macedonian guards step aside and begin talking while Yusuf's party is being held at gunpoint. They walk back and ask the translator, "Where is the money?" Yusuf shows them the \$60,000 deutsch marks he has in his satchel. One of the guards tries to grab the money. Yusuf holds on to it: "No please. This is for hungry people who have been forced out of their homes." The whole time the translator is relaying Yusuf's words. Yusuf looks into the guard's eyes, slightly shaking his head: "I beg of you." Just when we think the guard may give in to Yusuf's request, he rips the money from Yusuf's hand. Another guard from behind pushes a gun into Yusuf's neck to keep him from moving. Tears roll down Yusuf's cheek.

Hampstead Garden, London 2000

In front of the news media, Prince Charles addresses the students, faculty and parents of Yusuf's Islamia School. "As you know, recently Britain's Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, awarded grant-maintained status to Islamia Primary School." Prince Charles looks at Yusuf, "this is something for which Yusuf Islam has been campaigning for almost 15 years." The Prince and Yusuf smile at each other. Charles continues, "This was an historic first for our country. Never before has a Muslim school been granted government-aided status." The audience applauds. "We are very lucky to have Yusuf Islam," Charles once again smiles at Yusuf. "All of his humanitarian efforts in Great Britain, as well as in Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, the earthquake victims of Turkey last year, and most recently 'Small Kindness,' a UK/UN registered humanitarian relief charity, helping thousands of orphans, widows and families across the world." The

audience once again applauds. Charles looks over at a very humbled Yusuf. “I believe that Islam has much to teach us. Islam has much to teach increasingly secular societies like ours in Britain.” Yusuf stands up to begin the standing ovation to Prince Charles.

New York, NY September 11th, 2001

Planes crash into the side of the World Trade Center. A voice-over of a British television anchor says, “It’s been determined to be the cause of Muslim extremists.”

London 2001

Yusuf is very upset. He talks with the Imam of the Regent’s Park Mosque. Yusuf asks him: “Why would Muslims do such a thing?” The Imam tells him the people who did those horrific acts were not Muslim. “Islam is a religion of mercy and love and does not permit terrorism.” He tells Yusuf that Mohammad listed murder as the second of the major sins. “Those who committed those acts will not be permitted into heaven and therefore are not Muslim.” Yusuf then asks why these terrorists are doing these acts in the name of Allah. “Osama Bin Laden is taking Muslim law out of context to get his followers. He is upset that US forces have permanent military bases in Saudi Arabia. The Koran *does* state that enemies may not occupy Arab land by force. But the United States is there with the blessings of the Saudi government. So he really has no case.”

New York, NY 2001

Upon finishing up a video-linked a capella version of Peace Train for a charity concert for 9/11 victims, the host announces: “Yusuf has a much-anticipated box set coming out. He has pledged to donate half of its royalties to the September 11th Fund. The crowd applauds.

Hampstead Garden, London 2003

Yusuf reads in the living room. His son, Muhammad, and Fauzia return to the house. Muhammad carries a guitar case. Fauzia tells Yusuf that she bought him a guitar for a music class at school. “Maybe you could teach him something,” she suggests. He says he hasn’t played in almost 25 years and Muhammad would be better off learning from someone who’s a professional. “I probably don’t even remember how to play,” Yusuf adds.

Very early the next morning, Yusuf is in the kitchen. He pours himself a cup of coffee and walks into the sitting room. Muhammad's guitar leans against a chair. Yusuf stares at the guitar. Everyone is still asleep. He walks over and strums the still-leaning guitar with his finger. He steps back, looks and listens to make sure no one is awake. He sets down his coffee and picks up the guitar. He quietly says to himself smiling, "twenty-five years." Yusuf looks down at the guitar. He strums a C chord. "It's still there. Right where I remember it." Then a G. Then a D.

The sun is now up and Fauzia comes down stairs. Unbeknownst to Yusuf, she sees him playing the guitar. She looks up, as if to Heaven, places her hand on her heart, and smiles. She walks into the kitchen. She comes out with a cup of coffee and walks into the sitting room. "This is amazing," Yusuf says. "I can't believe I deprived myself of this joy for so long." Fauzia asks smiling, "I take it you still know how to play?" Yusuf responds "good enough to probably teach Muhammad a chord or two." They laugh and Fauzia kisses Yusuf.

Yusuf practices guitar and sings his Cat Steven's song "Morning Has Broken." Fauzia leans in the doorway watching—in awe of her husband's beautiful music. She closes her eyes and smiles. Yusuf screws up one of the lyrics and stops playing. He tells Fauzia, grinning, "I'm going to have to relearn all of my songs." Fauzia tells him to wait right here, "I have something that might help you out." Yusuf shakes his head as if to say, "What is she up to now?" From the other room, Fauzia tells Yusuf to close his eyes. She walks up and places the box of previously discarded Cat Stevens albums on his lap. Yusuf feels the weight of the box on his lap and opens his eyes. He almost embraces the box as he sees his albums sticking out of the top. He smiles and looks at Fauzia, "You're unbelievable."

Royal Albert Hall, London 2003

Backstage Yusuf talks with his brother David. "I'm nervous," Yusuf says. "You've played a thousand concerts. You'll be great," David reassures him. David tells him that someone is here to visit. Alun enters the dressing room carrying a guitar case. Yusuf and Alun embrace. Alun then opens up the guitar case revealing Yusuf's favorite guitar: "I thought you might like to have this back." Yusuf hugs Alun once again. He then looks at Alun in the eyes with his hand on his shoulder, "you're an amazing friend, Alun."

Yusuf walks on stage to a standing ovation. He sits on his stool and tells the audience “It’s a great privilege to be here. It’s a long time since I’ve been doing this kind of work. “ The crowd applauds. “Thank you. In the mean time I have been working. Doing other things: In education and relief. The eradication of poverty, helping those less fortunate and educating our children is definitely the way to peace. I’d like to do a song that has something to do with that. You probably recognize this.” He begins to play “Peace Train.” The crowd again erupts.

Heathrow Airport, London, 2004

Yusuf’s live version of “Peace Train” continues to play as we see Yusuf board a plane for Washington D.C. His daughter Maymanah accompanies him. The song plays as he looks out the window. He seems at peace. He smiles and reaches over and holds his daughter’s hand.

In the interior of the cockpit, we hear the pilots getting instructions to not land in Washington. Instead, they are told there are security orders to land the plane in Maine. The captain gets on the intercom and informs the passengers that the plane must make a brief stop in Bangor, Maine before continuing on to Washington D.C. Passengers are talking to each other confused by the sudden change of flight plans. Yusuf tells Maymanah that it’s probably just refuelling, “ If we don’t land in Washington in time for the connection I can reschedule for the next flight to Nashville.”

The plane lands in Bangor and there are several unmarked government vehicles with red lights flashing. Once again the passengers begin to talk amongst themselves. The front door of the plane opens and six plain-clothed government agents board. They immediately approach Yusuf. “Are you Yusuf Islam?” “Why yes. I am.” An agent tells him they are going to need him to come with them. “But why? I don’t understand. I’m here with my daughter--I’m travelling for a music project. What is this about?” The agent again asks, “You are Yusuf Islam?” Yusuf nods and says “yes.” The agent replies “things will be a lot easier if you just come with us—peacefully.” Yusuf looks at his daughter whose eyes are welling up with tears, “I’ll be fine Maymanah. I’ll meet you in Washington.” As Yusuf is escorted off the plane, Maymanah shouts, “Where are you taking my father?” Yusuf turns his head around and calmly says to her, “Everything will be OK.”

Hampstead Garden, London 2004

Muhammad plays guitar in front of the television. He suddenly sees a photo of his father, “Mummy! Get in here! Daddy’s on TV.” Fauzia rushes in from the kitchen. By this time his other sisters have entered the room. They all stand in front of the TV as the newscaster says “Yusuf Islam, formerly known as Cat Stevens, was apprehended today on a scheduled flight from Heathrow to Dulles International Airport in Washington DC. The plane was apparently diverted to Bangor, Maine, where it landed safely. US officials reportedly entered the plane and escorted Mr. Islam to an unknown location for questioning. Sources tell us that they believe Mr. Islam may be linked to terrorist activity.” As she hears this, tears roll down Fauzia’s cheek. Her hand covers her mouth. She looks deathly scared. The two daughters rush to their mother’s side. Muhammad asks, “Is Daddy going to be OK?” Fauzia, hesitating at first, says, “Oh God, I hope so. She looks at them each individually, “We all must pray for your father.”

Bangor, Maine 2004

Yusuf is seated at a table. There are two men in the room with him and several others watch from the next room through one-way glass. “What is your name?” Agent One asks. “I told you. I’m Yusuf Islam.” The other man, Agent Two, asks, “But that’s not your real name, is it?” Yusuf tells them that it’s his assumed Muslim name, “I was born Steven Georgiou.” This confuses Agent One, “Wait, I thought your name used to be Cat Stevens.” “That was my stage name,” is Yusuf’s response. Agent Two whispers something in Agent One’s ear. Agent One then asks Yusuf where he lives. “I told you, I live in London. Born and raised.” Agent Two asks if he has ever lived in Saudi Arabia. “Never. I have visited a couple times on peacekeeping missions. And, of course, made a holy pilgrimage to Mecca. But I’ve never lived there.” In the next room, the Commander says, “Our man is listed as a Saudi citizen. Something isn’t adding up.” He gets on the intercom and tells Agent One to please come here. As Agent One leaves the interrogation room, Agent Two continues talking to Yusuf, “I can’t believe you quit. I really enjoyed your music.” Yusuf laughs, “I have heard that from many people. I’m actually working on some new material. It’s the reason why I am travelling to Nashville.” Back in the other room, the Commander tells Agent One to ask Yusuf how he spells his name, “Our guy spells his name Y-o-u-se-f.” Agent One returns to the interrogation and asks Yusuf how he spells his name. “Y-u-s-u-f I-s-l-a-m.” “Have you ever spelled it Y-o-u-s-e-f?” asks Agent One. “No. I spell it the way Joseph does

in the Qur'an—with two U's." Agent One follows up, "have you seen it spelled that way—with an O and an E." Yusuf smiles, "Of course. You can also spell it Y-u-s-E-f or Y-o-u-s-S-e-f. It's a very common Muslim name." Agent Two says "makes sense to me."

Yusuf and Agent Two walk down a hotel hallway. Another agent walks behind. "We just need to check your story, Mr. Islam. I think we may have made a mistake here—and for that I certainly apologize." Yusuf responds, "As your President often says 'Everything changed on September 11th.'" "You're not kidding," is Agent Two's response.

From inside a hotel room, we see the door open and Yusuf and the Agent enter. "I hope this room will be OK," Agent Two says. "It will be just fine, thank you," says a smiling Yusuf. "Feel free to order some room service. I'll be back in the morning. There will be an Agent stationed outside your door tonight, so don't try to flee," Agent Two says smiling." He exits and Yusuf lays back on the bed and let's out a sigh of relief.

The next morning, Agent Two knocks on Yusuf's hotel room door. Upon answering, the agent tells Yusuf to please sit down. Yusuf looks worried as he takes a seat on the edge of the bed. The agent pulls up a chair, "We obviously made a big mistake here. But this is protocol—something we had to look into." Yusuf nods. The agent continues, "I hate to use the word 'deportation,' because that sounds like you did something wrong. But the Government has to do some final investigation and paperwork before you can continue on your trip in the United States. We're going to put you on a plane back to London. I'm sure you'll be able to come back soon and tend to your business." Yusuf says he understands. "Again, Mr. Islam," says the agent, "I'm very sorry for the inconvenience and trouble this may have caused you."

Yusuf and Agent Two drive to the airport. Looking a bit embarrassed, the agent says, "I do have a favor to ask you, Mr. Islam." "Of course. And, please, call me Yusuf." Agent Two pulls out a paper bag from under the seat. From the bag he reveals a copy of the album *Tea For The Tillerman*, "I know this is very inappropriate and I would understand if you didn't want to. But, like I said, I am a big fan. Do you think you'd mind signing this for me?" Yusuf laughs, "Not at all." While Yusuf pulls out a pen, he asks the agent how he'd like him to sign it, "Yusuf or Cat?" The agent says, "It's up to you." Yusuf tells the agent that it took a long time to

embrace Cat Stevens once again, “But I realized that because I now go by ‘Yusuf’ does not mean that Cat Stevens isn’t still a part of me. I wrote these songs and many still have a positive place in society.” Yusuf signs the album “Yusuf Islam...AKA...Cat Stevens.” Agent Two adds, “Well, I’m just glad we weren’t responsible for ending your comeback.” Yusuf smiles, “Me, too.”

Somewhere above the Atlantic Ocean, 2004

Cat Steven’s song “The Wind” plays as Yusuf flies back to London. As he looks out the window, we once again see him reliving the drowning scene. But that memory quickly fades as he sees the celestial marvel of the clouds out the window. He then begins to see the positive things in his life. We see Fauzia laughing as Yusuf gives baby Hassanah an Eskimo kiss. We see him teaching Muhammad to play the guitar. His youngest daughter jumps on his lap and they laugh. Him looking over Mecca and feeling spiritually complete.

The song continues to play as he gets off the plane. We see Yusuf carrying his guitar case, walking away, down the concourse and out of sight as the Cat Steven’s song “Wild World” plays over the closing credits.

The End.