

Shabe Siah

Draft 12

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TITLE ANIMATION

A solid concrete wall looms large, imposing and unbroken. A sudden, sharp crack forms across the wall, spreading like a jagged spiderweb. Within the cracks, fragments of women's faces emerge. From the fragmented eyes, blood tears begin to flow, slowly at first, then in a steady, relentless stream. The tears spill down the wall, pooling at the base. The pools of blood start to merge, forming small rivulets that grow and swell into a roaring river of blood. As the river surges, its waters shape and distort, slowly transforming into calligraphic letters. They spell out: **"Shabe Siah"**

[FADE TO BLACK]

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - DAWN

Morning sunlight streams through a small window, spilling across the bare, soulless cell. Sunbeams illuminate writings on the wall. The room is starkly empty, save for a stained mattress on the floor. Mona (big eyes, long hair) lies on the mattress, her shabby skirt crumpled around her. The golden light highlights the stillness of her form as she stirs awake.

She turns her gaze to see the dust softly dancing through the rays of light.

A solitary tear weaves down her cheek.

Her eyes turn to the clock mounted on the wall. It reads **6:55 AM**. The rhythmic ticking is faint but unrelenting.

Mona's focus lifts to the window, where the morning sky glows brighter than ever, starkly contrasted by the shadows within the room.

A shadow appears behind the door.

SHADOW

Psst..

Mona freezes as a voice whispers:

SHADOW (CONT'D)

Mona, catch these. I'll never forget you, my friend.

A pack of cigarettes is thrown through the window. Mona catches the box.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

INT. PARTY ROOM. NIGHT

Mona catches a pack of cigarettes in a busy house-party. Lights strobe as three drunk men and women stumble past her. Through the crowd she looks to a tall, handsome man. They share a smile. The beat of the music and drunken screeching encompasses the room.

MONA

Thank you!

He playfully pretends not to hear over the beat.

OMID

What?!

He gives a charming smile and winks. She blushes.

OMID (CONT'D)

It looks like it's going to be a beautiful Yalda night. The longest night of the year finally came into use.

CUT BACK TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - DAWN . CONTINUED

The door to the cell swings open, Alavi, a butch and broad, stern guard wearing a black chaddor, enters, her expression cold and accusatory.

GUARD ALAVI

Even on your last day, you can't resist sinning. Dragging others down with you.

Mona looks at her, silent. Alavi steps closer, her voice dripping with disdain.

GUARD ALAVI (CONT'D)

Your friend is going to receive her punishment for helping you. A punishment far worse than you deserve. And You won't get away just because you're gonna die.

She gestures to the window, her tone turning sharper.

GUARD ALAVI (CONT'D)

You don't deserve even a glimpse of the sky. Not after everything you've done ... Let's see how you enjoy your last day without even that sliver of freedom.

Alavi turns and walks out, slamming the door behind her.

Mona sits there, panicking, her eyes darting to the faint writings on the wall, searching for some comfort or meaning in the dim light. she reads: "My life is nearing its end, but with each passing moment, new pains and burdens continue to pile up."

After a few seconds of silence, the light fades from the writings on the wall, swallowed by the encroaching dimness as Alavi approaches the window from outside covering the window fully by a heavy cloth. The once-visible scrawls blur into shadows, unreadable now in the darkening cell.

Mona looks up to the window and the trapped sunlight. She sits motionless, she takes out the cigarette pack clutching it tightly, staring at the now-covered window.

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - NOON

A metal tray of food, in the form of brown sludge, slides beneath the door and lands beside Mona's feet.

She stands up and swiftly kicks it away from her while placing a cigarette on her lips.

She closes her eyes and looks up to the ceiling. A male voice emerges from the silence.

OMID

Happy Yalda night love. I think it has become our destiny to have our lives' most important days on this day!

Mona turns in shock.

Omid (tall, dark hair) leans nonchalantly on the wall.

Mona stares at him. Her body entirely frozen. Her cigarette stuck to her lips.

MONA

(With a bitter smile)

It's a strange sarcasm. Today is

already the longest night of my life!

He walks past her and sees her untouched food tray.

OMID

My darling, If you're trying to *starve* yourself, you won't get there before..

He sits and pats a patch of ground beside him; ushering her over. Sheepishly, she puts out the cigarette and hides it beneath the mattress before joining him on the ground. She sits silently. He tenderly brushes the hairs that cover her eyes.

OMID (CONT'D)

In all our years together, I don't think I ever saw your eyes like this

MONA

I fear that there's nothing left of the me that you loved.

OMID

What happened to her?

MONA

She got buried next to you.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

INT. MONA AND OMID'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Three people are dressed in black in the living room. A picture of Omid has a black ribbon draped over it, with two lit candles in front. The room is filled with muted cries.

Mona with puffy eyes and dead expression stands in a corner. People come over to hug her, but she steps away from them.

CUT BACK TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - NOON . CONTINUED

The ticking of the clocks gets more and more prevalent and snaps her out of her vision. Footsteps make their way down the corridor behind the door. She sits up onto her knees and puts her ear against the door.

MONA

(Softly)

Miss Alavi? Are you there?

There is no response but Mona sees her shadow under the door.

MONA (CONT'D)

If this is to be my last sunset, may I
ask that the window be uncovered. Just
for a moment?

GUARD ALAVI

(Through the door)

I'm preparing you for the darkness
ahead dear child. Maybe then he'll be
merciful.

The shadow under the door moves on.

Mona rests her head on the door. Defeated. She takes a breath
and turns to speak to Omid. He is gone. She is alone.

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Mona's fingers trace across messages written onto the
concrete walls by women before her - their dying testaments.
One reads: "God should beg for *my* forgiveness." other reads:
"Every inch of this wall is a shout out that we were here!"

Soft piano score begins, her fingers finish their journey as
she reaches the dampened light of the window. She sits on the
ground and looks up at it. She mutters to herself.

MONA

Please. God... one last time?

The silhouette appears from the other side of the cloth.

Fear strikes Mona's face. She squeezes her eyes shut like a
child, as if what she can't see doesn't exist. As she stands,
glued to the spot, a ray of sunlight appears on her face.

She opens her eyes to see that the cloth is gone and what
remains is a crumpled note between two bars. There is a sound
of hurried footsteps walking from the window.

Mona smiles wildly as the sunlight reflects on her now
watering eyes. She laughs like a person who has almost
forgotten how to.

OMID

(From behind her)

There she is.

He places his chin on her shoulder. They both smile up at the

light.

The Score intensifies and they begin to hold one another. As the music builds, they dance through the dappled beams.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

INT. MONA AND OMID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mona and Omid hold each other in the center of the living room, dancing to a classic Iranian love song. They are happy, at peace.

Omid gently kisses Mona's hands, one of which holds a matching wedding ring. He gestures for her to wait, then quickly jumps to the other side of the room.

Omid returns with a small, velvet box from his bag. He hands it to Mona with a soft smile.

MONA opens the box to find a delicate necklace inside, with a card that reads: "To the most kind-hearted woman I know, to my savior. I'm so proud of you, and I'll be even prouder as your career continues to flourish. P.s: Happy Yalda night. It's amazing to spend the longest night of the year with you just because it means I can have you a little more"

MONA smiles widely and hugs OMID, spinning in his arms. She playfully screams with delight.

CUT BACK TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON . CONTINUED

The shafts of light illuminate the writings on the wall and outline the shadow of the dance - Mona's shadow is dancing alone.

As she pirouettes she catches sight of the shadow and stops. She looks back at Omid and then to the shadow again. As she turns her head to see Omid once more something catches her eye on the window.

Slowly she walks towards it and picks it up. It is a crumpled-up note holding a small piece of chalk. Mona looks around at the writings on the walls. she looks at the note once more to see a message scribbled onto the paper. it reads: "I'm sorry that this has happened to you."

Mona sits down on her mattress and stares watery-eyed into nothing - still holding the note. Omid watches from a shaded

corner.

MONA

There's nothing of me left. All I was
and everything I could've been - he
took it.

OMID

Who?

MONA

You know who.

OMID

I'm not asking because I don't know.
I'm asking because you need to say it.
Before you die, you need to speak
about this-your first and last time,
with someone who can help you find
peace.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

EXT. ROOFTOP - EVENING

Mona, dressed in black, stands on the rooftop, smoking. A set
of pictures featuring Mona and Omid lies on the floor,
creating a memorial for Omid. Vases of flowers, cards,
candles and gifts surround the photos.

A darkly dressed figure emerges from the stairway in the
distance, moving towards Mona.

MONA (VO)

and what good would that do. he
already shackles my mind in every
moment and that can't be fixed.

CUT BACK TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON . CONTINUED

OMID

I wish I could take those memories
from you.

MONA

Before you, I hated men-for the
control they had, the control I wanted
for myself. But you were different.
You didn't try to change me; you let
me

find my own way. That freedom was something that I wasn't about to waste.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

EXT. ROOFTOP - EVENING . CONTINUED

MONA (VO)

But... everything changed in a single glance.

The man stands next to Mona lighting a cigarette. he turns and looks at Mona with a malevolent smirk.

Mona stares confused at him- speechless. Mona moves away from him a little bit.

MONA

I know all of omid's friends and co-workers but I have never seen you. where did you know my husband from?

CUT BACK TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON . CONTINUED

Omid doesn't know how to react and just looks at Mona.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

EXT. ROOFTOP - EVENING . CONTINUED

The Man grabs Mona by each wrist and pushes her down onto the ground. She screams out - flailing her body in every direction in an attempt to wriggle free.

He covers her mouth with his hand and places his entire body weight onto her knees. He unzips his jeans.

From underneath him she manages to break one hand free. She strains further and pushes her arm out. She sees the vase in the corner of her eye and tries to reach for it but it is too far away.

She frantically claws at the cloth that holds the memorial, trying to pull herself closer to the vase. She just manages to brush it with her fingertips and knocks it on its side. It rolls just within reach. She picks it up and with all of her force smashes the mans skull, sending pieces of glass over both of them.

There is a moment of silence as Mona lay frozen with shock before blood drops fall on her face and the man falls next to her on his face.

Mona Pushes her palms on the ground, she barely stands up above him and looks at her bloody sleeves.

CUT BACK TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT:

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - LATE AFTERNOON . CONTINUED

MONA

I defended myself... and I payed the ultimate price. I can just be part of a wall from now on.

Mona looks painfully at the chalk in her fist. Omid holds her hand, places it in his and hold it against his lips.

MONA (CONT'D)

I see him in my nightmares. Sometimes he's not a rapist-just an ordinary man with a family. But then he dies... and it's me who killed him.

she begins to panic.

MONA (CONT'D)

I'm a murderer. I took a child's chance to play with his father, a mother's chance to hold her son. But I had no choice. Seven months later, I still don't know what's right.

OMID

Listen to me. You and that child are both victims. There's no right in this.

Omid holds Mona's quivering body in his arms.

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - DAWN

The clock on the wall ticks louder than ever. The sound of Guard Alavi's steel-capped boots synchronies with the relentless rythm, and the clock's arrival at 5 AM is punctuated by Alavi's batton colliding with the metal door.

GUARD ALAVI

Stand!

Mona lies on her back like a board on her mattress. Her eyes couldn't be wider. Alavi looks at her and nods to two other guards at the door.

The guards flood the room and take Mona by the arms, lifting her dead-weight to her feet. She barely stands with terror.

A piece of chalk is lying on the floor beside her mattress. Written on the wall above is a message that reads: "At the end of the dark night there's light"

Mona's feet brush the cell floor, her eyes heavy with unspoken emotions as she leaves solitary confinement behind.

ANIMATION - PRISON HALLWAY - DAWN

Hanging ropes emerge, obscuring Mona's face. The camera dives into her eyes, traveling through a hallway of memories, where fragments of her past unfold simultaneously. It exits from the back of her head, pulling us into the present.

A narrow prison hallway, trembling in uneven pencil strokes, stretches into darkness. Its walls flicker, hastily sketched, rough, and unfinished.

Mona steps forward, her faint colors the only warmth in a monochrome world. Two shifting shadows trail behind-smudged ink, their edges bleeding and rippling in restless motion.

She pauses. Her breath, quick, jagged strokes. The shadows pause too, but never still.

ANIMATION - PRISON YARD - DAWN

A painterly prison yard emerges-faded charcoal strokes, the ground a wash of muted greys and browns, bleeding like damp ink. Dawn's fragile light bathes the yard.

At the center, Mona stands, her once-delicate form now trembling with overworked lines. Her eyes snap open, blinks exaggerated, her disoriented movements shattering the stillness.

The hanging rack looms, a crude, unfinished shape, its lines shaky, as if drawn by an unsteady hand. The wooden

The camera shifts-Alavi steps forward, her form a bold, heavy ink stroke. Her hand morphs as she reaches, erased and redrawn.

A blindfold tightens-the screen darkens, charcoal smudges

swallowing the light in hurried strokes.

MONA'S POV:

The darkness isn't complete-through the haze of the blindfold, a soft white glow lingers, untouched. Omid appears, sketched in fluid, golden strokes, his edges loose, glowing-unbound by the rigid world around him.

OMID

(Softly Whispering)

I'm here, my love. Don't be afraid.
Death is not something to fear. What's
truly terrifying is living in a world
like this. Let go of the pain. Come to
me, and I'll hold you.

Silence, except for the flutter of birds, drawn in light, incomplete lines, their wings flickering like unfinished thoughts. Their chirping cuts through the void-a bittersweet echo of life beyond these lines.

The frame tightens-Mona's colors fade, delicate blues and oranges bleeding into grey as she stands in front of the noose.

INT. HANGING RACK - DAWN

Mona is blindfolded. Her breathes are heavy.

A moment of stillness.

The camera goes back as the rope goes around Mona's head and Alavi tightens it.

A harsh sound is heard as the rope gets pulled.

The screen fades-not smoothly. The last sound: a single bird's cry, soft, distant-soaring beyond the paper sky.

END