

AMIRA

by  
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Current Revisions by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. EGYPTIAN DESERT - AFTERNOON

An endless sea of sand beneath a blazing purple sky fringed with pink, shining down on the desert.

In the distance, THE SPHINX.

A major excavation site filled with workers shoveling earth and stone. A widening block of sunlight illuminates their dusty shadows.

The Diggers are busy hauling rock and dirt out of the ground.

Few western Egyptologists are supervising the dig.

One of the diggers is a handsome, muscular MAN with intense piercing eyes. His name is TAREQ, in his early 30's.

MAN (O.S.)  
(in Arabic)  
Hello Tareq.

Tareq instinctively smiles as he walks over to greet ATWA, an intense looking, bearded man in his mid 40's.

TAREQ  
Brother Atwa, that's a nice surprise. What brings you to the middle of the desert?

ATWA  
I came to check up on you, brother. Shiekh Hasan asked me about you the other day, so I thought I should come here and see you.

TAREQ  
God bless you, and Shiekh Hasan. How's he doing?

ATWA  
He's fine. Listen when do you finish work?

TAREQ  
I can leave any time. What's on your mind?

ATWA  
Let's go have a cup of tea.

EXT. DESERT TOWN - LATER

Turbaned, bearded men. Women covered in black veils from head to toe, walk through the narrow, half-paved main city street.

Tareq and Atwa sit at an outside table of a local coffee shop, smoking HOOKA...

ATWA

... You know, it amazes me how you turned your life around, from a street fighter into an honest working man. I'm proud of you brother.

TAREQ

If not for Shiekh Hasan and yourself, none of this would've happened. I'd probably be in some jail by now... Instead, I'm working, praying five times a day and taking care of all my religious duties. Thank god. I owe my life to Shiekh Hasan.

ATWA

Do you really feel this way, Tareq?

TAREQ

Of course I do. I'm a man of my word. I don't say anything if I don't truly mean it.

ATWA

Well I'm very glad to hear this, because Shiekh Hasan will be calling upon you very soon.

TAREQ

For what?

ATWA

For a great mission, brother. A mission that would greatly please the Shiekh, it would also please god and the prophet.

TAREQ

I am ready, brother Atwa, more than ready for anything to serve the Shiekh and Islam.

ATWA

God bless you, Tareq. I knew you're an honorable man and we can count on you.

TAREQ

Anything you need, just tell me, order me.

ATWA

OK, I'll tell you...

Tareq is listening intently.

ATWA

... Shiekh Hasan called me few days ago and gave me some disturbing news about an Egyptian woman, named Amira, living abroad.

TAREQ

Why? What did she do?

ATWA

She insulted Islam.

TAREQ

God forbid. How did she do that?

ATWA

It's a long story and we're still gathering information. Don't concern yourself with that at this point. But here's what we want you to do, we want you to help us collect more information on her, until we decide what to do.

TAREQ

Sure. I'm ready.

ATWA

The only problem is, she lives in America.

TAREQ

America??

Atwa nods.

TAREQ

I don't care even if she lives at the corner of Earth. But how will I find her?

ATWA

Don't worry about that. Everything is taken care of, even your living expenses. You don't have to worry about a thing. All I need you to do at this point is to report to me all her movements. Every person she comes in contact with. We need to know everything about her until we decide her fate.

TAREQ

I'm at your service. When do you want me to leave?

ATWA

As soon as possible. How soon can you be ready?

TAREQ

Anytime. As you know, I have no family, no one cares where I am or what I'm doing.

ATWA

That's even better. I'll be back in a week to get you all the paper work you'll need.

As Atwa gets up to leave, he reaches inside his pocket and hands Tareq a picture.

ATWA

This is the girl... I'll see you in a week. Get ready.

They shake hands as Atwa leaves.

Tareq stares at the picture. It's of a very beautiful girl in her late teens, with long dark hair and somewhat sad eyes.

EXT. A STREET IN A SMALL EGYPTIAN TOWN - DAY

Moving through the small city streets. The minaret of the only mosque in town dot the skyline.

Traders and dealers and merchants move around, all talking very quickly and very emphatically.

In the center of the market place there is a small cigarette and newspaper store, a tiny wooden structure in the main city square.

The owner is HICHAM, in his mid 40's, bearded, dressed in a long, white traditional Arab robe. Hicham is tall, fit, the years of hardship has taken over his once handsome face.

He hands a pack of cigarettes to one of the locals as the man hands him some change.

HICHAM

Thank you brother. God bless you.

MAN

God bless you too, brother Hicham.

Another local picks up a newspaper from the pile next to the store. He hands Hicham some change and walks away.

Hicham checks his watch, then quickly walks out and locks the door, a man walks over to him.

MAN

Where are you going brother Hicham?  
I want to buy a pack of cigarettes.

HICHAM

I'm sorry brother, It's getting  
close to prayer time, need to go  
home and get ready.

The man shakes his head and walks away as Hicham rushes out of the store.

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - LATER

Very simple and warm. A small black and white TV monitor plays a show in Arabic as a 10-year-old girl watches.

Her grandmother, HAGGA WAHIBA sits on a couch close to the girl, peeling potatoes. Hagga Wahiba is in her late 50's, and wears a white head scarf.

Something gets the girl's attention as she watches, it's a tall skyline.

GIRL  
Grandmother, look, this is America.  
It's where my mother lives.

Hagga Wahiba is startled. The words got her attention. She immediately gets up and turns off the TV.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Suha, how many times I told you not  
to mention this name around here!  
Do you know what would your uncle  
do if he heard you?

Suha lowers her eyes as she politely nods.

SUHA  
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Just go to your room now, no more  
TV for you. You should be studying  
rather than sticking your nose in  
things that don't mean a thing.

Suha nods as she starts to walk toward her bedroom, she then turns and looks at Wahiba.

SUHA  
For how long are you going to be  
angry with me grandma?

HAGGA WAHIBA  
(hiding a smile)  
And why is that?

SUHA  
Because I'm getting hungry.

Wahiba fights a smile as she looks at Suha.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Be patient sweetheart, the potatoes  
are almost ready.

SUHA  
Potatoes? Again?

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Suha, stop it. You should thank god  
we have food on the table...  
Anyways, stop wasting time and go  
study.

Suha turns to walk to her room, but at that moment the front door opens and Hicham walks in, Suha runs to him and gives him a big hug.

HICHAM  
Al Salam alaikum (Hello in Arabic).

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Wa Alaikum Al Salam son. Give me few minutes and the food will be ready.

SUHA  
Yeah, the potatoes will be ready... Again!

Wahiba smiles and shakes her head as she walks into the kitchen.

SUHA  
Uncle, when are we going to the store to buy new clothes for the feast? It's only a month away.

HICHAM  
(smiling)  
You know, Suha, it shocks me sometimes how certain things never slip your mind. Anyways, we'll go soon, if god willing.

SUHA  
Oh no!

HICHAM  
What?

SUHA  
Whenever you say if god willing, I know you're only buying time.

HICHAM  
No honey. When I say if god willing, I truly mean it, because everything in our lives happens at the will of god. He, and only he decides what we should and shouldn't do, remember that.

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - LATER

Everyone is eating silently.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Hicham, you're not going to believe what happened today.

HICHAM

What? Mother?

HAGGA WAHIBA

That lady, our next door neighbor, came and told me she found a wonderful girl for you.

SUHA

She did?

HICHAM

(laughs and shakes his head)

Mother, you know this is the last thing on my mind.

HAGGA WAHIBA

But why? You are the best man out there, son. All the girl would love to be with you.

HICHAM

(sighing)

That was long time ago, mother. I'm old now. I wish I can bring back time.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Don't say that. You're still young, you have your health, what else do you need?

HICHAM

What else do I need? How about money? You think marriage is cheap these days? I barely make enough for us, how can I bring another soul into this house?

HAGGA WAHIBA

Don't think like that. You know what they say, a woman comes and brings luck for her and her new family.

Hicham smiles as he gets up.

HICHAM

It's time to pray. I'll see you all later.

He quickly leaves as his mother watches him and shakes her head.

INT. MOSQUE - LATER

Hicham and about thirty other men kneel down, performing the Friday prayer... leading them is Shiekh Hasan, a bearded, rough looking man in his late 60's.

The prayer is over. Men get up and shake each other's hands with big smiles. Hicham walks over to Shiekh Hasan.

HICHAM

Al Salamu alaikum, Shiekh Hasan.

SHIEKH HASAN

Wa alaikum Al Salam brother Hicham.  
How are you, how is the family?

HICHAM

Everyone is fine Shiekh Hasan,  
thank god. All we want is your  
blessings.

SHIEKH HASAN

May God protect you my brother.

Hicham kisses the Shiekh's hand then walks away. The Shiekh keeps looking at him as Atwa appears.

ATWA

Al Salamu alaikum Shiekh Hasan.

SHIEKH HASAN

Wa alaikum Al Salam Atwa. Any news yet?

ATWA

I need few more days, as you know,  
this is a very sensitive matter, I  
want to make sure I got the facts  
right.

SHIEKH HASAN

God bless you, Atwa, you are an  
honest man and I trust your  
judgement.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Tareq stands next to Atwa. He has a small suitcase and getting ready to board the train. Atwa hands him an envelope.

ATWA  
Everything you need is in this envelope. Be careful Tareq and remember, no one knows about this except you, me and Shiekh Hasan.

TAREQ  
I will.

A beat.

ATWA  
How do you feel?

TAREQ  
I feel great and proud that you and Shiekh Hasan are counting on me.

ATWA  
Indeed we are, Tareq. You are our soldier.

They hug each other, then Atwa turns and leaves. Tareq reaches inside his pocket and pulls out the picture. He brings it closer to his face and stares at it.

Close on the girl's eyes as they blink...

EXT. VENICE BEACH - CALIFORNIA - DAY

It's that same girl in the picture, now few years older but still as pretty. AMIRA is now 25, with long dark hair. She holds a bottle of sun-block lotion as she smiles at a TV camera.

This is the Venice Beach Boardwalk, and Amira, along with a TV crew and countless number of admirers and on-lookers are right in the middle of it, shooting a commercial.

Amira squeezes the bottle on her beautiful golden shoulders and starts rubbing the liquid as she keeps smiles, that's when the crowd explodes with applaude and whistles.

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR  
And... CUT!

Cameras are off. Amira's smile quickly fades as she turns and starts to make her way towards a VAN parked on the side.

A MAN emerges from the crowd, in his mid 30's with short dark hair... Somehow he stands out from everyone else with the way he stares at Amira, watching her every move.

Ahmad catches up with her.

AHMAD

Amira, wait.

Amira stops and looks at him as she paints a big smile on her face. Ahmad is in his mid 30's. Tall and attractive, dressed in a very expensive Armani suit.

AMIRA

So, Ahmad, did you like it?

AHMAD

Liked it? I LOVED IT! But then I can't think of anything you do that I don't like.

Her face turns red.

AMHAD

I really appreciate this, Amira. A big movie star like you taking the time to advertise our products, this is great.

AMIRA

Like I told you, Ahmad, I do anything for my friends.

AMHAD

(teasing)

All your friends?

AMIRA

(smiling)

Well, some are more special than others.

They both laugh and look at each other.

JULIAN (O.S.)

Amira, we need to get going, darling.

Julian is Amira's manager. A very large eccentric man in his 40's. He has bleached hair and wears an earring. He quickly whisks Amira toward the van.

AHMAD

Am I going to see you later?

AMIRA

Call me.

A crowd gather around them. People try to make their way to her with pencils and pieces of paper for her autograph. But Julian keeps pushing her toward the van. Finally she's in.

Julian sits next to her as the van starts to move away from the crowd.

A car makes a quick U-turn and starts behind them. The driver is that same strange man who was watching Amira earlier.

EXT. THE PACIFIC OCEAN - MORNING

A lone palm tree rises up into a clear morning sky. Behind it, the sparkling blue of the Pacific Ocean and the city of Los Angeles.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - AFTERNOON

Tareq stands in front of TOM BRADLEY INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL, moments later, a YELLOW CAB comes to a streaking halt in front of him.

The driver quickly gets out and starts loading Tareq's suitcase in the trunk.

TAREQ

(thick English accent)

Excuse me, what are you doing?

CAB DRIVER

(similar accent)

Are you waiting for someone?

TAREQ

No.

The driver looks impatient as he shakes his head.

CAB DRIVER

Listen, do you want to go to the city or not?

TAREQ

Yes I do.

CAB DRIVER

By the way the meter is running...  
has been running for...(checks his  
watch) five minutes. You already  
owe me money, so you better get in.

Tareq shakes his head as he enters the car.

INT. YELLOW CAB - MOMENTS LATER

The driver, an eccentric man in his late 30's, fights his way  
out of the airport as he keeps cursing other drivers.

TAREQ

Are all drivers crazy like you in  
America?

CAB DRIVER

Yes! Where Are you from?

TAREQ

Egypt.

The driver looks at Tareq through the rear view mirror and  
bursts out laughing.

CAB DRIVER

I knew it, I swear, the moment I  
laid my eyes on you, I knew you're  
from my country.

TAREQ

You're Egyptian?

CAB DRIVER

(in Arabic)

Flesh and blood. Well I shouldn't  
lie, it's not flesh and blood  
anymore, after fifteen years in  
America, it's McDonald and Burger  
king, that's what running inside me  
instead of blood.

Tareq forces a smile.

The driver reaches with his hand into the back seat and  
shakes hands with Tareq.

CAB DRIVER

My name is Hussain, but you can call me Hank.

TAREQ

Hank?

HUSSAIN

Is this your first time in America?

TAREQ

Yes.

HUSSAIN

Well you better find yourself an easy American name my friend, or else no one will talk to you. What's your name?

TAREQ

Tareq.

HUSSAIN

OK. Well... lets see... what about Tom?

TAREQ

I'll tell you what, Hussain, forget my new name. Do you know a good hotel I can go to?

HUSSAIN

Why? You don't have any relatives here?

Tareq shakes his head.

HUSSAIN

You came here for vacation or business or what?

TAREQ

Business. I'll be here for few months.

HUSSAIN

OK. Listen, you look like a decent guy, I have an extra room in my place, I can rent it to you. Don't spend your money on hotels.

TAREQ

Sounds good. How far do you live from Malibu?

HUSSAIN

Malibu? Why?

TAREQ

Because I want to be close to it. I heard it's a nice place.

HUSSAIN

Nice place, yes. But for super rich people... yes I'm close, I live in Santa Monica.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - LATE AFTERNOON

Beach front properties in an exclusive and private part of Malibu.

A 10-year-old girl sits in front of one of those houses reading a book. The house is a two-story Mediterranean villa with large windows and balcony.

Amira walks out of the house and sits next to the girl.

AMIRA

How are you Lamia?

LAMIA

Hi Miss Amira.

AMIRA

What are you doing?

LAMIA

Oh I just finished reading this book.

AMIRA

Nice. What's it about?

LAMIA

It's about a prince who saves his princess and then take her away on a white horse. I love it.

AMIRA

(laughs and shakes her head)

AMIRA(cont'd)

I read the same book when I was your age. I loved it too. But too bad it's only a fairy-tale my dear. These things never happen in real life.

LAMIA

How come?

AMIRA

To sacrifice your life for someone means you're truly in love with him, but these days no one is willing to sacrifice anything for anyone. Everything is about money and fame, not about love.

LAMIA

That's so sad... so you never been in love, miss Amira?

Amira thinks about this one.

AMIRA

Not in the past, no. But maybe... maybe there's potential in the future.

LAMIA

(excited)

Who is it? Tell me... tell me.

Amira laughs.

NEFEESA (O.S.)

Lamia, are you bothering miss Amira as usual?

Nefeesa walks out from the house. She's in her late 40's, looks like a house keeper, dressed in traditional Arab clothing.

AMIRA

(smiling)

No Nefeesa, she's not bothering me. We're just having a girl's talk.

LAMIA

Yes grandma. We're having a girl's talk.

NEFEESA

Well, you two better come into the house, dinner is ready.

NEFEESA(cont'd)

And you should get ready to go home  
Lamia, or else your Mom will be  
worried.

Nefeesa walks back into the house as the two girls follow  
her.

INT. HUSSAIN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Hussain is in the living room watching TV. The place is  
simple but nicely decorated. Tareq walks out from a side  
door, nicely dressed in Jeans and white shirt.

HUSSAIN

Man! You've been here for two days  
and you already have a date?

TAREQ

I don't date, that's forbidden in  
our religion, or you forgot?

HUSSAIN

Oh please don't give me that  
bullshit, everybody dates.

TAREQ

Not me.

HUSSAIN

Anyways, how's everything with you  
so far?

TAREQ

Nothing much, I took a drive around  
the area this morning, just to get  
used to driving in this town...  
thanks for lending me your car by  
the way.

HUSSAIN

You are most welcome my friend.  
Anything you need, just ask. When I  
first came here I had to learn  
everything on my own, no one gave  
me anything or offered any help. It  
was really tough. So I know how it  
feels to be new in this country,  
that's why I'm offering my help.

TAREQ

You're a good man, Hussain.

Hussain nods and smiles. Tareq heads for the door.

TAREQ

I'm going for a drive. I'll see you later.

HUSSAIN

OK. I'm going to work soon, I'm working the night shift and I'll be late. But tomorrow night I'm off, we can go out if you like.

TAREQ

Remind me again, how do I get to Malibu?

HUSSAIN

I wrote the directions for you and left it in the car.

TAREQ

Sounds good.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A Toyota Corolla speeds down the dark empty highway.

INT. THE CAR

Tareq gazes straight ahead. A cigarette smolders in his mouth as he relaxes his head back. He then pulls a paper out of his pocket and reads something.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - LATER

The Corolla makes a left turn on a small narrow road, then stops. Tareq gets out... walks few feet on a small dirt road in between the houses and into the beach sand.

It is calm everywhere, except the sound of waves, and the sound of Arabic music coming from the direction of one of the houses behind him.

It's Amira's house.

Tareq walks closer to the house. He then takes that same piece of paper and reads from it. Looks like he found the right one.

He then walks toward the water.

The house door opens, the music is now louder. Then it closes, leaving someone out on the steps. Tareq spots a shadow coming slowly down the stairs into the sand. He keeps walking.

The shadow draws nearer to Tareq's path... it's Amira, in a long dark skirt and white tank-top.

When she sees Tareq coming her way she stops. He stops. It's dark, they can't make out each other's faces.

TAREQ

Hello.

AMIRA

Hello.

Just then, another shadow appears at her doorstep, it's Ahmad.

AHMAD

Amira, what are you doing?

Amira stares at Tareq for few seconds, trying to make his face in the dark... she then turns and walks back toward the house.

Tareq watches her as she walks to the door.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

A small party in progress. Arabic music plays. Amira and Ahmad appear and join another couple, Nabeel and Samia, a husband and wife, both in their early 30's, and then there's Taufeeq, an eccentric, fat man, also in his early 30's.

SAMIA

(smiling)

Oh the love birds are back.

AHMAD

(smiling)

Yes. She tried to run out of the cage, but I got her.

Everyone laughs.

TAUFEEQ

Hey, talk about birds, is there any food in this house?

NABEEL

Man, I swear it's because of you  
they have famine in Africa.

Nefeesa appears from inside the kitchen.

NEFEESA

Oh leave him alone. Come here  
honey, I'll feed you.

Taufeeq is excited, he runs to her.

TAUFEEQ

Nefeesa you are the best, the only  
woman who knows how to treat a real  
man.

Amira walks over to the large window which over looks the  
ocean, and curiously looks out. But can't see anyone. Samia  
joins her as the guys get busy talking.

SAMIA

Hey, what's up?

AMIRA

Nothing. I walked out to get some  
fresh air, and there was this  
guy...

SAMIA

What guy?

AMIRA

I don't know, he said hello, I said  
hello, that was it.

SAMIA

(whispering)  
Cute?

AMIRA

(smiling)  
I don't know, I couldn't see his  
face.

SAMIA

Ahmad was looking for you like  
crazy.

Amira's face turns red as she smiles and lowers her head.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - SAME MOMENT

Tareq is back inside the car. He looks at his watch, it's 1 AM. He thinks for a moment then lowers the seat back and closes his eyes.

MAN (V.O.)

Tareq! Wake up you idiot! You're late for work.

A very rough looking man in his early 50's, dressed in traditional Arab clothing, leans over a 10-year-old boy, roughing him up as he tries to wake him up. The boy looks scared as he tries to get up.

BOY

I'm sorry dad, I over slept.

MAN

Over slept... you no good son of a...

Tareq opens his eyes, startled. His hands over his head, trying to protect his face from the strike. He looks around, it's morning, he's still in the car, in Malibu...

He shakes his head as he walks out of the car and starts to stretch his muscles.

He looks out at the ocean, it's calm and peaceful. The clear blue sky adds shades of purple and green to the ocean water.

At that moment, a garage door slides open. Tareq sees a late model Mercedes Benz and a red convertible VW, and the VW is pulling out, with Amira behind the wheel.

He ducks behind the Corolla as the VW passes by.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - LATER

The VW makes a turn, then comes to a full stop. Amira puts on a pair of sunglasses as she gets out and walks across the street, towards a shopping center.

INT. SHOPPING CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

A sign reads: " Welcome To Malibu Country Mart ".

Amira walks slowly, window shopping. One particular shop gets her attention, and she walks in.

Tareq arrives at the front window of that same shop. He's also wearing sunglasses.

IN THE SHOP

Amira walks around looking at young girl's dresses and sports wear. The shop keeper, a warm looking large woman, looks at Amira and smiles.

SHOP KEEPER  
Shopping for your little girl?

Amira sighs but manages to give the woman a warm smiles.

AMIRA  
Something like that.

She places two dresses on the counter as she gets ready to pay.

SHOP KEEPER  
(recognizing her)  
You're that actress, aren't you?

Amira nods and smiles.

SHOP KEEPER  
You know, I love all your movies,  
you're such a sweetheart.

AMIRA  
Thank you.

OUTSIDE THE SHOP. TAREQ POV

Tareq watches as the shop keeper reaches to Amira and gives her a warm hug. Amira then turns and walks to the door. Tareq immediately turns and faces the other way.

Amira walks out and heads toward an outdoor coffee shop.

COFFEE SHOP. TAREQ POV

Amira sits at a patio table. She reaches inside the shopping bag and takes out a pretty pink dress. There's a sad look in her eyes as she holds the dress and stares at it.

She then reaches inside her purse and picks up a cellphone, seconds later she gets up and heads out, still talking on the cellphone.

Tareq starts to follow her but to his shock, there's another man keeping an eye on her, it's that same man who was watching her during the commercial shoot.

Tareq's attention now shifts to that man as Amira gets in her car and leaves.

EXT. CITY LIGHTS - NIGHT

The endless flicker of white, yellow and blue lights across the city makes it look like a sparkling wide deep ocean.

Tareq and Hussain walk past colorful neon signs, coffee shops and restaurants. They arrive at a purple neon sign. It reads: "THE BLUE BIRD CLUB".

TAREQ

What kind of a place is this?

HUSSAIN

I have no idea my friend. I know I bring and take alot of people from this place with my taxi, so I thought we should come check it out.

TAREQ

It looks weird.

HUSSAIN

Lets go in, maybe we'll find a couple of hot chicks in there.

Tareq rolls his eyes and shakes his head as they walk in.

INT. THE BLUE BIRD CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

A Jukebox plays Gloria Gaynor's "I WILL SURVIVE".

Red and blue lights flash on top of a small crowded dance floor, shared only by Male-Couples. Tareq and Hussain pass through with wide open eyes.

TAREQ

By the way, where exactly are we?

HUSSAIN

That's what I'm trying to figure out.

TAREQ  
All I see is men!

HUSSAIN  
That's what I'm seeing too! Maybe  
the girls are off tonight...?

Hussain suddenly screams, he just got pinched...by a MAN.

EXT. THE BLUE BIRD CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Tareq and Hussain storm out the door and keep running... then finally stop to catch their breath...

TAREQ  
You idiot!... you brought us to a  
MEN'S CLUB!

HUSSAIN  
And how the hell should I know? No  
wonder all my clients were men... I  
always wondered about that.

TAREQ  
Well stop wondering, now you know.

They look at each other and burst out laughing.

HUSSAIN  
Hey listen, I know another place.

TAREQ  
Enough with you and your places,  
I'm going home.

HUSSAIN  
No seriously, this is an Arabic  
place. Trust me you'll like this  
one.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Passing traffic reveal the storefront of a TV showroom.  
Inside, behind the reflection of the city lights, all the TV  
sets show that same commercial, the beautiful image of Amira,  
rubbing the lotion over her shoulders.

A man stares at her intensely, it's that same strange man who  
keeps stalking her.

INT. BYBLOS CLUB - NIGHT

This is a trendy Arabic club. Red and blue lights flash on a crowded dancing floor with a live band.

Tareq and Hussain walk past a large security guard and arrive at a table next to the dance floor. And to the shock of Tareq, Amira and her group are at the table next to them.

And just as the guys get ready to sit, Hussain and Taufeeq glance at each other, then immediately get up and hug each other.

TAUFEEQ

Hussain, the worst cab driver in the world!

HUSSAIN

Taufeeq, the man who can eat an elephant!

They burst out laughing as they hug each other tighter.

TAUFEEQ

Man where have you been? You move so much I can't keep track of you.

HUSSAIN

I know. They keep raising the rent on me and I keep moving.

TAUFEEQ

(to his group)

You guys, I like you to meet a very good friend of mine, Hussain.

They nod and smile to him.

TAUFEEQ

Hey who are you with? Why don't you join our table?

Hussain looks at Tareq, who is looking a bit uncomfortable.

TAUFEEQ

Come on bring your friend, we have extra chairs.

Tareq walks over to the table and sits next to Hussain and Taufeeq at one end, Amira and Ahmad sit at the other end, across from Nabeel and Samia.

Amira and Samia look at Tareq then exchange a quick look.  
Taufeeq does the introductions;

TAUFEEQ

This is Amira, of course I don't  
need to say more...

HUSSAIN

(very respectful)

Of course not. It's an honor to  
meet you miss.

She nods and smiles.

TAUFEEQ

And next to her is the man who  
makes all the sun lotions and  
creams, you know, the stuff that  
causes cancer...

Everyone burst out laughing.

TAUFEEQ

(pointing at Nabeel and  
Samia)

And this is Doctor Nabeel, if you  
ever lose your head, go to him, he  
always has a spare one laying  
around...

Another round of laughs.

TAUFEEQ

And this is his lovely wife Samia,  
the one who he stole from me...

HUSSAIN

Nice to meet you all... This is my  
friend Tareq, he's new to the  
country.

Amira looks at Tareq curiously.

AMIRA

Have we met before? I have a  
feeling I've seen you somewhere.

TAREQ

(uncomfortable)

I don't think so.

AMIRA

Have you been to Malibu lately?

TAREQ  
(shakes his head)  
I...

HUSSAIN  
Oh, this kid loves Malibu. He was  
there the other night, didn't even  
come home.

Amira and Samia glance at each other.

The band just started playing another song. Ahmad takes Amira's hand and lead her to the dance floor, so does Nabeel and Samia.

Tareq steals a look at Amira as she dances.

A loud group of men, in their early 20's are at an adjacent table to the group. Their table is filled with alcoholic drinks and they all seem to be buzzed as they sing loud and make obnoxious gestures.

The music stops and everyone head back to their table.

At that moment, an announcer takes to the stage.

ANNOUNCER  
Ladies and gentlemen, first I like  
to welcome you to Byblos club. I  
also like to mention that tonight  
is a very special night as we are  
honored (pointing at Amira) with  
the presence of Miss Amira. A lady  
who had made the Arabic community  
in America very proud with her  
success in Hollywood.

A loud applaud from the audience motivates a nod and a warm smile from Amira.

One of the young men from the adjacent table, the loudest and most obnoxious in the group, gets up and addresses the announcer.

YOUNG MAN  
Excuse me, we like to know if miss  
Amira is still single.

Everyone laughs, including Amira as she nods " yes ".

YOUNG MAN  
 (winking at her)  
 In this case, maybe you need a  
 man... a real man.

His friends laugh. Amira looks very uncomfortable. Ahmad  
 shakes his head. Taufeeq, who sits closest to the young men,  
 looks irritated.

TAUFEEQ  
 Hey... cool it. Don't be rude.

YOUNG MAN  
 No one is talking to you, fat boy.

Taufeeq shakes his head. Tareq stares at the group,  
 especially that young man, who reaches across and touches  
 Amira's hand.

YOUNG MAN  
 (winking)  
 You wanna dance?

Amira draws her hand quickly.

AHMAD  
 Hey, stop!

The young man shoots a glare at Ahmad, then shakes his head.  
 He then gets up and stumbles toward the bathroom.

YOUNG MAN  
 I'll be back honey.

He continues on as Amira shakes her head in disgust.

AMHAD  
 Don't worry about him. He's drunk.  
 If he says another word I'm calling  
 security.

SAMIA  
 You guys maybe we should change the  
 table.

AMIRA  
 Good idea.

NABEEL  
 It's not worth it. We're leaving  
 soon anyways, don't worry about  
 these guys, they're kids.

The band plays on. Tareq gets up and walks toward the bathroom. No one notices except Samia and Amira as they glance at each other.

INT. RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tareq enters the restroom. That same young man is at one of the urinals, he just finished taking a leak and is turning.

Tareq is right behind him, staring at him...

YOUNG MAN  
What's your problem...

TAREQ  
Listen to me, you piece of shit.  
You will get out of here, go to  
your table and sit quietly for the  
rest of the night. I swear to god  
if I hear you say a word, a single  
word, I'm gonna cut off your tongue  
and make you eat it.

YOUNG MAN  
Hey who the hell are...

... And before he finishes his sentence, Tareq slams his palm into his face like a piledriver, and spins him against the stall as he smacks his head against the wall.

And just like that, the young man is on the floor, unconscious.

INT. BYBLOS CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Tareq walks out of the restroom but heads for the entrance instead, and to his surprise, Amira is outside, standing next to the front door. She smiles when she sees him.

TAREQ  
Are you still upset?

AMIRA  
A little bit. I just hate rude  
people.

TAREQ  
He will not bother you anymore.

AMIRA  
Why?

Ahmad appears.

AHMAD  
Amira, what's wrong?

AMIRA  
Oh nothing, I just needed some  
fresh air.

AHMAD  
Lets go back inside, we're getting  
ready to leave.

Amira gives Tareq a warm smile as they all walk inside. And at that same moment, the security guard and one of the waiters walk out of the bathroom, dragging the unconscious young man with the bloody nose. His friends run to help.

Amira immediately looks at Tareq, but he avoids her look.

AHMAD  
(to the guard)  
What happened to him?

SECURITY GUARD  
He took a blow to the face. I guess  
he fell down or something.

BACK AT THE TABLE

Hussain just cracked up a joke and everyone laughs. Tareq calmly joins them.

AMIRA  
Did you guys see what happened to  
that guy?

SAMIA  
Yes. And he deserved it.

Amira walks over and sits next to Samia, she then whispers something to her, and Samia immediately looks at Tareq.

AHMAD  
I think we should head out.

HUSSAIN  
Good idea.

Hussain and Tareq get up and get ready to go.

HUSSAIN

Taufeeq my friend, it was very good seeing you. I'll call you later. Nice to meet you all.

AMIRA

By the way, I'm having a bar-b-que tomorrow, you guys are more than welcome to come.

HUSSAIN

Sure, sounds good. What do you think Tareq?

Tareq nods.

AMIRA

OK. We'll see you tomorrow then.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - PATIO - DAY

Bar-b-que in progress. Arabic music plays.

Julian and Taufeeq are the grill masters. Taufeeq picks up a large sizzling piece of meat and sticks it in his mouth.

JULIAN

How can you do that?

TAUFEEQ

It's so easy my friend. You pick it up and you eat it.

JULIAN

I don't think normal human beings can do that.

TAUFEEQ

And who said I was normal?

SAMIA

(laughs)

Taufeeq is normal? That's a joke.

Amira checks her watch, as if waiting for someone. Ahmad walks over to her.

AHMAD

Hi beautiful.

AMIRA  
(smiles)  
Hi.

AHMAD  
Having fun?

AMIRA  
Of course I am.

AHMAD  
Amira. I've been wanting to talk to  
you for a while but I can never  
find a good time.

AMIRA  
Talk about what, Ahmad?

AHMAD  
Come on, you know about what, about  
us, our future.

AMIRA  
I know that, Ahmad. But many things  
are happening these days. Julian is  
negotiating that new movie deal,  
and you know also about the case in  
the court. Just give me sometime  
please.

AHMAD  
I will. But I just wanted to let  
you know that I'm patiently  
waiting.

She gives him a warm smile.

A door knock. Amira quickly runs to answer it. Nefeesa got  
there first. It's Hussain.

AMIRA  
Hello Hussain.

HUSSAIN  
Hello miss Amira. Sorry I'm late.

AMIRA  
Oh it's OK, we just started... so  
where's your friend?

HUSSAIN  
Tareq couldn't make it, he has  
other things to take care of.

Hussain walks in with Amira, who walks over to Samia.

SAMIA  
How come Hussain came alone?  
Where's Tareq?

AMIRA  
(sighing)  
He said he had other business to  
take care of.

SAMIA  
(sarcastic)  
More important than us?!

AMIRA  
(serious)  
Yes! Can you believe it?!

SAMIA  
Amira I'm just kidding... wait a  
minute, what's going on here?

AMIRA  
(shakes her head)  
I don't know.

SAMIA  
Ok! You need to stop! We barely  
know the guy.

AMIRA  
You're right... but...

SAMIA  
But what?

AMIRA  
I don't know... there's something  
about him... I don't know how to  
explain it.

INT. HUSSAIN'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

Tareq is on the phone.

TAREQ  
I know... it was a very strange  
coincidence...

ATWA (V.O.)  
 Very strange indeed... but she  
 didn't notice anything, right?

TAREQ  
 No. Not at all. I tried as much as  
 possible not to talk to her.

ATWA (V.O.)  
 Good job Tareq... because if she  
 knew, the whole mission would be  
 ruined.

TAREQ  
 Don't worry brother Atwa. Like I  
 said before, you can count on me.

ATWA (V.O.)  
 And what do you think so far about  
 her behavior?

TAREQ  
 It's hard to say, I've only seen  
 her a couple of times, but so far  
 she hasn't done or said anything  
 bad.

A beat.

ATWA (V.O.)  
 She will. She's a snake. She can't  
 hide her true colors for a long  
 time.

TAREQ  
 We'll see.

A beat.

ATWA (V.O.)  
 So, how is America?

TAREQ  
 To be honest with you, alot nicer  
 than I thought... I like it alot.

ATWA (V.O.)  
 That's good. Enjoy it while you  
 can...

A beat.

ATWA (V.O.)

Tareq...

TAREQ

Yes, brother Atwa...

ATWA (V.O.)

Be very careful with this girl Amira... I know she's very pretty... but like I said, she's a snake. Don't get carried away... because if what she did turned out to be true, then you'll have to take action against her... so don't get emotional.

TAREQ

Don't worry at all about that. It's always in the back of my mind that she insulted our religion, even though I still don't know how. But just the thought of that makes me sick.

ATWA (V.O.)

Very good... anyways, I'll let you go now. Expect to hear from me in a couple of days... bye.

Tareq hangs up, leans back on the chair and seems lost in a deep thought.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - NIGHT

Foggy. Cold. A soft wind blows some dry leaves along the ground.

Quiet. The only sounds are the soft calls of some DISTANT NIGHT BIRDS... And the hollow sound of the ocean.

The Corolla is parked at that same spot next to Amira's house.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

Amira sits in her living room on a small rocking chair, staring out at the ocean.

NEFEESA

Do you like me to make you some hot tea, miss Amira?

AMIRA  
...what? Did you say something.

Nefeesa smiles and shakes her head.

NEFEESA  
I said do you want some hot tea?

AMIRA  
Oh no, thank you, Nefeesa.

Nefeesa goes back to the kitchen. Amira looks out at the ocean, and sees someone.

AMIRA'S POV

A shadow walks slowly near the water.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - SAME MOMENT

It's Tareq. He then stops directly in front of Amira's house, and turns to face the ocean.

Amira walks over to him and stands few feet away, also looking out at the ocean.

AMIRA  
I can tell you like the ocean.

TAREQ  
I love it. I can sit here for the rest of my life.

AMIRA  
Me too. That's why I bought this house. Just to be close...

A beat.

AMIRA  
So how come you didn't come today?

TAREQ  
I was busy.

AMIRA  
With what?

TAREQ  
Do you always ask too many questions?

AMIRA

Why can't you just answer my question? Why do you have to be so secretive?

TAREQ

I answer when I feel like it, alright? And why do you care if I came or not?

AMIRA

Who said I care?... because I don't!

TAREQ

Good. Because I don't care either.

AMIRA

You know, you are a very rude person and I don't like rude people.

TAREQ

Good. And I assure you the feeling is very mutual!

AMIRA

Just answer me one thing, if you don't like me and don't care about me, why did you stand up for me? Why did you beat up that guy in the bathroom?

TAREQ

I wasn't standing up for you or anyone, I was standing up for myself.

AMIRA

So, not only you are rude, but also selfish!

TAREQ

And you are a spoiled brat, who thinks the whole world revolves around her.

She's nearly losing it.

AMIRA  
 You know what, I truly regret  
 meeting you and talking to you and  
 I hope I'll never ever see you  
 again.

Tareq shakes his head and walks away. Amira runs toward the house.

INT. THE COROLLA - MOMENTS LATER

Tareq is extremely mad. He tries to turn on the engine, but it won't start. He slams hard on the steering wheel, nearly breaking his hand.

TAREQ  
 God damn it!!

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Amira is furious.

AMIRA  
 I have so many fans and friends who  
 love me and respect me, except this  
 man, I really hate him. I hate him.

Nefeesa gently runs her fingers through Amira's hair.

NEFEESA  
 It's alright sweetheart, don't  
 think about him.

AMIRA  
 Nefeesa, I want to ask you  
 something, Am I a spoiled brat?

NEFEESA  
 What?

AMIRA  
 A spoiled brat.

NEFEESA  
 Of course not, honey.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Amira and Samia sit at a patio table in that same coffee shop.

SAMIA  
... And What did you say to him?

AMIRA  
Nothing. That was it, I just left.

SAMIA  
What a rude man... but cute.

AMIRA  
I don't care anymore. It was just one of those stupid moments that women have sometimes, but that's it. I'm gonna start giving Ahmad the attention he deserves, I haven't been fair to him lately.

SAMIA  
And Tareq?

AMIRA  
Samia I don't even know Tareq. I only saw him 2 or 3 times. It was one of those first sight things that people talk about and that's it. It's over.

SAMIA  
It's funny though. You've known Ahmad for nearly 3 years and not once he had that effect on you that Tareq has.

AMIRA  
Well, when someone is rude and call people names, they usually leave an impression. That's exactly what happened.

A beat.

Samia looks around at the shops.

SAMIA  
I like this place.

AMIRA  
Oh I love it. They have some real nice stores. The other day I came and bought a couple of dresses, one for Lamia, Nefeesa's granddaughter and one for...

Amira's chin begins to tremble and she chokes out a sob.

SAMIA

Suha...

Amira nods. Samia puts her hand on Amira's shoulder.

AMIRA

You know, sometimes I dream about her running to me, calling out, Mama, Mama, and I take her in my arms and hug her... forever...

Samia wipes a tear.

AMIRA

...I wonder how she looks like, how does she wear her hair, what kind of clothes she likes...

SAMIA

You should try and call her.

AMIRA

I tried so many times, but when my brother Hicham picks up the phone and hears my voice, he immediately hangs up.

Samia shakes her head.

SAMIA

Anyways, like I told you before, Nabeel is going back home just before the feast. Get the clothes ready and I'm sure he'll find a way to deliver them to Suha.

AMIRA

OK, I will.

The girls get up and walk away.

Tareq sits in his car directly across the street from the coffee shop. But his attention is not on the girls, it's on that same stalker who's parked few spots away, watching Amira.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

A HAZY SHAPE-- accompanied by a whirring sound. A steam covered mirror is cleared with a BLOW DRYER. Amira starts to come into focus.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Amira walks in from the bathroom in a sexy cotton nightgown, then goes downstairs to the living room.

EXT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

A pale shape appears in the distance, gliding closer towards the house.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Amira looks out and sees the shadow.

AMIRA

So you're back again. I'm just gonna ignore you my dear, as if you do not exist.

EXT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

That same shadow keeps walking closer to the house... But it's not Tareq. It's the STALKER, dressed in black.

He moves around the house, finds a side door, quickly works the lock... and WALKS IN.

The man moves quickly through a small laundry room into the kitchen, and just around the corner is the living room, and Amira.

She hears something.

AMIRA

Nefeesa...?

No response. Amira gasps quietly, then takes few steps backwards as she keeps an eye on the kitchen. She's on full alert.

AMIRA

Nefeesa... is that you?

She's finally able to gather her strength and walk towards the kitchen. No one is there.

AMIRA

Hello...?

She slowly walks through the kitchen and arrives to the small laundry room, then opens that same side door and looks out. Nothing.

She turns to go back inside, when she is suddenly FACE TO FACE WITH THE STALKER.

He grabs her hand and pulls her inside. Amira lets out a loud scream, but the intruder is quick to cover her mouth as he pulls her inside the house.

The tall, powerful man quickly overpowers Amira and pushes her down to the floor. But at that same moment, A HAND APPEARS from behind, grabs the stalker and throws him to the side.

IT'S TAREQ.

Just then, Nefeesa comes out from a side door, realizing what's going on, she starts screaming.

Amira manages to pull herself away with the help of Nefeesa, Leaving Tareq face to face with the intruder, who regains his balance and pulls a knife.

Amira and Nefeesa watch in horror as the two men savagely attack each other.

The intruder launches straight ahead at Tareq with the knife. Tareq spins as he strikes the man's neck with an open hand, sending him flying to the ground.

Tareq walks over to Amira and Nefeesa, making sure they're OK. But at that moment the intruder jumps up and charges him one more time with the knife.

AMIRA

TAREQ!!

Tareq quickly turns and throws a hard punch to the intruder's jaw, but in the process, part of the sharp blade catches his shoulder, causing him to lose balance for few seconds.

Just then, Tareq launches a spectacular sequence of side, front and reverse kicks against, sending the intruder flying across the room, landing unconscious on the ground.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The intruder, badly beaten, is handcuffed and is being led out of the house by a police officer.

A medic just finished wrapping a bandage around Tareq's shoulder. Amira and Nefeesa sit on a couch, still in shock.

POLICE OFFICER

(to Tareq)

Sir, are you sure you don't want us to take you to the hospital? Make sure you're OK?

TAREQ

No. I'm fine.

MEDIC

It's only a surface wound, he'll be fine in a couple of days.

POLICE OFFICER

Miss Amira, I definitely think you should get yourself a bodyguard. You got lucky this time, if not for this gentleman (pointing at Tareq) god knows what would've happened.

Amira is a nervous wreck. She slowly nods to the officer.

AMIRA

Who was he?

POLICE OFFICER

We had a number of assaults in this area lately. I have a feeling this man is part of it, we'll know for sure in few days when we get his finger prints. But the problem is, we don't know if he was working on his own or if has partners, maybe this was a kidnapping attempt for ransom. So in the mean time make sure you take extra precautions. And like I said, get yourself a bodyguard or some kind of security. Most celebrities do that, don't take chances.

The officer and the medics turn and leave. Tareq gets up, puts on his shirt... then slowly heads out.

EXT. SHIEKH HASAN'S HOUSE - EGYPT - MORNING

Atwa has a large envelope in his hand as he walks over and knocks on a door. Shiekh Hasan opens.

ATWA  
Al Salamu Alaikum Shiekh Hasan.

SHIEKH HASAN  
Wa alaikum AL Salam Atwa.

Atwa flashes an envelope.

ATWA  
I got it.

SHIEKH HASAN  
(surprised)  
So it's true?

ATWA  
Yes. Go ahead and watch the tape,  
you'll see with your own eyes.

SHIEKH HASAN  
Atwa, are you sure? Because  
someone's life will depend on this  
tape.

ATWA  
I am very sure.

INT. THE MOSQUE - LATER

Hicham just finished praying. He shakes hands with other men and gets ready to leave.

SHIEKH HASAN  
Brother Hicham. I like to have a  
word with you, please.

INT. SHIEKH HASAN'S PRIVATE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small room with a TV monitor. Hicham and few other men wait for Shiekh Hasan to speak. Hicham feels he's the reason of this meeting as men steal looks at him.

SHIEKH HASAN

Brother Hicham, as you know, these brothers are part of the Islamic council of this region, and I asked you to join our meeting for a very important issue, of which you are a part of.

Hicham looks concerned.

SHIEKH HASAN

As you all know, we are proud members of a very religious society and whatever happens to one of us, deeply affects the others. There are no rules here above the rules of god and his prophet. Therefore, I had called this meeting.

Shiekh Hasan pulls a VHS tape out of the envelope Atwa had given him and inserts it in the TV/VCR combo, and a film clip starts to play.

THE CLIP

A man and a woman stand face to face with each other, both half naked, but we can only see the woman's back as she faces the man.

The Islamic council and Hicham are in shock. Shiekh Hasan seem to have known earlier what's in the tape as he stare at Hicham.

BACK TO THE CLIP

The man and the woman walk closer and start kissing each other, the woman then starts to turn to face the camera.

At that moment, Hicham jumps over to the monitor and turns it off.

SHIEKH HASAN

I expected this reaction from an honorable man like you, brother Hicham.

Hicham is speechless, breathless as he stands there, looking at the ground.

SHIEKH HASAN

Your sister's behavior is unacceptable to us as it is to you. She thinks that by living and working in America, she can do whatever pleases her. But she's not only shaming herself, she's shaming us as well, our culture and most important, our religion... am I right? Hicham?

HICHAM

Of course, Shiekh Hasan, but as you and most of the men here know, I have disowned this woman years ago. She's no longer part of our family. She's not my sister anymore, even before she committed a shameless act like this one.

SHIEKH HASAN

It is definitely a very shameless act. An act that we can't tolerate whether she's your sister or not. You see, she's forgetting the fact that she was born a Muslim, something she will carry with her to the grave. So by doing what she is doing now, she's not only insulting you and us, she's insulting god himself... therefore God had asked me to act.

These last words gets a reaction from Hicham, he looks at the Shiekh, not sure what he meant.

SHIEKH HASAN

Brother Hicham, after consulting the religious council, I have decided to issue a FATWA (religious order) against your sister. A DEATH FATWA.

Hicham is shocked. He looks around, everyone stares at him.

SHIEKH HASAN

If anyone has a different opinion on this matter, he may speak.

Hicham remains silent as Shiekh Hasan motions the men to leave. They slowly get up and walk out.

Shiekh Hasan walks closer to Hicham and puts a hand on his shoulder.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 Brother Hicham, do you have  
 anything to say?

HICHAM  
 (shaking his head)  
 No, Shiekh Hasan. This is god's  
 will and I will not go against it,  
 so let it be.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 God bless you. I knew you're an  
 honorable man.

HICHAM  
 But how will it be done? She's all  
 the way in America.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 Don't worry about that, I'll take  
 care of everything.

Hicham nods, he then slowly turns to leaves. Hicham opens the door and sees Atwa standing there, staring at him. They nod to each other as Hicham walks out.

Hicham takes few steps then stops and looks back, and sees Atwa walking into the Shiekh's room and closing the door behind him.

INT. SHIEKH HASAN'S PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

SHIEKH HASAN  
 So, Atwa, what do you think?

ATWA  
 I knew he'll agree, he had no  
 choice.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 Who do you think we should send?

ATWA  
 I've already thought about it, and  
 already picked the right man for  
 the job. All I need is your  
 permission to go ahead.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 (surprised)  
 Who did you pick?

ATWA  
 Tareq. Remember him?

SHIEKH HASAN  
 Of course I do.

ATWA  
 He's the best man for this job.  
 He'll never let us down... and  
 Shiekh Hasan, you have to forgive  
 me because I've already sent Tareq  
 to America.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 You did?

ATWA  
 Yes my Shiekh, I did. I wanted him  
 to observe her before you make any  
 decision. Because if you issued  
 your sacred Fatwa and the woman  
 turned out to be innocent, I  
 wouldn't live another day, my  
 conscience would kill me.

The Shiekh thinks about it, taking it all in.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 And what did he say?

ATWA  
 He said the worst things about her.  
 Everything we've seen in those  
 tapes, she does actually even in  
 real life, not only on camera.

The Shiekh shakes his head.

SHIEKH HASAN  
 What a pity... call Tareq and tell  
 him to go ahead.

INT. ATWA'S HOUSE - LATER

Atwa picks up the phone and dials...

TAREQ (V.O.)  
 Hello?

ATWA  
Al Salamu Alaikum brother Tareq.

TAREQ (V.O.)  
Wa alaikum Al Salam brother Atwa.

ATWA  
I have good news for you my friend.  
You will have the honor of carrying  
out Shiekh Hasan's Fatwa.

There is silence on the other end.

ATWA  
Tareq. Are you there?

TAREQ (V.O.)  
Yes... I'm here.

INT. HUSSAIN'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

Tareq is on the phone, listening intently.

TAREQ  
...and it was her? Amira? On the  
tape?

ATWA (V.O.)  
Of course it was her. Me and Shiekh  
Hasan, even her own brother saw it.  
You should've seen the look in his  
eyes. The poor man started crying.  
He was begging Shiekh Hasan to  
issue the Fatwa.

Tareq looks very confused, not sure what to say.

ATWA (V.O.)  
So Tareq. The hero. It's all in  
your hands now. It's all up to you.  
You're the only one who can defend  
the name of god and carry out the  
Fatwa. We're all counting on you.

A beat.

TAREQ  
...and I will not let you down.

ATWA (V.O.)  
Good. I like to hear this. Tareq,  
one more thing.

ATWA(cont'd)

The Shiekh wants you to do it at the night of the Feast of Sacrifice, because her blood will run like water to the feet of the devil. She will be sacrificed as we sacrifice a sheep, and let it be a lesson for whoever dares to insult our god and his prophet.

TAREQ

(nodding)

...OK Brother Atwa. Consider it done.

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - LATER

Hicham walks in, stone faced. Hagga Wahiba and Suha are watching TV. Hicham walks toward his room without saying a word.

HAGGA WAHIBA

(surprised)

Hicham? What's wrong son?

Hicham walks inside his room and closes the door. Hagga Wahiba and Suha look at each other.

SUHA

What's wrong with uncle Hicham, Grandma?

Hagga Wahiba gets up and knocks on the door. No response, she tries to walk in but the door is locked.

INT. HICHAM'S ROOM - SAME MOMENT

Hicham sits on the side of the bed, his head is down. There is another knock on the door as Hagga Wahiba calls out to him, but he ignores her.

He reaches for a small night-stand next to bed and pulls a drawer open.

From under a stack of papers, Hicham's fingers find a picture, he takes it out and stares at it.

In the picture, Hicham is wearing a nice dark suit, his arm is wrapped around a 12-year-old Amira, both smiling at the camera.

Hicham suddenly looks outraged as he tears the picture to pieces.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Amira just finished telling her story to the rest of the group. Samia takes her in her arms.

SAMIA

Oh my god Amira, I was so scared  
when I heard the news. I'm so glad  
you're OK!

Nefeesa appears from the kitchen.

NEFEESA

If not for Tareq, we would've been  
dead by now.

Ahmad doesn't like this.

AHMAD

What was Tareq doing here?

NABEEL

Who cares? What matters is that he  
saved Amira.

But Ahmad keeps looking at Amira, waiting for a response.

AMIRA

He wasn't here. He was out walking  
by the shore when he saw the man.

AHMAD

Out walking by the shore?... this  
Shore?

AMIRA

Yes.  
(to Taufeeq)  
Remember how his friend Hussain  
said he likes this area?

TAUFEEQ

That's right. I remember that.

Ahmad doesn't look convinced.

SAMIA

Come on guys. What really matters  
now is that Amira is fine, thank  
god...

SAMIA(cont'd)

and Amira, I really think you should get yourself some kind of security, maybe Tareq wouldn't be here the next time around.

Something clicked with Amira when Samia said those last words.

INT. HUSSAIN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Hussain is in the living room watching TV. A door knock. Hussain opens, and to his shock, it's Amira.

HUSSAIN

Miss Amira??

AMIRA

How are you Hussain?

HUSSAIN

I'm good. Thanks. Please come in.

Amira walks in.

AMIRA

I got your address from Taufeeq. I'm sorry for this surprise visit.

HUSSAIN

Oh no, please don't worry about it. You're welcome any time.

AMIRA

Thank you. Is Tareq home?

HUSSAIN

Yes. Yes he is.

Hussain walks over toward Tareq's room and knocks.

HUSSAIN

Tareq, you have a guest.

Tareq opens the door and walks out. She looks at him.

HUSSAIN

Well. I'm sorry to be rude, Miss Amira, but I have to go take care of some business. I'll see you later.

AMIRA

OK, Hussain. Bye.

Hussain quickly leaves.

AMIRA  
How's your shoulder?

TAREQ  
It's fine.

AMIRA  
I've been trying to call you for 3 days. Didn't Hussain tell you?

Tareq slowly nods.

AMIRA  
Tareq, I came here to thank you for saving my life. What you did proves to me you are a noble man. And I really thank you from the bottom of my heart...

He is listening silently.

AMIRA  
Listen, I don't know what you have against me. I don't know what I did to make you so bitter with me...

She waits for some kind of response. But gets nothing out of him.

AMIRA  
I don't know what to say. You show up near my house almost everyday, you stand up for me, even though you try to deny it, and finally you put your own life at risk... for me. But on the other hand you refuse to even talk to me. How do you explain that, Tareq? Please help me understand because I'm very confused right now.

TAREQ  
Don't be confused. Everything happens for a reason.

AMIRA  
Are you back to being secretive again?

TAREQ  
Amira, what do you want from me?

A beat.

AMIRA  
I like you to work for me.

TAREQ  
Me? Work for you?

She nods.

TAREQ  
And do what?

AMIRA  
Protect me. You heard what the policeman said... what if someone wants to kidnap me? Tareq I'm really afraid, and I can't think of anyone who can protect me other than you.

TAREQ  
(teasing)  
Why don't you let your boyfriend, Ahmad, protect you?

This one really hurts. She's nearly in tears now. She looks at him. He's looking right back at her. Waiting for a reaction, but she just shakes her head and leaves.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Amira fixes Lamia's hair. A door knock. Nefeesa opens... It's Tareq.

NEFEESA  
Tareq?!

She instinctively takes him in her arms.

NEFEESA  
I swear my heart jumps when I see you. Come on in sweetheart.

He gives her a warm smile as he walks in. Amira looks at him, then looks the other way.

LAMIA  
So you are Tareq?

TAREQ  
Yes. And who are you?

LAMIA  
My name is Lamia.

TAREQ  
(glancing at Amira)  
Nice to meet you Lamia.

LAMIA  
So you are the one who saved my  
grandmother and miss Amira from the  
monster?

He smiles and nods.

AMIRA  
He didn't really mean to save us,  
he was probably saving himself.

He looks at her. She looks at him for a second then looks  
away.

LAMIA  
Where is your white horse?

TAREQ  
White horse?

LAMIA  
Of course. You are the knight who  
saved the princess. Now you have to  
take her away on your white horse.

Amira forces a smile as she rolls her eyes.

TAREQ  
(smiles)  
Well, I have a tiny little car,  
would that work?

LAMIA  
No. It has to be a white horse,  
just like the book. We need to get  
you one.

TAREQ  
What book?

AMIRA  
It's one of those romantic stories  
that has feelings and emotions...  
Of which you have none!

He stares at her.

Nefeesa appears from the kitchen.

NEFEESA

Lamia. Leave them alone. Come to the kitchen, honey, your lunch is ready.

Lamia smiles at Tareq as she heads for the kitchen.

NEFEESA

Tareq, are you hungry sweetheart?

TAREQ

As a matter of fact I'm starving.

NEFEESA

That's good. I made alot of food today. Give me few minutes while I feed Lamia and I'll get lunch ready for you guys.

TAREQ

Thank you Nefeesa.

He looks at Amira.

TAREQ

I'm sorry about the comment I made. It was out of place.

AMIRA

You know, it's very strange, but I actually got used to not hearing anything nice from you.

TAREQ

Is that so...

AMIRA

(nods)

...and Just to let you know, Ahmad is NOT my boyfriend. He's a person that I like very much, because he's kind and sensitive, unlike...

TAREQ

Me?

AMIRA

Maybe.

TAREQ

So now who's insulting who?

AMIRA  
I'm learning fast. I have a good  
teacher.

TAREQ  
Anyways... when do you like me to  
start?

She looks very surprised.

AMIRA  
You want to take the job?

He nods.

AMIRA  
Even though you can't stand me?

He nods again.

AMIRA  
You didn't have to agree on this  
one.

TAREQ  
Do I have to be with you all the  
time?

AMIRA  
(nodding)  
Like my shadow.

He rolls his eyes.

AMIRA  
(sarcastic)  
Oh you poor baby, what a torture,  
ha!

TAREQ  
It's OK. I'll live.

AMIRA  
Excuse me, but alot of people would  
love a chance like this to be close  
to me.

NEFEESA (O.S.)  
If you kids are done arguing, food  
is ready.

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - MORNING

Suha is reading a book. Hagga Wahiba is doing some cleaning around the house.

HICHAM'S ROOM

Hagga Wahiba pushes open the door and walks in. She picks up some pieces of clothing from the floor, neatly folds them then places them on the bed. She's just about to leave when something catches her eye.

She kneels next to the bed and picks up a tiny piece of paper, one of many scattered on the floor.

INT. HICHAM HOUSE - LATER

Those same tiny pieces of papers are now put together as Suha puts in place the last piece of the puzzle.

Suha and Hagga Wahiba lean over the picture, studying it carefully. Hagga Wahiba is surprised.

SUHA

Who is this girl, Grandma?

She hesitates a bit.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Look at it carefully, Suha and tell me who does she look like.

Suha stares hard at the picture which doesn't look very clear after it had been ripped to pieces.

SUHA

She looks like me... right?

HAGGA WAHIBA

(nods)

Of course she does. Because she's your mother.

Suha's heart just skipped a beat as she looks at her grandmother with wide open eyes. She then looks at the picture, then looks back at Hagga Wahiba, this time with a tear in her eye.

SUHA

She's so beautiful.

Hagga Wahiba's face is full with sadness. The memories of a painful past suddenly comes back to her. She stumbles back and sits on the sofa. Suha keeps staring at the picture.

Hicham walks in.

HICHAM  
Al Salam Alaikum mother.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Wa alaikum Al Salam.

HICHAM  
What's wrong?

She doesn't respond. He walks closer to Suha and notices the picture, then slowly walks to his room.

INT. HICHAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

He sits on his bed, lost in a deep thought. A knock on the door, then Hagga Wahiba walks in, and sits next to him.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Hicham, do you want to talk to me  
about something, son?

He takes a deep breath.

HICHAM  
No mother. Nothing to worry about.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
What about your sister's picture?  
What did you do that?

He looks mad as he gets up.

HICHAM  
Do not call her my sister. Please  
mother.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
(shake her head)  
10 years have passed, and you still  
have those feelings about her...

HICHAM  
I don't care even if it was a 100  
years. Nothing will change.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Hicham, I'm your mother, talk to me son, tell me what's wrong. My heart tells me something bad has happened and my heart never fails me, I can tell for the past few days you haven't been yourself...

HICHAM

Mother please drop it. I beg you.

She slowly nods as she gets up and leaves the room.

INT. HUSSAIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Hussain is in the living room watching TV. Tareq walks in.

HUSSAIN

Hello Tareq.

TAREQ

Hi.

Tareq walks to his room.

HUSSAIN

Are you alright?

TAREQ

Yes I am. Give me a second.

Tareq quickly walks into his room and closes the door, then reaches into his waist and pull a 9mm pistol. He looks at it then hides it under the mattress, then walks out.

HUSSAIN

Man congratulations on the new job. Taufeeq just called me and told me.

TAREQ

Thank you.

HUSSAIN

Tareq what's wrong? You haven't been yourself lately.

TAREQ

(sighing)

Nothing. I'm fine.

HUSSAIN

You don't look fine. You look like someone who has the world on his shoulders.

TAREQ

Thanks for your concern Hussain, but I'll be fine, trust me.

HUSSAIN

So tell me about the new job.

TAREQ

Well, I'm gonna be making more money than the mummy that I used to dig in Egypt.

HUSSAIN

(laughing)

Is that what you did back home?

TAREQ

That, and alot of other stuff.

HUSSAIN

Well it looks like you finally struck gold my friend.

TAREQ

You think so?

HUSSAIN

Of course, I mean, you and I know very well that Amira likes you and trust you, or else she wouldn't trust you with her life.

These last words struck a cord with Tareq.

TAREQ (V.O.)

Trust me with her life... god... only if you knew.

HUSSAIN

What? You don't think so?

TAREQ

Yes. I guess you're right.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Nefeesa opens the front door as Ahmad storms in. He finds Amira and Samia in the living room.

AHMAD  
(fuming)  
...is It true!

AMIRA  
What are you talking about?

AHMAD  
Is it true you're hiring that guy  
as your bodyguard?

Amira looks at him.

AHMAD  
Well?

AMIRA  
Yes, it's true.

AHMAD  
Amira, what the hell is going on  
here? You barely know this guy...  
how can you trust him with your  
life?

Amira tries to keep calm.

AMIRA  
...I Just do.

AHMAD  
I don't like this. I don't like how  
this guy came out of nowhere and is  
suddenly part of our lives, Amira.

AMIRA  
Ahmad listen to me please. This is  
a temporary solution until the  
police assures me that the person  
who broke into my house and tried  
to kill me is not part of some  
conspiracy. I am afraid, that's why  
I want Tareq to be with me for a  
while, just to be sure.

AHMAD

But why him? I can get you the best security in town, they'll be with you 24 hours...

AMIRA

(overlapping)

...Because he already saved me once, and I trust him more than anyone else.

AHMAD

So what does that mean? Do we have to get a clearance from Mr. Tareq just to come and talk to you from now on?

SAMIA

Ahmad, come on. You're making a big deal out of this, you really are. You're forgetting that Amira is a celebrity and rich. All celebrities have bodyguards around them all the time. In my opinion, Amira is doing the right thing. She should've done that a long time ago.

Ahmad looks hopeless as he collapses on the couch and buries his head in his hands.

AHMAD

Just do me a favor. I don't want him around when you and I go out, Amira, please. I'll protect you.

AMIRA

That's fine.

He gets up and heads for the door.

AHMAD

Don't forget about tonight. I'll pick you up at 8.

AMIRA

No it's a long drive for you, I'll just meet you there.

Ahmad nods, then turns and leaves.

SAMIA

(sarcastic)

That went very well.

Amira shakes her head.

EXT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tareq stands next to the Mercedes. Amira walks out of the house, looking very good in a black dress. He can't help but to look impressed.

AMIRA  
Can you please not look so shocked?

TAREQ  
I didn't say anything.

AMIRA  
(as she gets in the car)  
You didn't need to.

INT. THE MERCEDES BENZ - LATER

City lights appear in the distance. Tareq is behind the wheel, Amira is in the back seat, still fixing her make-up.

AMIRA  
God I'm so nervous.

TAREQ  
Why?

AMIRA  
All of Ahmad's family will be in Byblos tonight. It's his father's birthday.

TAREQ  
So?

AMIRA  
I don't know. I feel I'm going to be the center of attention. I'll have to watch my every move, every word I say. His mom usually takes notes.

TAREQ  
That's strange. I thought all of you rich people like to be with each other.

She puts away her little mirror as she gives him a stare.

AMIRA

For your information, I wasn't born rich. And no I don't feel comfortable around people who look to see if I'm wearing a diamond ring before they look at me.

The car comes to a full stop in front of Byblos restaurant. Tareq gets out and stretches his legs as Amira waits for him to open the door for her, she then gets out.

AMIRA

Thanks for getting the door.

He looks clueless.

AMIRA

Tareq, I'm sorry but I have to ask you to wait here... Ahmad...

TAREQ

(interrupting)

I wasn't going in anyways.

She gives him a warm smile as she turns and heads for the door. He keeps staring at her.

INT. BYBLOS CLUB - LATER

Men in suits and ties, and women in expensive jewelry.

There are about 12 people at the table including Ahmad, Amira and Ahmad's mother and father, both in their mid 50's.

Amira looks out of place. Ahmad whispers something in her ear, and she forces a smile.

Two waiters appear with a large cake, filled with small candles. They make their way to Ahmad's table and place the cake in the middle. Ahmad's father blows on the candles as the band starts to play " Happy Birthday ".

Amira gets up and heads for the restroom.

Ahmad's father and mother watch her.

AHMAD'S FATHER

(whisper)

Ahmad, what are you doing?

AHMAD

What do you mean, dad?

AHMAD'S FATHER

Why aren't you dancing with her?

AHMAD

I don't know. I'm not in the mood.

AHMAD'S FATHER

(shakes his head)

Not in the mood, great.

(looks at Ahmad's mother)

Did you hear your son? He's not in the mood. He's letting the golden egg slip right out of his hands, because he's not in the mood. This is just great.

AHMAD

Father, I have this girl wrapped around my finger. Don't worry.

AHMAD'S FATHER

Don't worry? Just listen to yourself, you've been telling me this for the past what...3 years? Don't worry my ass. Son I'm telling you, if you don't marry her soon, we're out of business. We need her goddamn money. So don't tell me not to worry.

AHMAD'S MOTHER

You should propose to her, formally. I don't know what you're waiting for.

Amira is on her way back to the table.

AHMAD

I will. Don't worry.

She sits next to Ahmad as she gives everyone a warm, fake smile.

EXT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The Mercedes comes to a full stop in front of the garage. They both get out.

AMIRA

Thank god this night is almost over.

TAREQ  
Was it that bad?

AMIRA  
Please don't ask.

TAREQ  
(looks at his watch)  
I guess I should be going.

AMIRA  
Why don't you come in for a little  
while, I'll make you tea.

TAREQ  
Aren't you sleepy?

She shakes her head.

EXT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - PATIO

The moonlight cast silver beams over the ocean. Amira and Tareq sit side by side, sipping on tea, looking out at the ocean.

AMIRA  
It's so beautiful.

TAREQ  
How come you're not sleepy, what's  
on your mind?

AMIRA  
I don't know. I've been having bad  
dreams lately. I'm scared to go to  
bed.

TAREQ  
What dreams?

AMIRA  
You'll think I'm crazy if I told  
you.

TAREQ  
No I wont... Tell me.

AMIRA  
...well, Few days ago I went to see  
Madam Reshma, she's an Indian lady,  
the best fortune teller in town.

TAREQ  
Fortune teller?

AMIRA  
Yes. She tells you about your future. She's amazing. Everything she tells me ends up being true.

TAREQ  
And what did she tell you this time?

AMIRA  
Well, at first she gave me this strange look, and wouldn't tell me why. Later she told something very bad is going to happen.

Tareq looks very surprised.

TAREQ  
Did she say what exactly?

AMIRA  
No. I kept asking her but she wouldn't say a thing... and since then I've been having those nightmares.

TAREQ  
This is really strange.

AMIRA  
But you know what, I really feel safe now that you are with me all the time.

He looks at her then looks out at the ocean.

TAREQ  
That's good.

He gets up and gets ready to leave.

AMIRA  
Do you have to go?

TAREQ  
Yes. It's getting late.

AMIRA

Tareq, why don't you spend the night here? Why have a guest room downstairs.

TAREQ

I don't think I should.

AMIRA

Come on, why not? Tomorrow is Sunday, Nefeesa will make you a big breakfast in the morning... Lamia will be here as well.

TAREQ

I don't...

AMIRA

(overlapping)

Oh come on, please? I'd feel much safer knowing you're here, with me.

He looks at her. She lowers her eyes.

TAREQ

OK.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - LATER

Amira pushes the door open and walks in. Tareq is behind her.

AMIRA

(smiles)

Nice ha?

He nods. She turns to leave.

TAREQ

Amira.

She looks at him.

TAREQ

I hope you have sweet dreams tonight.

She gives him a warm smile before she closes the door.

Tareq looks around then sits on the bed.

There's a small night stand, he reaches and opens up a drawer, and takes out a book, and to his surprise it's a copy the QURAN. He stares at it, then slowly holds it closer to his heart.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Tareq walks in through a side door into the living room.

Lamia, Ahmad and Taufeeq are there with Amira.

Lamia runs and hugs him.

LAMIA  
My horseless knight is here!

Everyone smiles, except Ahmad.

AHMAD  
(to Amira)  
He slept here last night??

TAREQ  
Yes I did. You have a problem with that?

AHMAD  
I wasn't talking to you...

AMIRA  
Guys! Please...

TAUFEEQ  
(smiles)  
So Tareq, tell us, is she driving you crazy or she hasn't started yet?

Tareq forces a smile and shakes his head. Ahmad is fuming. Nefeesa walks in.

NEFEESA  
Good morning boys and girls.  
Where's Samia and Nabeel?

AMIRA  
They went shopping, Nabeel is going back home tomorrow. By the way you guys, if you need to send anything with him back home you better get it ready.

TAUFEEQ

I'm not sending anything. I've been so damn broke.

AMIRA

(smiles)

You're always broke. That's why I feed you all the time.

TAUFEEQ

Oh that reminds me... where's the food?

NEFEESA

Just give me few minutes honey and it'll be ready.

Nefeesa turns to go to the kitchen.

LAMIA

Grandma, can I go for a swim while you make the food?

NEFEESA

Sure honey, but stay close and use your tube.

Lamia runs out. Amira glances at Ahmad, he still looks mad.

TAUFEEQ

So Tareq, how's Hussain?

TAREQ

He's fine.

AHMAD

Isn't Hussain the cab driver?

TAUFEEQ

(smiles)

That's him, the worst of the worst.

AHMAD

(to Tareq)

Nice, so now you and your friend have the same kind of work... drivers.

Tareq stares at him.

AMIRA  
 (irritated)  
 Tareq is NOT my driver, he's my  
 BODYGUARD!

Through the balcony, Lamia appears walking close to the water, carrying an orange TUBE.

AHMAD  
 (clearly looking for a  
 confrontation)  
 But I thought people need to have  
 some kind of a license, or degree  
 to do this kind of work... I wonder  
 what qualifications your new  
 bodyguard has?

Tareq tries hard to stay calm.

TAUFEEQ  
 (laughs)  
 A license to kill.

TAREQ  
 My only qualification is that I  
 don't have a BIG MOUTH.

Amira can't help but to smile. Ahmad is fuming. Tareq gets up and gets ready to leave.

AMIRA  
 Tareq...

AHMAD  
 Leave him...

AMIRA  
 Ahmad STOP!  
 (to Tareq)  
 Tareq, please don't go.

TAREQ  
 I lost my appetite...

Tareq looks at Amira, his eyes then shift for a split second over her shoulder, toward the balcony and the ocean beyond.

Tareq turns and is about to open the door but suddenly stops and turns again.

Outside, about thirty feet in the water floats Lamia's orange tube... Empty.

Tareq walks back slowly, eyes fixed outside. At that same moment Nefeesa walks in from the kitchen

TAREQ  
(pointing out)  
Where's Lamia?

Nefeesa has a plate of salad and is on her way to the table when she heard Tareq. They all look at him then look out.

At that moment everything stops, then Nefeesa lets out a horrible scream, realizing Lamia might have drowned.

AMIRA  
Oh my god!!

Tareq is the first to take action. He runs fast through the balcony and jumps down into the sand. Taufeeq and Ahmad run out the door. Nefeesa can barely breath, but makes it through the door with Amira.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - SHORTLY AFTER

By now Tareq is in the water, struggling against the strong tide.

Taufeeq looks around for a lifeguard while Amira and Nefeesa scream hysterically for help.

Tareq is still swimming while few neighbors rush to the scene. He finally arrives to the tube, then dives.

UNDERWATER

Tareq swims fast near the bottom... moving through a murky haze... dark blues and greens... shafts of prised purple.

A pale shape appears in the distance... gliding closer... Tareq arrives at the shape... it's an old piece of cloth...

BACK AT THE SHORE

TAUFEEQ  
This is bad, real bad.

AHMAD  
Where did he go? I can't see him.

Tareq pops out quickly then disappears again.

Nefeesa manages to look out then turns her head the other way... only to get the shock of her life.

Under the balcony, by the fence, sits Lamia, crying.

NEFEESA

Lamia...?

Lamia gets up and runs to her grandmother while everyone watch in disbelief...

TAUFEEQ

My god. We need to get Tareq quickly!

Taufeeq and two of the neighbors take to the water. Ahmad stays behind. Amira drops on her knees crying. Nefeesa holds as she looks out at the water.

UNDERWATER

Tareq is running out of breath but still looking... Not realizing he had exceeded all his energy, he keeps searching.

Finally he tries to go up, but his arms and legs fail him.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - SAME MOMENT

Amira watches in horror as Taufeeq and the neighbors struggle against the waves to get to the tube.

UNDERWATER

Tareq slowly goes under, when a hand suddenly reaches for him, wraps around him and pulls him up.

INT. HICHAM HOUSE - EGYPT - AFTERNOON

Hicham walks in and finds his mother holding Suha, who seems to be crying.

HICHAM

What's wrong?

HAGGA WAHIBA

Oh nothing, it's the usual thing.

SUHA

All my friends have new clothes  
except me. The feast is only five  
days away and I have nothing.

She releases herself from Wahiba and runs to her room. Hicham  
takes a deep breath then collapses on the sofa.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Don't worry about her, son. You  
know how she is.

HICHAM

She's a kid, mother. I have to find  
a way to get her something. I'll go  
borrow some money tomorrow.

HAGGA WAHIBA

No. Don't borrow anything from  
anyone. I'll find an old dress and  
fix it up new, she wouldn't notice  
the difference.

A knock on the door. Hicham opens it. It's Nabeel.

HICHAM

Hello, can I help you?

NABEEL

You must be Mr. Hicham.

HICHAM

That's right, and who might you be?

Hagga Wahiba walks closer to the door.

NABEEL

And you must be Hagga Wahiba.

HAGGA WAHIBA

That's right, son... who are you?

Nabeel hands Hicham a large bag, it's that same one Amira had  
when she came out from the clothing store at Malibu Country  
Mart.

NABEEL

(smiles)

This is a gift for Suha.

HAGGA WAHIBA

A gift for Suha? From who?

Nabeel smiles, then turns and walks away, leaving Hicham and Wahiba in shock.

Hicham reaches inside the bag and pulls out that same pink dress. At that moment Suha walks out from her room.

SUHA  
Oh my god!

She runs and grabs the dress, her mouth and eyes are wide open. She then reaches inside the bag and pulls out more clothes.

SUHA  
This is all for me??

Wahiba nods and smiles.

SUHA  
From who??

Wahiba and Hicham look at each other.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
... from your mother.

INT. HUSSAIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tareq walks in. Hussain is in the kitchen.

TAREQ  
Hello Hussain.

HUSSAIN  
Hello champ. How was your day?

TAREQ  
OK.

HUSSAIN  
Hey, someone left you a message...  
from a traveling agency.

TAREQ  
They did?

HUSSAIN  
Yes. They said your flight is  
confirmed.

TAREQ  
That's Good.

HUSSAIN

Wait, are you serious? You're leaving in four days?

Tareq nods.

HUSSAIN

What about your job? What About Amira?

TAREQ

Like I told you when we first met. I have some business to take care of... and in four days everything will be done, then I have nothing to do here.

HUSSAIN

Does Amira know?

TAREQ

She will... in the right time.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

The Mercedes Benz drives past SUNSET BLVD.

INT. THE MERCEDES BENZ

Tareq is behind the wheel, Amira is in the back seat. Their eyes meet and they both look away.

AMIRA

Are you still upset with Ahmad?

TAREQ

No. He's an idiot... idiots Don't bother me.

AMIRA

How come you don't like him?

He looks at her.

TAREQ

Because He wants to steal my girl.

She looks at him.

AMIRA

What do you mean?

TAREQ  
(smiling, teasing)  
Lamia... he wants to steal Lamia.

She stares at him, then looks away as she rolls her eyes. She then points toward a side street.

AMIRA  
Right there... turn left.

He does. The road ends up being a beautiful tree lined, one way street, only few yards away from the ocean. The car comes to a full stop.

TAREQ  
Nice place.

AMIRA  
That's my secret hiding place.

TAREQ  
Beautiful.

AMIRA  
It's called Paradise Grove.

She gets out, takes a deep breath and walks slowly away from the car.

Tareq watches her as she leans against a tree and stares out at the ocean. He gets out and leans against the hood.

TAREQ  
You come here alot?

AMIRA  
(nods)  
When I want be away from people.

TAREQ  
That's why you didn't want me to come along?

She nods.

TAREQ  
(teasing)  
Well, in this case I'm going go in for a nap. Let me know when you finish romancing the tree.

He is about to go inside the car when Amira snaps all of a sudden.

AMIRA  
YOU... UNROMANTIC... JERK!

She bolts toward him as she takes one of her shoes off, ready to strike him with it.

TAREQ  
Oh no, she lost her mind.

He laughs as he runs behind the car. She follows. They run around the car twice before he bolts out toward the trees. She is relentless... and the CHASE CONTINUES.

He slows down, she catches up to him and is about to strike.

He bends, she loses her balance and is about to fall, but he is quick to hold her as they both fall on the sand. He is on top of her... they look at each other, both surprised to end up in this position.

AMIRA  
(gasps)  
Get off me.

TAREQ  
Are you still going to hit me?

AMIRA  
Yes.

TAREQ  
Why?

AMIRA  
Because you are an insensitive jerk  
and I've had it with you!

TAREQ  
I was just kidding.

AMIRA  
I don't care, you're still a  
jerk... get off me.

TAREQ  
Not until you promise to stop being  
a brat.

AMIRA  
I am NOT a brat.

TAREQ  
Oh yes you are.

They stare at each other. She looks the other way. Tareq looks at her.

TAREQ

Say it.

AMIRA

(rolls her eyes)

I promise... just get away from me.

He gets off her. She gets up and walks toward the car.

AMIRA

But you're still a jerk and I HATE YOU.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Nefeesa opens the door, it's Tareq.

NEFEESA

Hello dear, come on in. Amira is talking to Julian.

Tareq walks through the hallway to the living room, but stops when he hears Amira's voice;

AMIRA (O.S.)

Julian, just tell them no.

JULIAN (O.S.)

Sweetheart, just listen to me...

THE LIVING ROOM

Amira shakes her head nervously.

AMIRA

No... I said NO!

JULIAN

I don't get it. It's a 3 second shot... you wanna let go of a 10 million dollar contract for a lousy 3 second shot?

AMIRA

Would you take off all your clothes in front of the camera for...

She doesn't have to finish her sentence, he's already nodding.

AMIRA

Forget It.

JULIAN

Listen, I know it's your first time to appear naked, and I understand how nervous you are...

AMIRA

(interrupting)

I'm not nervous. I just won't do it. It's in the contract, so they can't force me

Tareq listens intently.

JULIAN

I don't get it... Amira, I really don't.

AMIRA

I know you don't, and it's OK.

JULIAN

So what do I tell them?

AMIRA

Like I said, they can either change the script or take me off the movie.

Julian shakes his head as he gets up and leaves. Tareq stares at him, then walks into the living room. Amira looks very upset.

TAREQ

Are you OK?

AMIRA

Do you have a cigarette?

TAREQ

I didn't know you smoke.

AMIRA

I don't... do you have one?

He lights one and hands it to her as they both walk out to the balcony.

TAREQ  
So, what going on?

AMIRA  
The studio that I work for, they  
want me to appear...

A pause.

TAREQ  
Well?

AMIRA  
Appear naked in a movie.

He looks confused.

TAREQ  
...and what did you say?

She stares at him.

AMIRA  
Well what do you think?? I said no  
of course.

He looks more confused. She notices.

AMIRA  
What? You think because I'm an  
actress in America, I'd show my  
body to strangers? You think I  
forgot who I am or where I came  
from?

He keeps staring at her.

AMIRA  
Why are you looking at me this way?

TAREQ  
Because I...

AMIRA  
You what?

TAREQ  
I saw you... I saw you naked.

AMIRA  
WHAT??

TAREQ

In a movie, I meant. There's a clip of you kissing someone while you were half naked.

AMIRA

Oh, that... it's not me.

TAREQ

What??

AMIRA

Come on, please. That ugly body they picked couldn't be mine.

TAREQ

I don't understand.

AMIRA

Tareq come on, it's obvious. It's one of those special effects they use nowadays. They take someone's head and put it on someone else's body. When I saw it I was very mad, that's why I'm taking the company who published the clip to court, I'm suing them.

Tareq is out of words.

AMIRA

What? You don't believe me?

He looks at her, then suddenly turns and storms out.

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - EGYPT

Hagga Wahiba is fitting the new pink dress on Suha, who looks very excited. Hicham walks in.

SUHA

Uncle, look at me. How do I look?

HICHAM

You look very nice, honey.

SUHA

Grandma can I go show my new dress to Maha?

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Sweetheart, the feast is only a couple of days away, why don't you wait?

SUHA  
Oh please, I can't wait. Please?

HAGGA WAHIBA  
OK fine. Go.

Suha storms out. Haggga Wahiba looks at Hicham, he's sitting on the sofa, looking at her.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
What's on your mind, son?

HICHAM  
Suha. I haven't seen her so happy in a long time.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
(smiling)  
She hasn't slept in two days, all she does is iron her new clothes, then tries them on.

He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
She's been asking about her mom alot lately...

HICHAM  
She needs to stop doing that... it will not do anyone any good.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Hicham, Suha is older now. I can't shut her up every time she brings up her mother's name.

HICHAM  
Well, mother, you're gonna have to... sooner Or later.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
what do you mean?

HICHAM  
Soon you'll know.

She looks very worried.

HAGGA WAHIBA

No. I want to know now... I know you've been hiding something from me.

He gets up and heads for his room.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Hicham...

He turns and looks at her.

HICHAM

Mother, Amira committed a sin.

HAGGA WAHIBA

A sin?

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - DAY

Tareq walks along the shore, lost in a deep thought.

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - SAME MOMENT

Hicham just finished telling his mother about the Fatwa, Hagga Wahiba is outraged.

HAGGA WAHIBA

...and you believed them??

He looks at her, not sure what to say.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Answer me!

HICHAM

Yes mother, I do. Like I told you, I saw the movie clip with my own eyes.

HAGGA WAHIBA

I don't care if you saw it with your own eyes or with the eyes of the whole world. Your sister is innocent!

HICHAM

Mother...

HAGGA WAHIBA

(screams)

Shame on you! Shame on you all! Who the hell do you think you are to order the death of my daughter?? My flesh and blood...

HICHAM

Mother, please listen...

HAGGA WAHIBA

I listened to you enough! I listened to you for ten years! Because of your honor and your pride, I agreed to disown my only daughter! I broke my heart because of you, just to honor you, and now you wanna kill her?! NO!...NO!

Hicham is in shock.

HICHAM

Mother, God ordered...

HAGGA WAHIBA

Do not talk to me about god! The god I know is different than yours and your Sheikhs', the God I know is merciful! The God I know would do not approve of the death of innocent people! No one has the right to take a soul, because souls belongs to God, and only God! It does NOT belong to Shiekh Hasan or to anyone else!

Hagga Wahiba suddenly picks up her scarf and gets ready to storm out of the house.

HICHAM

What are you doing??

She pushes him aside.

HAGGA WAHIBA

I am going to talk to your Shiekh. I am going to tell him to kill me first before he kills my daughter!

Hicham hangs on to his mother's hand and stops her from walking out.

HICHAM

Mother I beg you stop! I BEG YOU!

Hagga Wahiba stops and looks at him.

HAGGA WAHIBA

How can you do this? Amira is your only sister, she always looked up to you, loved you, trusted you... how can you forget her? You never walked into this house without bringing her candy or something... how can you forget? Remember that one night when she cut her finger with the knife? You cried like a child, then ran all the way to the hospital to buy her medicine... how can you let them kill her? HOW?

Hicham looks at his mother, he then closes his eyes and shakes his head.

HAGGA WAHIBA

Hicham, use your head. There is something fishy about this whole thing. Someone out there is up to no good and my only daughter is going to pay the price.

HICHAM

Let me handle this, please.

She gives him a nod as he storms out of the house.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Amira looks worried as she paces the living room back and forth.

A knock on the door. She runs to open it, but Nefeesa got there first, it's Ahmad.

Amira looks disappointed.

AHMAD

Amira, are you OK?

She nods.

AHMAD

How come you're not returning my calls?

AMIRA  
I've been busy.

AHMAD  
Something's bothering you, I know  
it... did I say or do something  
wrong? Please tell me.

AMIRA  
You know what Ahmad, the problem  
with you is that you never say or  
do anything wrong, everything in  
your life is perfect, calculated,  
even measured...

AHMAD  
I don't see any problem with that.

AMIRA  
I do.

AHMAD  
What do you mean?

AMIRA  
Ahmad, I'm not sure we're good for  
each other.

AHMAD  
I can't believe what I'm hearing...  
just tell me what I did wrong and I  
promise I'll change, just don't  
tell me we're not good for each  
other, please...

AMIRA  
You can't change, Ahmad, and I'm  
not asking you to... I've been  
thinking alot lately...

AHMAD  
(interrupting)  
It's that guy, isn't it!

She looks the other way.

AHMAD  
Amira talk to...

AMIRA  
(overlapping)  
Yes it is...

Ahmad loses it.

AHMAD

How dare you pick someone like that  
over me! How dare you?

She's nearly in tears.

AMIRA

Ahmad, please stop.

AHMAD

OK, Amira, I know you're not  
thinking straight, I'm sure you're  
not... but please think about us,  
Amira, think of how good we are to  
each other.

AMIRA

I will. I promise I will, but  
please, I really need to be alone  
now...

AHMAD

OK... OK I will leave, but please  
promise me, Amira, please.

She nods. He slowly turns and leaves.

INT. HUSSAIN'S HOUSE - EVENING

Tareq is on the phone.

TAREQ

Brother Atwa, please listen to  
me...

ATWA (V.O.)

(loud and angry)

NO I WILL NOT LISTEN! You are going  
against the Fatwa, against the  
Shiekh, you are going against GOD  
HIMSELF Tareq!

TAREQ

No I am not, all I'm asking is some  
time, some time to find out more  
about the clip, just to be sure.

ATWA (V.O.)

I told you a hundred times it was  
her!

ATWA(cont'd)

I saw it, the Shiekh saw it, her brother saw it, the whole Islamic council saw it.. what else do you need me to tell you?

Tareq is out of words.

ATWA (V.O.)

Tareq she's lying to you, she's playing you for a fool! I told you before she's a snake. I told you watch out from her, but obviously she brainwashed you, obviously she made you SOFT!

TAREQ

I'M NOT SOFT!

ATWA (V.O.)

THEN PROVE IT! Make the Shiekh proud, Tareq, don't let him down. The Fatwa's already been issued and there's no turning back, so if you can't do it, let me find someone else, someone with MORE HEART!

Tareq has reached a boiling point.

TAREQ

STOP TALKING TO ME LIKE THAT! I'M GOING TO KILL HER TONIGHT, I'LL KILL HER AND I'LL DRINK HER BLOOD!

Tareq hangs up and runs to his room, grabs his gun and storms out.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Amira and Nefeesa stand at the front door. Nefeesa carries a small bag as she gets ready to leave.

NEFEESA

Miss Amira, please if you need anything just call me.

AMIRA

Don't worry about me Nefeesa, enjoy your time and I'll see you in a couple of days.

They hug and kiss. Nefeesa then turns and leaves.

NEFEESA

Happy feast.

AMIRA

Same to you. Say hi to Lamia...  
Bye.

Amira is about to close the door when Tareq walks in.

TAREQ

Hello.

AMIRA

Hi... are you OK?

He nods.

AMIRA

Are you sure? You look pale.

TAREQ

I'm fine...

INT. THE MOSQUE - EGYPT

Hicham walks into Shiekh Hasan's private room. The Shiekh is talking to a man, he then motions for the man to leave when he sees Hicham.

SHIEKH HASAN

Brother Hicham, that's a nice  
surprise.

Hicham remains silent.

SHIEKH HASAN

What's wrong brother?

HICHAM

Lots of things.

SHIEKH HASAN

Talk to me, tell me what's on your  
mind?

HICHAM

Shiekh Hasan, you know how much I  
respect you, and that I would never  
go against your wishes, because you  
were always like a father to me...

Shiekh Hasan listens intently as he nods.

HICHAM

But...

SHIEKH HASAN

But what?

HICHAM

But I don't want my sister to die...

The Shiekh looks surprised.

SHIEKH HASAN

What do you mean? We talked about it in front of the men and we all reached the decision...

HICHAM

I understand that... but I changed my mind. I need to look into this matter further more...

SHIEKH HASAN

Further more?... but we...

HICHAM

(interrupting)

Shiekh, she is my flesh and blood after all, a decision like that should be my decision, me and my family... I think there's a time where religion stops, and family takes over.

SHIEKH HASAN

(irritated)

Brother Hicham, I can't believe I'm hearing these words from you.

HICHAM

Well, you're gonna have to, Shiekh. No one is killing my sister, unless it's over my dead body.

The Shiekh is fuming.

SHIEKH HASAN

You're going against my wishes, against a Fatwa of which I had issued, this will have many consequences in the future, brother, but as far as your sister, I think there's nothing we can do at this point.

(looks at his watch)

It's about ten o'clock in America now, the Fatwa is supposed to be carried out at midnight, I'm afraid it's a bit too late to do anything.

HICHAM

What do you mean too late? Just call your guy and call this whole thing off!

SHIEKH HASAN

I don't know how to reach him. I swear...

HICHAM

What are you talking about?? Then who does? WHO DOES!

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amira walks in from the kitchen. She has two cups of tea, and hands one to Tareq.

AMIRA

So... why are you acting so strange?

TAREQ

Don't worry about it... where was Nefeesa going?

AMIRA

Oh, to her daughter's house. She usually spends the first two days of the feast with her family.

He nods.

AMIRA

What about you, any plans for the feast?

TAREQ  
(shakes his head)  
No. No time.

AMIRA  
What do you mean?

There's an odd look in his eyes.

TAREQ  
I'm going back home.

AMIRA  
Home? When?

TAREQ  
Tomorrow morning.

She's in total shock.

AMIRA  
Tareq I don't understand... why are  
you going back home?

TAREQ  
I came to America to take care of  
some business, and this business  
will be over in two hours.

She looks very confused.

AMIRA  
Business? What kind of business?

He gives her a very cold look.

TAREQ  
You...

A beat.

AMIRA  
What?

TAREQ  
Amira... I came to America to carry  
out a Fatwa...

AMIRA  
Fatwa? I don't understand.

TAREQ

That film clip... Shiekh Hasan and the Islamic council saw it, and issued a Fatwa for your death... They sent me here to carry it out.

INT. ATWA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Atwa opens the door and Hicham suddenly storms in. Atwa is shocked.

HICHAM

(squeezes his teeth)  
So you wanna kill my sister, you son of a bitch.

ATWA

Hicham, watch your language. Your sister was asking for it, she got what she deserves.

Hicham suddenly loses it and grabs Atwa from his neck.

HICHAM

She got what she deserves, now it's your turn. Say your last prayer!

Hicham is choking him. Atwa fights back.

ATWA

Hicham, don't be crazy, listen to me...

HICHAM

I listened long enough you bastard! You planned it from the start, you brought the tape to the Shiekh, you sent the assassin. You wanted to kill her the day she left you, you just couldn't get over it.

Hicham is still choking him.

ATWA

Hicham I beg you STOP! For god sake!

Atwa stops resisting as Hicham sits on top of him and squeezes hard on his neck...

HICHAM

Who did you send, WHO?

Atwa can barely talk. Hicham eases the pressure.

ATWA  
He's name is Tareq, you don't know  
him.

HICHAM  
How can we call it off? TELL ME  
HOW!

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - LATER

Hicham walks in. Hagga Wahiba runs to him.

HICHAM  
I got it mother, I got her number  
in America.

They both run to the phone and Hicham starts to dial frantically... He waits as a busy signal is heard on the other end.

There's a look of horror over Hagga Wahiba's face as she looks at Hicham.

HAGGA WAHIBA  
What?

HICHAM  
Busy signal... I'm afraid we're...

HAGGA WAHIBA  
DON'T SAY IT!!... just Keep trying.

INT. AMIRA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Amira has an odd look in her eyes. The enormity of the situation has arrived to her with a thud.

Tareq slowly pulls out his gun. She's about to faint as she drops the tea cup to the floor.

TAREQ  
Relax... you still have two hours  
to live, you have till midnight...  
sit down.

Her body shakes hard as she sits across from him. He places the gun on the table.

AMIRA

So everything was planned... from the start.

He nods.

TAREQ

Since the first time you saw me on the beach.

AMIRA

And the restaurant...?

TAREQ

That was a coincidence.

AMIRA

... And The man who broke into my house...?

TAREQ

I was out watching you, and I saw him walking in...

AMIRA

Why didn't you let him kill me then?

TAREQ

There's no honor in that.

AMIRA

Honor? What do you know about honor? You sneak your way into my house, into my life, just so you can be close to me so you can kill me, and you call yourself a man with honor?

TAREQ

At least I don't sell my body and soul for money... Our religion forbids...

AMIRA

STOP! Do not talk about religion! This has nothing to do with GOD! And if you really think your shiekh sent you here to kill me so he can protect the name of god, then you're not only a cold-blooded murderer, but you're also a fool!

TAREQ

SHUT UP! Call me fool again and I swear to god I'll shoot you right here right now!

AMIRA

I will call you anything I want because I DON'T CARE ANYMORE! I am not afraid of you and your shiekh! Men like you tried to destroy me, drove me away from my home and family. Because of men like you thousands of Muslim women can't read, can't work, can't live their lives or even drive a car, so don't tell me God wanted this! It's ignorant men like you, blinded by hatred and failure, it's men like you who are anti social, anti happiness who want to lock up women and throw away the key!

TAREQ

(screaming)

STOP!

She stops. He slowly gets up and walks toward the balcony, leaving his gun on the table. And suddenly strikes the window with his fist.

AMIRA

So the fortune teller was right after all... and the nightmares...

TAREQ

Yes.

She wipes a tear. He looks at her.

AMIRA

So what are you waiting for? Go ahead, get it over with.

TAREQ

I told you I want to wait until midnight.

AMIRA

Why? Are you enjoying this?

TAREQ

Amira, I'm not enjoying this.

AMIRA

Then do it...

He shakes his head.

AMIRA

I want the Quran.

He looks at her then looks around, and finds one at a bookshelf. He picks it up and walks over to her, without the gun.

She takes it as she looks at him, her face streaked with tears. He looks at her then backs away. She holds the Quran very tight to her heart as he watches her.

TAREQ

Is there anything else you need?

AMIRA

What I want, you can't give me.

TAREQ

What... tell me.

AMIRA

I want to see Suha, my daughter... she was a baby when I left her. I don't even know how she looks like. Maybe you're right after all, I'm such a bad mother, I guess I deserve to die.

TAREQ

Don't say that... that's not why you're dying.

A pause.

TAREQ

Why did you leave her?

AMIRA

(sighing)

It's a long story...

TAREQ

Tell me... we have time.

She takes a deep breath then closes her eyes.

AMIRA

When I was fourteen, I fell in love with a boy from our neighborhood, we were both kids and didn't care about anything. One day, he was walking me home from school, and my brother Hicham saw us together, and lost his mind... He jumped on the kid and gave him the worst beating, then pulled me from my hair all the way to the house, there, he beat me up and swore that I'll never go back to school again, or even leave the house.

Tareq is listening intensely as she stops to wipe her tears.

TAREQ

Go on.

AMIRA

My brother Hicham was like a father to me. Our father died when Hicham was young, so he took responsibility for me and my mother at a very young age, he sacrificed a lot for us, that's why he never got married or even thought about it, we always came first in his life, that's why he felt betrayed by me when he saw me with that boy.

She stops and takes a deep breath.

TAREQ

And then what happened?

AMIRA

So I stayed home from that day on. I couldn't leave the house unless he or my mother were with me. It was like hell... Then few months later, a man, one of his friends proposed to me for marriage.

TAREQ

Marriage? But you were only 14?

AMIRA

(sighs)

Do you have any sisters?

He shakes his head.

AMIRA

Well if you had any, you would know that it's very normal for young girls back home to get married, especially in small towns like ours... so my brother immediately accepted.

TAREQ

Why didn't you say no?

AMIRA

Girls can't say no... I was very confused and I didn't know what I was getting myself into, somehow it was my ticket out of jail, so I accepted... he was thirty, I was fourteen... and it was hell, I left one hell and got into another. My husband was ruthless. He Had no heart... and I have no idea how I lasted with him for a year... I kept thinking things will get better someday... but it got worse, finally I couldn't take it anymore and I started thinking about suicide, but I had just given birth to my Suha, I felt it's unfair for her to be born without a mother... but the minute he found out that I gave birth to a girl, not a boy, hell broke loose and he was about to kill us both... so few days later I got up very early in the morning and sneaked out of the house with my baby, I went to my mother's house and left Suha with her, I told her I'll be back later...

She stops.

TAREQ

...and?

AMIRA

I had made arrangement with my aunt Magda, god bless her soul, to run away with her to America. My aunt lived here nearly all her life, and was visiting Egypt at the time, and when she saw how I was living she decided to take me away with her...

AMIRA(cont'd)

And we left that night, it was the night of the feast of sacrifice, just like tonight.

Tareq looks surprised.

TAREQ

What about Suha?

AMIRA

At the time Suha was one week old, I was going into the unknown and I was afraid to take her with me, I was grateful enough that my aunt was willing to take me away, I felt it would be a great burden to take an infant with me. So I decided to leave here there until I'm able to send for her.

She wipes a tear.

AMIRA

And just like that, I was gone... everyone went crazy when they found out. My brother Hicham immediately disowned me, and my husband Atwa divorced me then started spreading all kinds of bad rumors about me.

TAREQ

What did you say??

AMIRA

I said my husband...

TAREQ

What was his name?

AMIRA

Atwa...

Tareq gets up.

TAREQ

What's his last name??

AMIRA

Atwa Salem... why?

Tareq is in complete shock. He stares at her with wide open eyes.

AMIRA  
Do you know him??

Tareq's heart beats fast as he nods.

TAREQ  
He's the one who sent me to kill  
you.

AMIRA  
What??

There is a knock on the door.

TAREQ  
Are you expecting anyone?

AMIRA  
ATWA SENT YOU?!

Another knock. Then the front door opens and the sound of  
footsteps is heard in the hallway.

Tareq picks up the gun and steps back to a dark corner.

It's JULIAN.

JULIAN  
Amira.

AMIRA  
What are you doing here at this  
time?

He takes few steps closer.

JULIAN  
Amira why are you doing this to me,  
to us? Do you realize what's at  
stake?

She sniffs as he gets closer.

AMIRA  
You've been drinking, haven't you!

He suddenly grabs her arm.

JULIAN  
So what if they saw you naked, ha?

AMIRA  
Julian get out of here!

JULIAN

There's nothing wrong with it,  
honey. I personally wanted to see  
you naked since day one!

He pulls her closer. She screams as she looks at Tareq, who places the gun on the table and takes few steps closer.

Julian sees him.

JULIAN

Oh look who do we have here! The  
bodyguard. The fucking knight in  
the shining armor.

TAREQ

Let her go.

JULIAN

Oh yeah? I thought maybe you'd like  
to watch.

Amira releases herself from Julian's strong grip and takes few steps back.

AMIRA

Get out... Both of you, or I'm  
calling the police!

JULIAN

I'll get him out, honey. Do not  
worry.

Julian advances on Tareq and the two men begin a savage fight.

Amira watches in horror as Julian, the larger of the two, punches Tareq hard, sending him flying to the ground.

Amira screams.

Tareq checks his jaw for blood, and finds plenty of it as Julian advances on him again and kicks him hard in the stomach.

Tareq rolls onto his belly in pain.

Julian turns his attention back to Amira and advances on her.

She screams loud as he tries to rip her shirt.

TAREQ

Hey...

Tareq is right behind him. He jumps in the air and strikes Julian with a side kick on the neck, sending him flying to the ground unconscious.

Tareq looks at Amira and takes a step closer to her. She backs away.

TAREQ

Amira...

AMIRA

So, are you still going to kill me?

TAREQ

I don't know. I don't know anything anymore.

AMIRA

You know, in the end, you're no different than Atwa. You're both willing to kill and destroy a life for the simplest reasons. He does it because of revenge, you do it because of your wrong ideas about religion, but in the end you're not different than him.

TAREQ

Please let me explain... I...

Suddenly, A GUN SHOT.

Amira screams.

Julian stands there with a cold look in his eyes, holding Tareq's gun.

Tareq suddenly sprints at him, landing a series of hard kicks and punches which finally sends Julian flying across the living room, landing on the glass window, shattering it to pieces.

Tareq turns to look at Amira. She stares at him with a strange look in her eyes.

TAREQ

Are you OK?

Tareq then follows her look... Landing onto his chest, which is now full of blood.

He takes a deep breath, then slowly drops to his knees.

AMIRA  
 (screams)  
 TAREQ!

She holds him tight.

AMIRA  
 TAREQ NO! NO!

TAREQ  
 (faint)  
 I'm sorry... I'm sorry for  
 everything...

His eyes are closing as she holds him tighter.

AMIRA  
 TAREQ!!

TAREQ  
 I wasn't going to shoot you... I  
 swear...

Her tears mixes with his blood as she kisses his face.

AMIRA  
 I know that... My love... Hang on I  
 will call for help...

He takes a deep breath as he struggles to speak.

TAREQ  
 (faint)  
 Don't... Stay with me, I feel so  
 warm in your arms...

She holds him tighter.

TAREQ  
 I never cared if I lived or died...  
 Never... Nothing in my life ever  
 meant a thing... Until I met you...

He forces a smile as his bloody hand touches her face... And  
 his eyes slowly close.

TAREQ  
 Never believe fortune tellers.

The phone rings... And keeps ringing as Amira buries Tareq's  
 head in her chest.

The answering machine picks up;

HICHAM (V.O.)  
(screams loud)  
Amira! Sister! Be careful a man is  
going to kill you, his name is  
Tareq.

EXT. MALIBU BEACH - DAY

Amira walks alone along the shore, dressed in black.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HICHAM'S HOUSE - A WEEK LATER

Hagga Wahiba, Hicham and Suha sit in silence, all dressed in black.

A large picture of young Amira now hangs on the wall. A knock on the door, Hicham opens, it's Amira.

She walks in... no one says a word.

Amira and Suha look at each other.

AMIRA  
(wipes a tear)  
Suha... where's your pink dress?

Suha's face is streaked with tears as she looks at her mother... Amira takes few steps forward and takes her daughter in her arms.

AMIRA  
Baby, you're alot prettier than I  
imagined...

Hagga Wahiba and Hicham walk over and take Amira and Suha into their arms...

HICHAM  
Forgive me, Amira, forgive me  
sister, please forgive me.

AMIRA  
I already have, brother, a long  
time ago.

A pause.

HICHAM

But what happened with that man  
they sent for you? Tareq.

Amira walks to the front door and opens it. Tareq stands  
there, and behind him is Nefeesa and Lamia.

AMIRA

This is Tareq. The man who was  
supposed to kill me, but ended up  
saving my life in so many ways...  
And these are Nefeesa and Lamia.  
Nefeesa is my second mother

Everyone is shocked as Tareq walks in.

HICHAM

What the hell is going on? What is  
he doing here?

TAREQ

I came to ask for your sister's  
hand, brother Hicham... And also to  
apologize to you and Hagga Wahiba  
for what happened.

Hicham looks confused. Hagga Wahiba has a deep smile over her  
lips. Suha clutches tight on her mother's arm as she looks at  
Tareq. Her attention then shifts to Lamia.

AMIRA

Suha, I like you to meet Lamia,  
your other sister.

SUHA

Hi. Do you like to see my pink  
dress?

LAMIA

Yes I do.

Suha takes Lamia's hand and they head to the bedroom. Suha  
stops and looks at Amira, then runs to her and gives her a  
tight hug.

Hagga Wahiba looks at Tareq.

HAGGA WAHIBA

So you are the one who saved my  
daughter's life?

TAREQ

Well...

HAGGA WAHIBA  
Then she is yours forever.

Hagga Wahiba looks at Hicham, who slowly nods.

TAREQ  
And just to let you know, brother Hicham, me and Amira paid a visit to Shiekh Hasan before we come here and explained everything to him... He apologized to Amira and promised that the religious council will be meeting soon to decide the fate of Atwa.

HICHAM  
I already took care of him.

TAREQ  
(smiles)  
Yes. I heard. That's why I left him alone... For now.

Hicham smiles as he takes Amira's hand and pulls her closer to Tareq.

HICHAM  
We are proud to have you in our family, brother Tareq... Very proud.

THE END