

Anna

By

?????

FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STOP - AMMAN - DAY

A BUS pulls away from the curb and merges with traffic.

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

ANNA (12), sits alone on an empty bus bench amidst the noise of the bus's engine and the many PASSENGERS who pay her no mind. The head scarf she wears partially hangs over her large eyes and drapes over the bulky BACKPACK she wears.

BUZZ! BUZZ!

Startled, she reaches into her pocket and pulls out a cell phone.

ON CELL PHONE

ALLAH ACKBAR! :)

The phone drops to the ground as A LARGE WOMAN walks past and bumps into, Anna without care.

A large CRACK as the phone falls to the ground.

Terrified, Anna clutches the phone off the ground, swipes the screen on. A countdown timer on the phone's cracked screen races past nine minutes and fourty seconds.

INT. WAREHOUSE ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

In a dimly lit room full of boxes and tools, Anna sits solely on a stool next to a plate of PITA BREAD and HUMMUS atop a dingy desk. Anna reaches out to grab a piece but her hand is slapped away by FATIMA (28). Middle Eastern. Bitch.

FATIMA

What do you need that for? ... Why waste it?

Fatima plunges a piece of bread into the hummus, takes a small bite, and sets it onto the table while, Anna rubs the redness from her hand.

On the floor by the table sits a large BACKPACK. Haphazardly, Fatima struggles to lift the heavy backpack and strap it onto Anna's slim shoulders. It's great weight digs into her.

Eye to eye, Fatima crouches in front of Anna to jerk the front straps snug and tight.

FATIMA

You remember what to do?

Assertively, Anna shakes her head.

FATIMA

Don't talk to anybody or stop for anything. Here's your fare.

She forces a wad of bills into Anna's hand.

FATIMA

If the bus is late there's a small cafe across the street. In that case, use the money to order a drink and find a seat inside. Pray they there's a long line for the knafeh this morning.

With thin fingers, Fatima threads and connects two pieces of a black wire through the front buckle of the backpack and straps it across Anna's chest. Uncomfortably tight, Anna reaches to loosen it but, Fatima catches her hand.

FATIMA

Don't! This is like a dead man's switch. Now if you or anybody else tries to take this off you, they'll be blown apart like a, like a overfilled water balloon. As a matter of fact, don't touch anything anymore. Do you understand?

Happy with a small nod of confirmation, Fatima springs up and walks away. Anna darts her hand out to grab a piece of pita then inhales it.

Seconds after, Fatima returns to hand a cell phone to, Anna.

FATIMA

Don't touch anything I meant, except this. Listen closely. This phone is connected to the device. When the timer runs out you better be on the bus or in that cafe. Or else.

Fatima pushes a button the phone which starts the countdown timer, set at one hour.

Proud, Fatima stands up, smiles down at Anna and runs a finger across her lips.

FATIMA

Aren't you just adorable?

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

In Anna's hand, the phone's timer races past eight minutes and fifty three seconds.

Anna looks around at the people on the bus.

Oblivious, two, OLDER STUDENTS peck away at their phones.

Armed with a bagel and coffee, a BUSINESSWOMAN enjoys her breakfast. Anna bites her lip with hunger.

In the rear view mirror, Anna catches the view of the BUS DRIVER who looks up and glares back at Anna.

Nearby, a MOTHER scolds her two young GIRLS to keep them from fighting.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - ANNA'S HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Togther on the bed, ANNA kneels next to her friend, BASMA (13). Anna's hands lay lightly on Basma's lap as Basma stares into Anna's eyes and yoys with her hair.

BASMA

I wish I had cute lashes and eyes like yours. Perfectly almond shaped instead of these big ugly ones.

ANNA

I like your eyes, Basma.

BASMA

(laughing)

I hate them. My brother always said I had the eyes of a cow. When we were little he used to chase me around with my uncle's cowbell and throw grass at me. You have no ideas what little asshols brothers are!

A nervous laugh from Anna.

BASMA
Even your laugh is cute.

Basma leans in for a soft kiss on Anna who returns it after a brief pause. They both giggle as it breaks.

BASMA
How was that?

Bashful and red, Anna can only smile. .

BASMA
I liked it too. Have you ever done that before? With another girl?

ANNA
No.... No I never have.

BASMA
I have. Lots of times.

Confident, Basma leans in to kiss Anna again. As the kiss lingers, Anna slowly slides her hands up Basma's arms.

Suddenly, ANNA'S MOTHER (48) throws open her bedroom door and tramples in.

ANNA'S MOTHER
Anna, dinner is ready for you and your ... ANNA!

The two girls freeze in terror on the bed, eyes wide, as Anna's Mom processes the situation. Before they can react, Anna's Mom launches into a physical assault on Anna as she throws anything in sight at her daughter before a barrage of slaps.

ANNA'S MOTHER
(in Arabic)
Anna! What are you doing with that little whore friend! How dare you you do this in my house! Under my roof! Where did you learn this? Do her parents know? Anna! Speak to me!

ANNA
Mama! Stop it!

Helpless, Anna's arms shield herself from the blows without use while Basma tries to deflect them as best she can.

BASMA
 Leave her alone! She didn't do
 anything wrong!

ANNA'S MOTHER
 (in Arabic)
 Get out of my house! Both of you!
 No daughter of mine will act like
 street whore as long as I live in
 this house. What if the family
 knew? Get out!

ANNA
 Mama! Don't!

ANNA'S MOTHER
 (in Arabic)
 Out! Get out!

Anna and Basma scramble out of the room as, Anna's Mom
 chases them to the bedroom doorway.

ANNA'S MOTHER
 (in Arabic)
 And don't you dare come back!

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

Head down full of despair, Anna checks the cell phone again
 as it ticks past five minutes and twenty six seconds.

The bus stops and the front door swings open. A young girl,
 MADALYN (12) enters wearing a school uniform and carries a
 binder and a brown bag. She takes up a seat opposite Anna.

MADALYN opens up her bag and takes out some fresh knafeh.
 With hardly a notice, Anna looks away.

MADALYN
 Are you hungry?

No response.

MADALYN
 I can't eat it all. It's too rich.
 Honestly. You can have some. I
 really don't mind.

A gooey cheesy piece is broken off and offered to, Anna, who
 rejects it.

MADALYN

What's wrong? You don't like knafeh?

Quickly, Madalyn stands up to move across the aisle and sit next to Anna. As she does the bus shakes and she falls onto Anna but braces herself on the backpack.

MADALYN

Shit! I'm sorry! Here. It's from a cafe by my house. I always buy something there for breakfast on the way to school.

As, Anna reluctantly take the knafeh from, Madalyn their hands touch but briefly. A sliver of a smile slips out from Anna as she takes a bite, that soon turns into a full blown smile as she devours the pastry.

MADALYN

See? It's good as fuck isn't it? My bakers over there, they know me and so make sure to hook me up with the good shit.

Now a small chuckle escapes.

MADALYN

My name's Madalyn. What's your name?

ANNA

Anna.

MADALYN

The boys must love your eyes.

ANNA

No. Nobody does.

MADALYN

Stupid boys.

With a hint of intent, Madalyn sways a small flirty nudge into Anna. For a moment, they lock eyes before bashful smiles from each ruins the moment.

MADALYN

Is this your first day? Are you some kind of fucking super nerd or something? Your backpack is like, full of books.

To illustrate her point, Madalyn thumps Anna's backpack.

ANNA

No! Don't!

MADALYN

What the hell do you got in there?

Panicked, Anna checks the phone. Three minutes and fifty eight seconds.

ANNA

Stop! Stop the bus!

In a blur, Anna leaps from her seat, and claws her way to the front of the bus. The phone drops to the floor.

ANNA

I need to get off! Stop the bus please! Please let me off!

EXT. CITY BUS - STREET - DAY

Abruptly the bus stops in the middle of traffic. The doors open and Anna rushes out at top speed down the street past a row of shops and PEEDESTRIANS.

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

The timer on the cell phone relentlessly counts past the three minute and sixteen second mark in Madalyn's hand.

MADALYN

Anna! Wait! Your phone!

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Nearly out of breath, Anna turns a corner, and stops on the sidewalk, assess her surroundings frantically as she fights back tears.

In front of her is an intersection crowded with PEOPLE who wait to cross the street.

Across the street, TRAFFIC whizzes by with even more PEDESTRIANS on the other side. At the intersection a large MOVING TRUCK waits for the red light to change.

Anna looks behind to find a RESTAURANT patio packed with DINERS.

With a change of the traffic light, the pedestrians cross the street and the moving truck drives off to reveal an empty park behind it. Instantly, Anna darts through the intersection towards the park. Cars screech and stop as they narrowly miss her.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

In full desperation, Anna runs for her life through the park. Her arms flail helplessly to take off the backpack without a trigger of the safety wire.

Distracted and off balance, she trips on a divit in the dirt and falls hard. The front buckle of the backpack snaps on impact.

Anna freezes.

Nothing happens.

She tears off the backpack as fast as she can, then scrambles away in a hobble.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Amid the chaos and comotion of the stopped cars and with Anna's phone, binder and bag of knafeh in hand, Madalyn urgently scans for Anna. She checks the phone again. One minute and twenty-two seconds. Then a doubletake as she sees the park.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Exhausted and with heavy breaths, Anna pushes herself to escape the backpack.

MADALYN (O.S.)
(faint)
Anna! Wait up!

Unaware, Anna keeps on.

In a full run, Madalyn gives chase.

MADALYN
Anna! What are you doing?... Damn,
this is one crazy bitch.

Anna keeps up her quick pace until...

MADALYN (O.S.)
Anna! Fuck! Slow down!

ANNA
Oh no.

Like a top, Anna stops, spins around in place, sees Madalyn in a run towards the backpack.

ANNA
Madalyn! Run!

A sigh of relief as Madalyn finally gets Anna's attention. She slows down as she nears the backpack as Anna waves in the distance.

ANNA
(faint)
Run! it's a bomb!

MADALYN
What? Fun? Who the hell thinks this
shit is fun?

In a full sprint, Anna takes off towards Madalyn.

Winded but triumphant, Madalyn stands over the backpack. She leans over to heft it up onto her shoulders.

Anna runs without hesitaion.

ANNA
Get away! It's a bomb! Please! It's
a bomb! Run away please! Madalyn!

With the backpack on her shoulders, Madalyn shields her eyes from the sun and stares out at, Anna, a smile spreads across her face...

... a powerful explosion rips through the air where Madalyn used to be. The blast throws Anna back off her feet. A second later, the brown bag of knafeh lands next to her.

Dirty, scratched and bloodied, Anna props herself up only to look on in horror at the aftermath of the explosion. There is absolutely no sign of Madalyn. Anywhere.

Watery eyes soon lead to full blown tears as the stress, shock, and loss floods out of Anna. She loses control of her body and breaks down compeltely. Looks up at the sky, then then where Anna used to be.

In the distance, sirens echo begin to echo through the city.

Barely composed, Anna struggles to her feet and begins to limp away from the explosion deeper into the park.

A light breeze ripples over the brown knafeh bag.

FADE OUT: