The Velvet Song

By:

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Adapted from the feature

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"THE VELVET SONG"

EXT. CANAL-NIGHT

Leila gazes across the canal at the murky water with only a stone wall separating the two.

Against it are her bag and a blade.

She must be high up considering the drop. From her pocket, she takes out a dagger and places it against her neck. She closes her eyes, and just as she's about to...

    MALE VOICE (O.S.)
    Please! Someone help!

Leila doesn't know if she's the one calling for help to stop the dagger from piercing her skin, though hears it again. She looks over her shoulder, taking off in the direction of the voice without a second thought dropping the dagger.

CUT TO:

Surrounded by a GROUP OF THIEVES is...

ANTONY (late 20s), a tall, slender and pleasing to the eye man with creamy skin. He's dressed in a straight-sleeve, v-neck coat, in his hand a black LEATHER BAG made for a doctor.

One of the thieves holds a WALLET.

    ANTONY
    That's all I have.

    THIEF 1
    We want the bag too.

    ANTONY
    It's a doctor's bag! What do you need it for?

Thief 1 takes out a knife.

    THIEF 1
    I'll be the judge of that. Give it here.

    ANTONY
    No...

    THIEF 1
    You asked for this!
The thieves close in on Antony...

WHEN...

...Leila dashes in.

Before the other thief know what's happening, Leila starts the battle smoothly until each thief lies on the surface motionless.

Antony, in awe, rushes to Leila grasping both hands.

   ANTONY
   Young, miss. Thank you!

   LEILA
   Are you okay?

   ANTONY
   Yes. Quite. My name is Antony Stroud. I was on my way to a patient's house when I was ambushed.

   LEILA
   Why didn't you give them the bag? You could've been killed.

   ANTONY
   This bag contains medicine for a child. At the time, I wasn't worried about my life.

   LEILA
   How admirable, but couldn't you buy more?

   ANTONY
   'Buy more?'

He scoffs.

   ANTONY (CONT’D)
   I am a doctor, and I cannot just 'buy more'. Do you have five thousand dollars? Besides, she can't wait another few weeks. She needs it now.

   LEILA
   Okay. Well be careful. There's been a lot of crime around here lately.

Leila turns to walk off.
ANTONY
Wait! You're right. I see—uh—you're quite skilled. Is there any possibility you can accompany me? When people see I am a physician, they assume I have money. I've had quite a few close calls. I could pay you, of course.

LEILA
I doubt I could be of service.

ANTONY
I disagree! You saved me...I need to get this medicine to that little girl. Please. I'll pay you whatever you want.

LEILA
It's not about money. I—I just think you could hire someone better...

ANTONY
And I disagree...

Leila considers it.

CUT TO:

Leila grabbing her bag and blade.

ANTONY (CONT'D)
So, Leila—Leila, right? May I ask why a cute girl like you is traveling alone at night? Certainly you can take of yourself, but it's still dangerous for a young woman to travel alone.

LEILA
I'm not the one who was almost killed...

ANTONY
You got me there! I took the bus and cut through here. It's quicker.

LEILA
Aww. The traveling doctor.

ANTONY
I like that. But you didn't answer my question.
LEILA
I-I was just taking a walk.

ANTONY
You were taking a walk...

LEILA
Yes. A walk.

ANTONY
Well...thank you for coming with me.

LEILA
It's important you get that medicine to that little girl, right?

ANTONY
Yes, it is. Thank you.

EXT. FRONT DOOR-NIGHT
Antony and Leila head up to the front door.
Antony knocks on the door.
A moment passes.
The door opens.
AMIRA (early 30s) stands there quite shocked to see the doctor.

AMIRA
Dr. Stroud? You came!

ANTONY
Amira. Hello. It's been too long.

AMIRA
It has. Please-Come in!

INT. FRONT ROOM/HOUSE-CONTINUOUS
Antony enters followed by Leila.
Amira closes the door behind them.
THREE SMALL CHILDREN, racing into the living room, shout:
CHILDREN
Dr. Stroud!

ANTONY
Here are my three favorite racers. How have you all been?

CHILDREN
Good!

ANTONY
Taking care of your sister?

CHILDREN
Yes!

Antony, patting all three on the head, says:

ANTONY
You all haven't been giving your mother any trouble, right?

CHILDREN
No!

AMIRA
Hmph. Anyway, is this your wife?

ANTONY
If only. No. This is Leila. She's my assistant. Long story, but is it okay if I see Amani?

AMIRA
Of course.

Amira leads Antony and Leila down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM/HOUSE/FROLIN-NIGHT

The door creeps open.

Amira enters followed by Antony and Leila.

The bedroom walls are painted in a pale blue color with teddy bear stickers decorated on all four corners, giving off the very definition of serenity.

A PRESCHOOLER lies under a comforter asleep, her face a ghastly pale even with the light from the lamp radiating it. On her forehead is a wet cloth.
Amira rushes to her side.

    AMIRA
    Amani. Amani. Dr. Stroud is here.

AMANI opens her eyes and smiles when she sees Antony.
Antony bends down to her eye level.

    ANTONY
    Amani. How are you feeling?

    AMANI
    Okay.

    ANTONY
    Good. I have something for you.

Antony takes out a small vial from his bag and holds it up for Amani. Inside is a bluish tint liquid.

    ANTONY (CONT’D)
    It's candy. It's a little bitter, but it is actually quite good.

Amani, giggling, says:

    AMANI
    It's medicine.

    ANTONY
    You're just too smart for me. I'm going to sit you up, okay?

Amira helps the doctor sit Amani up.
Antony opens the vial.

    ANTONY (CONT’D)
    Okay, Amani. Try to get this all down for me.

He puts the vial to her lips.
Amani drinks all the contents and coughs a little.
Antony and Amira help her lie back down.

Leila watches Antony in awe. This romantic doctor is actually quite serious when it comes to his patients.
EXT. FRONT DOOR—NIGHT

LEILA leans against the front door waiting.
The front door creaks open.
Antony walks out and closes it.

LEILA
How is she?

ANTONY
Much better. Her fever's gone, and her complexion is returning.

LEILA
So you really are the traveling doctor?

ANTONY
Only for those that can't go to the hospital.

LEILA
Why can't she go to the hospital?

ANTONY
We better go.

Antony walks off first leaving our dubious main character.

EXT. CANAL—NIGHT

Antony and Leila return to the canal.

ANTONY
Thank you for accompanying me. It was a blessing that you were there when you were. I would not be alive if you weren't.

LEILA
You shouldn't travel alone on foot.
Even if it is cheaper.

ANTONY
That's true, but as a 'traveling doctor', what can I do, right? (beat) I'm not sure what you do for a living, but is it possible to make you consider...
LEILA
'Consider...'

ANTONY
Would you consider being my escort?

LEILA
'Escort'? As in putting your life in my hands? Bad idea.

ANTONY
I don't think so. In fact I would feel much safer having a sightly, young woman such as yourself escorting me.

LEILA
I-I can't. I already moved out of my house, and-

ANTONY
Even better! You can stay with me. You can also help me around the clinic. So what do you say?

What a tempting offer?

EXT. ANTONY'S HOME-NIGHT

Leila looks up at the traditional one-story, wooden home one wouldn't expect a doctor to live in.

ANTONY
This way.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM/ANTONY'S HOME-NIGHT

Antony leads Leila inside.

It's a simple room. Two sofas adjacent to each other behind a coffee table, and in the corner a table and chair for possibly patient care.

Leila notices something.

LEILA
A one bedroom??
ANTONY
Yeah, it's yours. I can sleep out here.

LEILA
I can't possibly kick you out of your room.

Antony, pointing to one of the sofas, says:

ANTONY
It's fine! This one has a pull out mattress. Exciting, right?

LEILA
He-hehe.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ANTONY'S HOME-DAY

Leila walks out of the room, glancing at Antony still asleep on the sofa.

INT. PATIENT AREA/ANTONY'S HOME-DAY

Mrs. Cummins sits down with the help of Leila.

Leila, in scrubs, listens to Mrs. Cummins heartbeat.

LEILA
One hundred and ten beats per minute.

MRS. CUMMINS
That's good, right?

LEILA
Um-No. That's pretty fast actually.

MRS. CUMMINS
Honestly, I think it's just a cold. The weather is nippy these days.

LEILA
Which is why you should make sure you're staying warm. May I check your temperature?

MRS. CUMMINS
Of course.
Leila places her hand on Mrs. Cummins's forehead.

    MRS. CUMMINS (CONT’D)
    I can't believe Dr. Stroud has such
    a cute assistant. You know, my
grandson is around your age.

    LEILA
    R-Really?

Antony enters dressed in green scrubs.

    ANTONY
    Mrs. Cummins. You're looking as
    beautiful as ever.

    MRS. CUMMINS
    (blushing)
    Doctor Stroud, I was just telling
    your assistant that I think she'd
    be perfect for my grandson.

    ANTONY
    Now, Mrs. Cummins. I cannot have
    you taking my Leila away from me.

    MRS. CUMMINS
    Oh my! Are you saving her for
    yourself?

    ANTONY
    I would be crazy to let her get
    away. Now how are you feeling?

    MRS. CUMMINS
    I just have a little cough.

    LEILA
    And a fever.

    ANTONY
    That is not good. What is her heart
    rate?

    LEILA
    One hundred and ten beats.

    MRS. CUMMINS
    That's not too bad, I don't think.

Antony checks her forehead.

    ANTONY
    And coughing?
MRS. CUMMINS
Only a little.

ANTONY
Any mucous when you cough?

MRS. CUMMINS
Yes, but it's just the cold coming up.

ANTONY
What about chest pain?

MRS. CUMMINS
Only when I cough.

ANTONY
Any other symptoms?

MRS. CUMMINS
Hm-diarrhea.

ANTONY
Mrs. Cummins, you have the pneumonia.

MRS. CUMMINS
'Pneumonia'?

ANTONY
I'll give you a week supply of meds and will visit in three days. How does that sound?

MRS. CUMMINS
Hehe. Fine with me!

INT. PATIENT AREA/ANTONY'S HOME-DAY

This time in the chair is a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN.

ANTONY
What seems to be the problem?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
(with swollen tongue)
My tongue is swollen.

ANTONY
Did you eat anything that could have caused this?
MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
(with swollen tongue)
I don't think so.

ANTONY
May I ask what your meals have consisted of? It could very well be just an allergic reaction.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
(with swollen tongue)
Well, I want my husband to start eatin' healthy so I started makin' different dishes. Berries, fruits, dumb cane-

ANTONY
Dumb Cane is poisonous...

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN
(with swollen tongue)
Are you sure?

Leila is dumbfounded.

CUT TO:

INT. PATIENT AREA/ANTONY'S HOME-DAY

A YOUNG WOMAN sits on the chair, a YOUNG MAN standing beside her.

ANTONY
What are your other symptoms?

YOUNG WOMAN
Nausea, fatigue, I've been urinating more than usual.

YOUNG MAN
Tell him how you hate your favorite foods now.

YOUNG WOMAN
And that!

ANTONY
Sounds like you could be pregnant.

Same time:

YOUNG WOMAN
What?
YOUNG MAN
Huh?

ANTONY
These sound like symptoms of pregnancy.

YOUNG MAN
But we've never had relations...

Leila mouths 'Yikes'.

CUT TO:

Leila closes the door as the couple leaves in a heated argument, leans against it, and lets out a deep sigh.

Antony enters.

ANTONY
What a day.

LEILA
It's never been this busy.

ANTONY
Eh...Slow day-Dinner?

Leila thinks to herself, 'Slow day?'

EXT. STREET-DAY

The two tread down the street.

LEILA
It's true! You were meant for this.

ANTONY
You think so? My parents taught me everything I know. When I told them I was opening my very own clinic outside of town, you would think they would have heard the words "sailing" and "around the world".

LEILA
Your parents are doctors?

ANTONY
My mother is. My father tries to stay out of her way.

Leila fights back a smile, Antony giving in.
ANTONY (CONT’D)
I want to help those that needed it. The wealthy, they are well taken care of. The poor—they are barely looked at. They at least deserve their basic needs met. Basic healthcare.

LEILA
And you moved to one of the poorest areas of the city.

ANTONY
There are plenty of physicians in the bigger parts of the city, don't you think?

LEILA
Indeed, Doctor.

Antony says something, though Leila doesn't catch it. Across the street she sees...

TWO MILITANTS both dressed in military uniforms, harassing a FATHER of color with a SMALL BOY quivering behind him.

FATHER
I-I'm sorry. Please accept my apology.

MILITANT 1
Your 'apology'? Tell your kid to watch where he's going.

FATHER
He didn't mean to bump into you. He just wasn't lookin' where he was goin'.

MILITANT 1
He sure wasn't. Maybe I'll teach 'im a lesson for you!

The militant snatches up the boy...

The father hurls himself forward, taking a blow to the chest by the second militant.

The militant raises a hand to the boy.

LEILA
Hey!

Leila moves to step in.
Antony, grabbing her arm, whispers:

ANTONY
Leila...

WHEN...

...Another UNIFORM (early 40s) seizes the military's hand just in time.

MILITANT
Commander Sable!

Leila recognizes this man; the deep scar he dons on his eye, difference in uniform signifying his rank. Her face goes a ghostly white; both hands ball into quivering fists.

ANTONY
Leila, are you all right?

SABLE releases the soldier.

The boy rushes to his father.

MILITANT
Commander, I don't believe these people have their papers.

FATHER
P-Papers?

SABLE
(to militants)
You're making a scene.

Sable treads off. As he walks off, for a split second that seems like a lifetime, his eyes meet with Leila's.

The two militants follow behind.

Leila slips her arm from Antony, who is too preoccupied with the father and child. She follows Sable to the side, blending in with the crowd. Can she get any closer?

ANTONY (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Leila is just as surprised as Antony.

LEILA
That's him.

ANTONY
What?
LEILA
That's the man who killed my mother...

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODLAND–DAY (FLASHBACK)

HUGO (mid 20s) leads ELEMENTARY-AGED LEILA through the woodland. He wears a military uniform.

LEILA (V.O.)
My mother and I were refugees hidden in a town that took us and others in. That's until the military discovered what the town was doing.

CUT TO:

Leila yanks her hand from Hugo's.

HUGO
What are you doing?

YOUNG LEILA
I want my mummy.

Hugo doesn't know what to say. He can command an army, but to comfort a child?

HUGO
We need to keep moving.

YOUNG LEILA
I want my mummy!

Hugo looks down at the young child with a menacing look–like a predator observing his prey.

HUGO
As of today, you're no longer a child. You're not a Syran, and until you get rid of that accent, you do not speak. Understand?

They stand there in total silence, Leila's defiant eyes brimming with tears.

LEILA (V.O.)
We were nomads. We didn't stay in one place for too long.

(MORE)
LEILA (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Me being an undocumented immigrant, Hugo branded a traitor by his country. We were on the run, and at times, they caught up. What's worse, they would send Hugo's comrades.

Hugo turns to leave with little Leila following behind.

CUT TO:

Hugo stands ready to defend himself, blade extended out.

Young Leila is hidden behind a tree, gazing at him anxiously.

A distance away is an OFFICER dressed in a similar military uniform Hugo once wore. He too has his blade extended out. The way it trembles, we can tell this isn't what he wants.

HUGO
You don't have to do this.

OFFICER
I'm sorry, Commander. They have my family...

HUGO
I'm sorry, Luke.

LUKE (LUKE)
Me too...

Luke bolts toward Hugo.

The two exchange swift blows...

WHEN...

...Hugo plunges his sword deep into Luke.

HUGO
I'm so sorry.

Leila just watches from a distance, her heart broken for Hugo.

CUT TO:

In the woodland...

Hugo teaches a TEEN LEILA martial arts, specifically Wing Chun mixed with Self Defense.
He then picks up two kali staffs, tosses her one, and gives her a lesson in kali, or simply sword techniques.

LEILA (V.O.)
We were always on the move, but eventually we were able to just breathe.

Hugo, seeing Leila out of breath, says:

HUGO

Rest.

Leila trots to her water jug and takes a swig.

Hugo practices sword fighting dressed in a uniform similar to Wing Chun. It's the sword Leila carries in the present. His strikes are swift—his footwork smooth.

HUGO (CONT'D)
That's enough. Let's continue.

Leila gazes away with an 'of course' blank look and stands up.

HUGO (CONT'D)
No sword?

LEILA
No thank you.

HUGO
If you can use a staff, you can use a blade.

LEILA
I'd rather not.

Hugo, trading in his blade for a staff, says:

HUGO
Leila, I teach you everything I know in order for you to use what you can. If I teach you five hundred techniques and you use five, so be it.

LEILA
Fine, Hugo. Should I get my sword then?

HUGO
No, no. Gives a chance to spar now.
LEILA

Wha-

Hugo dashes toward Leila deflecting her staff, exchanging prompt blows in Largo Mano long range, the space between them shrinking.

HUGO

Watch the distance!

Leila scatters back, the sparring continuing until Hugo lands a blow on her sparring hand. He drops his staff, the two engaging in hand-to-hand combat until he tosses her onto the grassy surface.

LEILA

Ow...

HUGO

What did I tell you about falling?
Slap the ground, tuck your chin in,
spread your legs, and breathe out.

LEILA

You caught me off guard!

Hugo, extending his hand to her and grinning, says:

HUGO

Then should we go again?

Leila is not too pleased.

EXT. PORCH-DUSK

The sky is tinged with a reddish orange, the chirping of cicadas are all around.

Leila and Hugo sit on the top step, drinking soup and eating bread while enjoying the scenery.

HUGO

You know, you did good today.

LEILA

I took a beating.

HUGO

Fall down seven times. Stand up eight. You're still learning, and you're going against me.

Hugo playfully shoves his shoulder into her.
She shakes her head in disapproval, though grinning.

HUGO (CONT'D)
You were discomposed today.

LEILA
You threw me around all day!

HUGO
Are you saying I upset you because I cannot upset you. Only you can upset yourself.

LEILA
Here we go.

HUGO
It is true. People can try to hurt you. Try to break you, but you control how you feel. Stoicism teaches us that our lives are brief and how we must be strong and in control of ourselves. It teaches us that we cannot control external forces, though we can control our responses. It doesn't help us to seek an understanding of the world, but to overcome destructive emotions.

LEILA
I'm trying.

HUGO
What have I always taught you?

LEILA
'Always be yourself, express yourself, have faith in yourself.'

HUGO
You are you. That is good enough.

LEILA
Does that mean I'll beat you one day?

HUGO
No, it doesn't.

This tickles Leila.
PRESENT-EXT. CANAL-DAY

Leila and Antony look over the canal, gazing at the clear blue water.

This is a lot for Antony to process, more so because of what this all means. Not just for her. Not just for him.

ANTONY
Is he... still with us?

Leila shakes her head 'no'.

LEILA
I always thought nothing could hurt him. Like he was made of brick.

Leila, swallowing herself in self-pity with a chuckle, says:

LEILA (CONT’D)
But I guess not even the strongest man can beat pneumonia while on the run, right?

ANTONY (O.S.)
Leila, I am so sorry... Hearing this is difficult to believe. We never heard anything about this.

The audacity of this man of privilege.

LEILA
Your President didn't tell you? Your men slaughtered my people. My mother! What? Does that not fit into your country's narrative?!

ANTONY (O.S.)
I did not mean it like that. I-

LEILA
Your country pretends to be this great nation yet you turn your backs on the people who need you the most!

ANTONY (O.S.)
I am so very sorry... Leila, what were you going to do back there?

LEILA
... Kill him.
The cool breeze or those chilling words cause Antony to quiver. He takes her hand, spins her toward him, and embraces her so tightly, Leila can barely breathe.

LEILA (CONT’D)
What are you doing?
(beat)
What are you doing?

Antony just holds her, and at this moment for Leila, it means everything to her.

INT. LIVING ROOM/ANTONY'S HOME-DAY

Leila straightens up the coffee table as Antony gazes at her unbeknownst to her. When she turns to him, he glances away red in the face...

WHEN...

...there's a knock at the door.

Leila, surreptitiously, exits into the bedroom and closes the door.

CUT TO:

Antony opening the door to find...

...THREE MILITANTS outside the door.

ANTONY
May-May I help you?

MILITANT 1
Good evening, Dr. Stroud. Sorry to bother you so late, but we have reason to believe your live-in nurse is an illegal immigrant.

ANTONY
What? That is not possible. I know her.

MILIITANT 2
May we speak with her?

CUT TO:

Leila leans in ear first toward the door.
ANTONY (O.S.)
She isn't here right now.

CUT TO:

MILITANT 1
When she does return, will you alert the military?

ANTONY
Of course, but this is a mistake.

MILITANT 2
We'll see...Good night, Dr. Stroud.

The militants exit.

Antony closes the door, locks it, and rushes to the bedroom door. He opens it to find...

EXT. CANAL-NIGHT

Leila, with her bag and sword, sprint down the canal...

WHEN...

...She becomes surrounded, TWO MILITANT FIGHTERS on one side and one MILITANT FIGHTER on her other.

MILITANT FIGHTER 1
You're Dr. Stroud's assistant, right? Come with us, and we can get this all straightened out.

LEILA
Nothing to straighten out.

MILITANT FIGHTER 1
So you admit to being an illegal immigrant?

LEILA
You got me.

MILITANT FIGHTER 1
Then you're under arrest for-

LEILA
Save it. Here I am. Arrest me.

Militant 2 and 3 glance at one another and stride to her.

Leila raises her hands into a cuffing position...
WHEN...

...Leila side kicks one militant and jabs the other.

Blows are exchanged between Leila and the three militants, Leila taking in a few blows herself until all three militants lay on the concrete motionless.

Leila holds her side, tries to walk it off, and collapses.

LEILA (CONT’D)
Hugo, if you could see me now.

She rises, grimacing, and we realize this is where she was planning to end it all.

ANTONY (O.S.)
Leila?!

Antony jogs her way, not able to look away from the motionless bodies on the ground.

LEILA
Why are you here?

ANTONY
Ha. To save my sightly nurse.

He sees that she's holding her side.

ANTONY (CONT’D)
Let me take a look.

He lifts her shirt a bit and examines her side.

ANTONY (CONT’D)
You're bruising. You could have a broken rib.

LEILA
You should go.

ANTONY
What?

LEILA
They'll kill you.

ANTONY
Leila, I-I cannot just...

LEILA
You know nothing about me.
Then tell me! Besides lying and telling me you were just out for a walk!

Leila is taken aback.

I was going to kill myself until I heard you calling for help.

Antony's eyes widen in disbelief.

I lost my only family. It's just me now.

ANTONY

Hugo.

Leila begins limping, Antony putting an arm around her waist. She stops.

When Hugo told me what happened to my mother because of what we were, I fell to my knees, dug my nails into the gravel until they bled and screamed until I lost my voice. I wanted the devil in me to wake up. I stopped feeling. Pain. Happiness. Empathy. Nothing. Just emptiness. I didn't have to say anything. Hugo knew. He would look into my eyes and say the flame in my soul was no longer lit. The devil in me was awake. That's when Hugo started to teach me martial arts. Then I lost Hugo. To pneumonia. Can you believe it?

Leila, I—I'm so sorry.

I know.

Leila then notices the chirping—it's stopped. She looks over her shoulder.

What is it?

The silence is deafening.
Leila pushes Antony to the side.

WHEN...

...There are rapid footsteps approaching the group. The military—at least SIX SOLDIERS.

LEILA
Antony, go.

A SGT, or whatever his title is, steps forward.

SERGEANT
(to Antony)
You are under arrest for the harboring of illegal immigrants.
(to Leila)
So put the sword down...

LEILA
Antony...

SERGEANT
Doctor Stroud, if you leave your assistant and she comes quietly with us, we will escort her to a safe location.

LEILA
Like you did my mother.

SERGEANT
Dr. Stroud, I suggest leaving.

LEILA
Do as he says.

ANTONY
(to himself)
No...

LEILA
Go!

Antony, hesitantly, takes off in the opposite direction.

SERGEANT
You defile our country.

Leila raises her blade for the fight of her life.

LEILA
Your country was already defiled.
SERGEANT
(to militants)
Arrest her.

The militants charge toward Leila.

Leila gets in stance, initiating combat.

Leila exchanges blows with the militants, using the blunt part of the sword until one by one fall. That's until more militants appear and...

...Sable walks through the flock right before her eyes like a ghost from her past. Though he doesn't recognize her, she does him.

SABLE
(to Leila)
You've betrayed this country.

LEILA
I think you did that for the both of us, Captain Sable.

Sable raises a brow.

Leila and Sable stand across from one another, her eyes piercing into his own.

SABLE
You have nowhere to go.

LEILA
That's fine.

Leila aims her sword toward him.

The audacity of this girl. Sable unbothered takes out his blade, his soldiers stepping back gaping.

SABLE
You dare to challenge me?

LEILA
I've waited years for this moment.

Sable has no idea what she's talking about. Doesn't matter.

Leila darts toward Sable, blows exchanged. Though our heroine only knows what Hugo taught her, Sable is astounded by her talent.

He knocks the sword from her hand, and both engage in hand to hand combat...
WHEN...

...SABLE repels her back, Leila being knocked to the ground. Sable closes in the distance.

    SABLE
    Little girl, you're going to regret this very day.

He bends down to her and grabs her.

Leila takes out her dagger and pushes it against his neck.

    SABLE (CONT’D)
    You use that blade, you die.

    LEILA
    That was the initial plan anyway.

Sable leaps back taking out his own dagger, Leila leaping up, and the two exchange blows, Leila evading every attack, repelling him back.

The military can only watch as their Captain struggles to keep up.

Heavy, violent blows are exchanged until...

...Leila defangs him.

His dagger drops to the ground and...

...Leila thrusts her blade into his chest.

Gasps hover over the forest. Then silence.

Sable glances down at the blade still plunged in his chest, steps back, and falls over.

Leila steps toward Sable, eyes burning with such hatred we've never seen in her. She pulls her blade out.

    LEILA (CONT’D)
    Hugo was right about you.

Sable's eyes widen at hearing that name. He chuckles.

    SABLE
    Hugo was a coward, who ran from his duty.

    LEILA
    Hugo didn't run from his duty. Hugo ran to save me.
Sable coughs up blood.

LEILA (CONT’D)
You don't remember me? Of course you don't. You've killed so many refugees over the years. That night Hugo disappeared, there was an eight year old girl with her mother.

This rings a bell for Sable.

LEILA (CONT’D)
That was me. You killed my people! You killed my mother! You defiled Hugo's name! And for that, you cannot be forgiven!

Leila falls to her knees, raises her dagger...

WHEN...

ANTONY (O.S.)
Stop!

Leila looks up to find Antony, and behind him more MILITANTS.

Leila, eyes on Sable, says:

LEILA
Stay out of this, Antony!

ANTONY
They will kill you!

LEILA
I'm ready to die!

ANTONY
No! This isn't what your mother would want!

LEILA
You don't know what my mother would have wanted!

ANTONY
Did she or did she not give up her life to save her daughter?! What about Hugo? Is this what he would want? For you to die? Like this? They lived and died for you, Leila!

Leila can't hold back anymore tears.
ANTONY (CONT’D)
When we first met and you saved my life, we went to see my patients. You saved her life. And guess what? She and her family are just like you.

LEILA
Me?

ANTONY
Yes. That's why I guess I'm the 'traveling doctor'. I understand. Because of what Hugo taught you. Because of the morals your mother instilled in you. That little girl is alive.

Leila looks over at Antony.
Antony nods.

She tosses her blade to the side and rises.

LEILA
(to Antony)
Make sure they don't get to them.

Antony nods, determined not to fail Leila.

The militants rush in and seize her, putting her arms behind her back and cuffs on her wrists.

Leila can't help but cry as she and Antony gaze at one another, though they aren't tears of sadness.

INSERT SHOT: HUGO EATING WITH LEILA ON THE PORCH.

No. Not tears of sadness.

FADE OUT.

THE END.