

PURITY IN EID

by

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FADE IN:

EGYPT - HUDA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Faint smoke rises above the incense burner in the living room of a spotless apartment.

HUDA, (30s), olive skin, a devoted daughter, sits at the dining table. Burdens bend her shoulder. Silent sadness lives in her eyes.

Huda stuffs individual grape leaves with rice, then rolls them into sticks.

They're all uniform in size, like machine-made. Huda stacks them in a pot in perfect rows.

AMINA

Dinner won't be ready on time.

AMINA, Huda's mother, (70s), sour face hardened by life, sits on the couch a few steps away from the dining table listening to celebratory Egyptian music on TV.

Huda sighs, rolling her eyes, then a grape leaf.

HUDA

Beef is cooking the instant pot.
Fattah will be ready by the time
they come.

Amina smacks her lips together.

AMINA

Instant what? Pot? There's one way
to cook Fattah, my great-
grandmother's way. Traditions,
daughter. Traditions.

RANDA, Huda's daughter, (10), joyful, sits on the red carpet by the TV table, playing with her colorful Egyptian-style lantern.

Upset, Huda ignores her mother's words. The stacked stuffed grape leaves reach the rim of the pot.

Huda wipes her hands on the kitchen towel beside her.

Like a flower dancing with joy, Randa skips steps to her mother. Huda pats the girl's shoulder lovingly.

RANDA

Papa won't come to this Eid either.

Amina smacks her lips and darts judgmental looks at Huda. Huda exchanges a broken and ashamed look with her mother.

The celebratory music on TV can't cheer the air in the room.

Randa notices the heat and tries to cool it.

RANDA (CONT'D)

Can I wear my new dress now?

HUDA

Of course, it's your Eid dress!

Randa grins.

RANDA

And will you give me Eidia?

HUDA

Let's wait for your cousins!

Randa kisses her mama's cheek and scampers inside.

Amina smacks her lips.

AMINA

You are spoiling that brat.

Huda stands carrying the pot.

HUDA

She is my only child.

AMINA

She should have a brother to
protect her.

Huda has heard that talk before. She leaves the living room
without arguing with Amina.

AMINA (CONT'D)

Did he pay child support this
month?

HUDA (O.S.)

Not yet.

AMINA

(murmuring)

A divorcee with a child.

The Azan, the call for prayer, cut the music segment on TV.

AZAN (O.S.)

Allah Akbar. Allah Akbar.

Huda returns to the living room. Amina crosses her legs on
the couch.

HUDA

I'm divorced because of you.

AMINA

Traditions are never wrong. Without
traditions, we will drift away from
our roots.

HUDA

It's not what they say on TV.

AMINA

This TV talk will not last.

The cheery music resumes after the Azan.

Interrupting their talk, Randa walks playfully into the living room, wearing a full-skirt white dress.

Randa twirls like a butterfly.

HUDA
My little angel!

Randa giggles.

Amina lets out a disapproving oof.

A knock on the door.

Huda answers and welcomes her aunt FATMA, (50s), kind and friendly. She hands Huda a tray of baklava.

Huda and Fatma exchange two kisses, one on each cheek.

FATMA
Hello, habibty.

Fatma's children, SALLY, (12), cute. JIJJI, (10), quiet. RAMY, (7), an obnoxious boy.

Huda and the guests go to the living room. The children hurry to their cousin, Randa.

FATMA (CONT'D)
As salam alaikum!

Fatma leans over to the couch, kissing her older sister's hand, Amina.

AMINA
Welcome! Welcome!

FATMA
(to Randa)
Look at you in this pretty dress!

Amina glances at Randa with a knowing look.

AMINA

Today is a special day!

AMINA (CONT'D)

(to Huda)

Show hospitality to your guests.

Huda heads to the kitchen.

Randa sits on Amina's lap for a second. Amina lifts her off.

AMINA (CONT'D)

Ramy, come to Nanna.

Ramy sits on Amina's lap. Amina smothers Ramy with kisses and hugs.

Randa, Sally, and Jijji, play together in the corner.

Huda comes back with a tray full of drinks. She serves the drinks to the oldest and then to the youngest.

RANDA

Mama, it's Eidia time!

Huda smiles, and takes her wallet out of the dress pocket.

Over-hyped, Ramy jumps off Amina's lap.

The children line up before Huda.

Huda gives Sally a twenty Egyptian pound bill.

HUDA

Eid Mubarak!

Sally kisses Huda and gets out of the line.

Huda gives Jijji a twenty-pound bill.

HUDA (CONT'D)

Eid Mubarak!

Jijji kisses Huda and leaves the line.

Huda gives Ramy a twenty-pound bill.

Ramy takes the money and sticks his tongue out.

Amina laughs at Ramy's reaction, and so does Fatma.

It's Randa's turn. Huda beams, looking at her daughter. Expectations and hopes for a better future build up on Huda's face.

Huda folds a twenty-pound bill to hand to Randa.

AMINA

Today is a special day! Give her
fifty!

Huda replaces the twenty with a fifty-pound bill, and folds it in Randa's hand.

Randa snuggles her mama.

RANDA

Thank you, mama!

Amina breaks the tender moment.

AMINA

Huda, it's supper time.

HUDA

Yes, mother.

Huda goes to the kitchen.

The adults are sitting on the couch watching TV.

The children are playing with colorful lanterns.

DINING TABLE.

Huda puts a large bowl of Fattah in the center of the dining table full of side dishes and appetizers.

HUDA

Dinner is served!

The children speed to the table, taking their seats.

Huda helps the limping Amina to the table while Fatma steps slowly behind them.

All are seated except for Huda; she serves their portions.

An ominous knock interrupts the dinner.

Huda, holding a large ladle of Fattah, freezes for a second.

AMINA

It is a dear guest!

Confused, Huda lowers her hand, walks to the door, and opens it.

MAGDA, grim, (85), with deep carved wrinkles on her face, steps inside the apartment without Huda inviting her in.

AMINA (CONT'D)

Welcome! Welcome! Right on time for dinner.

Haunted by a ghost from a time long past, Huda watches Magda insert herself into the family dinner.

Magda sits beside Amina, facing Randa, across the table.

Amina passes Magda a plate.

Anguished, afraid, and spiteful, Huda sits slowly across from Magda.

Huda doesn't hear the songs celebrating Eid, or the kids' giggles. Or Fatma greeting Magda.

The only thing Huda hears is a girl's fearful scream that no one else can hear.

HUDA
(to Magda)
What are you doing here?

Magda ignores the question, and eats with a trembling hand.

AMINA
I invited her.

Huda glares at her mother.

HUDA
This is my house.

AMINA
I'm your mother.

The tension forces the whole table to fall silent.

MAGDA
Where is the man of the house?

HUDA
He divorced me. Thanks to you.

AMINA
We all went through this, and none of us got divorced.

HUDA
She stole my future from me.

AMINA
It's your fault, not hers.

Fatma shakes her head slightly, disapproving of her older sister's words but daring not to speak.

HUDA

That is just like you, mother.
Traditions are more important than
your flesh and blood.

AMINA

Everything I did was for your good.

HUDA

Yeah, you mentioned it every day.

Fatma lifts her bottom off the seat.

FATMA

We better get...

Amina slams the table with her fist.

AMINA

No one leaves.

Fatma's bottom sinks into the chair.

Amina challenges Huda.

AMINA (CONT'D)

Today is a special day.

A staring contest between Huda and Amina begins.

Huda notices Magda's glances at Randa.

Magda pulls a white handkerchief from her purse, puts it on
the tabletop, and unfolds it, revealing a sharp razor.

Huda tears up at the sight, jailed tears that aren't free to
fall.

UNDER THE TABLE.

Huda shuts her legs together, squeezing her dress.

THE DINING TABLE.

A memory daunts Huda.

AMINA

Today, we celebrate twice—Eid and
Randa's purification.

FATMA

Mubarak!

Randa doesn't understand what is going on.

As if being struck by lightning, Huda is speechless.

SALLY

(casually warns Randa)

It will hurt a lot and sting when
you pee.

Randa hurries to her mama and tucks her face into Huda's
bosom.

Huda comforts Randa with a gentle pat on the shoulder.

HUDA

I'm her mother. Don't I get a say
in this?

AMINA

It's been decided.

MAGDA

Randa, come to me, dear.

Randa exchanges terrified looks with her mother. Then she
looks at Magda's stern face.

Magda grabs Randa to her side.

Huda watches her daughter driven to the slaughter helplessly.

MAGDA (CONT'D)

I purified your grandmother, aunt,
mother, and cousin, and today is
your day!

Horrified, Randa struggles in Magda's clutch. The girl's eyes
beg her mother for rescue.

Magda holds the blade with the right hand and grips tight on
Randa's forearm with the left hand.

Furious, Huda can't witness this travesty.

HUDA

Let go of my daughter.

Magda ignores Huda.

MAGDA

(to Randa)

You will be a woman today.

Randa sniffs back tears.

Huda stands, slamming the table.

HUDA

Let go of my daughter, you old
bitch!

Huda frees the child from Magda's grip.

HUDA (CONT'D)

(to Randa)

habibty, go to your room and lock
the door.

Randa escapes to her room.

AMINA

Have you lost your mind? The family
is here to celebrate the ritual.

HUDA
Celebrate my daughter's blood?

AMINA
(to Magda)
Do the job I'm paying you for.

Magda reaches for the sharp razor and is about to stand.

HUDA
My daughter was born whole and will
live whole.

Amina nods to Magda to keep moving.

Amina's gesture is Huda's breaking point.

HUDA (CONT'D)
Get the hell out of my house!

Fatma signals her children to move quickly. They hurry to the door.

HUDA (CONT'D)
All of you. Out!

In the heat of the moment, Magda leaves, forgetting the razor on the white handkerchief on the tabletop.

Amina glares at Huda shamefully and is the last to leave.

Huda shuts the door.

Proud of herself, Huda stands in the middle of the room, and her tears break free.

Huda walks to the table and folds the handkerchief, covering the razor.

HUDA (CONT'D)
It's safe now.

A door clicks.

Still wearing the Eid dress, Randa returns to the quiet living room.

Huda and Randa embrace.

FADE OUT