




# The Day of Arafah

by  
Ala'a Al Qaisi

A woman with dark, wavy hair is wearing a brown headscarf and a green sweater. She is looking out of a window with white frames. The background is slightly blurred, showing a building exterior.

In a society that forces you to be another copy of everyone else, in a one man's culture—where you have to hide behind a mask, never dare to show your real face— comes

## **The Day of Arafah**

With layers of foundation each morning, Hadeel puts her virtually flawless face on, her real face is buried beneath makeup. Everyone in her life love her as they nod their heads with approval. But what lies beneath the pretty face she projects to the world?

## Logline

A conservative Jordanian woman is thrilled when her love finally proposes to her, but her happiness is threatened by the prospect of revealing her secret skin condition to him



Genre: Social Drama, Coming of Age,  
Women Empowerment

Target Audience: International and local,  
females and males, feminists, filmgoers  
interested in social drama, character  
driven stories, social change,  
female content and people with  
insecurity or health conditions





## SYNOPSIS

The Day of Arafah follows the story of 21 year old Hadeel, a Jordanian Muslim woman who covers her skin religiously with makeup to hide her secret skin condition. Her dilemma begins when the love of her life Bassel finally proposes to her. Hadeel is thrilled, but she knows she will have to reveal her secret to him, she will have to take off the mask. Hadeel keeps delaying the engagement, and makes excuses to prolong it, which triggers Bassel's insecurity and affects their relationship

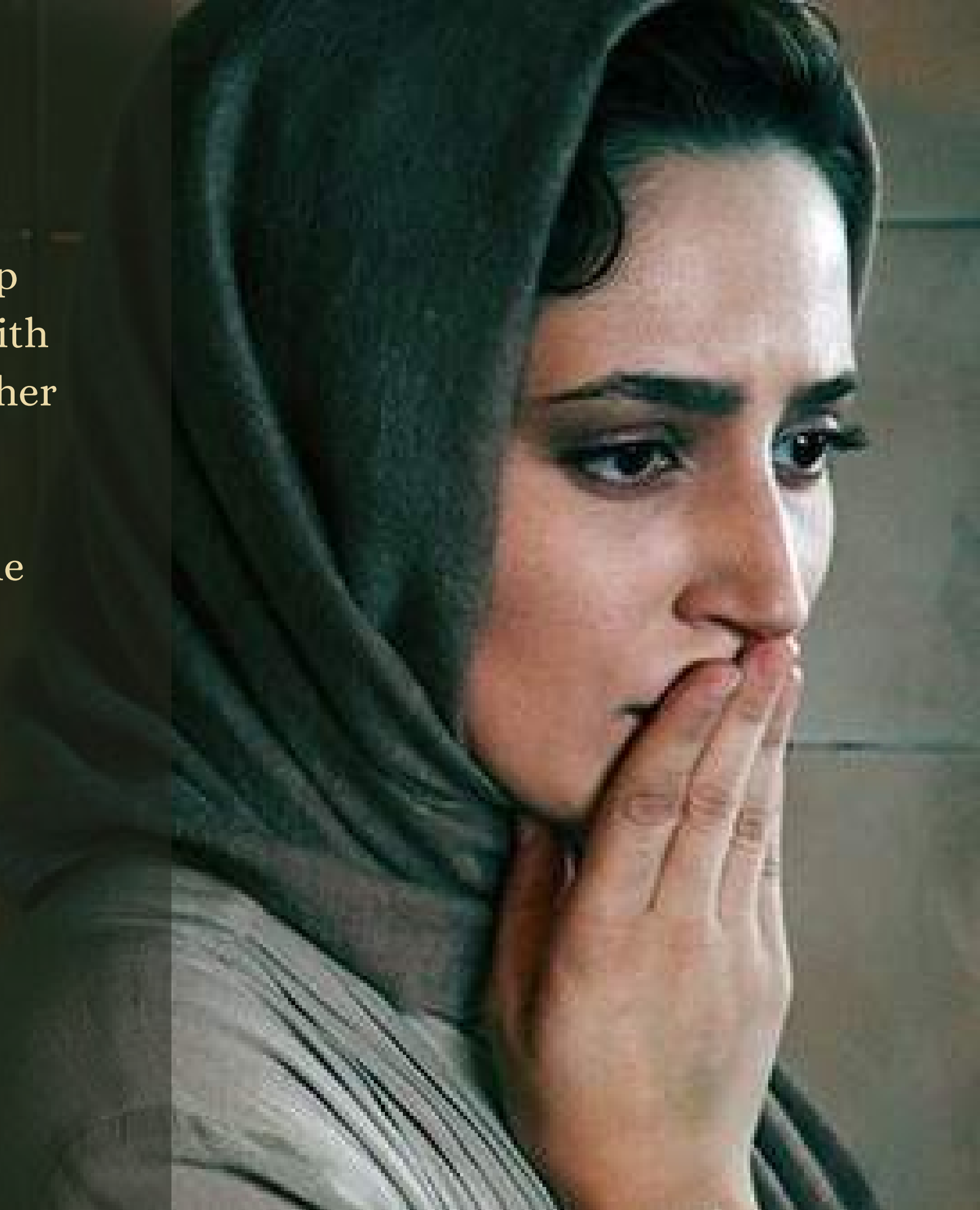


Bassel—who is 20 years Hadeel senior and works as a barber opposite to Hadeel’s lingerie shop—always felt so lucky to have such a beautiful educated young woman, that everyone thinks is way out of his league. But how long could it last?

At a beauty clinic, a doctor uses wet wipe to clean Hadeel’s face. For the first time, we see her face without makeup. White patches appear on her skin. Hadeel has vitiligo, a disorder that causes depigmentation. She asks the doctor for a faster solution. The doctor tells her about a new treatment that restores the pigmentation more quickly, but it’s expensive.



Hadeel asks her beloved grandmother, who she lives with, for advice. The grandmother instructs her to keep her vitiligo secret in the hope that he will fall in love with her and sign the marriage contract before he learns of her condition. Hadeel is left sad and confused. Her grandmother also hands her some money toward the faster medical treatment and convinces everyone in the family to keep quiet this time and not scare the suitor away. Hadeel believes Bassel should know about the vitiligo, but she also has high hopes of being cured, especially after the doctor showed her the before and after pictures.





As Hadeel gathers money to pay for the expensive treatment, she receives an intimate video of her and Bassel kissing after he proposed from an unknown facebook account. Hadeel is thrown into a fright. She doesn't want her controlling hot-headed brother to find out about the scandalous video. She asks Bassel to bring his family and propose to her family immediately.

Bassel comes to visit Hadeel's family with his inquisitive stepmother. But how far will Hadeel go with her secret? And how long can this love last?

## Writer's Notes

Hadeel is a young woman in a conservative Arab society who struggles to reconcile her desires and aspirations with what her society wants her to be. She tries to please the society, while simultaneously breaking its rules and taboos in secret. But how long can she maintain her dual lives?

Hadeel is an Arab woman who must live with her doubts about her looks. She always feels like people are looking at her, like people are noticing her physical flaws. Body shaming and image shaming is a phenomenon, woman experience every day. We are always reminded that we are too fat, too skinny, too white, too dark. Hadeel believes she will never find love without makeup and that no one will accept her with vitiligo.

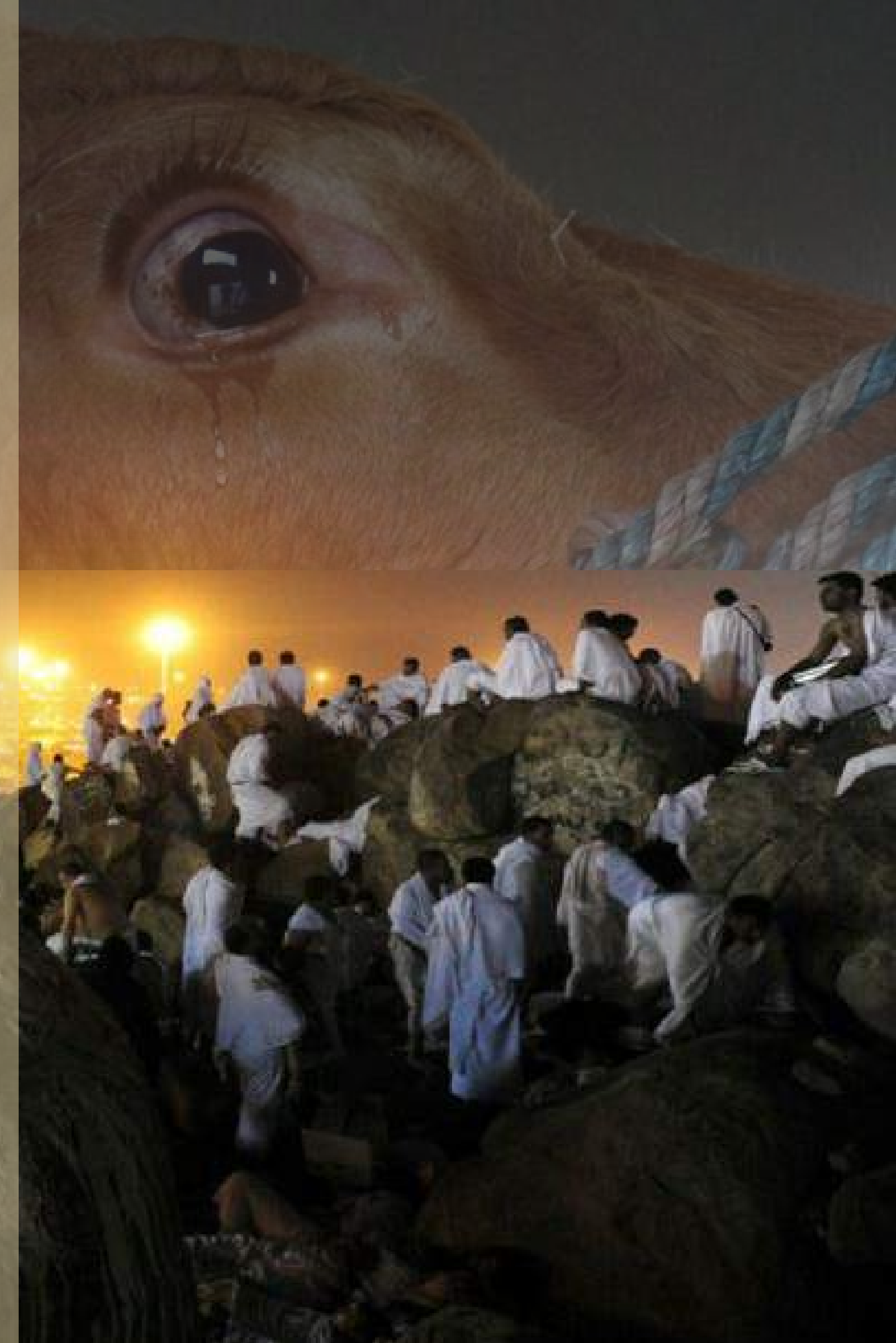
In a society where women are valued mainly for their beauty, Hadeel is worthless. Imagine you must always cover your skin and become very anxious if your foundation fades away. This is how my heroine feels every day. Applying makeup religiously, Hadeel slowly sank so deep into this new identity that she lost herself. She doesn't want to acknowledge the face beneath makeup. She doesn't like this new, fake identity that she has created, but she has no choice but to live with it.

Hadeel works in a lingerie shop, where she sells lingerie to young and pretty girls and she sees how they were courted and became engaged thanks to their beauty. This kind of job affirms the social belief that women must look pretty and sexy for men and men expect this from them.

While I am conscience of the prevalence of misogyny in all societies, I want to use this film to draw particular attention to its role in Jordanian society, where it reaches a level of intensity and social control. In addition to emphasising the suppression of women in Jordan, the film will explore Jordanian culture in all of its complexity and dignity.

The story takes place two weeks before Eid Al Adha, when Hadeel's brother buys a cow to slaughter as a sacrifice for the festival. The cow's presence triggers Hadeel's insecurity. It brings back a troubled past of bullying and abuse: she was called La Vache Qui Rit, or "the laughing cow". We see how the relationship between Hadeel and the cow develops, how their paths cross as Eid Al Adha approaches.

"The Day of Arafah" means the day of awakening. It begins just before noon and lasts until sunset. Pilgrims, in white clothes, gather on Mount Arafah and take their stand of faith before God, entreating His mercy and acceptance. On the Day of Arafah, while the pilgrims go through their spiritual journey, Hadeel will be in her higher state of inner awakening, when she hits rock bottom. While the pilgrims raise their hands for god to accept them, Hadeel will raise her hands to her higher self to accept herself and the skin she lives in.

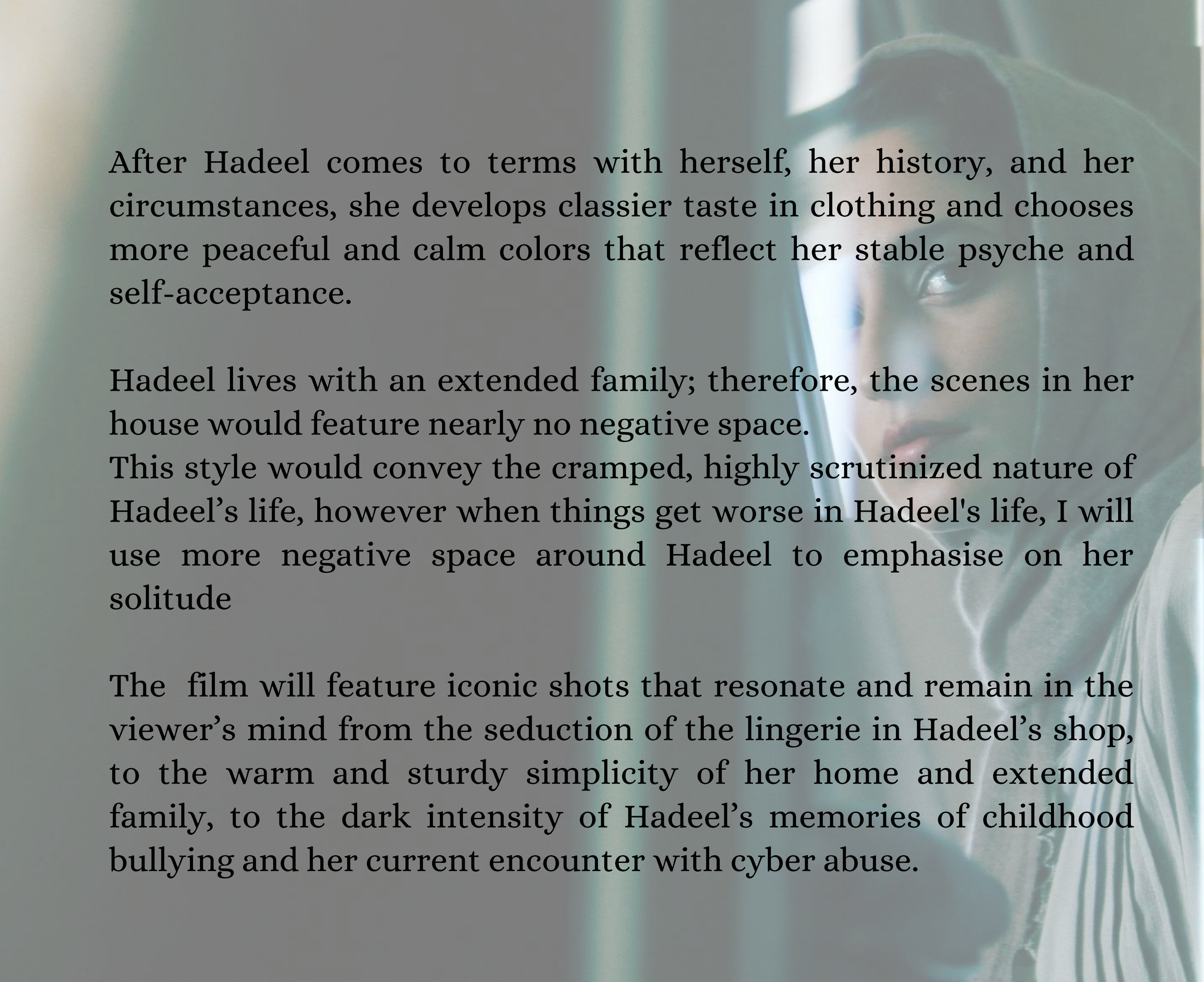




## Style/ director's notes:

The Day of Arafah will feature carefully crafted steady camera movements in the early scenes of the first act, which gradually become shakier to reflect the increase in tension and danger as the story progresses. The scenes in the first act are mainly slow paced and they get fast paced as the tension increases.

The colours are going to be unsaturated. The color style includes an abundance of warm colors: dark yellow, brown-brownish-red, and dark red. The scenes of the dreams and the flashbacks are going to be dreamy and slightly blurred, with soft color and warm lighting. There will be lots of vibrant colors in the early scenes, but throughout the film, as she increasingly encounters adversity and even danger, the colors get darker.




After Hadeel comes to terms with herself, her history, and her circumstances, she develops classier taste in clothing and chooses more peaceful and calm colors that reflect her stable psyche and self-acceptance.

Hadeel lives with an extended family; therefore, the scenes in her house would feature nearly no negative space.

This style would convey the cramped, highly scrutinized nature of Hadeel's life, however when things get worse in Hadeel's life, I will use more negative space around Hadeel to emphasise on her solitude

The film will feature iconic shots that resonate and remain in the viewer's mind from the seduction of the lingerie in Hadeel's shop, to the warm and sturdy simplicity of her home and extended family, to the dark intensity of Hadeel's memories of childhood bullying and her current encounter with cyber abuse.



# ALA'A AL QAISI

Writer/ Director



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Ala'a Al Qaisi is a Jordanian-Australian Writer-Director. After intense competition, the Royal Jordanian Royal Film Commission's jury headed by the Academy Award Winner Hany Abu- Assad ("Paradise Now", "Omar") has selected Ala'a for its Debut Feature Fund. The RFC is funding the upcoming production of The Day of Arafah of USD 130K, plus a grant of using the gift of King Abdullah II to the RFC, Arri Alexa camera and all its attachments, and many more sponsorships and logistic support.

The Day of Arafah has also been selected at 2020 El Gouna Film Festival Platform for development prize

Ala'a participated in the RFC Rawi Screenwriting Lab. She has developed The Day of Arafah under the mentorship of the well-known filmmakers Annemarie Jacir ("Wajib" "When I Saw You"), Karim Traïdia ("The Polish Bride" "The Gandhi Murder") and Abu Bakr Shawky ("Yomeddine" Cannes Film Festival)

She has received several awards for her screenwriting from The University of Jordan, The Hashemite University and The Jordan Language Center. Ala'a Al Qaisi moved to Australia in 2009. While there, she studied filmmaking at Sydney Film School and graduated from Actors Centre Australia. Ala'a worked on numerous short films there including two she directed: "Walk in My Shoes," and "Pink Swing." Both films were featured at the Sydney Film School Festival, where she was awarded The Sydney Film School Courage, Curiosity and Compassion Award in 2013.

Ala'a Al Qaisi recently returned to Jordan at the request of The Royal Jordanian Film Commission to develop and produce The Day of Arafah

**Pink Swing Film:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLw6-SluktA&t=19s>

## Funds & Awards

Secured Funds: The Debut Feature Film Fund \$130k/ The Royal Film Commission- Jordan

Selection at El Gouna Film Festival  
CineGouna Platform/Egypt

Won the IEFTA Award including a participation at The Cannes Film Festival's workshops in 2021

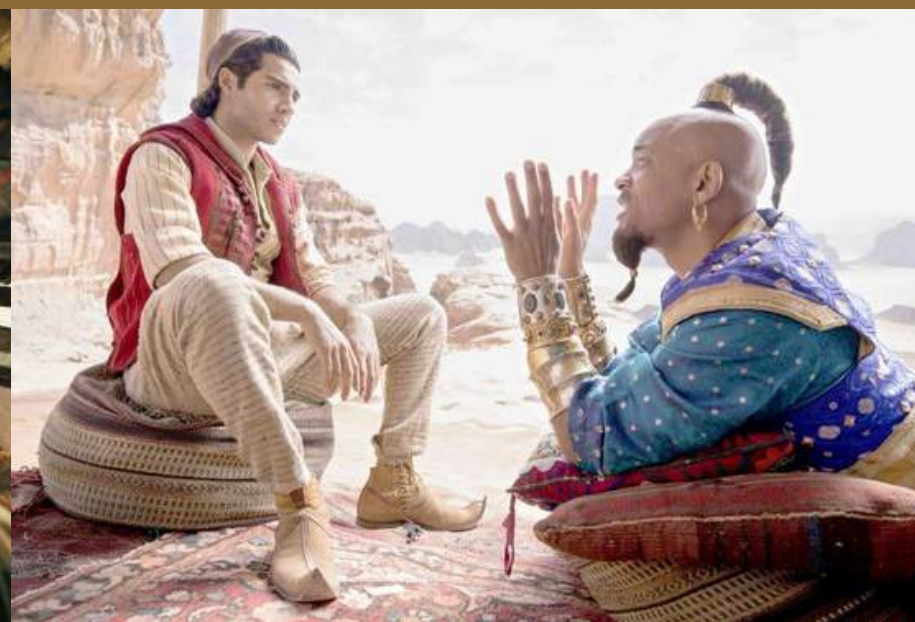




الهيئة الملكية الأردنية للأفلام

The ROYAL FILM COMMISSION

JORDAN



## About the RFC:

THE ROYAL FILM COMMISSION is a public institution, with administrative and financial autonomy, established in 2003 with a mandate to promote for and contribute to the development of an internationally competitive Jordanian audio-visual industry.

## RFC'S SUPPORT TO THE DAY OF ARAFAH

For the last two decades, RFC has been supporting liberty and freedom in Jordan, they have been supporting women filmmakers and always encourages women to take a place in the film industry through a wide range of filmmaking training workshops all over the country with an intense care of rural areas.

When I met with her highness princess Rym Al ALi, RFC's Member of the Board of Commissioners, she told me your film tells the story of every Arab woman and touches every Arab home, and this has to be made with all the support she could get.

RFC is one of the institutions that brings light and hope to the current situation of women in Jordan. Thus, they have been supporting The Day of Arafah from the very beginning, assigned great writing and directing mentors, involved the projects with many workshops and has been promoting it to their partners in various platforms.

## FILMED IN JORDAN WITH THE RFC'S SPONSORSHIP

"Star Wars: Episode IX"

Sergio

Transformers Revenge of the Fallen

The Martian

Aladdin

The Hurt Locker

Prometheus

Mummy Returns

Rosewater

# Australian Coproduction

## Breathless Production

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We are interested in co-producing *The Day of Arafah*.

The film provides a fresh insight into the perspective of Jordanian women and the struggles that they face on a daily basis. Having followed her development as an emerging filmmaker, we believe that the writer/director Ms Ala'a Qaisi has an authentic voice on this issue, and an unwavering commitment to bring this project to life.

Ben & Ulysses

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**Ben Ferris**



**Ulysses Oliver**

# COMPARATIVE FILMS

Black Swan



Dirty God



The Lunchbox



The Patience Stone



# PHOTO REFERENCES



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