

MINE
Written By
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EXT. DESERT - DAY

A vast and open desert landscape. SHABAN (29), a thin-faced man with a dirty and ragged Nirvana t-shirt, chases after a retreating WOLF. The wolf stops and turns around. The man runs at him once more. The wolf retreats for good.

Shaban steps over a wolf's dead body and comes to kneel beside the corpse of a lamb. He holds a walking stick with blood on its tip. Blood and sweat stain his shirt.

He checks the lamb's breathing. Defeated, he removes his keffiyeh (protective Israeli headwear).

He hears a bleat and turns to see another injured LAMB.

He walks to it and takes out a beaten water bottle. He drips some moisture into its mouth. Wolf howls ring out in the distance. The lamb breathes heavily and belabored.

He looks at the lamb's hind leg, which bends at an unnatural angle.

Shaban takes out his bulky flip phone and opens it to reveal a cracked screen and a pixelated picture of him with a woman and a small girl.

He goes to its picture gallery and opens up a picture of a lamb's leg with several supplies by it.

He digs through his shoulder bag and pulls out a cardboard tube from a roll of toilet paper and another nearly-gone roll. He unstrings the drawstring of the bag.

He lays them all by the lamb's leg, similar to the picture. He goes to the next picture.

It shows hands holding the crooked leg. He goes to the next picture, which shows the leg straightened.

The lamb bleats as he lifts its leg. He whispers in its ear and nuzzles its head, comforting it.

The lamb YELLS as he sets the bone.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

The lamb sits draped over Shaban's shoulders. The cardboard tubes and string serve as a makeshift splint for the lamb, who seems to be more content now.

Shaban leads six sheep behind him. He spots a lamb off in the distance.

Shaban yells its name. It turns to look at him. He beckons it toward him.

SHABAN

Ta-aal!

EXT. DESERT - LATER

The ground crunches under Shaban's feet as he searches.

He makes a quick count of the sheep and swivels his head around, looking for the unaccounted ones. A BLEAT in the distance. He follows it.

He leads the herd toward a steep drop. He puts the injured lamb down on the ground. It hobbles a bit.

He carefully slides down a rock and finds himself in a small canyon created by sandstone rock features.

He turns back to see the lambs sheepishly waiting on the rock's edge, scared to go down it with him. He walks away but they BLEAT. He shushes the sheep and holds up his hands, calming them. He heads down the small canyon.

Rocks stand on either side of him. He hears the noise again and quickens his pace.

He hears the NOISE once more immediately to his left. But there's no lamb there.

He bends over and finds a paper wrapper stuck in the grass. It makes noise as the wind blows through it, causing it to vibrate like a reed.

He picks up the trash. He crumples it and lets the wind carry it away. He turns back.

As he walks back, he steps on something and hears METALIC

GRINDING. A switch CLICKS and he hears a QUICK TICKING noise. He looks down in horror.

He stoops to brush away the sand around his feet and finds rusted metal underneath. He continues brushing until it's apparent: it's a LAND MINE.

He winces as the ticking noise slows to a stop. He waits, but no explosion comes.

He looks down at his foot, afraid to move it.

He looks around, completely alone. He calls for help. Only sheep call back. He takes out his phone, which has no service. He yells again.

EXT. CANYON - SUNSET

Shaban cups his hands around his mouth.

SHABAN
Ta-aal! ... Ta-aal!

A single BLEAT.

He takes out his water bottle and finishes its contents, a slight tremor in his hands.

He reaches out and tries to grab a rock. Not even close. He can't reach it without taking his foot off the mine.

He pours out the contents of his bag. Some toilet paper, a piece of fruit, and a prayer mat. Useless.

He stretches his legs and rolls his neck. He looks around for other resources. All he sees within reach is sand.

He looks at the sunset. He unrolls his prayer mat. He tries to bow down and keep one foot firmly on the mine. Tries.

EXT. CANYON - NIGHT

Shaban kneels on one knee, keeping his other foot on the switch. He struggles to stay awake.

Lambs SCREAM in the distance and wolves HOWL. Helpless and pained, he squeezes his eyes shut.

Shaban hears the ground crackle behind him. He swivels around quickly, but sees nothing.

He hears a throaty GROWL. He checks once more. Nothing.

He stands still and silent. Only his own breathing is heard.

EXT. CANYON - SUNRISE

Light hits Shaban, who fights for consciousness. His chapped face wearily reels from the light.

He opens his water bottle once more and tries to get the last few drops out. He crushes it in his hands and looks down at his foot.

He takes out the piece of fruit and peels the skin. He takes

a bite and spits it out. It's rancid. He wipes his mouth.

He looks at the spit-out piece on the ground. He picks it up and tries to brush the sand off. He tries to eat it again.

He swallows it and shudders. He saves the rest.

He calls out to his sheep. No response.

He tiredly tries to say the sunrise prayer, struggling to lie as flat as he can on the ground while keeping his foot on the switch.

He gives up and hits the sandy ground. He kicks the mat away with his free foot and yells at the sky. He runs his hands through his hair and yells.

EXT. CANYON - DAY

Shaban tries to wedge the switch down with a small piece of sandstone. It crumbles as he tries to situate it.

He takes out his empty water bottle. He flattens it as well as he can. He doubles it up and wedges it in.

He very slowly lifts his foot off the switch. The switch stays.

Beat.

He lifts his foot a bit more. Still nothing. A bit more. The water bottle pops out and he slams his foot down as quickly as he can. Nothing happens. He exhales finally.

He looks around for other options. More sand. And that's it. His posture falters.

He grabs a handful and throws it angrily. He picks up the water bottle and pitches it at one of the canyon walls. He yells, hopeless at his situation.

The injured lamb pokes its head over the canyon wall, looking down at Shaban. It BLEATS.

Shaban turns to look at it.

SHABAN
(surprised)
Zahid??

It BLEATS.

SHABAN (CONT'D)
(relieved)
Ta-aal Zahid! Ta-aal!

The lamb tries to make its way down but can't get its footing on the somewhat steep canyon walls. Shaban encourages it.

After some time, the sheep backs off. Shaban pleads for it to stay.

SHABAN (CONT'D)
Zahid! Zahid, ta-aal! Zahid!

The lamb disappears from sight. He yells angrily, beckoning it to come back.

The sad figure of Shaban stands alone in the canyon.

EXT. CANYON - DUSK

The sun's last light disappears and darkness surrounds Shaban.

His vision doubles. He shakes his head, trying to see straight. He hears the dry ground CRACKLE ahead of him.

Two beady yellow eyes stare back at him. They get closer.

Shaban hears a GROWL and tries to control his own breathing. He takes out his cell phone and takes a picture.

The flash reveals a wolf dead ahead, eying him. Shaban sees blood surrounding its mouth in the picture.

He sees its form as it nears. It springs for Shaban.

Shaban awakens from his nightmare. He recoils in the dark canyon.

The SQUEAK of the metal switch sliding against the mine snaps him back to reality.

He freezes and looks down.

Half his foot is on the switch, which has risen a bit due to lack of full body weight.

He sits, hoping the mine won't be set off. Nothing happens.

He breathes a sigh of relief and moves his foot back on the switch, putting his full weight on it again.

He looks around once again, as if hoping something around him has changed.

His eyes fight to stay open as he wobbles on the mine, barely able to stand upright. He falls once again on one knee, looking at his foot.

He stands. He drags his foot slightly. He does it again. Almost off. He braces himself for the impending explosion. Closer.

A BLEAT stops him just in time. He whips around.

SHABAN

Zahid...

He smiles and reaches out, holding out his hand toward the sheep, even though he has nothing to offer it.

He freezes. He turns to look at his bag. He springs for it.

He quickly takes out the rancid fruit and breaks off a piece. He throws it to the lamb.

The lamb sniffs it and eventually eats it. It looks to Shaban for more.

Shaban breaks off a piece and waves it for the lamb to see.

The lamb carefully tries to walk down the walls of the canyon again. It stops at the same point it stopped at before.

Shaban throws the piece just short of the lamb. The lamb tries to catch it with its mouth but loses its footing.

It slides down the canyon wall and hits the ground. It shakes off the impact and eats the piece of fruit.

Shaban holds the last piece of fruit in his hand. He holds it out for the lamb.

The lamb approaches. Shaban feeds it from his hand. He pets it as it eats. He holds it close once it finishes eating.

The lamb stares up at him. It bleats. He holds it close and nuzzles his face into its wool.

Shaban quickly jerks and the lamb goes limp. He looks down at the lifeless body, and sits for a moment.

EXT. DESERT - SUNRISE

Blood spots Shaban's clothing. He sweats as he forces a broken bone between the switch and the mine, wedging it in place.

He stares at the makeshift solution. He drags his foot off the switch. A bit more. He relaxes. His foot sits beside the switch. It's off completely.

He carefully picks up the dead lamb's body and places it on the mine. He kneels beside it for a brief moment. He then lies prostrate toward the sheep and WHISPERS a prayer.