



SHAYDA

25th
Year!

Spring
Season
2024

Release: 2023

Cert (UK): NC, F

Country: Australia

Language: English and Persian with English subtitles

Runtime: 1 hour 57 mins

Director: Noora Niasari

Written by: Noora Niasari

Cinematography: Sherwin Akbarzadeh

Cast: Zar Amir Ebrahimi, Leah Purcell, Mojean Aria



Shayda tells the story of the titular character's attempt to escape her abusive husband's clutches. The pair have moved to Australia for Hosain to become a doctor, though he wants to return to Iran. Frightened of his continual violence, Shayda takes her daughter Mona into a women's shelter while filing for divorce, but the courts, as often happens, take Hossain's side and give him rights to see his daughter alone. We see Shayda's fear that Hossain will take Mona out of the country in the opening scene as Shayda takes her daughter to the airport to show her places she can hide 'just in case'.

This is director Noora Niasari's confident personal debut, which won an Audience Award at Sundance for the World Dramatic Competition program. *'Reportedly based on the filmmaker's own experience, this drama surges with truth, thanks in no small part to a stunning performance from Zar Amir Ebrahimi, winner of Best Actress at Cannes for 'Holy Spider.'* Ebrahimi plays [Shayda], alternately processing the trauma of her past and trying to carve out a new future for her daughter. With her abusive husband in the narrative mix, 'Shayda' hums with inevitable dread. It's a tug-of-war between hope and fear that gives Ebrahimi the platform to carve out a completely three-dimensional character. We come to care for Shayda and her daughter. And, by extension, the thousands of women in the tragically same position in the world' - Brian Tallerico, RogerEbert.com.

'The film is set in 1995 in the lead up to and during Persian New Year, the celebrations signifying an opportunity for rebirth – though Niasari doesn't overegg the symbolism. Nothing in Shayda feels laboured. The director sticks closely to her actors, prioritising people over place' - Luke Buckmaster, Guardian.

