

SAID THE DOVE TO THE OLIVE TREE

Written by

Name of Amira Al Shanti

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Amira lies in bed unable to get to sleep. In her mind flashes fuzzy dreams depicting the violations of human rights including restriction of water and electricity, checkpoints etc. Soundbites of Palestinian voices, Arabic but with subtitles (describing not being able to use water/travel freely/have medicine) amidst faint sounds of violence.

The frenzy of images and voices builds in intensity, until finally Amira sits up in bed.

AMIRA (V.O.)

Sometimes I feel so alone. The whole world has turned it's back on my people. Children are being ripped from their homes, soldiers attack innocent worshippers as they pray, and no one is doing anything.

Amira takes a long drink of water.

AMIRA (V.O.)

Whilst my people on the other side of the world are being targeted because their blood, like mine, is Palestinian.

AMIRA (V.O.)

Well intentioned people call it a war, a conflict, they say it's 'too complicated'. I am exhausted trying to tell them that it's not.

AMIRA (V.O.)

I know I am lucky to be safe here in Scotland. Lucky to have been born and raised in a place where I don't live in fear of my house being bombed, or denied my basic human rights under an apartheid regime. But I'm lost.

I'm forbidden to even enter my homeland, to physically be with my people in their struggle. I'm trying to do everything I can, but how much change can one person really make?

Amira angrily scatters the papers on the desk and they fly around her.

Amira picks up a notebook, wiping away dust.

AMIRA (V.O.)

When a child cries, they cry for
their Mother. She alone can bring
them comfort.

Amira sits down and opens the notebook. With a deep breath
she places a pen to the page.

She writes the words: 'Immi. My Mother Palestine.' [Also in
Arabic]

2

EXT. GREEN SPACE

2

Amira walks through the green space.

AMIRA

I always feel closest to you in
nature. The music of the river, the
rustle of the leaves.

You taught me: we are all born from
the soil and we are destined to
return to it.

My friends here, the Apple and
Bramble trees send their love to
their cousins the Grape Vines and
the Jaffa Orange trees. As always,
I miss your Olive Trees the most.

I will never forget your golden
sunlight spilling over green,

Calling me back to you across 4,000
miles. Like a dove to the olive
tree.

I see a lot of you here: the lush
Scottish glens and the emerald hues
of the Jordan Valley are not so
different.

The green rolling hills and deep
valleys, mirror your name -
Falasteen [Palestine].

Lush, gorgeous images of Scotland and Palestine side-by-side
fly towards us.

3 EXT. GREEN SPACE- SPIKY TREES 3

AMIRA (V.O.)

But in Scotland, we can roam our
land freely, whilst you are burned
down, carved up and walled in.

4 EXT. GREEN SPACE 4

AMIRA (V.O.)

The West Bank is surrounded by a
wall with over 600 checkpoints in
an area smaller than Perthshire,
stopping people from going to
school, work or prayers.

And to avoid an un-payable fine or
an 18 month prison sentence,
families in Jerusalem are forced to
demolish their own homes to make
way for a theme park.
Palestinians living in Israel have
their identity stripped from them -
called Arabs, not Palestinians - to
justify a state only created in
1948.

And people here in the Western
world only care about Gaza when the
bombs are falling, yet people there
are living without basic
sanitation, medical supplies and
drinking water every single day.
We're complaining about our local
lockdowns when Gaza has been locked
down for over a decade.

5 EXT. GREEN SPACE TREE 5

AMIRA (V.O.)

But there are people here who do
care. People who are learning,
listening, and more and more are
starting to speak up.

6 EXT. RIGHT OF RETURN KEY MONUMENT EDINBURGH 6

AMIRA

Edinburgh stands a key at it's
Church doors, big enough for the
diaspora of 7 million, displaced
all around the world. We are ready
and waiting to come home to you and
restore the world's promise to us:
Haqq Al-'Awda [Right of Return].

7 EXT. NABLUS AVENUE 7

AMIRA

Dundee has adopted Nablus as it's twin. Standing here on Nablus Avenue is the closest my feet will get to your ground.

8 EXT. DEIR YASSIN MEMORIAL AT KELVINGROVE 8

AMIRA

And Glasgow remembers Deir Yassin, where 107 Palestinians were murdered by Zionist in 1948 to create the country Israel. It is the only place of mourning the Palestinian diaspora in Scotland can visit as the ethic cleansing of their people continues to this day over 73 years later.

9 EXT. GREEN SPACE TREE 9

AMIRA

But there's still so much to be done and so much that the media propaganda makes unclear: Anti-zionism is not antisemitism - we just want equality, peace and basic human rights for everyone.

10 EXT. RIGHT OF RETURN KEY MONUMENT EDINBURGH 10

AMIRA

Do you hear the jangle of your children's keys? Keys held so tight for decades, the shapes imprinted on our palms.

11 EXT. GREEN SPACE 11

AMIRA

Your kidnapers say the old will die and the young will forget. They turn their back on you, try to erase you from maps and history books, and try to get others to turn away too, so that your child is left as an orphan.

And yet, Handala still persists. 10 years old, barefoot and tough.

- 12 INT. AMIRA'S BEDROOM 12
- Amira is drawing Handala.
- AMIRA
- His artist Naji Al-Ali died on 29th August 1987, assassinated in London for inciting hope. He was only one person, but he affected millions.
- He promised that as the world turned its back on Palestinian children, Handala too will turn his back, only to show his face when the world recognises Palestinian children's rights.
- 13 EXT. GREEN SPACE 13
- AMIRA
- I know you, Immi. As we your children as caged, longing for freedom we also feel our Mother's chains with every butchered olive tree; every death of our siblings; every senseless response from a world which celebrates Christmas but stays silent when Bethlehem is blasted by bullets?!
- 14 INT. AMIRA'S BEDROOM 14
- She looks up from the page and out.
- AMIRA
- But your lullaby always reaches my ears, carried by the birds, singing Sumud [steadfastness], filling my heart with the brightest light.
- 15 EXT. GREEN SPACE 15
- AMIRA
- You remind me that I am not alone. You remind me that to exist is to resist.
- 16 EXT. GREEN SPACE 16
- Amira is revealed in her Thobe.
- AMIRA
- In the Thobes we embroider and wear.
- (MORE)

AMIRA (CONT'D)

In the olives we harvest and press into oil, bitter and thick like juice. In the ka'ak we bake and knead with our hands. In the Dabke we pulse through our legs and stamp into the Earth. Your strength gives me strength. That steadfast determination to survive through the every day Nakba [catastrophe].

17 INT. AMIRA'S BEDROOM

17

AMIRA V.O.

We are stronger together. When we base our love and hope in pursuing the knowledge of the truth.

I am Palestinian and Scottish - these two passionate identities together are an unstoppable force, driven by love for both people, and both countries

18 EXT. GREEN SPACE

18

AMIRA

Immi, you are my healer, my Mother. No matter how hard the world and the thieves try, they will not break the bond or lineage between Mother and child.

Amira is writing her letter.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

I am You and You are Me. And you are more than what they want you to be.

Said the Dove to the Olive Tree...

Mia finishes writing her letter. She kisses it to her and folds it, placing it in her Kuffiyeh. A Dove coos. Mia smiles and throws her Kuffiyeh in the air. It transforms into a Dove, which flies over the trees.

19 INT. AMIRA'S BEDROOM

19

Amira closes the notebook and kisses it to her. She places it down.

AMIRA

Just as you never give up on us,
your children will never give up on
you.

Amira fastens the necklace of Handala around her neck.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

For change to happen, we all need
to act.

Amira directly addresses camera.

AMIRA (CONT'D)

Don't turn your back any longer.

Text appears on the screen:

Freedom of movement without checkpoints, access to sanitation and medical supplies, the right to call yourself Palestinian, the right to go home - for the last 73 years Palestinians have been denied their basic human rights, which is a violation of international law.

UN RESOLUTION 194 1948 sets out intentions for returning Palestinian refugees to their homes.

73 years later they are still waiting.

Let The Child Return Home.