

DEATH METAL

by

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SHADIA SIDES

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EXT. VENUE - NIGHT

The guys turn away to finish loading the rest of their gear. Meanwhile, Ramsey pulls Shadia aside...

RAMSEY

Just between you and me, kid...
How's Ivan doing? Since Europe?

SHADIA

He's... He locks himself in his practice room, writing... He wears headphones so I never hear what he's playing. I have no idea when he sleeps, he never eats, when he talks to me it's... he won't even tell me where he went, when he vanished. He was gone for *weeks*, but... We never keep secrets.

Shadia pauses, rallying herself. She forces a smile.

SHADIA

I think Europe... focused Ivan. It's like he took all of that fighting and cancelled shows and turned it into... uh...
(then)
Something really special is about to happen. You'll see.

RAMSEY

Cool. Keep me posted, okay?

INT. TOUR BUS - DAY

Shadia tracks down the phone; it's Ivan's, on the seat he was occupying earlier, bleeping for a Skype.

The ID says "Ramsey." She answers.

RAMSEY (V.O.)
(on screen)
Hey, Ivan, I like your new hair.

SHADIA
He's busy with Fleming.

RAMSEY (V.O.)
Uh... tell him I called...

SHADIA
Dude, c'mon.

Ramsey sighs.

RAMSEY (V.O.)
I wanted to tell Ivan directly.
Sony gave us the cut list, and...

SHADIA
They wanna drop Abyssinister.

RAMSEY (V.O.)
After that shit in Europe...

Shadia lets out a long breath. But she rallies, as always --

SHADIA
Do they know we're recording?

RAMSEY (V.O.)
Of course, I mentioned it --

SHADIA
"Mentioned?" Fuck that. *Tell them*
Fleming says it's the best shit
he's ever heard.

RAMSEY (V.O.)
Did he, now?

SHADIA
Dropping Abyssinister right now
would be the stupidest thing ever.
This album is gonna *kill*.

RAMSEY (V.O.)
Uhhh... oooh-kay.... I can *maybe*
swing a stay of execution...

SHADIA
That's all I'm asking.

RAMSEY (V.O.)
If this doesn't turn out, it's my
ass. Only for you guys, okay? Only
for you, and only this once.

Ramsey hangs up. Shadia drops into the seat, thinking.

She powers down the phone and stows it.

INT. FARMHOUSE - WASHROOM - NIGHT

Ivan has his shirt off, twisting in the mirror to get a look at an injury on the back of his neck.

There is a small, oval-shaped wound, clean and perfect, as if the skin had been removed by a scalpel.

Shadia appears, arms crossed. She watches Ivan struggle to dab at the wound with a tissue. It's wet, but doesn't bleed.

With a huff, she pushes into the room and digs around, almost instantly finding a FIRST AID KIT.

SHADIA

It was right here.

She opens it, finds disinfectant.

SHADIA

Get down. Come on.

Ivan sits on the edge of the tub.

SHADIA

Grit your teeth.

She pours disinfectant onto Ivan's wound. Oddly, he doesn't react; zero pain. It might as well be water.

SHADIA

How did you get this?

Ivan shakes his head; no idea.

Shadia forges ahead, applying a bandage and tape.

SHADIA

We said things... We were upset.
Which is understandable, since --
Devin. All of this. But...

Ivan's unresponsive, so she takes him by the face, makes him look into her eyes.

SHADIA

We've always been there for each
other, right? No matter what --
that's what we always say. *Right?*

He nods.

SHADIA

I need to know those weren't just words. Something's going on with you, and I... I'm alone right now, in a way I haven't been in a long time, since...

IVAN

I love you. That never goes away.

SHADIA

Then talk to me. Please.

IVAN

I'm focused. I'm tired.

SHADIA

You're exhausted, I can tell...

IVAN

When the album's done and we're gone, then we turn the next chapter, for us. Until then, it's the music, nothing but the music...

SHADIA

You still think you're going to make this album? After Devin?

He gives her a sharp look.

And softens...

IVAN

I've spent every dime for this album. If it doesn't work out... there's no fall back, nothing else.
(then)
Devin was one of my best friends. I think he'd understand.

Shadia embraces him.

Ivan leans into it.

[The Composer flickers behind Shadia.]

IVAN

I have to get back to work.

Ivan stands, gently (but firmly) removes Shadia's hands, and leaves without a word.