

The Deserted Station

A Film by
Alireza Raisian

Iran, 2002, In Farsi w/English Subtitles
88 min, Color, 35mm, 1:185



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THE DESERTED STATION

(Istgah-e Matrouk)

Synopsis

A photographer and his wife, a former schoolteacher, are driving on pilgrimage to Mashad from Tehran but find themselves stranded when their car breaks down. In a nearby village, the husband encounters the village's sole adult male and self-appointed guardian, who teaches at the school nearby.

The husband accompanies the villager to another town to get a part for the car, while his wife takes over his teaching duties at the school. She quickly develops a close bond with the children and the other villagers. Her presence in the classroom brings unexpected humor from the children who live in this strange deserted place. As the day draws on, the children help to bring a new hope and life into her heart.

At the end of the day, a game of hide-and-seek among abandoned trains at a nearby rail yard inspires a nightmarish hallucination for the woman, and sets the scene for this film's extraordinary final sequence.

Cast

Leila Hatami	The Wife
Nezam Manouchehri	The Husband
Mehran Rajabi	Feizollah
Mahmoud Pak Neeyat	The Signal Guard

Crew

Director	Ali Reza Raisian
Dir. Photography	Mahammad Aladpoush
Draft written by	Abbas Kiarostami
Producer	Hossein Zandof
Scriptwriter	Kambozia Partovi
Editor	Hossein Zandof
Production Designer	Mohsen Shah Ebrahimi
Sound	Parviz Abnar, Julien Klocke
Music	Peymen Yazdanian

Awards

Montreal Film Festival 2002: Best Actress to Leila Hatami

Nominated for the Grand Prix des Amériques

Festivals

Montreal International Film Festival 2002

Rotterdam Film Festival 2003

Edinburgh International Film Festival 2003

Melbourne International Film Festival 2003

Ali Reza Raisian

Ali Reza Raisian was born in 1955 in Tehran. Graduating in film direction from College of Television, Raisian made the short film, *THIRD HYPOTHESIS* as his graduation project and then began his professional career as screenwriter and assistant director. After directing a number of short films, he made his first feature film, *REYHANEH* in 1990. His second film, *THE JOURNEY*, which was based on a screenplay by Abbas Kiarostami, was shown in San Sebastian, Sao Paulo, Hong Kong and London film festivals. He was producer of Rakhshan Bani Etemad's *THE MAY LADY* (1998) as well as a number of documentaries and short films by Jafar Panahi, Bahman Giarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Manouchehr Teyyab, etc. His latest film, *THE DESERTED STATION*, based on an idea by Abbas Kiarostami and a script by Kambozia Partovi, was produced with the support of French Ministry of Culture.

Leila Hatami

Hatami's interest in becoming an actress was influenced by her family. Her father, Ali Hatami, who died shortly before *LEILA* opened in Tehran, was a famous screenwriter and director of historical films under the Shah. Her mother, Zahra, was an equally famous actress whose career was cut short after the Islamic revolution because she had appeared in pre-revolutionary films without a head scarf. Back then she was called Zari Khoshkam. (The hejab is obligatory for all women, including tourists.)

Hatami said her first film "role" was when her mother was pregnant with her, but also appeared in one of her father's early films when she was three years old.

The family was on vacation in England when Hatami was six when the Islamic revolution broke out. They decided to remain in London for a year. When they returned to Iran, she appeared in two of her father's films. At nine, she played a little boy who later became the famous Iranian painter, Kamal Olmök.

In 1990, she starred as a Turkish princess in Paris in his film *THE LOVE STRICKEN*. A year later, at 18, she was sent to Lausanne in Switzerland to continue her schooling because it was a

French-speaking area and she had studied French since she was a youngster. In Lausanne, she attended engineering school for two years.

Although she lived in Switzerland for three more years - and gleefully confessed to a “bit of being naughty” - she returned once a month to Iran.

The only time her father allowed her to act in a production by another director was for his good friend, the distinguished filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui, in *LEILA*. Too ill to finish his last film, Hatami senior died a month before *LEILA* premiered at the 1997 Fajr festival in Tehran, but Hatami was already famous as his daughter.

Hatami was frightened at the prospect of working with another director as she had such affection for her father as a director. “I was like a spoiled girl,” she once said. However, she has gone on to star as a nurse in *SHEIDA*, a big TV hit in Iran. But she is best known for her role in *LEILA* that was so controversial at the time, many Iranians returned several times to watch it.

Nezam Manouchehri

Born in Tehran 1949, Manouchehri moved to the USA in 1971 and made a series of short films from 1972-1982. Aside from acting, he is a journalist, translator, photographer, and short filmmaker. Since the early seventies, he has been heavily involved media projects, which has includes releasing film and video arts. Manouchehri have been writing and translating in both Farsi and English for a number of years and has been published in local and international press.

He is currently completing a novel starting in the period of the constitutional revolution and ending in the era of the Islamic Republic.

Abbas Kiarostami

Although Kiarostami emerged in the West as a major filmmaker in the early '90s with films like *CLOSE UP* and *THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES*, he had already been making films in Iran for two decades.

Born on June 22, 1940 in Tehran, Kiarostami was interested in the arts from an early age. He won a painting competition at the age of eighteen, and left home to study at Tehran University's Faculty of Fine Arts. As a designer and illustrator, Kiarostami worked throughout the '60s in advertising, making commercials, designing posters, creating credit titles for films, and illustrating children's books.

Following the Islamic Revolution, Kiarostami produced two films that examined the interrelation between actual reality and constructed reality: *TOOTHACHE* (1980), a Kanun documentary on oral hygiene, weighs the benefits of maintaining healthy teeth over the convenience of dentures (created reality), and *THE CHORUS* (1982), an examination of an old man's mixed feelings over his hearing aid, as he becomes subjected to the noise of the busy streets, but misses his granddaughter's visit after he turns off the device and does not hear her knocking. This recurring theme foreshadows Kiarostami's thematic signature, and has become a perennial aspect of his subsequent feature films, most notably in *CLOSE -UP*, *THE EARTHQUAKE TRILOGY: WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOME*, *AND THE LIFE GOES ON*, and *THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES* , and *A TASTE OF CHERRY*.