

KABUK
THE SHELL

Written by

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EXT./INT. ISTANBUL - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY (SERIES OF SHOTS)

ROOF OF HOUSE - Smoke rises from a chimney.

CITYSCAPE - High rise buildings, skyscrapers towering in the horizon.

SHOPPING CENTER - People walk in and out in a steady stream.

CLOCK TOWER - Time passes as the gears clink and clank.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - Tiny windows sparkle with light in modern apartment buildings.

SWAMP - A bird's wings flap over a swamp.

FIELD - A hand slaughters a lamb.

ROOM - An erect penis

HOUSE - A hand pulls a nail from a woman's flesh, separating it.

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. ZEYNEP'S APARTMENT - ZEYNEP'S BEDROOM - DAWN (DREAM SEQUENCE)

The light from the window shimmer across ZEYNEP's (early 40s) closed eyes. Her eyes open, confused. She looks at the wall.

A clock with no hands ticks along on the wall. The doorbell rings. Zeynep looks startled, straightens up.

INT. HALLWAY/ENTRANCE - DAWN - MOMENTS LATER (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Zeynep pauses at the entrance of another bedroom, looks through the crack of the door, tiptoes past it.

The front door. Zeynep moves forward hesitantly to look through the peephole.

POLICE OFFICER's eye stares at her through the peephole. Doorbell rings again.

Zeynep is startled by the sound, looks back to the kitchen. A lamb with its legs bound lying on the ground in the kitchen is defenselessly kicking the table and trying to be free. She is puzzled.

Another doorbell. She glances back at the apartment, and then at the door, forcing her words out:

ZEYNEP
Who is it?

OFFICER (O.S.)
Are you Ms. Koçak?

ZEYNEP
What's this about?

OFFICER (O.S.)
Open the door please. It's important.

After an uncertain pause, Zeynep opens the door a crack.

The uniformed Police Officer in his late thirty stands still, wearing an absurd expression of tranquility.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
You are required to come with me.

INT. ZEYNEP'S BEDROOM - DAWN - MOMENTS LATER (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Zeynep hastily puts on drab clothes. She catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror as she walks out. Her anxiety is apparent.

INT. POLICE CAR (MOVING) - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Zeynep sits in the back, restlessly watching the wet streets passing by in the grey morning light.

The gloomy grey and splotches of color of a blurry city smeared window.

She turns her attention to the car, notices something poking out of the seat.

She sticks her finger into the upholstery and pulls out a metal string.

She examines the rusty and decayed string curiously. Slightly turns her eyes to the rearview mirror and catches the eye of the police officer.

She suddenly drops it down. They regard each other for a beat.

The Officer's eyes are empty.

She is momentarily frightened. Feels guilty. Continues to stare out the window with visible discomfort.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Officer marches down the long hallway uncharacteristically fast.

Zeynep struggles to keep up a few paces behind him, the fluorescent lights flashing above them.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - DAY (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Towering double doors swing open as if they are the gates of hell.

Zeynep's hesitant feet step into the disinfected linoleum floor.

She lifts her gaze in fear of what she might see. As she begins to shiver, her breath makes white clouds in the freezing room.

A PROSECUTOR, in his mid-forties, with a loose tie in his neck and a potbellied, balding ATTENDANT, in his fifties, in white coats stand on either side of a gurney. A white sheet covers a BODY.

A CLERK, in his mid-forties, with slender and long fingers sitting at a table in front of a typewriter. He looks up at her, wipes his nose now and again.

Zeynep looks back at the gurney, Officer behind her.

Prosecutor turns a page of the forensic report he's holding, looks at Zeynep. Clears his throat.

PROSECUTOR
Zeynep Koçak?

Zeynep nods her head in assent.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
Please, step closer.

Zeynep approaches the gurney, Officer keeping step with her.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
This won't be easy.

Zeynep's breathing quickens. Looks dramatically pale. She watches the white sheet expectantly.

Prosecutor nods at the Attendant.

The white sheet gets peeled off to reveal: Zeynep's likeness.

Zeynep's breathing seemingly stops as she looks stiffly at her own dead and frozen face. She is paralyzed.

PROSECUTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Do you recognize her?

Zeynep barely stands. Continues to stare and finally exhales.
A nod 'no' from Zeynep.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
(frowning)
Are you sure? No relation of yours?

ZEYNEP
No...
I don't think so.

Prosecutor and Attendant exchange suspicious looks.

Prosecutor nods at the Clerk. We hear the sound of Clerk's sneezing and the clack of a typewriter. He blows his nose.

PROSECUTOR
Zeynep Koçak claimed the deceased
bears no relation to her. As far as
she knows.

Clerk's elbows on his desk, he looks down at what he has just written. He rolls the paper up a few lines, looks some more.

Prosecutor walks over to Clerk to check the typed document.

Zeynep bends over the body to look at it more closely. She touches the corpse's face ever so slightly.

Prosecutor appears very close to her.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)
You need to sign a statement.

Zeynep timidly walks over to Clerk's desk.

As she signs the paper Clerk sneezes loudly.

He looks at her with his nose running, baring his black teeth.

The fluorescent lights flicker above them. Zeynep looks up.
Lights go out.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. ZEYNEP'S APARTMENT - ZEYNEP'S BEDROOM - DAWN (PRESENT)

The clock on the wall, now with hands, ticks along. Muffled animal-like moans and groans are heard.

Zeynep's closed eyes flicker. Her brow furrows as the moaning sounds become increasingly disturbing.

GÜLTEN (O.S.)
Zeynep! Zeyneep! ZEYNEEEP!

Zeynep's eyes open and adjust to light. She looks at the clock on the wall. It reads 7 o'clock.

She sits up, takes in the perfectly neat and simply decorated room. She walks over to a small unpretentious wardrobe, opens it.

GÜLTEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Where the hell are you?

All the dresses are same type. Long and white...

She pulls one out blindly.

As she dresses, she glances at a charcoal drawing on an easel in the corner of her room.

In the drawing a figure of a woman stands in a drab landscape, her hair and white dress whipping about in the wind.

GÜLTEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Are you dead or what? You don't
care if I rot in here!

Zeynep watches the figure in the drawing for another beat, then looks towards the door with a blank expression.

INT. GÜLTEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Zeynep pushes open a door, immediately putting an end to the groans. She grimaces at the stench in the room.

GÜLTEN (70s), old, thin and paraplegic woman, glares at Zeynep menacingly from the towering covers in her bed.

The room is dark; the curtains drawn; old, brown and oversized furniture surround Gülten like evil statues.

GÜLTEN
You're alive. Thank God.

Zeynep walks to the curtains.

Stark light fills the gloomy room, revealing the flamboyance of the wardrobe, the medicine cabinet and an ominous wheelchair.

Gülten continues glaring at Zeynep birdlike, pale but vibrant in her obvious hatred.

Zeynep approaches her bed head down, eyes to the floor.

She peels off Gülten's covers to see her lying in a dark yellow wet stain. She grimaces at the sight, closes her mouth.

Gülten looks at her accusingly.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

How do you like your new painting?
You've reached new artistic
heights.

Zeynep takes a breath and bends down to maneuver Gülten out of bed. She lifts her and places her in the wheelchair, starts removing her underwear.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

It serves you right to clean up all
this mess. What were you doing?
Huh? Dreaming of your boyfriends?
Were you wishing that I die so you
can bring them home with you? I'm
still here! Bring me my pills. My
chest hurts.

Zeynep fills a glass with water from a jug, opens a bottle of pills.

Gülten opens her mouth to take the pills from Zeynep's hand, still glaring at her with menace.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

Much good these pills are doing.
They're poisoning me, those
doctors. Nothing changes. My chest
still hurts.

Zeynep finishes piling up the dirty sheets on the floor without looking at Gülten. She walks out of the room briefly.

Gülten holds her wrinkly chest as she wheezes. Her eyes land on a framed picture of her as A YOUNG WOMAN in a ballet dress, by her side.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

My youth photos are watching me rot in here. My insides are humming and growling. You don't hear any of it. Something is eating my flesh from the inside.

Zeynep walks back in with a washing bowl and a rag. Gülten looks at her with disdain.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

I'm disappearing. You don't even care!

Zeynep moves closer, kneels down beside her. She dips the rag into the water, rings it.

Zeynep gently opens Gülten's legs and starts wiping at her legs and groin.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

Open more! You have to get to everything. It stinks!

Zeynep does as she's told. Gülten endures, still looking at the picture on the wall, takes a deep breath.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

You're going to be late for class
if you don't hurry. You still have
to make breakfast. Do you want me
to starve to death?

Zeynep puts Gülten's wet underwear on top of the laundry pile. She walks to the wardrobe and flicks through her mother's black dresses. She picks one, turns to Gülten.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)

You're not going to wash my
underwear with the sheets, are you?
They'll get hard and stiff with the
bleach. I'll get a rash. Wash them
by hand. Do I have to repeat these
things every time?

Zeynep separates Gülten's underwear from the sheets.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Zeynep washes Gülten's underwear in the sink.

She loads the sheets into the washing machine. The water is running. She carefully fills a cup with soap powder and pours it over the laundry.

She stops for a moment to watch the agitator grind away at the clothes. Then she closes the lid.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Zeynep prepares the breakfast table as the tea brews on the stove. Gülten's groans and coughing are heard in the background.

Zeynep pours herself coffee, then looks at the painting of Francisco de Zurbaran's Agnus Dei hangs on the wall. She stands in front of it, takes a sip and her puzzled look trying to decipher the enigma.

She takes out a pack of cigarettes hidden deep in a cupboard. Walks over to the window. Puts her coffee on the windowsill and lights her cigarette. Takes a puff.

She opens the window a crack while she inhales. Her shoulders relax as she exhales, watching the view from the window.

Outside, the garbage truck collects garbage.

Zeynep takes another long puff.

Zeynep coughs a little but stifles the sound.

GÜLTEN (O.S.)
What're you doing, daydreaming
again?

Zeynep extinguishes her cigarette.

INT. GÜLTEN'S BEDROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

Gülten waits impatiently and uncomfortably in her wheelchair.
Zeynep walks in and starts to wheel her out of the room.

GÜLTEN
I'm freezing.

Zeynep puts a cardigan over her shoulders and a blanket over her knees. Gülten sniffs at her, displeased.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)
You couldn't wait till after
breakfast to smoke that poison?

Zeynep looks at Gülten, but holds it in. She steps behind her and pushes her out of the door, into the dark and long hallway.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)
I have to smell your stinky breath
over breakfast now. Me, I never
smoked a day in my life. You're the
bad apple. Always have been.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Zeynep maneuvers Gülten into the kitchen, expressionless.

GÜLTEN

What a waste of youth. You're supposed to be a lady. Such a shame.

Zeynep parks Gülten's wheelchair by the table and sits across from her.

She pours a cup of tea and places it in front of Gülten, who watches her every move.

Gülten takes a bite of food, scowling.

Zeynep picks up a piece of toast and takes a tiny, careful bite. Smacks a bit her lips. The crunch of her bite is still too loud.

Zeynep's eyes meet Gülten's disapproving glare. She swallows with difficulty, puts down her toast and leans back in her chair as if she's done with breakfast.

Gülten shakes her head and resumes eating.

INT. ART SCHOOL - WORKSHOP - DAY

A FEMALE HAND makes a charcoal drawing of a male nude.

YOUNG FEMALE STUDENTS sit on long stools, intensely concentrating on drawing a NUDE MALE MODEL seated on a platform in the middle of the room.

Zeynep paces around the students lost in thought, checking their work intermittently.

She suddenly pauses near a STUDENT, looks back and forth between the drawing and the Model.

With a piece of charcoal, she touches up the drawing of the Model's genitals, then stares at his genitals for a beat.

Sound of Thunder breaks the silence in the room. It suddenly starts pouring outside.

Zeynep turns away from the Model with embarrassment, walks over to the window and watches the rain flooding into the city drains.

Zeynep's eyes shift from the rain to her reflection in the window.

In her reflection a dark fluid seeps out of her nose. She touches it lightly.

Blood is smeared on her finger. She turns to the students in shock, but no one pays attention to her. Just stillness.

She walks over to the Model's platform, takes his robe from the back of a chair and wipes her nose with it. Her face gets even more smeared with blood.

The students and the Model give her confused looks.

From their perspective Zeynep's nose is perfectly clean.

She puts down the robe absently, her attention drifting towards the wall.

For a moment, her eyes remain locked to the painting of Edvard Munch's 'The Scream' hangs on the wall.

INT. ZEYNEP'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

We are facing the doorway. The click of a key turning and the door opens. Zeynep enters, sits down to take her shoes off but suddenly pauses. It's deadly quiet.

She looks around searching for some kind of sound or movement.

INT. HALLWAY/GÜLTEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zeynep slowly pushes open Gülten's door and looks at her bed.

Gülten lies on her bed like a corpse. Not a sound. Just a dull silence. A disturbing, oppressive, deafening silence...

Zeynep steps in and approaches Gülten quietly. Gülten's face is expressionless, her chest unmoving.

Zeynep leans in to listen to her breathing. Gülten suddenly coughs and groans uncomfortably but goes back to sleep.

Zeynep takes a deep breath and closes the door slowly.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Zeynep checks her nose in the mirror: there's no sign of blood.

She turns on the hot water. The bath is filled with steam. She steps into the shower. Water pours on her face...

She stands still under the shower for a while.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Zeynep lights a cigarette and looks out the window. Takes a deep puff.

She suddenly turns her eyes to a woman also standing in a window, smokes a cigarette, symmetrically facing the apartment of Zeynep.

As Zeynep gazes at her symbolic double, the unknown woman suddenly leaves in the darkness of her apartment.

INT. ZEYNEP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zeynep works on her unfinished work on the easel. Her eyes assume a calm she hasn't had all through her day.

LATER - DAWN

Zeynep wakes up to sounds of something getting knocked over, groans and coughing from the next room.

INT. GÜLTEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Zeynep is dressed for the day and trying to maneuver Gülden out of the bed, but Gülden doesn't cooperate and groans louder.

GÜLTEN

My back is clenched tight, I can't even breathe.

ZEYNEP

Should I call the doctor?

GÜLTEN

What good would that do? I might as well pray to God. Don't make me laugh.

Gülden pushes Zeynep's hands away.

GÜLTEN (CONT'D)
 Turn me over and walk on my back a
 little.

Zeynep flips Gülten on her front and climbs on top of her.

GULTEN
 Last time I prayed to God, those so-
 called 'doctors' were operating on
 my legs.
 (sad beat for both of
 them)
 Even God is of no use to me.

Zeynep walks all over Gülten's back. Gülten's face is pushed
 into the pillow and her voice is strained, but she continues:

GULTEN (CONT'D)
 Why were you late last night?

ZEYNEP
 I was at the art school.

GULTEN
 You were with a man, weren't you?

ZEYNEP
 No, I wasn't.

GULTEN
 Don't lie to me.

ZEYNEP

I'm not. I was at a class. Is that enough?

GULTEN

Keep going. Higher. Stronger.

Zeynep walks farther up Gülten's back, all the way up to her neck. Gülten's voice is choked but strong.

GULTEN (CONT'D)

Men... They will use you and then leave you hanging. If you let them. Act like your mother's daughter. Daughter of a noble family. A respected artist. An idealist.

Long pause as Zeynep keeps her balance over Gülten's body and finally steps off.

Gülten lifts her red face off the pillow and looks at her.

GULTEN (CONT'D)

You have no time for such immoral thrills. You're not getting any younger.

Zeynep helps Gülten sit up and transition to the wheelchair.

Gülten lands hard on the wheelchair, as if Zeynep dropped her.

GULTEN (CONT'D)
 You're not strong enough to take
 care of your mother.

Zeynep puts a blanket over her legs. Gülten watches her
 keenly.

GULTEN (CONT'D)
 You don't want to take care of your
 mother. You want me to drop dead so
 you can live your life, bring your
 boyfriends to my home. But no
 boyfriend is going to take care of
 you when you're a cripple like me.

Zeynep gives her a look that says, 'Oh, please!' She walks to
 the back of the wheelchair and wheels her out of the room.

GÜLTEN
 I have a right to be concerned.
 Staying late so many nights. I hope
 anyone's not taking advantage.

ZEYNEP
 No.

GÜLTEN
 Good. I don't want you making the
 same mistake I did.

ZEYNEP
What do you mean?

GÜLTEN
I just mean as far as my career was
concerned.

ZEYNEP
What career?

GÜLTEN
Yes. The one I gave up to have you.

ZEYNEP
..but you were 23.

GÜLTEN
So?... I did not choose to be
pregnant.

Gülten is looking at a framed black and white photograph of her young self: She is in a white dress like princess, dancing at ballet on a platform. She then slides her eyes to the wheelchair right beside of it. Sad.

Zeynep is with her back to her mother. She hesitates for a moment, stares at the door knob a step away, tries to open but somehow she cannot. She suddenly turns off the light.

GÜLTEN'S VOICE
Take me out after breakfast
tomorrow. I'm suffocating in this
room all day.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Zeynep pushes Gülten's wheelchair on the sidewalk. They pass
by a store.

Zeynep slows down to look through a storefront window at
WOMEN shopping for clothes. Then her attention shifts to her
reflection on the glass window.

Gülten glares at her through the reflection.

GULTEN
You want to be like those women?
Waste money on clothes all day long
to please their men?

Zeynep pushes on.

A PREGNANT WOMAN and HER BABY in a stroller pass by. Zeynep
and the pregnant woman exchange looks.

GULTEN (CONT'D)
I've had enough. Turn around.

Zeynep ignores her and keeps walking.

GULTEN (CONT'D)
Are you deaf? I'm cold. Take me
home.

Zeynep's steps quicken. She almost breaks into a run as if possessed.

Gülten tries to turn around and yell at her but her shouts are interrupted by heavy coughing.

GULTEN (CONT'D)
What did I say? ... Stop right now
and ...take me home! Do you hear me!?
Have you gone ...mad?

Zeynep is short of sprinting now. They reach a noisy construction zone.

A rock drill hammers the tarmac, causing a loud enough noise to drown out Gülten's screaming and coughing.

Zeynep stops as if coming up for air in an ocean of Gülten's bickering.

Gülten continues to yell and swing at her but her voice no longer reaches Zeynep.

Zeynep stands stock still, eyes closed, finally feeling some peace.

Passersby throw them quizzical looks.

Zeynep pushes the wheelchair onto the construction site for a few steps and then steps away from Gülten to walk farther into the construction site.

Gülten shuts up as she watches Zeynep in a daze, walking away from her. She's almost too shocked to say anything.

Zeynep approaches a WORKER eating a sandwich on a stoop. She stops right in front of him and watches him eat for a long beat.

Worker looks her up and down, continues eating.

Abruptly Zeynep grabs the sandwich off his hands and bites into it with extreme hunger and delight. She recklessly smacks her mouth.

Zeynep eats ravenously as Worker watches her finish his sandwich.

When she's done, she smiles at Worker and turns around to Gülten.

Gülten is not in her wheelchair.

Zeynep scans the site in panic but can't see her. She starts running around frantically.

Eventually she finds Gülten flailing about on the ground, pushing away WORKER II, who is trying to help her.

Zeynep runs to her, takes over from Worker II and carries Gülten into her wheelchair.

Worker watches Zeynep push Gülten away and out of the site.

INT. ZEYNEP'S APARTMENT - GÜLTEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zeynep helps Gülten into bed, reaches for her bottle of pills and a glass water from the bedside table.

Gülten takes the glass, opens her mouth for the pills, takes a sip, all the while not taking her eyes off Zeynep.

When she's done drinking, she throws the rest of the water at Zeynep's face, making her jump.

After a moment of shock Zeynep takes the empty glass out of Gülten's hand, gently places it on the table and leaves the room in silence.

INT. ZEYNEP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zeynep works on her unfinished drawing, her face still glistening with water as if she'd been crying.

After a moment, she gets up and lies down on her bed, still looking at her drawing. She turns off the light.

INT. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Through the peephole Zeynep's face is visible. The lock turns, she opens the door and enters carrying a few large canvases.

She pushes the door shut but it doesn't close. She turns on the light, tries to close it again, but the door is jammed by a foot.

She looks up in shock.

Worker from the construction site stands in the doorway.

Zeynep tries to slam the door in his face, but Worker enters with ease and shuts the door behind him.

Zeynep backs away into the wall still holding onto a canvas like a life raft.

Worker walks towards her with lust in his eyes.

Zeynep looks down at his muddy boots leaving a trail on the floor.

Worker touches her dress, smudging it with dirt.

Zeynep drops her canvas and looks toward Gülten's bedroom.

GÜLTEN (O.S.)
Zeynep? What's all this noise?

Zeynep slides across the wall toward Gülten. Worker tries to kiss her despite her resistance.

INT. GÜLTEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zeynep flees into Gülten's bedroom, followed by Worker.

With the force of Worker's assault, she falls on the floor by Gülten's bed.

Zeynep closes her eyes and turns her face toward Gülten, while Worker tears her clothes and rapes her.

Gülten watches what's happening helplessly with wide eyes.

Zeynep looks up at Gülten, her eyes full of tears.

Both Zeynep and Gülten stare emptily, frozen in time. Worker is the only person who seems to be alive in the room.

Worker finishes and leaves the room without so much as a glance at the two women.

Zeynep and Gülten remain motionless for a beat, until Zeynep slowly stands up, blood flowing down her leg, and sits next to Gülten.

Gülten speechlessly watches Zeynep take her bottle of pills, pop a few pills into her mouth and gulp them down with some water.

Zeynep takes Gülten's trembling hands and places them between her legs.

Gülten begins to cry. Zeynep lays her on her lap and strokes her hairs like a mother does to her child.

ZEYNEP

Shhh. Everything will be better in the morning. It always is.

Zeynep sits in silence for a beat.

She takes off her dirty dress, opens Gülten's wardrobe and browses through her dark dresses just like the women shopping in the store.

She picks a black dress and puts it on. As she reaches the door, she hears Gülten's voice. This time so intimate and motherly.

GÜLTEN

Zeynep! My daughter!

Zeynep turns her looks and stare at us.

FADE OUT.