



THE PATIENCE STONE

Spring
Season
2014

Release: 2013

Cert (UK): 15

Runtime: 102 mins

Director: Atiq Rahimi

Screenwriters: Jean-Claude Carrière from novel by Atiq Rahimi

Cast: Golshifteh Farahani



The *Patience Stone* is an intoxicating, slow-moving swirl of deep colours and even deeper emotions. Afghan filmmaker and novelist Atiq Rahimi has adapted his own award-winning novel, *Syngue Sabour*, and has turned it into an award-winning film – and it was the entry by Afghanistan for the 2013 Oscars.

Set in an un-named war-torn landscape it is a meditation about truth as the key to true liberation. The film opens with a woman caring for her ostensibly comatose husband, in a small, sparsely furnished, but lusciously coloured room. She dabs his forehead with a compress and whimpers, “Can you hear me?” The more we learn of her circumstances the more she seems helpless beyond reason. She speaks to her husband meekly, in a steady, undulating stream of whispered secrets, confessions of fear, and desperate pleas to the heavens for respite. She looks as if in a daze as she vents, her eyes fixed on something that isn’t there. The husband lies motionless and unresponsive.

As the story unfolds, we start to hear the woman’s one-way talks with her husband turn increasingly disagreeable with the expectations thrust upon her as a Muslim woman—she speaks in her husband’s ear of long-gestating resentments and reveals more and more about herself and her past. As she unburdens herself, watch her eyes soften, listen to her voice calm down, and witness her transformation as she starts to pulse with confidence and even talk about forbidden ecstasy. She seems to have let go of her burdens, and even looks happy. We think, if the husband can hear her, he must be torn apart inside, even seething.



Consider also that the time we are witnessing is perhaps the first time they've ever truly spent time with one another. The story of their wedding ceremony reveals much in this respect.

Legend has it that a patience stone bears silent witness to personal confessions and revelations until one day the stone shatters and the person is delivered from pain. Given that the stone is her husband, how will this denouement be achieved?