

Doc Edge Film Reviews

A Sisters Tale

Dir. Leila Amini

Review by Evienne Jones (she/they)

A Sister's Tale is a prime example of existence often equaling resistance. Filmed over seven years, the film follows Nasreen through the lens of her sister's camera, Director Leila Amini. Against the backdrops of Iran and its restrictive laws for women, including the ban on women singing in public. Nasreen moves away from fulfilling the traditional idea of a mother and wife and towards her dream of becoming a singer. A dream that was fostered by the sisters' late father. This film is an incredibly close look at Nasreen's family with intergenerational discussions providing particular interest to audiences.

What is special about this film is how those featured interact with the camera. It's welcomed into intimate family moments and treated as an extension of a belloved sister, aunt and daughter. You can feel the love and admiration both Nasreen and Leila have for each other as Nasreen is transformed into the woman she always wanted to be. "I have the courage to keep my dignity" - Nasreen.

Where a fictionalized version of this film would have taken a more dramatic route this documentary allows the audience to consider the day to day impacts the restrictive laws in Iran have on women. The raw depiction of day to day struggles and realities give space for quiet reflection. It is an inspiring watch as we see not only Nasreen but her sister, mother and children grow through the caring lens of Leila. This film is at times heartbreaking but constantly eye opening as a portrait of a family grappling with identity and expression as women within Iran.