



Quick Review: Circumstance

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I have seen a lot of Iranian movies, and I have no idea how Maryam Keshavarz's *Circumstance* was ever financed, but I can guess that it was never shown to any Iranian officials for approval. It has some pretty radical images in it, adding up to a powerful experience.

It centers on two beautiful young Iranian girls, Atafeh (Nikohl Boosheri), and Shireen (Sarah Kazemy); just the act of reveling in these women's beauty is revolutionary enough (their heads are shown uncovered), but the movie has the courage to make them lovers besides. Atafeh is the daughter of a powerful but liberal father and enjoys a certain amount of freedom. Unfortunately, her older brother Mehran (Reza Sixo Safai) returns home having become a radical fundamentalist, and proceeds to turn their lives upside down.

Some non-traditional Iranian films have a tendency to overcook the drama, but Keshavarz keeps her images on a strong simmer, letting the powerful and pent-up emotions come through.