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THE FIRST COMPROMISE IS THE EASIEST: MAY TARTOUSSY'S PLAYWRITING DEBUT *THE VINE THAT WITHERS* PREMIERES AT THE 2026 TORONTO FRINGE FESTIVAL

Toronto, ON — Set inside an intimate Toronto café, *The Vine That Withers* follows two immigrant women trying to build stability in a city where starting over never really ends. As survival, ambition, and identity collide, small compromises begin to feel necessary. Then normal. Then unavoidable.

Written by Toronto-based actor, playwright, and community-engaged artist May Tartoussy, the play is rooted in conversations about survival, dignity, and the moral grey areas people enter when pressure builds. Inspired by a conversation that stayed with her long after it ended, Tartoussy began questioning where the line between survival and compromise really sits.

Dalia and Layal are driven by different needs: one trying to hold on to who she believes she is, the other focused on survival. What begins as a practical solution gradually reshapes their relationship, their sense of self, and the stories they tell themselves in order to keep going.

Presented by Purple Penguin in partnership with Arabic Theatre Company, the production marks both Purple Penguin's first project and May Tartoussy's playwriting debut.

The Vine That Withers is written by May Tartoussy, directed by Zain Ahmed, and features Fatma Naguib, Hani Yakan, Beatriz Camargo, and Gilles Hammoud.

Performance Dates: June 30 at 7:15 PM | July 3 at 4:00 PM | July 5 at 1:30 PM | July 7 at 5:45 PM | July 8 at 2:00 PM | July 10 at 9:15 PM | July 11 at 8:00 PM

Venue: Factory Theatre, Toronto

Tickets: Available June 3, 2026 at <https://www.fringetoronto.com/fringe/show/vine-withers>

Media Rep: May Tartoussy

Phone: 647-770-5533

Email: mtartoussy@gmail.com

Toronto Fringe Publicist: Damien Nelson, damien@wantandable.ca