

"Project Splitting Image"

By:

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FADE IN:

FLASHBACK BEGINS

EXT. CITY PARK - MID-DAY

A young DIANA CLEMINS, (19), with brown hair tied back in a ponytail, dressed in denim shorts and a pink t-shirt, sits on the grass in the crowded City Park. She has one earbud in her right ear, and she is taking notes on a notepad in front of her. People walk by, with dogs and children. Diana looks up to view the surrounding area.

As Diana scans the park, she sees a familiar couple, MAN and WOMAN, walking next to a tree. Diana's eyes widen as she tries to see the couple better. Diana drops her things to the ground, and starts to stand.

DIANA

Mom? Dad?

Diana starts to quickly walk towards the couple that now have their backs to her. She tries to catch up to them, but then the couple takes a turn towards a shack, Diana finally reaches the shack, but the couple had disappeared.

Diana leans on the shack in defeat, she takes her face in her hands, and starts to cry.

END FLASHBACK

INT. AXEL'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Diana, now age 26, awakes from a restless sleep. Her hair is ruffled, and her facial features more defined. The alarm clock next to Diana reads: "4:53 AM". Diana pulls the covers off of herself, and goes to the bathroom.

INT. AXEL'S BATHROOM

Diana groggily enters the bathroom, and closes the door behind her. She begins to undress, she suddenly stops, and goes to check behind the gray shower curtain on the shower. Satisfied with the view of shampoo bottles and some shaving cream, she turns on the water and continues to get undressed.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

INT. STARBUCKS - MID-DAY

Diana, now slightly older than 19, is sitting at a table near

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a window facing a busy street. Diana is typing on her laptop, books and papers scattered around the table, plus a small coffee cup among the mix. A small glimpse of the computer screen reveals a website forum, the title reads: "DEAD PEOPLE COMING BACK TO LIFE?" Some of the paperwork scattered on the desk has titles like: "CAN THE DEAD RISE?" and "HOW TO PETITION THE EXHUMATION OF A PERSON".

Diana looks up from her computer, and out onto the street, her eyes scanning the collage of moving people and vehicles. As the sunlights illuminates her face, her eyes widen.

Across the street, she sees the Man and Woman from the the park. They walk hand-in-hand, facing Diana directly. Diana freezes, watching them intently. A HONK of a car horn brings Diana out of her shock, and she quickly pushes herself out of her chair, and runs out the front door.

The traffic is intense, and the cars keep blocking Diana from seeing or going across the road. She hurried down the street, trying to see over the vehicles to find the Man and Woman. She spots in-between passing cars, realizing she won't be able to cross the street, she YELLS:

DIANA
Roman and Annabelle Clemins!

The traffic of cars WOOSHING by drowns out Diana, and the couple continue to walk away. Diana stands in place. She drops her head in defeat, and begins to walk back to the Starbucks.

Walking not too far behind Diana is a suspicious slender blonde woman, AGENT JERICO. Dressed in an all black outfit, she slowly walks toward the Starbucks, keeping her eyes trained on the back of Diana's head.

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. AXEL'S BATHROOM - CONTINUED

Diana, wrapped in nothing but a towel, goes to the sink to brush her teeth. She looks up to her reflection in the mirror, and shakes her head in disapproval.

EXT. - THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE - WEDNESDAY - LATE AFTERNOON

There are pedestrians walking along the sidewalk in front of the building.

INT. RICHIE STAHL'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Daylight fills the room through the ceiling to wall windows in the large office. The room is adorned with a huge desk standing in front of a whole wall of bookshelves. The man sitting behind the desk is RICHIE STAHL, a middle-age silver fox of fifty-three, with a full head of styled hair, sharp facial features with sun-tanned skin that slightly shows his age. Richie reclines slightly in his chair, his posture displaying true confidence.

Over at the silver metal mini-bar, Diana stands making a drink. She is dressed in business casual black pants and a blue blouse. Diana sticks a spoon in the glass, and swirls the liquid. She puts down the spoon, and brings the glass over and sets it on Richie's desk.

Diana sits nervously in her chair, across from Richie, picking at her nails. Diana is dressed in business casual black pants and a blue blouse. There is a pen and notepad setting in her lap.

RICHIE

Diana... sweetheart, you know I can't give you the Thompson article.

DIANA

Richie, I don't see why not? I've been here the longest of anyone, and you give all the good stories to Jarrod and Vince! Why can't I have a shot at this?

Richie takes a sip from his glass, as his eyes divert from Diana to peer out the windows.

RICHIE

It's a tough world Diana, and some of us have to make hard decisions...

DIANA

Would it really be that hard to choose me?

Richie turns his attention back to Diana, she pleads with her eyes for him to give her a shot. Richie hangs his head and shakes it left and right.

RICHIE

I'm sorry Diana, but I...

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DIANA

Is it because of my gender? My opinions? Just tell me Richie.

There is a long pause from both of them, and the reality truly sets into the conversation.

Breaking the silence, the phone on the desk RINGS to life. Richie gives Diana a sad look while he picks up the phone.

RICHIE

This is Richie Stahl.

There is an inaudible person MURMURING to Richie through the phone.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

Alright, thank you Rachel. I'll be there in a moment.

Richie sets the phone back on his desk, Diana is staring at him with aggravation on her face.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry... I have a meeting to go to.

DIANA

Will you at least think about giving me the story?

Richie starts to push together some paperwork, and rises from his chair. Diana mirrors him and stands up, awaiting his response.

RICHIE

Look... Don't worry about the stuff that's higher than your pay-grade. Just be happy with what you are doing, alright?

Diana glares even more intensely at Richie, she purses her lips as though to hold herself back from having an outburst. She simply nods at Richie in response.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

That a girl! I'll see you later.

Diana quickly turns and leaves Richie's office. She makes her way back to her cubicle, while shaking her head and rolling her eyes. She picks at her nails subconsciously. Visibly

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angered, she tries her best not to cry or lash out. She finally makes it to her cubicle, and sits at her chair and tries to INHALE deep breaths.

FADE TO:

INT. - DIANA'S CUBICLE

Diana sits at her dimly-lit desk, surrounded by canvas-like gray walls that are way too close. She sits in front of her laptop, attempting to write an article. The page remains blank, as no words meet the screen.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The same younger Diana is walking on a street lined with shops and stores, the night is dark except for the street lights and neon signs of the stores.

Diana is quickly and violently SLAMMED into a brick wall, a leather sleeved arm crushing in on her throat. Diana WHEEZES, trying to scream out.

Through the minimal light of the night, AGENT JERICO's face is slightly illuminated. Dress in all black suiting, this lean blonde woman stands a few inches above Diana. Jerico keeps pressure on Diana, pinning her to the wall.

JERICO

Diana Clemens, you've been quite the internet-savvy researcher lately... but I guess that's what journalists like yourself do.

Diana tries to catch her breath with no avail.

JERICO (CONT'D)

You know, it would be a shame if someone were to tell your new boss that his dashing young hire was into cult beliefs and conspiracy theories?

Jerico menacingly looks down to Diana awaiting her response. Diana frantically shakes her head left to right. Jerico drops her arm from Diana's throat, Diana GASPS for air as she falls to her knees.

JERICO (CONT'D)

Stop looking into all of this
(MORE)

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JERICO (CONT'D)
fictitious stuff for your own good. Or
else you'll be seeing more of me.

Jerico grabs at a hidden pocket, and pulls out a small
business card. She flicks it at Diana on the ground.

JERICO (CONT'D)
Here's your reminder not to mess up.
Goodbye, Diana Clemins.

Jerico quickly disappears into the night. Diana stays on her
knees, still trying to grasp her breath. Tears in her eyes,
she grabs the business card off the ground. The only thing
visible on the card is the large CIA logo.

FADE OUT:

FLASHBACK ENDS

Diana rubs her hand at the base of her neck, as if the
bruises of that night were still healing. She shuts her
laptop, and packs her stuff into her large purse. She quickly
grabs her things, and heads down the hall of cubicles, to the
elevator. She presses the button for the elevator with a
BING, as she waits, she scans the room and picks at her
nails.

The elevator BINGS again, as the sliding doors glide apart.
Diana goes into the elevator, and hits a button. The doors
shut.

EXT. - CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Diana looks up at the large building, with a hard look in her
face. She scales the steps at the front of the building, and
enters the double doors.

INT. - CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY COMPUTER LAB

Diana sits at an old desktop computer, she stares at the
screen as the spinning blue circle brings up forum website,
the page reads: "THE CHICAGO SCROLLS". The website is for a
local newspaper company. Diana puts in a fake set of
credentials, and finds herself on a page titled: "ADS AND
MISELLANEOUS". A typing window pops up on the screen.

Diana nervously looks over her shoulders, scanning the
computer lab. There is one older man sitting in the front of
the room, looking at his Facebook timeline. Diana refocuses
on her screen and begins a post:

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