

Three of Swords

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. CARNIVAL - NIGHT

Tenebrous and deserted. The wind squeals a high-pitched mourning through rusty amusement rides, ragged tents, old beat up trucks and trailers.

INT. TAROT TENT - NIGHT

AYLEEN (25), black business suit matching her icy demeanor, enters the candle-lit room.

The TAROT READER (40's), a gypsy woman seated behind a desk, stops shuffling a deck of cards and looks up.

TAROT READER
Being late ain't the best way to
make a first impression.

Ayleen sits in front of her. Drops a stack of hundreds over the table.

AYLEEN
Here's a second impression.

TAROT READER
Wasn't expecting so many
Franklins.

AYLEEN
My employer needs two more kilos.

TAROT READER
Ain't got that much.

AYLEEN
Then get me someone who does.

TAROT READER
I will... once I check you're
clean.

Ayleen starts unbuttoning her blouse.

TAROT READER
You think I'm dumb enough to
think you're dumb enough to come
in here wired?

Ayleen buttons her blouse back up.

TAROT READER
Just cut the deck.

Ayleen glances at the deck of tarot cards. Smirks.

AYLEEN

Am I being interrogated?

TAROT READER

If this was an interrogation,
you'd be able to choose your
answers. Cut the deck.

She does. Watches the reader deal four cards face down,
wondering if:

AYLEEN

You really believe in this crap?

TAROT READER

You really don't?

AYLEEN

Destiny is matter of choice, not
chance.

TAROT READER

(smiling)

That's why you must pick one.

Ayleen picks a card. The reader can't see her pick, yet her
smile vanishes as she guesses it's:

TAROT READER

The Three of Swords.

Ayleen stares at the card she holds: it depicts a heart
pierced by three swords.

TAROT READER

Sudden betrayal. Falseness.

The reader eyes Ayleen with deep sorrow.

TAROT READER

You made the dumbest mistake of
your life coming in here.

The reader raises a jewel-encrusted horn. And blows it.

EXT. CARNIVAL

The horn sounds a deep blast that spreads across the
Carnival. Lights appear in several trailer's windows - the
carnies are waking up.

INT. TAROT TENT

Ayleen grabs her money back.

AYLEEN

Circus freaks. I'm out of here.

The reader picks another card. Studies it.

TAROT READER

No. You'll never leave this
place. The die is cast for you.

EXT. CARNIVAL

Concern clouds Ayleen's calm demeanor as she storms out of the tarot tent into the foggy night.

She flips open a cell phone and hits speed dial.

Hears footsteps behind her. Turns to see...

The LION TAMER emerges from the mist, cracking his whip --

The tip hits her wrist - the phone flies away. Hits the ground, sliding right under the lustrous boot of...

The MAGICIAN picks up the phone. Does some fast sleight of hand moves - it's gone.

Her jaw drops. Pupils dilate, adrenaline kicking in. As she notices the approaching CLOWNS with satanic make-up in their faces and bottles in their hands. She sprints away.

Running past circus tents and trailers, her chest heaves, eyes fixed dead ahead. Where she notices more sinister clowns silhouetted against the thick mist.

She turns right to avoid them, heading right into a...

TENT

where she sprints towards the opposite exit. Too fast to stop when out of the shadows emerges the unnatural tall figure of --

The GIANT MAN smashes a fist against her face with wrecking ball force - she spits a blood trickle as she falls to...

EXT. FBI TRAINING GROUND - DAY - FLASHBACK

Ayleen hits the muddy ground, face twisted in pain. It can't rain any harder. Other trainees' legs run past her.

A TRAINER, whistle around his neck, FBI cap, orders her to:

TRAINER

Head back to the showers.

She spits mud.

AYLEEN

Already showered today.

TRAINER

Damn it, Ayleen. You've got a twisted ankle, one mile to go and the clock's still ticking.

AYLEEN

I just stepped on a stupid rock.
I know I can do this.

He extends a hand to help her.

TRAINER

Just give up, Ayleen. The die is cast for you today.

Ignoring his hand, she pushes with both hands, till...

INT. TENT - NIGHT

...she gets up. The Giant Man grabs her and throws her across the room --

CRASH! her body hits against a table breaking it to pieces. She grabs a plank to shield her face just in time to --

CLACK! the wood stops a knife inches from her face, thrown by...

The KNIFE THROWER, still in throwing position, standing in front of the Giant Man.

She grabs the knife and throws back --

The blade pierces the thrower's neck - he falls to his knees with a gargling moan.

She dashes to him, as her hand digs...

INTO HER POCKET

where her fingers slip through cloth and darkness into a shiny brass knuckle.

TENT

She jumps on the Thrower's shoulders, launching herself towards the Giant. Gaining height as she brings her fist back, brass knuckle glistening, readying for --

A crushing punch against his forehead! His eyes slip into oblivion as he falls like a puppet cut off its strings.

EXT. CARNIVAL

She exits the tent. Instantly greeted by -CRASH!- a bottle thrown at her head. She covers her bloody face with her arms, sprinting away from the bottle-throwing clowns.

More and more bottles crash against her as she dashes through the glass cannonade. Looks up in time to see --

The FIRE BREATHER cuts her off raising his torch. Spits a huge FIREBALL.

She dives...

UNDER A TRUCK

where she rolls away from the billowing fire that chases her - flames lick her face and scorch a few millimeters of her eyelashes just before she...

CARNIVAL

...rolls out from under the vehicle. Spots a gas can beside the wheel. Grabs it and drinks. Without swallowing.

Mouth full, she dashes away. Runs past a table with left overs, yanking the tablecloth on her way.

The Fire Breather cuts her off. And spits!

She raises the tablecloth as a shield - it catches fire as she runs against the flame storm.

The Breather drinks and raises his torch. But she spits first! A FIREBALL engulfs the screaming Breather as she dashes by. Picking up speed. Eyes locked on the distant entrance gate.

Raindrops start pelting against the ground as it becomes...

EXT. FBI TRAINING GROUND - DAY - FLASHBACK

...the muddy training field. Face twisted in pain, Ayleen struggles to run, tottering towards the finish line.

Where the trainer awaits, clock in hand. He watches her cross the finish line. Mouth agape, checks her time.

She stops by him, panting, standing in one foot.

AYLEEN

I quit when I choose to quit. Not because of a stupid rock.

The trainer's transfixed expression is similar to...

EXT. CARNIVAL

...the Tarot Reader's perplexed look - from the distance she watches how Ayleen sprints past the gate.

Her hand lets go of a tarot card. It hits the ground, face down. The wind blows it away.

FADE OUT.