

UMBAGE

by

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FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Twenty HOSTAGES sit on a hardwood floor, huddled by a wall. Hands bound behind them. Bags over their heads. Some quiet. Others weep. Boots creak across the boards. FOUR ARAB GUNMEN patrol.

In the back row, one female VICTIM, 30s, cries louder than the rest. Shrill and obnoxious. One annoyed gunman, UTBAH, 20s, glares at her. Clutches his semi-automatic rifle.

UTBAH

You better quiet that.

She weeps louder. In the front row, a terrified YOUNG GIRL, 12, tries to control her own crying. She nudges against her FATHER. He whispers toward the weeping woman.

FATHER

Be quiet.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

An Arab man, SALMAN BADR, 20s, sits at the table in front of a laptop computer and radio equipment. A corded phone to his ear. Wires run through a metal box.

SALMAN

You've got the prints. I'll call back in one hour with our demands.

INT. FBI COMMAND POST - DAY

SUPER - "United States Department of Justice - FBI Headquarters - Washington, D.C."

FBI AGENTS scramble everywhere in a state of urgency. Various charts and graphs are erected. There's a video screen on one wall.

Agent SCOTT PRESTON, 50s, by the book, lowers his phone. Glances toward... a TECHNICIAN, working at a computer.

TECHNICIAN

He's sending out hundreds of dummy signals. It's going to take a while to sort through them all.

PRESTON  
How long?

TECHNICIAN  
More than an hour.

Preston sighs. Agent LARISSA COOK, 30s, a woman with penetrating eyes, arrives with a file.

LARISSA  
The print report.

Preston takes the folder and scans. To his horror...

PRESTON  
They've got one of our agents.

LARISSA  
And his daughter.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The young girl's father leans comfortably toward her. The annoying woman behind them whimpers incessantly.

INT. HENRI SAY'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER - "United States Department of Justice - Interpol - Washington, D.C."

HENRI (pronounced ón ree) SAY, 40s, works at his desk. He's stiff and dutiful with a neatly trimmed moustache and a certain no-nonsense intensity.

An ASSISTANT enters with a file. Henri barely looks up as the folder drops onto his desk.

ASSISTANT  
A flag went up on a print during an FBI check.

Henri speaks English with a French accent.

HENRI  
Yes. Yes. I know about the bus... the hostages.

ASSISTANT  
This isn't for the FBI agent.

Henri pauses. His interest piqued, he scans the file.

HENRI  
Can this be real?

ASSISTANT  
It's been confirmed.

HENRI  
Get me through to whoever's in  
charge of recovery.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Salman enters. The gunmen pause. Their respectful stares make clear that this is their leader. He motions for Utbah to enter the next room.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Salman checks the doorway to make sure no one can hear.

SALMAN  
I want you to take a hostage out to  
the woods with one of the cell  
phones and wait for me to patch  
them through.

UTBAH  
Which one?

SALMAN  
Anyone but the federal agent or his  
daughter. We may need them later.

The loud woman whimpers in the background. Utbah smirks.

UTBAH  
I know just which one.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Utbah grabs the woman. Jerks her up so hard, she steps out of her shoes. Other hostages get fidgety, grasping what's happening. The hem of the woman's dress brushes across the young girl's bag as she's led out. The father rises up.

FATHER  
No! Take me!

UTBAH  
Get down!

Utbah thrusts his rifle butt into his temple, knocks him to the floor in a limp heap.

UTBAH  
Anybody else makes a move or gets  
too loud and you're next.

A SECOND GUNMAN cocks his rifle.

SECOND GUNMAN  
Everybody just sit there and keep  
your mouths shut!

INT. FBI COMMAND POST - DAY

Henri approaches Preston.

HENRI  
Agent Preston? Henri Say with  
Interpol.

PRESTON  
Larissa said you had some  
information.

HENRI  
Yes. May we speak privately?

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The weeping woman is led blindly through forest growth. Her bare feet are scratched and her dress keeps getting hung on small bush limbs. Utbah pulls her along mercilessly.

EXT. CREEK BANK - DAY

Utbah emerges from the wood line, tugging his victim behind him. They climb out onto the soft rock bed, alongside a swiftly moving creek. Utbah forces her onto her knees.

VICTIM  
Please don't kill me. I'll be  
quiet, I swear.

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Henri and Preston sit across from one another. Henri's calm demeanor provokes Preston's impatience.

HENRI

One of the prints received from the extortionists was identified as that of the international assassin known as La Sorcière Noire.

Preston shakes his head with indifference.

PRESTON

I'm sorry... La source what?

HENRI

La Sorcière Noire. The Black Witch.

PRESTON

You're saying that one of the hostages is a trained killer?

HENRI

Yes. A very clever and dangerous killer.

Preston leans back in his chair with a small laugh.

PRESTON

He isn't too clever if he got himself caught, now is he?

Henri leans forward, deadly serious.

HENRI

She, Agent Preston... and she could not be there by mistake.

EXT. CREEK BANK - DAY

Utbah is behind the victim, barrel aimed at the back of her head. He pulls the bag off. Her hair covers her face.

UTBAH

We want the Americans to see your face.

Then... the woman leaps with such force that her shoulder knocks Utbah's rifle upward and back. Her body flips completely upside down. In midair, she scissor-locks Utbah's neck with her legs.

Lowers onto her back, pulling him down. Hook-kicks through to Utbah's crotch and... catapults him, feet over head, onto the gravel. His body crashes with the rifle still slack in his hand. She heel-kicks him in the crotch.

Using her feet with the dexterity of hands, she SLAPS the rifle away. It spins like a chopper blade, lands in the gravel. She heel-kicks him in the nose. Compression SNAPS his cartilage. He yells in agony.

She scissor-locks his neck and chokes him. Utbah struggles to pull a knife from his sheath. She kicks it out of his hand. It lands meters away in the rocks.

She rolls back and kicks herself onto her feet with acrobatic ease. Leaps and CRASHES down onto the bridge of his nose with her knee. Leaps again. SMASHES onto his jaw with her knee, to the CRUNCH of bone.

With Utbah barely conscious, she somersaults away. Squats by where the knife rests. Grabs it and cuts at her binds.

Utbah's head rolls around groggily, his nose covered in blood. He groans in pain as he rolls onto his belly. He sees the rifle. Crawls desperately toward it.

The woman cuts ferociously at her binds until... she snaps free. She flips the knife around in preparation to throw...

Just as Utbah's hand is about to lay hold of the rifle... the knife impales it, pinning it to the ground like a tent peg. Utbah screams.

INT. FBI COMMAND POST - DAY

The PHONE RINGS. Preston jogs into the room, followed by Henri. He glances toward the trace technician.

PRESTON  
How are you doing?

TECHNICIAN  
I've mapped a lot of the dummy signals. I may be able to get a trace this time.

The PHONE RINGS again. Preston answers.

PRESTON  
This is Preston.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Salman paces with his phone.

SALMAN

Before we make our demands, Agent Preston, I've been instructed to show you that we are serious.

INT. FBI COMMAND POST - DAY

Preston's face tenses as he squeezes the phone.

PRESTON

Just tell me what you want!  
There's no need to kill a hostage!

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Salman, nervous but defiant, half-smiles.

SALMAN

No, I think you need to know what will happen if you don't cooperate.

Salman presses a key on his laptop and gazes at the screen.

INT. FBI COMMAND POST - DAY

Preston turns to the screen on the wall. An image comes up of Utbah on his knees. His face is bloody and he's crying.

UTBAH

Please don't kill me! I know names! Places!

A RIFLE BLAST. Preston is confused.

PRESTON

What the hell was that?

Henri steps forward with excitement.

HENRI

The Black Witch.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Salman stares at the screen in utter shock. Regains his bearings and quickly shuts the phone off. Presses a key on the laptop. Rubs his rough beard with desperate eyes.

INT. FBI COMMAND POST - DAY

The screen goes blank. The tech swivels around in his chair.

TECHNICIAN  
Got 'em! They're in Kentucky!

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

There is already an armed GUARD at the door as Salman leads the remaining three gunmen outside.

SALMAN  
(to the guard)  
You stay here.  
(to the others)  
Go and get her. Kill her.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The three men head up-slope, into the tall weeds. Toward the distant wood-line, spreading out as they approach.

EXT. WOOD-LINE - DAY

The first gunman stops, speaks to the third.

FIRST GUNMAN  
Guard the perimeter.

The first and second gunmen head into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - ONE SECTION - DAY

The first gunman is alone. He pauses, looks around. Nothing but birds chirping, squirrels scampering across limbs, an occasional branch falling. From the greenery behind him... arms reach out, pull him back. A hand holding Utbah's knife raises to his throat.

EXT. WOODS - ANOTHER SECTION - DAY

The second gunman searches among some downed trees. Leans into some treetops. A matted down deer-bed. Pulls out. Behind him... almost imperceptible... feet scamper across a thick downed tree stem. Just as he turns -- already in midair -- the Black Witch slams into him.

EXT. FIELD EDGE - DAY

The third gunman has a cigarette hanging from his mouth as he digs into his pocket for a lighter. Behind him... the Black Witch stealthily crosses from the woods to the weeds. The poise and stamina of a cat.

The gunman lights his cigarette and takes a deep draw. Turns and patrols the pathway. Pauses again idly. From the weeds behind him...

A bloody knife-hand shoots between his legs and stabs him in the lower abdomen. He grunts, doubling over. She pulls the knife out and his body falls into the weeds.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Salman steps outside. The guard is gone. He looks around nervously. Tries to contact the guard on his radio.

SALMAN  
Adham! Adham!

He gives up. Edges toward a corner. Behind him... the Black Witch slips into the house. Salman peeks around the corner. Against the wall is the guard's dead body. Salman retreats, paranoid. Hurries back to the house.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Salman locks the door with a shaky hand. Everywhere he goes, he nervously keeps his rifle pointed ahead.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The hostages sit, some still crying.

SALMAN  
Shut up! All of you!

The father still lies on the floor unconscious. His daughter quietly sobs, scared to death. Salman pulls her to her feet. Snug in front of him.

By his feet... the Black Witch is back in her original spot, bag over her head. But now there's a small hole. An ominous eye. She springs from the floor... A SLICE. GURGLING.

Salman's hands relax. His rifle drops. The crying girl slides to the floor. Blood drips onto her bag from overhead.

Behind her... Salman's boots quietly stagger with the woman's bare feet down the hallway.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Several ominous black helicopters traverse the Earth below, to the deafening sound of whirling propellers.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Preston, Henri, Larissa and others sit bunched together in a passenger compartment. Larissa yells over the noise.

LARISSA

They're about an hour outside Elizabethtown. The local police are en route but they've been instructed not to move in until we arrive.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Salman drops onto the mattress. Holds his neck, blood all over his hands. With hair and shadows obscuring her face, Salman's killer speaks with a British accent.

BLACK WITCH

Do you think the Greeks or the Vikings thought their gods would be relegated to mythology?

She holds out a gold locket, its slender chain hanging off the sides of her hand.

BLACK WITCH

No, but they were assured their religions would reign over the Earth for all time.

She turns her hand over and the locket falls from it. Lands on Salman's chest. He's too near death to notice.

BLACK WITCH

Now their names are adage fodder.  
(raises the knife)  
You won't even have that.

INT. MORRIS DUNNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

MORRIS DUNNE, 45, lies in bed, apparently dreaming. A young woman, TAMMY, 21, lies next to him. She starts to snuggle up to him when he mumbles sleepily.

DUNNE

Abby...

Tammy's look turns to an evil glare.

INT. STAFF ROOM - AMERICAN EMBASSY - DAY

SUPER - "American Embassy in Paris, France." After a beat,  
SUPER - "Fifteen Years Earlier."

ABIGAIL "ABBY" DUNNE, a beautiful woman, 30, sits at her desk in the open room, along with several other desks manned by embassy workers. Seated to the side are a MOTHER and her young teenaged DAUGHTER.

Dunne is 30, a handsome young American man, neatly dressed in a dark suit and tie. He approaches Abby's desk. She notices and smiles.

DUNNE

Excuse me, miss?

She playfully bites her lip. Speaks with a French accent.

ABBY

Yes. What is it?

Dunne holds up... an Interpol ID badge.

DUNNE

Agent Morris Dunne. Interpol.

The daughter glances at Abby's nameplate. It reads - "Abigail Dunne." She then notices... a photo of Dunne and Abby together. Dunne leans over Abby's desk.

DUNNE

I was wondering if I could speak  
with you about important business.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

It's quiet. Only a long table and some chairs, a television with a VCR. Abby enters smiling as Dunne closes the door.

ABBY  
If you're going to arrest me, I  
want to speak to my lawyer.

He slips his arms around her waist from behind and puts his chin on her shoulder.

DUNNE  
I just want to hold you.

Abby smiles as she turns around. Her face goes flush when she sees the window to the staff room.

ABBY  
Morris. People can see.

Morris checks. The daughter solemnly stares. Morris closes the blinds.

DUNNE  
Turn around and close your eyes.

ABBY  
Morris...

DUNNE  
Just do it.

She does. Dunne slips behind her and embraces her. She smiles happily in his arms.

DUNNE  
Okay. Now open your eyes.

She does. In Dunne's hand is a beautiful gold locket -- the one left on Salman's body. Abby gasps. Reaches for it.

ABBY  
It's beautiful.

DUNNE  
Open it.

She clicks it open. Inside is a picture of her and Dunne together. Embraced and smiling. Dressed in formal ballroom attire. Abby turns around to face him.

ABBY  
This is incredible.

DUNNE  
I had it made from the picture  
taken at the ball.

ABBY

I don't know what to say.

DUNNE

Don't say anything. Dance with me.

Dunne grabs her around the waist. She laughs as their hands clasp. Dunne leads them in a slow ballroom style along the border of the room. Then pauses. Kisses her softly on the lips. When he pulls back...

DUNNE

I had a nice time at the dance.

ABBY

And you didn't think you'd like it.

DUNNE

I have to admit, I still don't like wearing a tux... but it was worth it to dance with a beautiful lady.

ABBY

Do you think we'll be so silly in love by our second anniversary?

DUNNE

Oh, I figured the sappiness would last at least three.

ABBY

By five we'll hate each other.

Dunne takes the locket. Holds it out to put around her neck.

DUNNE

Hence sappy trinkets to remind us of the love we once shared.

She giggles, turning for him to put it on.

ABBY

Don't call my locket a trinket. Not before the sappiness wears off.

DUNNE

I'll always be your sap.

After it's on, he turns her around.

DUNNE

Happy anniversary.

They kiss. When they pull apart, Abby seems distraught.

DUNNE  
Worried about our witness?

Abby peeks through the blinds.

ABBY  
I'm frightened of what Al Din might  
do if they discover she's here.

DUNNE  
We'll protect her.

He tugs Abby away from the blinds. Their eyes meet.

DUNNE  
And besides... they don't know.

INT. STAFF ROOM - DAY

Abby steps back to her desk. Dunne stops in front of the woman and her daughter.

DUNNE  
Everything will be all right. I  
promise.

They seem comforted by the assurance. Dunne's attention is then caught by... TWO MEN IN JUMPSUITS, walking across the room, carrying bags. Dunne casts a suspicious eye. Steps to ANOTHER AGENT, who stands nearby.

DUNNE  
(re: the two men)  
Who are they?

AGENT  
Plumbers.

DUNNE  
They been cleared?

AGENT  
Yeah. We had an overflow this  
morning.

The two men see Dunne asking questions. This seems to rattle them a bit. They turn and head the opposite direction -- toward the exit. Dunne brushes past the agent.

AGENT  
Everything out of the ordinary  
isn't an attack, Dunne.

DUNNE  
Yes it is.

The agent gives a dismissive wave.

AGENT  
Paranoid.

Dunne approaches the men.

DUNNE  
Hey! I need to talk to you.

The men pause. Dunne pulls out his badge. One of the men nervously pulls a gun from his bag. Dunne draws his firearm.

DUNNE  
Everyone get down!

BANG! Dunne is hit in the shoulder, thrown to the floor. He returns fire... BANG! A head-shot. The first gunman goes down. Dunne rolls behind a desk.

The people in the staff room -- including Abby, the mother and daughter -- get onto the floor.

The second man pulls an Uzi from his bag and unleashes a hail of GUNFIRE upon the room. The second agent crouches behind a desk. Pieces of desk and wall explode all around him. He grabs his radio to call for help.

Dunne peers from beneath the desk and sees... the gunman's feet. He fires. BANG! The gunman is hit in the ankle. He screams, sprays bullets as he falls. Quickly climbs to his feet and limps away. Dunne starts after him. Pauses, yells toward the room.

DUNNE  
Everyone stay here! And stay down!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The gunman presses buttons on the elevator. When the doors don't open immediately, he looks to... the stairwell door. Limpes for it.

Dunne bursts around the corner just in time to see... the stairwell door close. When he gets to the door, he sees... the second agent at the other end of the hallway.

AGENT  
I called for backup!

Dunne nods, enters the stairwell.

AGENT  
Wait! Wait for backup!

He shakes his head, takes off after Dunne.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

As the gunman exits the building, a van SCREECHES to a halt. A MASKED MAN slides the door open. The DRIVER also wears a mask. Dunne barges into the garage. Fires at the gunman... BANG! The gunman goes down before he can reach the van.

Dunne's eyes meet briefly with the masked man. He quickly slides the door closed. The van SCREECHES off. Dunne talks on his radio as he rushes to his car.

DUNNE  
This is Agent Dunne! Two targets  
down and at least two more at  
large! In pursuit of a black van!

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - STREET - DAY

The van tears onto the street. Moments later, Dunne's car breaks out after it.

INT. DUNNE'S CAR - DAY

Through the back window... BOOM! The embassy building quakes. Black smoke rolls out from the lower section. Dunne looks in the rearview mirror, taken off guard.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dunne's car SQUEALS to a halt, stopping sideways. He leaps out. Stares in shock. A SCREECH behind him. He turns. The black van rounds a corner. Dunne whirls back to the embassy.

The building is crooked and cracked all over. The streets out front are disheveled and covered in debris. People SCREAM and run away.

DUNNE  
Abby...

He runs toward the building as fast as he can run.

DUNNE

Abby!

He runs toward the building as other people run away.

ONE MAN

The whole building's gonna fall!

Dunne doesn't care. He keeps running. Then... the ground QUAKES with a sound like ROARING THUNDER. The whole building buckles. Dunne stops and turns away, covering his head.

Black smoke rages forth in unfathomable volume, chased by the horrific RUMBLING of the structure's crumbling walls and frame. Dunne is consumed by smoke. Everything turns black.

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - DAY - LATER

A rescue chopper passes overhead. The thickness of the smoke has cleared but the air is stifled with dust particles. Ambulances, rescue workers, police and fire units surround the area. Evacuating survivors, caring for the injured, organizing rescue efforts.

Dunne, with his shirt covering his mouth, digs feverishly through debris. Some RESCUE WORKERS climb debris wearing dust masks. Approach Dunne.

RESCUE WORKER

We need all civilians to evacuate the area.

DUNNE

I'm with Interpol.

RESCUE WORKER

The dust is going to overtake you. There's still a lot of dangerous smoke in the air.

Dunne pauses when he finds... Abby's nameplate.

DUNNE

Help me!

Dunne digs further, finds the top of her desk. Rescue workers help him break it free from the rubble.

Beneath is a female, unconscious, covered in black soot. Lying face down. Dunne excitedly turns her over. Wipes soot off her face. It's the young girl who sat with her mother by Abby's desk. Dunne can't disguise his disappointment.

RESCUE WORKER  
Is she alive?

DUNNE  
I don't know.

He lifts her up and the rescue workers pull her out of the debris. Dunne resumes digging.

DUNNE  
Abby! Abby!

He digs as though he were digging himself out of a hole. As though his life were dependent on it. Then... he gets groggy. Flinches and blinks his eyes.

RESCUE WORKER  
Are you all right?

DUNNE  
I'm fine. Let's keep digging.

Then his body sways limply. A worker reaches out for him just as he passes out.

INT. MORRIS DUNNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER - "Present Day."

Dunne stirs. He's older now. He looks at the empty space on the mattress beside him. Sits up. He's a mess. Hair sticks out. Unshaven. An empty liquor bottle on the night-stand. Across the room, Tammy angrily dresses.

DUNNE  
What's wrong?

She adjusts her blouse.

TAMMY  
You called me Abby again.

Dunne rubs his face, still groggy.

DUNNE  
What? Where are you going?

She grabs her things and heads toward the door.

TAMMY  
You're an asshole.

DUNNE

Tammy...

TAMMY

You better hope I don't tell Dean Foster.

DUNNE

You're twenty one.

The door SLAMS. Dunne cringes.

DUNNE

Damn.

He notices the liquor bottle. Grabs it. Twists off the cap and sniffs the opening. Pulls away, repulsed.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

SUPER - "Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio."

The chalk board at the front reads - "The French Revolution." Dunne, in shirt and tie, reads aloud from a roll book.

DUNNE

Tabor?

TABOR (O.S.)

Here.

DUNNE

Urban?

No answer. Dunne looks toward... Tammy's empty desk. Surrounded by three GIRLS. They all glare poisonously at Dunne. He tries not to notice. Marks his book.

DUNNE

Vanway?

VANWAY (O.S.)

(male voice)

Here.

Dunne slaps the book closed. Steps in front of the class with no fervor. No life. No energy.

DUNNE

Okay. Who can tell me some of the precipitating events that led to the French Revolution?

A young man, VANWAY, raises his hand. Dunne fights rolling his eyes.

DUNNE  
Mr. Vanway.

VANWAY  
Everyone knows the Illuminati  
orchestrated the French Revolution.

Laughter from the class. Dunne puts his head in his hands.

DUNNE  
Oh God, Mr. Vanway. Not the  
Illuminati again.

VANWAY  
What? It's true.

The door creaks open. It's DEAN FOSTER, 50s, a slender woman with glasses and cropped hair.

DUNNE  
Dean Foster. How are you?

DEAN FOSTER  
May I see you outside, Mr. Dunne?

Dunne glances toward Tammy's desk. Her friends' mouths hang open. Dunne turns to the dean, defeated.

DUNNE  
Sure.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Dunne closes the classroom door behind him. Dean Foster is concerned. Just down the hall are Preston and Henri.

DEAN FOSTER  
There are some government agents  
here to see you.

Dunne checks them out.

DUNNE  
From what agency?

DEAN FOSTER  
The FBI for one. I believe one of  
them is from Interpol.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Dunne sits across from Preston and Henri. Preston tosses the gold locket onto the table. It slides to a stop in front of Dunne. He looks up with confusion.

DUNNE  
What's this?

PRESTON  
Is that your locket?

Dunne picks it up. Like it's a sacred object. Gently pulls it open. The picture of him and Abby, happily smiling and embracing. Dunne smiles with an air of sadness.

DUNNE  
It's Abby's. I haven't seen this in fifteen years. They eventually found her... but they never found the locket.

PRESTON  
We found it at a murder scene.

DUNNE  
A murder scene?

PRESTON  
More like a massacre.

Preston sets a photograph of Salman on the table.

PRESTON  
Do you know who this man is?

DUNNE  
Salman Badr.

PRESTON  
That's right. Do you know who his cousin is?

DUNNE  
Dharr Badr. The head of Baha al Din.

PRESTON  
That's right. The very same terrorist organization that claimed responsibility for the bombing of the American embassy in France... fifteen years ago.

Dunne shrugs, still confused.

PRESTON  
He was found slaughtered with five  
other members of Al Din.

Dunne is stunned by the news, but certainly not heartbroken.

DUNNE  
What does this have to do with  
Abby's locket?

PRESTON  
That locket was found on his body.

Preston and Henri study Dunne's reaction. It's confusion.

DUNNE  
How would Salman get Abby's locket?

PRESTON  
That's what we'd like to know.

DUNNE  
I have no idea.

Preston flashes Henri a leery glance.

PRESTON  
Have you ever heard of someone  
called the Black Witch?

DUNNE  
The what?

PRESTON  
The Black Witch is a...  
(to Henri)  
What do they call that over there  
in Algeria?

HENRI  
Tagati.

PRESTON  
Yeah, yeah. Tagati. Know what  
that is?

Dunne, tired, shakes his head.

PRESTON  
It's a poisoner. A witch.

DUNNE

Are you saying that Salman Badr was killed by a witch doctor?

Preston laughs as he points, shakes his hand.

PRESTON

That's what I said. Sounds crazy, doesn't it?

Preston stops laughing, rests his elbows on the table.

PRESTON

Nah, nah. This isn't some shaman from remote Africa. This is a bona fide expert in killing people through whatever means.

DUNNE

If he killed Salman Badr, I'd say you oughta thank him.

PRESTON

She. The Black Witch is a woman.

Dunne pauses in disbelief.

DUNNE

Six Al Din operatives got massacred by a girl?

HENRI

She is a lunatic. A disavowed agent for a foreign government who has gone mad.

DUNNE

What foreign government?

Preston slides some files toward Dunne.

PRESTON

She was with the British Secret Service. Her name is Gertrude Brucker... or at least that's the name we've been given.

Dunne cracks a sarcastic smile as he opens the file.

DUNNE

But now she's disavowed so England is conveniently free of all blame.

PRESTON  
She's also had affiliations with  
the U.S.

DUNNE  
We subcontracted her?

PRESTON  
She's operating independently now.

Dunne sifts through the papers.

DUNNE  
No photo?

PRESTON  
No one knows what she looks like.

DUNNE  
What do you want from me?

PRESTON  
You're an ex-Interpol agent.  
You've got motive. No alibi. And  
that's your locket. It doesn't  
look good for you, Dunne.

Dunne stares at the locket, not unnerved by the threat.

DUNNE  
Can I keep this?

PRESTON  
It's evidence.

He takes the locket. Stuffs it in his pocket. Dunne looks  
up excitedly.

DUNNE  
Why don't you let me work with you  
on this? As an advisor?

PRESTON  
Oh, you're going to work on this  
with us. Not as an advisor. As a  
suspect.

DUNNE  
(smartass)  
Does that mean I don't get a badge?

INT. OFFICE - DAY

SUPER - "FBI Office, Paducah, Kentucky."

Preston, Henri, Larissa and Dunne are huddled in an office. There are papers, files, boxes all over the place. A lean woman in a pantsuit, JOYCE BICKSLER, 30s, appears in the doorway. Speaks with a Southern accent.

JOYCE

If you all need anything, just let me know.

Preston halfheartedly pays her any mind.

PRESTON

Uh, yeah. Thanks for letting us use a spare office.

Joyce looks around at what appears to be important business.

JOYCE

You know, if you want to bring me on board or anything, I grew up here. I could prob'ly help you.

PRESTON

We'll keep that in mind.

She nods, starts to walk off, somewhat discouraged.

DUNNE

Gertrude?

Joyce turns around, confused.

JOYCE

Excuse me?

DUNNE

I just wanted to see if you'd break character.

JOYCE

Who's Gertrude?

PRESTON

Pay him no mind, Agent Bicksler. He still thinks monsters live under his bed.

Joyce looks curiously at Dunne. He shrugs.

DUNNE  
They owe me rent.

JOYCE  
(smiles)  
The freeloaders.

Dunne smiles back.

PRESTON  
Bicksler, could you make us some  
coffee?

Joyce looks offended at first. It dissipates.

JOYCE  
Sure.

DUNNE  
She's a field agent, asshole, not  
your maid.

Preston looks at Dunne with contempt.

PRESTON  
I don't care who makes the coffee,  
Dunne. Why don't you make the  
coffee?

DUNNE  
(smartass)  
Why don't we all make coffee  
together?

JOYCE  
It's okay. I don't mind.

Joyce walks off.

PRESTON  
You're a train wreck, Dunne.  
You're just as reckless today as  
you were then.

DUNNE  
Nobody complained when my  
recklessness paid off.

PRESTON  
You were a paranoid bastard.  
That's not the same thing as being  
a good detective.

Dunne steps to the door.

DUNNE  
You're a pretentious asshole.  
That's not the same thing as being  
a good leader.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Joyce prepares coffee. Dunne approaches from behind.

DUNNE  
I'm sorry. Thought I was helping.

JOYCE  
It's okay. I know you've had it  
rough.

Dunne stares at that a beat. Lets out a surprised chuckle.

DUNNE  
Wow. They didn't brief you on the  
case but they briefed you on me.

Joyce stops. Realizes she's said too much.

JOYCE  
I'm sorry. I didn't --

DUNNE  
Don't be. It's proof they  
occasionally tell the truth.

JOYCE  
Larissa told me you had issues.

DUNNE  
Issues? That was nice of her.

He opens the coffee can, trying to get things moving again.

DUNNE  
You can't wallow in self pity for  
fifteen years, though. You wallow  
for about the first five. From  
there, you just sort of drift along  
in its wake.

Joyce smiles. The awkwardness seems to be over.

JOYCE  
I wish I could do some real field  
work.

DUNNE

Preston's an asshole but he's a good guy. He'll bring you in soon.

Joyce hesitates, nervous.

JOYCE

Do you think you could... put in a word for me?

Dunne cracks a smile.

DUNNE

I'll talk to him.

EXT. EXECUTIVE INN - NIGHT

SUPER - "Executive Inn, Paducah, Kentucky."

The elongated four story hotel stretches along a portion of the Ohio river's edge. Its foremost section extends on pillars into the shallow river bank. Balconies and lights subdued by curtains are all over the exterior.

INT. EXECUTIVE INN - SHOP WING - NIGHT

The hotel is a vast oasis with room accesses from inside. Slender palm trees rise from large brick planters and stretch for the enormous sky lights. Supported by wires that attach to the rails of the walkways.

Across the expanse are boxy stores with no ceilings. In the middle of those is a fancy restaurant, out in the open.

Myriads of people eat at the restaurant and shop at the stores. An elevator with glass running up one side allows passengers to look out over the veritable paradise.

INT. WALKWAY - NIGHT

A PORTER leads the way. Behind him are TWO BODYGUARDS, Arab males in suits and ties. Next... IMAM RAFI, a middle-aged Arab man, wearing a turban and traditional Muslim attire.

Following are THREE WIVES, each wearing a black abaya (loose robe) and black niqab (face veil), covered from head to toe, with netting concealing even their eyes.

Behind them is a group of BAGGAGE HANDLERS, pulling wheeled luggage along. Lastly, TWO MORE BODYGUARDS.

INT. GROUND LEVEL - DAY

Looking up to the fourth level, Dunne, Preston and Henri watch the Imam and his train of people headed to their suite.

DUNNE  
This guy is their mouthpiece.

PRESTON  
You better be right about this,  
Dunne.

Dunne shifts his gaze down to Preston.

DUNNE  
Shall we have a drink while we're  
waiting?

INT. HOTEL LOUNGE - NIGHT

The three men sit at a semi-private table, tucked away in a corner of the darkened pub with drinks.

DUNNE  
It's practically impossible to get  
far enough into Al Din to get to  
Dharr Badr. He's somewhere in a  
remote area of Algeria.

Henri shifts, fascinated by this.

HENRI  
What makes you so certain?

DUNNE  
The Algerian government has been  
sponsoring them for years.

Henri is surprised. He glances at Preston. Same expression.

HENRI  
How exactly do you know that?

DUNNE  
Sixty percent of Algeria's budget  
is oil revenue. They're still  
recovering from a bloody civil war  
and they have a lot of money. In  
that kind of economic climate,  
nobody sees nothin'.

He takes a drink. Preston leans forward.

PRESTON

Okay. So remind me why we're here, stalking an Arab cleric with no known ties to Al Din?

DUNNE

Not just any cleric. A spiritual guide for the Badr family...

PRESTON

... Who disowned Dharr.

Dunne sets his glass down. Empty.

DUNNE

You think it's a coincidence that Imam Rafi is in the same state as Salman Badr?

PRESTON

No more than being one state over from you.

INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Large and swank. Fit for a king. The purple highlights in the color scheme give the entire place an aura of royalty. Imam Rafi sits comfortably on the couch, sipping Bordeaux from a goblet.

His four bodyguards do the same in various spots around the room. ARABIAN MUSIC streams from the stereo. SEVERAL STRIPPERS dance seductively, laughing and giggling. One of them is Larissa.

One wife, still completely covered in hijab and burqa, fills glasses with a green, fat bottomed bottle of Bordeaux.

The strippers each pick out a man to dance next to. They rub against them as they all drink wine. Larissa chooses Rafi to tease. Dances enticingly in front of him. Rafi looks her over, aroused. The wife exits to another room.

LARISSA

You like America, don't you?

IMAM RAFI

America is an evil place full of infidels and you are all going to hell.

A beat. They both burst out laughing.

LARISSA

Then why do you come here?

Rafi takes a sip of wine and smiles.

IMAM RAFI

One must know one's enemy.

She giggles. Then climbs on and straddles him. Softly kisses him around his neck and ear. His eyes widen at first, then slant with erotic pleasure.

She releases a soft moan. Rafi sighs with pleasure. Then... Larissa becomes lethargic. Disoriented. Stands with difficulty.

IMAM RAFI

What is wrong with you?

She staggers and falls over the table. Rafi leaps up.

IMAM RAFI

Stupid drunk American!

He turns toward his associates. Stops, puzzled. The other strippers are on the floor unconscious. The four men look at Rafi, confused. Then... they sway, light-headed, and one at a time collapse onto the floor.

IMAM RAFI

What is going on here?

Then... Rafi doesn't look so well. He starts quivering and sweating. Notices his goblet. It's so lax in his hand, his wine spills. He drops it. The goblet catches the edge of the table and SHATTERS. Rafi limply slumps on the couch.

IMAM RAFI

Yakootah! Get out here!

The door to the other room opens and the black draped figure appears. She steps to the stereo and shuts off the music. Steps before Rafi. His head rolls sluggishly.

She presses an acupuncture tube against his arm, pushes a needle in and quickly removes it. Steps back. Through her veil comes a stoic British voice.

BLACK WITCH

Your four thousand dollar Chateau Lafite doesn't seem quite so privileged now, does it?

The Imam stares with swollen glassy eyes at his motionless arm, levered over the couch's support. Looks at the shrouded figure. There's only black void in the netting.

IMAM RAFI

You poisoned me?

BLACK WITCH

So soon does it race the blood path  
that its victims are given to  
paralysis in only moments.

IMAM RAFI

Who are you?

BLACK WITCH

In Algeria, I'm called Umthakathi.  
In France, La Sorcière Noire. In  
England, the Black Witch.

A needle-like punch springs from a wrist device with a SHING and locks into place with a CLICK. Several centimeters beyond her closed fist. Rafi pains to breathe.

IMAM RAFI

Allah would have me murdered by an  
infidel? Is this justice? Is this  
Islam?

BLACK WITCH

Islam? Did you really believe you  
could frighten me with your fad?  
Your religion is dead, Imam.

She leans in ever closer, with the steely razor-sharp tip edging to the terrified victim's throat.

BLACK WITCH

As... are... you.

INT. HOTEL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Preston's CELL PHONE RINGS. He leaves the table to answer it. Dunne focuses on Henri.

DUNNE

So what made the Black Witch go  
independent?

HENRI

We don't know.

DUNNE  
What about her life prior to  
becoming the Black Witch?

HENRI  
We know nothing of her past.

Dunne shakes his head.

DUNNE  
Well, now, see Henri, it's times  
like this I have trouble trusting  
my associates.

HENRI  
We've told you everything we know.  
You're being paranoid.

Dunne smiles as he holds up his glass.

DUNNE  
Yeah, I've been working on that.

Takes a drink. Henri gives a halfhearted smile.

DUNNE  
Don't you think it's strange the  
Black Witch knows so much about the  
inner workings of Al Din?

HENRI  
You think she is a former member?

DUNNE  
I don't know. But I think she  
might be a Muslim. An apostate.

HENRI  
And what of her connection to you?

DUNNE  
It's almost as if she just wants to  
drag me into this.

HENRI  
And why would she want to do that?

He looks at Henri with a provocative grin.

DUNNE  
I don't know but it looks like she  
did it to you too.

Preston returns with a sense of urgency.

PRESTON  
The music stopped.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Preston, Henri and Dunne rush along, followed by SEVERAL AGENTS.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

The men round a corner. As they approach the outside of Rafi's suite, they see the shrouded black figure gliding away. Preston pulls a pistol.

PRESTON  
Freeze!

The figure stops cold. Preston motions to TWO AGENTS. They approach, guns drawn. The figure waits perfectly still.

FIRST AGENT  
Put your hands on the back of your head.

She does.

FIRST AGENT  
Get down on your knees.

She does. Dunne whispers to Preston.

DUNNE  
Give me a gun. She's gonna do something.

PRESTON  
Shut up, Dunne. You're paranoid.

Dunne backs away, through the agents. Toward the corner.

DUNNE  
She's gonna do something.

Preston turns. Tosses Dunne a gun.

PRESTON  
Here.

The first agent reaches for a pair of cuffs.

FIRST AGENT  
Just hold it right there.

Then... she back-kicks the agent in the crotch. Spins around on her knee. Smacks the gun toward him and... BANG! Shoots him in the abdomen.

Steadies her gun-hand in the agent's crotch... BANG! A bullet rips through the second agent's chest. She keeps the first agent's body draped over her shoulder for cover.

BANG! Preston and others crouch defensively. BANG! BANG! BANG! Pieces of wall explode as she fires off rounds. A BLAST near Preston's head. The men are forced back around the corner.

DUNNE

Told ya.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - NIGHT

Various people, dressed nicely, look up curiously.

MAN

That sounded like gunshots.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

The Black Witch edges to the rail, still firing. The gun CLICKS. She tosses the agent's body over the railing.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - NIGHT

The number of curious spectators has grown. The agent's lifeless body SMACKS the floor. Everyone jumps back in shock. SCREAMS.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR - OPEN SPACE - NIGHT

The Black Witch leaps from the rail -- an astonishing display of physical prowess -- flies a few meters distance to one of the palm trees...

The tree shakes as her weight slams onto the stem. The wire attaching it to the rail is pulled tight. She climbs down, her abaya ripping and tearing along the way.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Preston and Henri lean over the rail. Henri aims his gun and... BANG! He fires. A chunk of the palm tree explodes. Henri aims lower. Preston grabs his arm.

PRESTON

People!  
(points)  
The elevator.

He scurries off, followed by Henri and the remaining agents. Dunne stays behind and watches over the rail. Preston talks on his radio as he runs.

PRESTON

Subject is headed to the shopping  
center wearing...  
(calls back)  
What are those things called?

HENRI

Islamic hijab.

He puts the radio back to his mouth.

PRESTON

Cloak things worn by Muslim women.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - NIGHT

The abaya is ripped from the Black Witch. Beneath that, she wears black ninja-like garb, only tighter fitting. She drops the rest of the way to the floor. Lands, lowering into a cat-like stance.

Her attire -- dark tight-fitting active-wear with all sorts of accessories. A short sword on one hip. A small collapsible grappling hook on the other, with a coiled nylon rope attached. Small throwing daggers sheathed on her arms.

Her face is completely masked. Her eyes are covered with dark bulbous lenses that give her an insect-like appearance. A veil attached to the mask frames her face like hair -- but is also reminiscent of an executioner's hood.

People gasp. The Black Witch runs into the crowd.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dunne yells at the people below.

DUNNE

Get out of the way!

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Preston and Henri look out over the shop wing. Below, the Black Witch runs toward the restaurant area. As the elevator starts down, Preston notices... Dunne.

PRESTON  
Shit! I forgot Dunne!

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dunne follows the Black Witch from above, talks on his radio.

DUNNE  
She's heading toward the dining  
area.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - RESTAURANT AREA - NIGHT

Well dressed people dine. The Black Witch approaches. A THIRD AGENT appears in front of her. A FOURTH AGENT behind her. Restaurant patrons notice.

She whips out the short straight sword and thrusts the blade into the third agent's belly. He grunts, folds. Diners SCREAM. Retreat in absolute horror.

The fourth agent draws his gun. Not fast enough. Before he can aim, she kicks the gun from his hand. Spins, plants a back-fist in his temple. Lowers into another spin, kicks his feet out from under him. Raises the sword...

PING! A bullet smacks the sword out of her hand. She looks up to the...

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dunne almost cracks a self-satisfied grin. Aims again.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - RESTAURANT AREA - NIGHT

The Black Witch turns and runs. Clammers up and down tables while bullets rip all around her. Headed toward a shop wall. She scales it with animal efficiency.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - CLOTHING SHOP - NIGHT

A CASHIER and a CUSTOMER look the direction of the commotion just as the Black Witch SLAMS down onto the counter.

She uses the customer's head to hold her steady as she cartwheels over her head, lands on the floor.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dunne is impressed. It's too risky to fire. The Black Witch jumps through the doorway and uses the door-frame to sling herself down the hall.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - NIGHT

Preston and Henri head the direction of the restaurant. Dunne talks into his radio and points from above.

DUNNE  
(radio)  
The other side.

PRESTON  
(to his men)  
Find a place to cross over!

INT. FIRST LEVEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

A FIFTH AND SIXTH AGENT arrive near a doorway to the shops.

FIFTH AGENT  
I'll go this way...

He glances up, eyes widening... The Black Witch barrels toward him... side-kicks him in the throat. He stumbles into some pedestrians and CRASHES into a pamphlet rack.

The sixth agent grabs her at the shoulder. She elbows him across the jaw. As he's knocked back, the material rips and reveals the back of her shoulder.

She side-steps, grabs his arm, and elbow SMASHES him in the nose. Stomps on his knee. He drops to the floor. She axe-kicks him right on the collar bone with a loud SNAP.

The fifth agent staggers from the shattered pamphlet rack. Rushes furiously toward her. She ducks. As he goes over the top of her, she rises and tosses him upside down... SMASH! Through the window of a shop.

Preston and Henri arrive with backup but she's already gone.

PRESTON  
Where is she?

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dunne shouts into his radio.

DUNNE  
Second floor!

He takes off running the opposite direction.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - NIGHT

Preston twists around.

PRESTON  
There she is!

She runs across the walkway toward the next wing -- the main entrance. Henri points his gun but Preston stops him.

PRESTON  
No! There could be people in the rooms.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dunne speaks into his radio as he runs.

DUNNE  
I'm on her. Cover the main entrance.

INT. FIRST LEVEL - NIGHT

Preston divides his team into groups.

PRESTON  
You three take the back. You three the front. The rest follow us.

INT. MAIN ENTRY WING - SECOND LEVEL - NIGHT

This area is much quieter, with subdued light. The Black Witch runs along, flying with amazing speed and agility. She breathes like a machine. Rhythmic. Controlled. Leaps over the rail to the floor below.

Lands and rolls, up and running in a fluent stream. Some pedestrians marvel at this. Point and murmur.

PEDESTRIAN  
Did you see that?

INT. FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - NIGHT

Dunne runs as fast as he can. Breathes heavily. He's out of shape and it's killing him. Arrives at a service elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

This elevator is nowhere near as fancy as the shopping area one. No glass wall here. No view. It's quiet but for Dunne's wheezing. He waits impatiently for the ride to stop.

INT. MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A large two story entrance. A wide carpeted staircase spirals from the ground level to the first floor glory. A GREETER welcomes arriving guests. The Black Witch rounds the corner and arrives at the rail of the overlook.

DING. The elevator door opens and Dunne steps out with gun drawn. Sees her. The shot is clear.

DUNNE  
Hey!

She pauses. A large number of well dressed guests climb the stairs, startled. Then... Dunne notices... her bare shoulder. Upon it... a mysterious charred symbol has been burned. It looks demonic, like a being made of fire.

She slaps her arm, snatching a throwing knife. Flings it at Dunne. The dagger shoots into Dunne's hand like a dart. He yells, grabs the little dagger and pulls it out.

The Black Witch leaps over the rail and descends to the ground level. Lands on a table with a CRASH as it collapses. Pedestrians gasp. She jumps to her feet and rushes the door.

GREETER  
What's going on?

She clotheslines him on the way out. From the rail above, Dunne looks down. Must be at least twenty feet. He rushes to the staircase, pushes his way through the droves of people with his gun in the air.

DUNNE  
Get out of the way!

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

It's dark out but the area is well lit. The Black Witch hurdles a concrete partition between the parking garage and the outside parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Agents approach as she crosses the lot.

AGENT  
She's headed toward the floodwall!

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Dunne exits the building and SLAMS into a car pulling up.

DRIVER  
Watch it, asshole!

DUNNE  
Fuck you!

Dunne runs toward the parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Black Witch runs up a parked car, next to the floodwall and leaps... lands atop the wall, with one leg steadying her like a cat's tail. Hoists herself over the floodwall.

Dunne sees this as he runs. He's held up by cars coming into the lot through the open floodgates. Horns HONK at him as he works his way out, toward the...

EXT. OPEN STREET - NIGHT

Upon entering the open area of the city, he's met with amplified MUSIC and VOICES. He stops to look around.

A large banner hangs over Broadway. It reads - "Celebration on the River." There are bands, different types of music, vendors selling concessions, restaurants with doors open.

Dunne scans the crowd. The street is blocked off by police barricades. POLICE OFFICERS approach, guns drawn.

POLICE OFFICER  
Put the gun down!

Dunne places the gun and dagger on the ground.

DUNNE  
I'm with Interpol, uh, the FBI.

POLICE OFFICER  
Do you have a badge?

Dunne nods, trying to catch his breath. Starts to reach for his badge through force of habit.

POLICE OFFICER  
Slowly!

Dunne pauses when he realizes he doesn't have one.

DUNNE  
Shit. I don't have it on me.

POLICE OFFICER  
Get down on the ground!

Dunne gets down as the officers approach. One picks up the dagger to move it away.

POLICE OFFICER  
Where did this come from?

DUNNE  
My hand.

POLICE OFFICER  
Okay, smartass!

DUNNE  
I'm not being a smartass.

Dunne shows his wounded hand. Preston and Henri arrive with backup -- and badges showing.

PRESTON  
He's with us.  
(to Dunne)  
Where is she?

DUNNE  
She got away.

They start to help Dunne up.

DUNNE  
Just let me lay here a minute.

Dunne rolls over, lies on the pavement, breathing heavily.

PRESTON  
Not bad, Dunne.

DUNNE  
Now can I have a badge?

INT. RAFI'S SUITE - NIGHT

Larissa is carried out on a stretcher with an oxygen mask.  
Past Dunne, Preston and Henri. Dunne's hand is bandaged.

PRESTON  
Maybe Larissa saw her face.

DUNNE  
No one saw her face.

PRESTON  
They always get sloppy eventually.

HENRI  
I must agree with Mr. Dunne. Miss  
Cook would not be alive if she had  
seen the Black Witch's face.

DUNNE  
There. See? Even Henri agrees  
with me.

Preston rolls his eyes. Joyce enters.

JOYCE  
We could get the toxicology report  
back as early as tomorrow morning.

PRESTON  
Good work, Bicksler.

Dunne raises a fist mockingly.

DUNNE  
Attagirl.  
(off Joyce's smirk)  
Come on, Joyce. Let's go have a  
nightcap.

Dunne steps to the door. Preston pulls out a temp badge.

PRESTON  
Dunne?  
(off his turn)  
This is just temporary. To keep  
you out of jail.

He tosses it to Dunne. Dunne looks at it and grins.

DUNNE  
You do care.

PRESTON  
Get the hell out of here.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Dunne and Joyce sit at a table having drinks.

DUNNE  
It must be pretty quiet around here normally. I haven't gotten a tox report back that fast since... never.

JOYCE  
It's a small town. It's not every day a doctor gets to help the FBI catch an international assassin.

Dunne smiles initially but takes a serious turn.

DUNNE  
How'd you know we were after an international assassin?

JOYCE  
Huh?

DUNNE  
You haven't been briefed.

Joyce pauses in disbelief.

JOYCE  
Wow. You really are paranoid.

A beat. Dunne is serious. Joyce becomes agitated.

JOYCE  
I was briefed this evening. Doctor Cuthbert was briefed this evening. I guess someone decided we needed to know.

Dunne absorbs. Realizes what an ass he is.

DUNNE  
I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking.

JOYCE  
Were you always like this?

DUNNE  
(chuckles)  
As far as I can remember.

JOYCE  
Isn't it taxing? How can you have  
a relationship like this?

DUNNE  
It's not easy. They call it  
borderline schizophrenia.

The humor fades from Dunne's face.

DUNNE  
That's an important word,  
borderline. That's what kept me on  
the force.

He takes a big drink.

DUNNE  
It's the kind of thing that makes  
you suspect plumbers of being  
terrorists... and you turn out to  
be right.

He sets the glass down, his eyes drifting.

DUNNE  
But while you're chasing them, you  
never thought that maybe they  
planted a bomb in the building.

Joyce hesitates.

JOYCE  
Did you trust your wife?  
(regrets)  
I'm sorry. I overstepped --

DUNNE  
Completely... I trusted her  
completely.

He finishes his drink. Joyce watches.

JOYCE  
Do you think you could ever trust  
me?

INT. DUNNE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dunne and Joyce stumble into the cheap room. Drunk and making out. Dunne shuts the door. They start pulling each other's clothes off, giggling and falling over each other.

DUNNE

I might be too drunk to get it up.

Joyce laughs. They stumble to the bed. Fall heavy on it.

JOYCE

I'll lick it up.

Dunne's eyes widen.

DUNNE

Oh, hell, I think it's already on its way.

They laugh. Make out.

LATER

They lie in bed in each other's arms. A little sober now.

JOYCE

This case is going to look so good on my résumé.

DUNNE

Don't put me down for a reference unless you wanna ruin it.

JOYCE

(giggles)

Maybe someday I can even go work in D.C.

A moment of silence. Dunne sits up.

DUNNE

I don't believe this.

JOYCE

What?

DUNNE

How could I have fallen for this climb-the-ladder shit again?

JOYCE  
What are you talking about? And  
what do you mean, "again"?

DUNNE  
I mean, it's so obvious with my  
students but you...

Joyce sits up, visibly upset now.

JOYCE  
Morris, what the hell are you  
talking about?

DUNNE  
I don't know what you think I can  
do for you but I can barely keep  
myself afloat.

Joyce's face goes flush.

JOYCE  
Oh my God. What an unparalleled  
asshole you are.

She leaps out of bed. Starts putting her clothes on.

JOYCE  
You know, if I wanted to sleep my  
way out of small town life, I would  
have slept with Preston.

DUNNE  
There's always tomorrow.

She stops. Now she's really pissed.

JOYCE  
This may come as a shock to you,  
but just because I'm a country  
girl, doesn't mean I'm uneducated.  
I'm smart enough to know you're  
worthless to my career.

She grabs her things and heads to the door.

DUNNE  
Okay. You're right. I'm sorry...

Joyce pauses at the door.

JOYCE

Sorry only works for a while. From there, you just sort of drift along in its wake.

She walks out.

INT. DUNNE'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Dunne wakes up. Stares at the ceiling. Looks sadly at the empty space beside him.

EXT. RIVER PARK - MORNING

Dunne jogs along the river's edge in the fresh morning air. He breathes heavily. It's killing him. He stops to catch his breath. Starts walking instead.

INT. SMALL COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

An elderly couple, BILL AND MARY, work at the counter. Through the window, Dunne approaches the store. The floodwall entrance to the Executive Inn is in the background. A BELL RINGS as Dunne enters.

BILL AND MARY

Good morning.

DUNNE

Good morning. Can I just sit here and catch my breath and drink a cup of coffee?

BILL

Sure. Coffee after a long jog?

Dunne sits by a window with a view to the Inn.

DUNNE

If you call two miles, half of it walking, a long jog.

Mary brings a cup of coffee to the table. Smiles.

MARY

Your body might reject coffee after all that running.

DUNNE

My body loves coffee. It's the running it's rejecting.

BILL  
Trying to get back in shape?

DUNNE  
(nods)  
I used to be in great shape.

MARY  
I don't know, you look like you're  
still in pretty good shape to me.

Dunne pours cream, smiles playfully at Mary.

DUNNE  
You hitting on me?

She giggles with delight.

DUNNE  
You keep sweet talking me like that  
and my heart's gonna go pitter-pat.

BILL  
I'll let you take her.

Mary brushes Bill off.

MARY  
Oh, make your doughnuts, old man.

DUNNE  
You couldn't live without her.

BILL  
(laughs)  
I know, I know.

He comes around the counter. Grabs Mary around the waist --  
the way Dunne did with Abby. Playfully kisses her.

BILL  
Here. Let me give you some  
attention before you run off with  
some younger fella.

She giggles. Dunne watches sentimentally. Then... his  
attention is caught by something outside the window.

EXT. FLOODWALL ENTRANCE - MORNING

A motorcade pulls through the floodgates, entering the hotel  
parking lot.

INT. SMALL COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Dunne gazes out the window.

DUNNE  
Who's that?

Bill and Mary glance toward the motorcade.

BILL  
It's gotta be that ambassador.

DUNNE  
What ambassador?

BILL  
I don't know his name. All I know  
is he's from...  
(looks at Mary)  
Where'd they say he's from?

MARY  
Algeria, I believe.

Dunne's face fills with suspicion.

BILL  
Algeria. I think that's right.  
He's here for that meeting.

DUNNE  
What meeting?

INT. FBI OFFICE - MORNING

Henri and Joyce work at a table when Dunne arrives, a man on a mission. Preston enters from the break room with coffee.

PRESTON  
I made the coffee this morning.

Dunne mildly notices, focuses on Joyce.

DUNNE  
How long has Senator MacDougall  
been in town?

Preston throws his head back, annoyed. Sets his coffee down.

PRESTON  
Goddamn it, Dunne! The senator  
doesn't have a damn thing to do  
with this.

DUNNE

An Algerian ambassador is meeting a U.S. Senator in the very state, the very town, the very hotel, where a suspected Al Din official is staying.

PRESTON

Was staying... and so what?

DUNNE

You don't find that too coincidental?

PRESTON

Diplomats meet all the time.

Dunne turns to Joyce.

DUNNE

Will you work with me on it?

Joyce nervously looks at Preston.

PRESTON

She's working on the toxicology report. We were just about to go over it.

Dunne stares at Joyce. She lowers her eyes. He relents.

DUNNE

Okay. I'm sorry.

Joyce hands Preston a file. He thumbs through.

JOYCE

They were all given sedatives. The Imam was killed with some sort of puncture weapon after being administered an additional substance.

Preston pauses at a section on a page.

PRESTON

Snake venom!

JOYCE

From a very nasty viper.

DUNNE

Let me guess. It's found in Algeria.

Joyce shoots him a sharp look.

JOYCE  
And a lot of other places.

PRESTON  
There's no doubt about who's  
responsible for this.

DUNNE  
Am I the only person who finds the  
Algerian connection suspicious?

HENRI  
I'm afraid we are going to need  
more than snake venom.

Dunne turns to Henri, frustrated.

DUNNE  
How about dead FBI agents?

HENRI  
Strange you're incensed by the loss  
of Americans but not Arabs.

DUNNE  
You wanna make this about race?

HENRI  
You're mad because of what happened  
to your wife.

DUNNE  
You're goddamn right I am!

Dunne slaps some files off the table.

DUNNE  
I wish I could kill every fuckin'  
one of 'em!

He pauses. Preston and Joyce lower their heads. After a few  
beats, Dunne slowly turns and ambles out the door. Preston  
looks calmly at Joyce like it's all blown over.

PRESTON  
So how did she make the poison?

Joyce stares at the door, preoccupied. Struggles to regain  
composure. Stammers at first when she finally speaks.

JOYCE

Actually, it's not so much the mixture as the amount. Just the precise amount determines whether the victim is dead or just temporarily paralyzed.

Preston looks at the report. Shakes his head in disbelief.

PRESTON

Who would know how to administer such precise amounts?

JOYCE

Someone who's been poisoning people for a very long time.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - PICNIC AREA - DAY

Dunne sits at a picnic table alone. He scrawls a crude drawing of the Black Witch's demonic brand on a piece of paper. Joyce approaches from behind him.

JOYCE

I'm sorry.

Dunne looks up, surprised to see her.

DUNNE

What are you sorry about?

She sits next to him.

JOYCE

Feeling sorry for you.

DUNNE

Please tell me you didn't have pity sex with me.

JOYCE

(giggles)

No... but I love your story. I love the love you had for Abby.

DUNNE

I'm sorry I was such a... what'd you call me... an unparalleled asshole?

She giggles. Dunne becomes serious.

DUNNE  
You were right. I assumed I was still somebody. Sort of like reaching for a badge that wasn't there.

JOYCE  
Why don't you join again, for real?

DUNNE  
I don't know...

JOYCE  
Maybe it's time to swim back to shore, Morris.

He smiles faintly.

JOYCE  
I did that research you asked for.

DUNNE  
I didn't actually expect you to do any research.

JOYCE  
(smiles)  
I know. You think I'm some bumpkin who's never actually done any real field work.

DUNNE  
No, I don't. I think you're smarter than anyone gave you credit for. Including me.

JOYCE  
Ooh, Dunne admits he misjudged someone. Put that in his file.

DUNNE  
(chuckles)  
Didn't you say you had some information?

JOYCE  
MacDougall has had several meetings with the Imam. And now he's meeting with Sabeer Talal, the Algerian ambassador.

Dunne's eyes move around, excited.

DUNNE  
Something's going on.

JOYCE  
If there isn't, I'm paranoid too.

Dunne looks at her. A big smile stretches across his face.

DUNNE  
Wanna do some field work?

INT. EXECUTIVE INN - FOURTH FLOOR WALKWAY - DAY

Dunne and Joyce arrive at a room. Glance at each other, then Dunne knocks. The door is cracked open by a BODYGUARD, a large man in suit and tie with a very no-nonsense face.

BODYGUARD  
Can I help you?

Joyce displays her badge.

JOYCE  
I'm Agent Bicksler with the FBI.  
This is my associate, Mr. Dunne.

Dunne flashes his temp badge with a grin.

BODYGUARD  
A temporary badge?

DUNNE  
I overslept the day they were  
handing out real badges.

JOYCE  
May we speak with the senator?

BODYGUARD  
You'll have to make an appointment.

DUNNE  
Oh, but you've just got to let us  
in to see the wizard.

The bodyguard looks contemptuously at Dunne.

BODYGUARD  
Smartass.

JOYCE  
Are you telling me you're not going  
to let us speak with the senator?

BODYGUARD

I'm telling you to shit in one hand, and wish in the other, and see which one gets filled first.

Joyce is stunned. Dunne throws his hands up, backs away, raising his voice.

DUNNE

Okay, well, I guess we'll just go shit then!

He turns away to ensure he's heard by all.

DUNNE

And when I get done shitting, I'll just mosey on over to the television station...

The bodyguard fidgets, not sure what to do.

DUNNE

So I can tell the whole world that a U.S. Senator, who may be involved with terrorists, refused to answer questions from a federal agent!

Dunne lowers his voice as he steps back toward the bodyguard.

DUNNE

What was that official response?  
Shit where?

The door opens fully. The bodyguard steps aside. Into the hallway steps... a lovely Southern belle. CARLA MACDOUGALL. 30s. In a flowing dress, she's the picture of graceful Southern charm. A sweet smile on her gentle face. Speaks with a Southern accent.

CARLA

What on Earth is goin' on out here?

It's like she diffused the situation by her mere presence.

JOYCE

Mrs. MacDougall. I'm Agent Bicksler with the FBI. This is my associate, Mr. Dunne.

CARLA

(to Dunne)

That you makin' all that racket?

DUNNE  
Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry to say it  
was.

CARLA  
My husband is a very busy man.

She gives him a hospitable look, almost as if she might wink.

CARLA  
But if you think you can mind your  
manners, I'll go and see if I can't  
nudge him your direction.

DUNNE  
Yes, ma'am.

CARLA  
I will ask that your language be  
kept clean.

DUNNE  
Absolutely, ma'am.

As she turns toward the door, she pauses at the bodyguard.

CARLA  
I expect everyone's language to be  
kept clean.

BODYGUARD  
Yes, ma'am.

She turns to Joyce and Dunne with a gracious smile.

CARLA  
Please come in.

She disappears into the suite. Joyce passes through. As  
Dunne passes, the bodyguard whispers to him.

BODYGUARD  
When she's gone, you're fucked.

Dunne smirks playfully as he passes.

INT. SENATOR MACDOUGALL'S SUITE - DAY

There are SEVERAL BODYGUARDS. Senator SAMUEL MACDOUGALL,  
60s, twice his wife's age, stands on the other side. Glares  
at Dunne. The contempt on his face is matched only by the  
arrogance. He speaks with a thick Southern accent.

MACDOUGALL

Carla, why don't you show Ms. Bicksler where the Fall Sampler's going to be held this year?

Joyce is taken aback.

JOYCE

Sir, with all due respect, I --

MACDOUGALL

I mean you no disrespect, madam. Quite the opposite. I'd like to speak to Mr. Dunne here man to man.

JOYCE

Sir, I've lived here all my life. I know where the Sampler is held.

MACDOUGALL

I'm a U.S. Senator, Ms. Bicksler, and it's not a request.

Joyce is stunned. Carla puts a friendly hand on her arm.

CARLA

Come on. We can talk.

Joyce reluctantly leaves with her. Dunne watches until the door closes, then turns back just as... a bodyguard punches him hard in the stomach, catching him off guard. Dunne doubles over, the wind knocked out of him. Drops to his knees. A bodyguard takes his gun.

MACDOUGALL

Now, I'm gonna tell you this once. Because, quite frankly, I don't have to tell you anything more than once.

Just as Dunne is about to catch his breath... the bodyguard grabs him by the shoulder... slugs him in the stomach again. Dunne doubles over. His forehead lowers to the floor.

MACDOUGALL

Laws, Mr. Dunne. Hell, I don't even write them. Lawyers do all that. Don't read them either. What's the point?

A second bodyguard grabs Dunne. Pulls him onto his knees. Dunne doesn't look so good. He's disheveled and red-faced. The first bodyguard punches him in the stomach again. Dunne doubles over, falls loosely to the floor.

MACDOUGALL

We live at a time where we just rewrite history to whatever we want.

MacDougall calmly sits comfortably in a chair.

MACDOUGALL

Just go to the Government Printing Office and look at the Congressional Record. It's all right there, compliments of the taxpayers.

Dunne gasps for breath. He coughs, spits up blood.

MACDOUGALL

It'll tell you all the wonderful things I've said in chamber. Even when I wasn't there.

Dunne lays his face on the side. Watery eyed.

DUNNE

Do you have a point, or are you just gonna rattle on about what a successful dick you are?

The second bodyguard pulls Dunne up and... the first one slugs him in the face. Hard.

MACDOUGALL

My point is that whatever you think you might dig up is gonna go nowhere.

Dunne is barely able to speak.

DUNNE

But I'm having so much fun playing in the dirt.

MACDOUGALL

You can dig all the way to the Earth's core and all you'll be diggin' is a hole for yourself.

Dunne limply grabs the coffee table edge. Tries to climb up.

MACDOUGALL

Your life is already worthless. You haven't been worth a penny since your wife died.

Fury washes over Dunne's face.

DUNNE  
Don't you talk about my wife.

He tries and get up. The bodyguard punches him across the face. Knocks him back to the floor. Dunne uses every ounce of strength he has to roll over. Fights to get up.

DUNNE  
Don't you ever talk about my wife!

MACDOUGALL  
Or you'll do what, Mr. Dunne? Pour yourself a bourbon?

Dunne gazes a moment, then collapses to the floor.

MACDOUGALL  
Gentlemen, please show Mr. Dunne out. He looks like he might get sick on himself.

They peel Dunne off the floor.

BODYGUARD  
Should we make sure Mr. Dunne makes it back to his hotel all right?

MACDOUGALL  
Yes, of course. I do hope Mr. Dunne makes it back to his hotel all right.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - FOUNTAIN - DAY

Carla walks along the sidewalk with Joyce. The Executive Inn is in the background.

JOYCE  
So, I couldn't help but notice you're quite a bit younger than your husband.

Carla smiles gently, somewhat sadly.

CARLA  
My husband likes his wives young... and his whores younger.

They sit on a park bench.

JOYCE  
You put up with that?

CARLA  
It's part of it... when you're part  
of it.

Joyce notices... a partially obscured bruise on Carla's arm.  
Pushes Carla's sleeve up a little. Carla winces in pain.

JOYCE  
What about this? This part of it?

Carla is taken aback at first. Collects herself.

CARLA  
You know, I'm not Samuel's first  
wife.

JOYCE  
I didn't know that.

CARLA  
His first wife was killed in a  
terrible accident.

She looks at Joyce with a hint of fear in her eyes.

CARLA  
It could happen to anyone.

JOYCE  
If you're concerned about your  
safety, we can protect you.

CARLA  
You can't protect yourself.

Joyce pauses, disturbed by the comment.

JOYCE  
If your husband is involved with Al  
Din in any way, it's not going to  
turn out good for him.

Carla reflects a moment, looking out at the beautiful day.

CARLA  
When I was a young girl, I dreamed  
a man would come and take me  
away... show me the world.

She turns to Joyce with a halfhearted smile.

CARLA  
Well, it happened... but not the  
way I dreamed. What about you?

JOYCE  
I'm torn. I want to see the world  
but I like small town life.

CARLA  
Ah, small town is in your blood...  
but you're running from something.

Joyce hesitates.

JOYCE  
I'm not running from anything.

CARLA  
If there's one thing I know, it's a  
restless heart.

Joyce stands.

JOYCE  
I think we've talked about the Fall  
Sampler long enough.

CARLA  
I'm sorry if I've offended you in  
any way, Agent Bicksler.

JOYCE  
Not at all.

Carla breathes in the fresh air.

CARLA  
I think I'll stay out here a bit  
longer if you don't mind.

JOYCE  
If you hear anything...

CARLA  
I'll be sure and let you know.

Joyce starts to walk off.

CARLA  
Who was it? A boyfriend in high  
school? College?

Joyce pauses, struggling to hold herself together.

JOYCE  
Have a nice day, Mrs. MacDougall.

She walks away.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Dunne stumbles out of the Inn, escorted by MacDougall's bodyguards. A car pulls up. THREE MEN get out.

FIRST MAN  
We'll take it from here.

One of the bodyguards hands the man Dunne's gun.

FIRST MAN  
We've been instructed to see that you arrive safely back at your hotel, Mr. Dunne.

DUNNE  
Thanks but I've got a ride.

He points Dunne's gun at him.

FIRST MAN  
I'm sorry, sir. We're very concerned for your safety. We would prefer to escort you.

DUNNE  
With all these formalities, may I assume my death will be painless?

FIRST MAN  
Your comfort is of the utmost importance to us, sir.

In another area, Joyce is returning. Notices. Dunne gets into the back of the car, flanked by two men. Only the driver in front. Joyce hurries to her car.

INT. CORDIAL KILLERS' CAR - DAY

Dunne is sandwiched between two men, one holding his gun.

DUNNE  
Doesn't this look a little suspicious?  
(to the guy next to him)  
Why don't you sit up front?

SECOND MAN

We apologize for any inconvenience,  
sir. We'll have you home shortly.

DUNNE

You don't have to keep pretending  
you're taking me home.

SECOND MAN

We apologize for any  
misunderstanding, sir.

Dunne raises an eyebrow, somewhat befuddled.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The car drives along with Joyce tailing.

INT. CORDIAL KILLERS' CAR - DAY

Dunne points out the window sarcastically.

DUNNE

You missed the turnoff.

DRIVER

I'm very sorry, sir. I'll turn  
around as soon as possible.

DUNNE

Well, actually Jeeves, that's not  
good enough.

Dunne leaps over the back seat and... grabs the wheel, jerks  
it to one side, throwing everyone.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The car swerves and barrels for a telephone pole... CRASH!  
Dunne and the second man SMASH right through the windshield.  
Land on the pavement. Joyce's car SQUEALS to a halt. She  
hops out and draws her firearm. Her hand shakes.

INT. CORDIAL KILLERS' CAR - DAY

The first man, in the back, raises his head. The driver is  
unconscious, face in the airbag.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The first man climbs out as Joyce approaches.

JOYCE

Freeze!

Dunne stirs. The second man is out for good. Dunne forces himself up, in time to see... the first man aim at Joyce.

JOYCE

Put your hands where --

BANG! He fires. A bullet grazes Joyce's shoulder. Dunne yells, rushes the gunman. The gunman turns, SHOTS Dunne in the side, but that doesn't stop Dunne. He plows on and tackles him.

They hit the pavement. The gun is thrown beyond reach. Dunne punches him like a man possessed. Unleashes a flurry of pent-up rage. Joyce sits up, clutching her shoulder. Sees... the driver climb out.

JOYCE

Morris!

The driver grabs Dunne from behind in a choke hold. Joyce aims but can't get a shot.

Dunne throws the driver over his shoulder. The driver sees... the gun. Scrambles for it. Dunne tries to beat him to it. They fight over it. The driver's back is to Joyce.

DUNNE

Shoot him!

Joyce aims but she can't fire. She's frozen. The driver punches Dunne in his wound. He yells in pain but holds onto the gun for dear life. Then... the other man grabs Dunne. The gun falls to the pavement. The man punches Dunne, knocking him down. The driver picks the gun up.

JOYCE

Morris!

She tosses her gun to him. He snatches it... BANG! The driver's head is blown back. He falls to the pavement dead. Dunne aims at the other one. He puts his hands up... BANG! Dunne guns him down. Unarmed.

Dunne stares stunned. It all happened so fast. He looks at Joyce. Their eyes meet. They make an unspoken pact. It's their secret. SIRENS in the distance.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Dunne and Joyce sit on beds when Preston enters. Furious.

PRESTON

What the hell is the matter with you, Dunne? Have you completely lost your goddamn mind?

(re: Joyce)

And do you have to try and fuck up someone else's career too?

DUNNE

Don't worry about us. We'll be fine. They're just flesh wounds.

Preston rubs his face from the stress.

PRESTON

Are you two all right?

Dunne glances at Joyce.

DUNNE

We'll survive.

PRESTON

MacDougall has no idea who those men were. He doesn't want his name associated with this mess.

JOYCE

Sir, I saw MacDougall's bodyguards with Dunne at the car.

PRESTON

They claim they called for a car to take Dunne back to his hotel and those guys just showed up. And those guys are all dead.

DUNNE

What about what happened in MacDougall's suite?

PRESTON

He says it didn't happen... and quite frankly, I'm not so sure I don't believe him.

DUNNE

I've got the bruises to prove it.

PRESTON

They suggested you got those from the car accident. The one you caused!

(to Joyce)

Did you see Dunne's bruises when he got into the car?

JOYCE

I didn't get that good of a look.

Preston turns away with a perturbed sigh.

PRESTON

I'm going to check on Larissa and see if I can get one of my agents out of the hospital!

He storms out. Dunne looks at Joyce. Her eyes are glassy.

DUNNE

It was a bad shot.

JOYCE

I froze.

DUNNE

You could have hit me.

JOYCE

Not when you were on the pavement.

DUNNE

In the heat of the moment, anything can happen. You came through when it counted.

Joyce quietly stares into space.

JOYCE

Did you have trouble the first time?

Dunne climbs to his feet.

DUNNE

We all have trouble the first time.

He walks out. Joyce watches curiously. Hops to her feet.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Joyce approaches from behind as Dunne walks away.

JOYCE  
Where are you going?

DUNNE  
I'm done.

She hurries in front of him, cuts him off.

JOYCE  
You're giving up?

DUNNE  
It's been too long. I can't do  
this anymore.

JOYCE  
That's why you need to keep going.  
You're swimming back to shore,  
remember?

DUNNE  
No, I'm drowning.

He brushes past her. She calls after.

JOYCE  
I think I know who can tell us what  
the emblem means.

Dunne stops, turns around.

JOYCE  
Wanna do some field work?

INT. SWANK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dimly lit. Slender wineglasses shimmer and candles flicker at every table. Handsome waiters and waitresses move about the room. The guests are all well dressed and well groomed.

MACDOUGALL'S TABLE

Samuel and Carla MacDougall sit, immaculately dressed. At the same table is SABEER TALAL, 35, a handsome Berber man, dressed in traditional Islamic attire.

ENTRANCE

Dunne and Joyce arrive, nicely dressed in suit and formal gown respectively. They look good but out of place.

DUNNE  
 You look stunning tonight, Joyce.  
 I was wondering what it took to get  
 you into a dress.

JOYCE  
 You keep taking me to places like  
 this, I'll keep wearing dresses.

The HOST greets them.

HOST  
 Good evening. Do you have  
 reservations?

Joyce holds up her badge.

JOYCE  
 We're here on official business.

MACDOUGALL'S TABLE

Dunne and Joyce approach. MacDougall sees them. Gestures to  
 his bodyguards. They're ready to pounce.

DUNNE  
 Samuel. Good to see you, ole  
 buddy.

MacDougall fumes. Carla appears somewhat amused. Sabeer  
 smiles, almost nostalgically, at Dunne.

DUNNE  
 (to MacDougall)  
 Don't get up, old friend. I'm here  
 to talk to Mr. Talal.

Sabeer is surprised. He speaks with a French accent.

SABEER  
 Me?

DUNNE  
 I'm Morris Dunne. I'm temporarily  
 attached to the FBI.

MacDougall's face is shriveled with contempt.

MACDOUGALL  
 He's not a real agent. He's a  
 washed up has-been.

CARLA  
(shocked)  
Samuel!

Dunne pulls out the drawing. Sets it on the table before Sabeer. Sabeer is stunned at first.

DUNNE  
Can you tell me what this is?

Sabeer examines it wistfully.

SABEER  
It's a jinni.

DUNNE  
A jinni?

SABEER  
It's one of the shayatin.

Sabeer points to a certain part of the drawing.

SABEER  
This symbolizes Iblis. Satan. The shayatin are made of fire. And man is made of clay.

MACDOUGALL  
Is this important enough to --

SABEER  
It's all right.

Dunne sits next to Sabeer.

DUNNE  
Why would someone have this branded into her shoulder?

Sabeer looks at the drawing again.

SABEER  
Mr. Dunne. I think it's time we talked privately.

INT. SABEER'S SUITE - NIGHT

Sabeer carries two glasses of wine from the private bar. Hands one to Dunne and sits. Dunne checks the glass.

SABEER  
There is no poison in it.

Sabeer laughs. His smile is gorgeous. His green eyes intoxicating. He switches glasses with Dunne. Takes a drink. Lowers the glass with a smile.

SABEER

You see. I'm not your enemy.

Dunne faintly smiles, takes a drink.

SABEER

May I tell you a secret?

DUNNE

Sure. I love to hear secrets.

Sabeer leans forward with a smile.

SABEER

I love America. I love almost everything about it. I love American football.

DUNNE

You like football?

SABEER

Yes! American football is the best!

Dunne laughs. Sabeer's smile fades.

SABEER

May I tell you a story?

(off his nod)

My country has been ravaged by war. We have fought many enemies for our independence.

Dunne listens. Sabeer is a man with a heavy heart.

SABEER

We fought the Carthaginians. We fought the Romans until the Empire fell. We fought the Vandals. The Arabs. The French.

He sighs with an air of sadness.

SABEER

During the Civil War, there were guerrillas everywhere. More than one hundred thousand people died.

EXT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING - ALGERIA - DAY

SUPER - "Algiers, capital of Algeria, 1992."

Sabeer, with his beautiful green eyes, steps outside. Behind him is an office building. Before him is a busy street.

SABEER (V.O.)

I was an assistant for a government accountant. Fareed Bendjedid.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A beautiful Berber woman, NADIA TALAL, wears a cross between traditional African attire and Muslim with her head covered. She gives an injection to a child.

SABEER (V.O.)

My wife was Nadia. She was a nurse who also worked with the Red Cross to help prevent disease.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Men load barrels into the room from a truck outside. Nadia, with a clipboard, takes inventory. Next to her is a WOMAN with an ID badge pinned to her chest. She also has a clipboard and takes inventory.

SABEER (V.O.)

One day, people from USAID asked her to help them store some DDT.

The room is filled with barrels. Lots of them.

SABEER (V.O.)

Malaria was killing people throughout Africa by the millions. The American government wanted us to have the DDT but they were afraid the American people would get upset if they knew.

INT. SABEER'S HOME - NIGHT

It's small but well kept -- the home of people who are not rich but are educated and hardworking. Sabeer sleeps in bed with Nadia. The door BURSTS open. The lights come on. Armed BERBER SOLDIERS invade the room. Sabeer and Nadia strain their eyes to adjust to the light.

SABEER (V.O.)  
Then one day, guerrillas break into  
our home.

One soldier raps Sabeer across the head with his rifle butt.  
He falls to the mattress with blood running down his face.  
Nadia screams. She's forced out of bed and dragged off.

SABEER (V.O.)  
They say that Nadia has been  
conspiring with the U.S. to poison  
Muslims.

INT. OPEN ROOM - DAY

The room is filled with Berbers. Nadia and Sabeer have their  
hands tied behind them. They look beaten and worn out.

SABEER (V.O.)  
They say my wife is guilty. They  
give her no trial. They ask her no  
questions.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A large group of PEOPLE, mostly Berber, surround the field.  
Chanting and frenzied. Sabeer, hands bound behind him,  
beaten and weak, is held on his knees. Nadia is dragged out  
into the center. Islamic CLERICS wait with stone faces.

SABEER (V.O.)  
It was as though I was frozen in  
heat. And then I heard what they  
were chanting. Traitor! Traitor!  
Not misguided. Not ignorant. But  
traitor. Enemy of Islam.

Nadia is on her knees, hands bound behind her. A MAN with a  
machete hacks toward her neck.

INT. SABEER'S SUITE - NIGHT

Sabeer stares off, entranced. Dunne is enthralled.  
Completely consumed by the story.

SABEER  
And that is how I learned the  
difference between what God wants,  
and what man does in his name.

DUNNE  
I'm sorry to hear that story.

SABEER  
For years, after I lost Nadia, when  
I looked in the mirror, I saw this  
indescribable lost look.

Sabeer looks at Dunne. Their eyes meet.

SABEER  
When I look at you... I see that  
look again.

INT. DUNNE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dunne opens a small box refrigerator. Pulls out a bottled beer. Pops the cap and takes a swig. Steps to the little table by the window. Looks out in quiet wonder. The picture of loneliness. Another swig. He closes his eyes, sways rhythmically. Steps and turns. He's dancing. Alone.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Perched on a thick tree branch like a cat... is the Black Witch. In her ninja-like outfit. A black bag strapped to her back. She peers at Dunne through his hotel window.

INT. DUNNE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dunne sets the empty bottle on the table. Bored, he sits. Fiddles with the bottle cap. Then he notices something. His brow lowers. He leans in close...

A small pinhole. His head sways. His eyes droop. Then... UNLATCHING at the door. He looks up. The door opens. In the doorway, the ominous silhouette of the Black Witch. Dunne fights to stand. Staggeres to the bed.

DUNNE  
Who are you?

She closes the door.

BLACK WITCH  
I'm a runaway page in a world of  
pop-up books and puppet shows.

Dunne falls onto the bed. Struggles to roll onto his back. She sets the bag on the dresser.

BLACK WITCH

You can relax, Mr. Dunne. Your permanent demise would not serve my cause.

She pulls out an acupuncture needle and tube.

DUNNE

What cause is that?

She steps to him, gently inserts the needle and removes it.

BLACK WITCH

The truth, Mr. Dunne, is my goal. I know no other god. No other purpose. And no other pursuit.

Dunne looks at his hand. His fingers. He can barely speak.

DUNNE

I can't move.

She puts his feet onto the bed. Looms menacingly over him.

BLACK WITCH

The greatest human flaw is the need for familiarity. It's why people cling to their families or work the same job for twenty years. Get set in their ways.

She places his arms at his sides.

BLACK WITCH

It's why people fear the unknown, fear change, fear death.

She steps to the black bag.

BLACK WITCH

Nothing stifles creativity more than familiarity.

She pulls out a device that looks like a collar and vise with a long handle and a belt, such as something a trainer might use to control wild animals.

BLACK WITCH

I want to give you a gift, Mr. Dunne.

She steps toward him with the device. His eyes widen.

BLACK WITCH

Not as it was given to me the first  
time, in a rather crude fashion,  
but nonetheless magnificent.

She hangs over him with the wicked looking contraption.

BLACK WITCH

The gift of life.

He breathes erratically as the collar is put around his neck.

BLACK WITCH

I know you fear it...

She holds the handle tightly. Pulls the belt. The collar  
tightens around Dunne's neck. He chokes, terrified.

BLACK WITCH

... but I can assure you that what  
lies on the other side of that  
euphoria is better than anything  
you're... familiar with.

Dunne's eyes flutter. The image of the Black Witch blurs.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Dunne, neatly groomed in a tuxedo, steps down a large  
staircase toward the dance floor. Other people go up and  
down the stairs. The dance floor is filled with couples  
dancing to BALLROOM MUSIC.

At the base of the stairs, Abby stands as beautiful as ever.  
She wears a spectacular gown. Dunne is spellbound by her.

DUNNE

Abby?

She smiles when she sees him.

ABBY

Morris.

DUNNE

You look incredible.

ABBY  
(giggles)  
Isn't this fun?

He smiles nostalgically.

DUNNE  
Yes. I love this place.

ABBY  
Me too.

DUNNE  
I haven't been here in a long time.

ABBY  
It hasn't changed.

DUNNE  
I know.

They smile together. Dunne looks up and notices something. A banner overhead reads - "Paris Ballroom Dance." Dunne's expression turns to confusion.

ABBY  
What's wrong?

DUNNE  
Oh, nothing. It's just that...  
(re: the banner)  
We haven't actually gone to one of  
these in a long time.

He thinks a moment. Confused.

DUNNE  
Now that's odd.

She looks at him as if she knows what he hasn't realized. Something sad.

ABBY  
What?

DUNNE  
If we're here, then... Wait a  
minute. I'm confused.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dunne and Abby, still dressed up, sit at a table. The lights are subdued. There are no other patrons.

No waiters wandering around. No one. Ballroom music plays softly in the background.

DUNNE  
So how've you been?

ABBY  
Good. I've been good. How about you?

He glances around the room.

DUNNE  
You know, I just noticed something.

ABBY  
What?

DUNNE  
You know what this is? This is the place I...

He's confused again. Abby smiles sweetly but sadly at him.

DUNNE  
Wait a minute. What is this?

He glances around again, this time turning in his chair. This time with great suspicion.

ABBY  
What's wrong, Morris?

He turns back to Abby.

DUNNE  
I had reservations for this place.

ABBY  
And here we are.

DUNNE  
Yeah, but we never...

He stops, the revelation lowering on him. His face tenses with sorrow. He stares blankly into space. Abby reaches over, puts her hand comfortingly on his.

ABBY  
How are you doing, Morris?

He's barely able to turn his head. His eyes well with tears.

DUNNE  
Not too good, Abby. I'm not doing  
too good.

A tear runs down his cheek. He chokes up.

DUNNE  
I hate life. I hate it. I hate  
life without you.

Abby watches sadly. She stands. Gently puts one hand on his  
shoulder and the other on his arm.

ABBY  
Stand up.

DUNNE  
I don't think I can.

ABBY  
You can do it.

Morris, broken, rises from his seat. She puts her hands on  
his cheeks.

ABBY  
It was always so hard for you to  
believe someone could love you.  
Morris. You are loved.

DUNNE  
I love you, Abby.

ABBY  
Then dance with me.

DUNNE  
I can't... I feel weak... I...

ABBY  
You can do it.

She tugs him away from the table. Reluctant at first. He  
fights back tears. She holds her hand out. Dunne looks at  
it a moment, then reaches for it.

Their fingers lace together. She puts her arm over his  
shoulder. He puts his around her waist.

The music gets louder as they dance. Soon they dance around  
the room, stepping and turning. With every step, they gaze  
into each other's eyes.

Dunne smiles. A genuine smile. Abby smiles back. After a dance, they stop and stare at each other.

ABBY  
I'm okay, Morris.

He watches her sentimentally. Then kisses her. Their lips meet as they embrace. Then... the lights go out.

BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. DUNNE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Blurry. A HEARTBEAT. Lips part from Dunne's. Then... the blurred image of the Black Witch. Her mouth and jaw are exposed. Too blurry to make out.

She straddles Dunne, pumps his chest. A HEARTBEAT. Pumps. A HEARTBEAT. Puts her mouth to his... blows air into his lungs. Pumps his chest. A HEARTBEAT. Then another. And another. Dunne coughs and gasps for air.

She climbs off. Feels the side of his neck for a pulse. Pulls her mask over her face.

BLACK WITCH  
Welcome back, Mr. Dunne. I trust  
your respite stay at death's door  
was... memorable.

He hacks until his breathing steadies. Looks at her. Still too blurry. He fights to roll onto his side, now able to move a little. Tears stream from his eyes.

DUNNE  
I wanna go back.

BLACK WITCH  
It's just the brain shutting down.  
Memories and dreams with no way to  
rationalize --

DUNNE  
I wanna go back!

She pauses. This time, she speaks with a certain sadness.

BLACK WITCH

Oh, Mr. Dunne. Do you think she would have cared so much for our lives, had she known they would turn out so hollow?

She retreats, still a bit of a blur. Dunne curls up in a fetal position. Whispers to himself.

DUNNE

I wanna go back.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

An old small townhouse, cutely decorated. Joyce comes down the stairs in response to KNOCKING at the door.

JOYCE

Coming!

She opens the door. A distraught Dunne is on the other side.

JOYCE

Morris? What's wrong?

DUNNE

I told her to stay where she was. I told everyone to stay where they were.

JOYCE

Oh, Morris.

DUNNE

I should have evacuated the building.

He collapses in the threshold. She crouches down. Hugs him.

JOYCE

How long are you going to torture yourself?

EXT. RIVERFRONT - DAY

Dunne stands next to Joyce on large gray rocks. Behind them is the floodwall. Before them, the Ohio river runs. Its gentle WHOOSH would never let on as to its true power.

All seems peaceful. A large towboat slowly makes its way upstream, pushing several barges. Dunne watches the surroundings as a mild breeze blows.

DUNNE  
I don't get it.

Joyce looks out over the water.

JOYCE  
What do you mean you don't get it?  
It's the Ohio river. It's  
beautiful. What don't you get?

DUNNE  
She spoke with a British accent.  
Not a native one though. Like an  
exposure accent.

JOYCE  
A foreign recruit?

DUNNE  
I called an old friend in Interpol.  
The name Gertrude Brucker makes a  
lot of important people nervous.

JOYCE  
You couldn't find anything prior to  
her time with the Secret Service?

Dunne shakes his head. Frowns in frustration.

DUNNE  
Why do they meet here?

JOYCE  
(giggles)  
Paducah, Kentucky is the quilting  
capital of the world.

DUNNE  
I don't think people are getting  
killed over that.

JOYCE  
I don't know. Those ladies don't  
mess around.

Dunne concentrates, not in the mood for humor.

DUNNE  
We're missing something.

JOYCE  
I don't know what could be here  
that would interest terrorists.  
There's nothing here but land.

Dunne ponders. The towboat's HORN BLOWS.

DUNNE  
Yeah, there's plenty of that.  
Plenty to hide in.

JOYCE  
And factories.

Dunne nods, takes in a fresh breath of air. Pauses.

DUNNE  
What kinds of factories?

INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

Preston sits at his desk in his borrowed office. Henri and Larissa are with him. Dunne walks in, followed by Joyce.

PRESTON  
Where the hell have you been?

Dunne drops some files in front of Preston.

DUNNE  
Uranium enrichment.

Henri and Larissa perk up.

PRESTON  
What?

DUNNE  
In two thousand two, the  
Portsmouth, Ohio Uranium Enrichment  
Plant was closed and all operations  
were moved down river to Paducah,  
Kentucky.

Preston isn't impressed. He pushes the files away.

PRESTON  
So what? Lots of plants have been  
shut down.

Henri crosses his arms, chuckles.

DUNNE  
The Portsmouth facility was  
declared an historic landmark. The  
equipment is still there.

He leans over the desk.

DUNNE  
Guess who bought the Portsmouth  
facility under a special provision  
in the USEC Privatization Act?

Preston stares a beat. Slowly slides the files back. Opens  
the top one and scans. Afraid of where this is going.

PRESTON  
Senator Samuel MacDougall.

DUNNE  
All they need is uranium. They can  
enrich it here.

Preston leans back, pale. Henri strokes his moustache.

PRESTON  
All we have is conjecture.

DUNNE  
Conjecture?

Dunne rummages through the papers. Produces a photograph.

DUNNE  
Look. Look...

He slaps the photo in front of Preston.

DUNNE  
This is a satellite photo of an  
Algerian uranium mine.  
(taps various spots)  
See the equipment? See the men  
working? They're strip-mining!

He digs through more papers. Pulls out a small map.

DUNNE  
The Ohio runs into the Mississippi,  
which runs all the way to the Gulf  
of Mexico. And Paducah between.

Preston is stunned and nervous.

PRESTON  
They'd never get uranium past the  
port security.

DUNNE  
We have to act, Preston. We don't  
have time for bureaucracy.

PRESTON

You're accusing a U.S. Senator of treason, for Christ's sake!

DUNNE

This isn't something we're gonna be able to look back on and ask ourselves what we could have done differently!

PRESTON

You're gonna need more before I arrest a goddamn U.S. Senator!

Dunne is shocked. He's getting nowhere. Henri smirks.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - DAY

Dunne sits alone on a bench. Sabeer arrives, sits beside him. They both stare forward blankly a few moments.

SABEER

My new wife's name is Qismah. She is a very beautiful woman. I thank God for her.

He pauses. Dunne just stares into the distance.

SABEER

Do you know how Al Din began?

DUNNE

Not for certain.

SABEER

The men who started Al Din had very good intentions.

DUNNE

Are you saying that because you're a member?

Sabeer pauses, almost winces.

SABEER

The day they kill Nadia, they call her a witch. They say she is a traitor. But they tell me... this is what happens to a man who quits Al Din.

Dunne absorbs.

DUNNE  
Why did you quit?

SABEER  
I see them do things I cannot do.

He turns away in reflection, almost teary eyed.

SABEER  
May I tell you another story?

DUNNE  
No more stories.

SABEER  
It's a sad story. But I believe  
it's the one you want to hear.

Their eyes meet.

SABEER  
It starts with a member of Al Din  
named Umar Hanif.

EXT. ALGERIAN VILLAGE - DAY

It's out-of-the-way, with limited development. UMAR HANIF, a tall middle aged Arab man, walks a road with a cane and carries a briefcase.

SABEER (V.O.)  
He was an accountant. He was not a  
kind man.

INT. HANIF'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

A white woman, ZAHRA', and an Arab woman, ABIDA, boil vegetables over a fire. Their heads are covered. We never get a good look at Zahra's face.

SABEER (V.O.)  
He married a white British woman.  
I do not know her British name. He  
made her change it to Zahra'.

INT. HANIF'S HOME - DINING AREA - DAY

The women serve dinner to a prune-faced Hanif.

SABEER (V.O.)  
He also had a second wife, an Arab  
named Abida.

INT. HANIF'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hanif slaps Zahra'. She's crying. He throws her on the bed.

SABEER (V.O.)  
Hanif hated all women. He believed  
they were all deficient in  
intelligence and religion.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

While Zahra' crushes mustard seeds into a paste, Abida comes to her. Slaps her, knocking the bowl out of her lap.

SABEER (V.O.)  
Abida hated Zahra'. And as an  
Arab, she received preference.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Zahra' shows the bulge of pregnancy. Runs her hands across her belly. Abida watches, her face filled with jealousy.

SABEER (V.O.)  
Then Zahra' conceived. But Abida  
was not able to conceive.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Hanif paces the floor impatiently. Abida enters from the other room, carrying a white/Arab mixed race baby, bundled up in a blanket. She fights off a vindictive grin.

SABEER (V.O.)  
Hanif was very angry when he  
learned that the baby was a  
daughter. Her name was Badi'ah.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Badi'ah is now a six year old little dark haired girl. Hanif beats her around the yard with a cane.

SABEER (V.O.)  
Hanif was not kind to her. He beat  
her all the time.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DINING AREA - DAY

An older ARAB MAN, about Hanif's age, sits on the floor, eating with Hanif. The wives and Badi'ah eat in a separate area. Occasionally, the man glances at Badi'ah.

SABEER (V.O.)  
She was promised in marriage at a  
very early age, to a man who was  
also unkind.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Zahra' hurriedly covers Badi'ah, now at puberty, nearly as tall as her mother, in hijab. Only her eyes can be seen.

SABEER (V.O.)  
So her mother escaped with the  
child into the night.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A truck driven by Algerian soldiers stops at the Hanif house. There are also soldiers in the back.

SABEER (V.O.)  
Badi'ah's mother was killed...

Hanif looks into the truck bed. Soldiers pull a frightened and shivering Badi'ah out of the truck.

SABEER (V.O.)  
And Badi'ah was returned to her  
father.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - LATER

The older man, to whom Badi'ah was promised in marriage, drives away with her in the car. Badi'ah looks back. Only her eyes can be seen but in those eyes is sheer terror.

SABEER (V.O.)  
She was married off because she was  
a burden.

INT. BADI'AH'S NEW HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Badi'ah's husband slaps her around. Her face can't be seen because her head never stops getting jarred around. Her hair also obscures her face.

SABEER (V.O.)

Her life was not good. He beat her  
and raped her almost daily.

INT. BADI'AH'S HOME - DINING AREA - DAY

Badi'ah eats with TWO OTHER WIVES. Her face is so bruised and swollen that it's unrecognizable.

SABEER (V.O.)

The other wives hated her. And the  
in-laws practically owned her.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Badi'ah makes her way along a path, if it could be called that. It's thick with overgrowth -- just not quite as thick as everywhere else. She uses a machete to hack through the vines and growth. Carries a water pail.

SABEER (V.O.)

Then one day when Badi'ah went to  
fetch water, fate struck her.

An aggressive little saw-scaled viper slithers toward her. It's pale with two black stripes from eyes to tail-tip. Giving it a demonic appearance.

At first Badi'ah is frightened. She seems to go to a place deep in her mind -- where she is removed. She catches the viper near the head as it viciously snaps.

SABEER (V.O.)

She reached out and grabbed the  
snake with her bare hand.

Badi'ah holds the viper's head, with its jaw open, over the pail's edge. Squeezes its head. Venom oozes from its fangs.

SABEER (V.O.)

Then, she got an idea.

Badi'ah's eyes pulse. Gears turning in her mind.

EXT. BADI'AH'S BACKYARD - DAY

Her husband sits in a chair and works on papers. Badi'ah sets the pail by the back door behind him. Stares at him.

He pauses from his work. Paying her no mind, he rubs his thick long beard. She eases up behind him. He resumes work. She holds the snake head in her hand. The body has been cut away with the machete.

She sticks the snake's fangs into the side of his neck, presses its head. He grabs his neck in pain. Jumps from his chair. Turns and sees her. His eyes burn with fury.

SABEER (V.O.)

She murdered her own husband with  
the head of the serpent.

He pulls the snake head out. Sees what it is. Throws it aside. He's pissed. She zigzags around the yard while he chases her. Then... he slows down. His eyes fill with fear. He staggers. Collapses.

EXT. BACKYARD - HANIF'S HOUSE - DAY

Hanif pokes a brand made of iron into a fire.

SABEER (V.O.)

A widow, she was returned to her  
father. He said she brought a  
curse upon them.

Badi'ah struggles as Abida and relatives hold her steady. Hanif presses the hot iron to her shoulder. Badi'ah screams.

SABEER (V.O.)

He branded her with a jinni.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE - DAY

It's practically a prison. Badi'ah sits in what is basically a cell. Her bruises have healed some and her hair is cropped off but we still don't get a good look at her face.

SABEER (V.O.)

She was sent to a widow house.

INT. WIDOW HOUSE - NIGHT

Badi'ah watches frightened through a barred window. The flicker of fire against her face.

EXT. WIDOW HOUSE - NIGHT

VILLAGERS carry torches. Rocks pelt the walls of the house.

SABEER (V.O.)

The villagers yell that Badi'ah is a witch and throw stones at the widow house. They want her dead.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - DAY

Sabeer stares into space as Dunne listens captivated.

SABEER

The next morning, they came for her but she had disappeared in the night.

DUNNE

What happened to her?

SABEER

No one knows. There are only rumors. They are like ghost stories.

DUNNE

Like what?

SABEER

That Satan took her away and made a wife of her... but her depravity was so great that he could not control her... and she came back from hell.

DUNNE

What does she want?

SABEER

The Black Witch wants to cut off the head of Al Din the way she cut off the head of the serpent.

DUNNE

She wants Dharr Badr.

Sabeer nods. His eyes well with tears.

DUNNE

Why are you telling me this?

SABEER  
I've done things I...

DUNNE  
I want to help you Sabeer, but you  
have to tell me why you're here.

He fights to keep composure.

SABEER  
I will tell you this. Al Din does  
nothing without cause. They kill  
no one, kidnap no one... nothing  
without cause.

INT. JOYCE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joyce works at her computer. She pauses when she hears  
someone stumbling down the hall. Dunne goes by her office in  
a drunken stupor. Carrying a half empty whiskey bottle.

JOYCE  
Oh my God.

Dunne comes back, staggers into the doorway.

DUNNE  
There you are. They said you were  
working late.

JOYCE  
What are you doing?

DUNNE  
I was walking along drunk when I  
had a beautiful revelation.

Joyce puts away papers in preparation to leave.

JOYCE  
I need to get you home.

DUNNE  
No. Listen. I'm getting smart  
about this.

He holds up his bottle.

DUNNE  
First, I went and bought this  
randomly.

He takes a swig.

DUNNE  
That way, I made sure it doesn't  
have any poison in it.

Joyce closes up her desk. Grabs her purse.

DUNNE  
And then it hit me.

JOYCE  
What's that?

DUNNE  
No one knows what Dharr Badr looks  
like. We don't have a file photo.

JOYCE  
And that means...

DUNNE  
Don't you see? Dharr Badr is here.  
In Paducah.

JOYCE  
And you know this how?

DUNNE  
Because the Black Witch wants him.

JOYCE  
And you know that how?

She steps into the...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Turns out the lights in her office. Closes the door.

DUNNE  
Because that's what I was told.

Dunne uses Joyce as a crutch. His other arm, whiskey bottle  
in hand, swings loosely.

JOYCE  
And who told you this?

DUNNE  
I can't tell you... but his name  
starts with Sabeer.

JOYCE  
Sabeer told you that?

DUNNE

He told me the Black Witch wants Dharr Badr. From that I deduced he must be here.

JOYCE

If Dharr Badr was here, why hasn't the Black Witch already killed him?

DUNNE

Because she doesn't know who he is. She's flushing him out.

Joyce struggles under Dunne's unsteady weight.

DUNNE

I don't want to go back to my hotel. Can I stay with you?

They arrive at the elevator. Joyce considers.

JOYCE

I guess so.

DUNNE

That's real hospitable, Joyce.

She presses the elevator button. Dunne leans over, kisses her quickly on the side of the cheek.

DUNNE

I love women, Joyce.

She plays along, humoring him.

JOYCE

That's nice.

DUNNE

Some people don't like women. But I think women are wonderful.

JOYCE

We are. We're all wonderful.

DING. The elevator doors open. She helps him in.

DUNNE

I mean, you got your crazy bitches.

JOYCE

Oh yeah, those crazy bitches.

DUNNE  
But most are all right.

JOYCE  
Yeah, most are all right.

Joyce presses the button. Dunne leans against the wall.

DUNNE  
Joyce? Do you like to dance?

JOYCE  
Sometimes.

DUNNE  
I mean, like ballroom dancing?

The doors close.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dunne lies on the couch. Inebriated to the point of being barely conscious. Joyce sets his bottle on the coffee table. Then she sits on the table. Watches Dunne. He slurs quietly with his eyes closed.

DUNNE  
Can I tell you something?

JOYCE  
Sure.

DUNNE  
I'm a bad person.

JOYCE  
(frowns)  
You're not a bad person.

DUNNE  
Yes, I am.

JOYCE  
You're just a man who lost his wife... and then lost himself.

DUNNE  
When I was climbing over the debris... I didn't care about anything but Abby.

Dunne chokes up slightly.

DUNNE

I must have gone past other people,  
beneath the wreckage... but I  
didn't care.

Joyce listens captivated. Her eyes well with tears.

DUNNE

I saw a piece of this bulletin  
board I knew was near her desk...

Dunne opens his eyes, moist with tears.

DUNNE

I just started digging. And I've  
been digging ever since.

She puts a hand comfortingly on his arm.

JOYCE

You can start over again.

He closes his eyes. Passes out. Joyce watches him a moment.

JOYCE

Can I tell you something?

He lies still. Joyce hesitates even so.

JOYCE

When I was sixteen... I went to  
Nashville with my friends. To  
party at a dance club.

She looks away.

JOYCE

We had fake IDs but they didn't  
even check. It was New Year's Eve.

She reflects. Up to now, it would have been a fond memory.

JOYCE

Anyway, we met these college guys.  
I danced a lot with one of them.  
We went back to their frat house.

Her expression changes. It's getting more difficult.

JOYCE

The next thing I knew, I felt...  
sluggish. I can only remember bits  
and pieces.

She chokes up. Tears well in her eyes.

JOYCE

But I remember them on me.  
Different ones. And the others  
standing over me. I don't know how  
many there were.

Tears stream down her cheeks.

JOYCE

But in the fragments, I can feel  
it. It's like... drowning.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Dunne works at Joyce's computer. Joyce comes from the  
kitchen with two cups of coffee. Sets one on the desk.

JOYCE

How do you feel?

DUNNE

Like shit, thanks. Hey, about last  
night...

JOYCE

Don't say you're sorry. Sorry can  
mean you're sorry or it can be an  
excuse not to change.

Dunne nods with a faint smile. Stands, faces her. She's  
wondering what he's doing. He hugs her.

DUNNE

I'm sorry.

She's stunned. Not sure what he's talking about. Then she  
realizes he must have heard her story. She hugs him back.

JOYCE

I guess we all have our tragedies.

After a moment, they pull apart. Dunne gazes at her, making  
sure she's okay. They have an unspoken bond between them.  
Dunne sits back at the computer.

JOYCE

What are you reading?

DUNNE  
 Algeria is a mixed up place.  
 Berbers and Arabs and French and  
 British. I figure Badi'ah was  
 extracted by British Intelligence.

JOYCE  
 But why?

DUNNE  
 I don't know but she eventually  
 became Gertrude Brucker.

JOYCE  
 Murderess extraordinaire.

DUNNE  
 It just doesn't make sense. They  
 never made their demands. Why  
 would they kidnap an FBI agent?

Joyce sips her coffee. Throws out suggestions.

JOYCE  
 To scare us... to provoke us...

DUNNE  
 They could extort anybody. Why the  
 FBI?

JOYCE  
 Maybe they wanted to bring the FBI  
 into it.

Dunne's eyes pulse.

DUNNE  
 Maybe they needed the FBI.

INT. FBI OFFICE - DAY

Dunne is at the computer. Joyce and Larissa study files.  
 Preston enters, enraged.

PRESTON  
 What the hell is this, Dunne? I  
 just got word from Washington that  
 I'm being investigated!

Dunne rises from his seat as Preston approaches.

DUNNE  
 I'm just covering all the angles.

PRESTON  
You son of a bitch. That agent  
they were holding hostage? He's a  
friend of mine.

He SLUGS Dunne, knocking him... into some boxes in a corner.

PRESTON  
He has a wife and daughter.

Dunne rubs his jaw. Preston is almost teary eyed.

PRESTON  
Do you have any idea what it was  
like to see the name of a fellow  
agent, and a good friend, on that  
print report? He saved my life  
once, for Christ's sake!

DUNNE  
They wanted you involved.

PRESTON  
What the hell are you talking  
about?

Dunne climbs to his feet. Wiggles his jaw.

DUNNE  
Pretty good punch.

PRESTON  
I want you out of here, Dunne.  
You're a first class fuck-up and I  
want you out!

Preston storms out. Dunne rushes after him, leaving Joyce  
and Larissa behind.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Dunne follows Preston toward the main reception area.

DUNNE  
You may even have a traitor on  
board.

Preston is so outraged, he turns and throws another punch.  
Dunne blocks it. Shoves Preston back.

DUNNE  
Only the first one is free. The  
rest you have to earn.

PRESTON  
You got something to say, Dunne?

DUNNE  
They needed the FBI.

Preston turns and steps into the...

INT. MAIN RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Dunne follows.

PRESTON  
What the hell for?

DUNNE  
What does the FBI do? What powers  
do they have?

PRESTON  
The FBI doesn't normally handle  
international crimes, jerk!

DUNNE  
But the FBI does handle frozen Al  
Din accounts.

HENRI (O.S.)  
Very good, Mr. Dunne.

Preston and Dunne turn toward the entrance. Henri is there with a pistol pointed at them. Behind him, SEVERAL GUARDS enter with guns. Surround them. Then MacDougall enters.

PRESTON  
What the hell is this?

Henri keeps his pistol trained on his captives as their weapons are confiscated.

DUNNE  
It all went wrong with the  
extortion.

Preston looks at Henri, shocked.

PRESTON  
You're Al Din?

DUNNE  
Meet Dharr Badr himself.

Henri smiles and nods. Preston is flabbergasted.

HENRI

My father was Arab and my mother was French... but you already figured that out.

He steps toward Dunne.

HENRI

My father liked the idea of having his enemy's woman. He called it bleeding the pig.

DUNNE

But you decided to walk in his footsteps anyway?

HENRI

I'm a Muslim, Mr. Dunne. My cause is greater than me... or my family.

DUNNE

Or anybody else's.

HENRI

We would not have asked for much. Only for the FBI to unfreeze some accounts.

DUNNE

It costs a lot of money to fund your little régime du sabre?

HENRI

No price is too high.

DUNNE

You still have to get the uranium into the U.S.

HENRI

Transportation has already been procured.

EXT. TOWBOAT - DAY

A Russian man, VANYA KOSTYAVICH, stands on the deck, leaning on a guardrail. Tall and brawny with a bald head and thick moustache. His jacket flaps in the wind. Beside him is his RUSSIAN BODYGUARD, an empty-eyed woman with a pitiless face.

HENRI (V.O.)

A man named Vanya Kostyavich, a Russian arms dealer whose name may be familiar to you, Mr. Dunne, is traveling by riverboat up the Ohio river as we speak.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

The towboat plods forward, along the Mississippi river. Pushing several barges. Approaches the confluence of the Ohio river. The cargo containers are covered. Printed on the side - "Petrochemicals."

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

The dark shape of the lower portion of the barge can be seen through the murky river water. About three meters submerged.

HENRI (V.O.)

Beneath one of the cargo containers is a specially designed compartment.

Firmly attached to the bottom of the barge is a post, approximately three meters long. Attached at the other end of the post is a bathtub sized lead container.

HENRI (V.O.)

This compartment is itself a radiation shield. Submerged sufficiently beneath the water's surface, it will be undetectable to authorities.

INT. MAIN RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Henri cracks a subtle grin, impressed by his own brilliance.

DUNNE

But you still gotta pay for it.

PRESTON

And I'm not about to give any order to unfreeze any Al Din assets.

HENRI

(smirks)

We know alternate forms of persuasion.

Preston turns his attention to MacDougall.

PRESTON  
You son of a bitch. You're a  
disgrace! And a traitor!

MacDougall returns a look of arrogance and utter contempt.

MACDOUGALL  
There's no such thing as a traitor  
anymore, Agent Preston. We're  
global now.

DUNNE  
And a global economy is going to  
need bankers, right MacDougall?

MACDOUGALL  
You can't beat war, Mr. Dunne.  
It's the only way to make a fortune  
by losing all your assets.

Dunne notices... down the hall. Joyce and Larissa creep toward the reception area with guns drawn. Joyce rushes into the room, aiming her firearm at Henri.

JOYCE  
Freeze! Put the guns down!  
(off his smirk)  
I'm not kidding, asshole!

Larissa turns her gun on Joyce.

LARISSA  
Neither am I.

Joyce is stunned. The barrel is at her temple.

LARISSA  
Give me the gun, bitch.

Preston stares at Larissa in disbelief.

PRESTON  
Larissa? Why?

Larissa takes Joyce's gun. Shoves her toward Dunne.

LARISSA  
In this business, you either get  
made or you get paid.

PRESTON  
You did this for money?

LARISSA

I can't think of a better motive.

Henri motions to one of the guards.

HENRI

Get the truck.

EXT. HIDDEN COMPOUND - DAY

Nestled deep in the woods. Very makeshift. Some wooden buildings. Some stone buildings. The center of the camp is an open area. There are various vehicles, mostly trucks.

ARMED GUARDS are posted in various positions. Forming a perimeter. They all carry weapons, some handguns, some rifles. Some have knives or machetes sheathed. Guards converge upon the camp center as a large truck approaches.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Guards usher Dunne, Preston and Joyce in. All three have their hands bound behind them. Fear all over their faces. A dingy concrete floor. There's a long thick wooden table in the center of the room. A laptop computer atop.

Sabeer sits with his arms tied to the arms of a thick wooden chair. He's tied at the wrists, elbows, and around the shoulders. His face is filled with terror.

Henri, MacDougall and Larissa enter. Henri wears a military uniform. A gun belt with pistol. An Arab man, GHAZI, enters wearing a belt with a machete. Henri motions to a guard.

HENRI

Go and bring our guest.

The guard leaves. Henri turns to Larissa.

HENRI

It's time. Go to the river and pick up Mr. Kostyavich.

Larissa flashes Dunne a look before leaving. Dunne stares at Sabeer, talks to Henri.

DUNNE

You needed the Algerian government to allow the mining.

Sabeer lowers his head in shame.

HENRI

Sabeer is the chief accountant in Algiers. We could not have done this without him.

DUNNE

Then why is he here like us?

HENRI

Unlike the senator, Mr. Talal was not a willing participant. We had to take his wife, Qismah, as a hostage. We will need him to move the funds.

Dunne watches Sabeer in disbelief. Their eyes meet.

DUNNE

They're going to build a nuclear weapon.

HENRI

In fairness to him, he is weak... like the Americans. He has no sense of commitment to any cause.

Dunne desperately scans the room. Focuses on MacDougall.

DUNNE

What about MacDougall? All you have on him is greed. That's not a very good control.

MACDOUGALL

Shut the hell up, Dunne.

HENRI

Oh, I agree with you completely.

He motions to a couple of guards. MacDougall turns to Henri, his face filled with arrogance.

MACDOUGALL

You're going to need me until the damn reactor comes on line.

HENRI

Yes, but I think we need a little more commitment.

One of the guards punches MacDougall hard in the abdomen. MacDougall goes down to his knees. One guard holds him while the other punches him repeatedly in the face. Until he's a bloody mess. The hostages watch in horror.

HENRI

Enough.

The guard stops punching him but the other has to hold him up. Another guard enters, pulling with him... Carla MacDougall. Hands bound behind her. She sobs, terrified. Her demure grace is no more. Her long flowing dress is filthy. MacDougall looks at his disheveled wife.

MACDOUGALL

You didn't have to bring her into this.

Henri looks at her with complete indifference.

HENRI

Why not? Is there something else that would work more effectively?

CARLA

Samuel, what's going on?

MACDOUGALL

Let her go. I'll do whatever you ask.

HENRI

(laughs)

You Americans are so stupid. You always think you can make demands.

He knees MacDougall in the face. MacDougall rolls on the floor in pain. Henri turns to a guard.

HENRI

Take Mrs. MacDougall and Ms. Bicksler to their cells.

Guards force Carla and Joyce, terrified, out of the room.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

The guards pull Joyce and Carla from the building. Shove them toward another building across the open center.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Henri turns to the two guards who beat MacDougall.

HENRI

The senator needs to see the consequences that could befall any man who betrays Al Din.

The guards drag the beaten bloody MacDougall from the room. Dunne is more desperate than ever.

DUNNE

Please. The women haven't done anything...

HENRI

You cannot understand. Our cause requires the highest commitment. We must be willing to do anything. To crawl into the belly of the beast and destroy it from the inside.

He motions to a guard.

HENRI

Show Mr. Dunne what the beast has swallowed.

INT. PRISON - DAY

It's a dingy concrete box with four steel cells -- two on each side of the room -- with a walkway between. The guards force the women into separate cells. Carla's guard throws her to the floor. She pleads for her life.

CARLA

Please don't hurt me.

Two guards enter, dragging MacDougall along. They put MacDougall in the cell next to Joyce, so that he can see into Carla's cell. Carla's guard grins wickedly.

He straddles Carla. She struggles beneath him, her hands still bound behind her. He slaps her. Hard. Then again. She cries helplessly as he forces himself between her legs.

He puts one hand around her throat and chokes her. Shoves his other hand between her legs. Rips her panties out from beneath her dress.

MacDougall watches. Helpless. A tear streams from his eye. Two guards force Dunne into the room. He sees what's happening to Carla and fights against his captors.

DUNNE

No!

He wrestles with all his might. The guards pull out clubs and beat him. One whack right after the other pummels him to his knees. Joyce struggles against her guard, trying to get to Dunne.

JOYCE

Leave him alone!

Dunne's guards lift him from the floor, beaten and bloody. His head rolls around his shoulders. They drag him into the cell next to Carla. One of his guards grabs him by the hair and holds his head up.

Tears run down Joyce's cheeks. Then... the guard throws her to the floor. She fights back as he tears at her blouse. Dunne watches, glassy eyed. Powerless.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Preston sits with his arms bound to the chair's arm supports. Tied at the wrists, elbows, and shoulders. Staring at the laptop. The only people in the room now are Preston, Sabeer, Henri and Ghazi the butcher with his machete sheathed.

HENRI

You can access the FBI Intranet. I know there are codes you can enter to unfreeze Al Din's assets.

Preston sweats. His face is so flush with terror that his eyes are almost blank. He stammers from his parched mouth.

PRESTON

I told you. I can't get into the system. It requires a verification that can only be done in Washington.

Henri pauses with a cold glare.

HENRI

Ghazi.

Ghazi pulls the bind at Preston's wrist tight like a tourniquet and brandishes his machete.

HENRI

Wait.

Ghazi pauses. Henri lowers the cover of the laptop. Nods. Ghazi SLAMS the machete onto the arm of the chair like a cleaver on a cutting board. Slices off Preston's hand. Blood spatters the laptop cover.

Preston screams in agony. His hand drops to the concrete floor. He reels back and forth, yelling, eyes watering. Blood covers his stub.

HENRI

Don't lie to me. I know you know  
the necessary codes.

Sabeer winces with horror.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

The riverboat has stopped near a thickly wooded embankment along a remote area of the river. There's only one small section sparsely wooded enough for trucks to come in and out.

Three rowboats approach. In one is Vanya, his female bodyguard and SEVERAL RUSSIAN SOLDERS, of the mercenary variety. In the other two, more soldiers.

Several trucks with Al Din camp guards arrive. Larissa hops from a truck and strides to the river. Vanya and his small army slosh to the bank, pulling their boats ashore.

LARISSA

You made it.

VANYA

(Russian accent)

You'll get the uranium when I get  
my money.

LARISSA

The transaction is being prepared  
at the camp right now.

VANYA

Then we'll go to the camp, do the  
transaction, then you can come back  
and pick up your uranium.

Larissa sighs with a grin. Directs them to the trucks.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Preston is in severe pain. Ghazi tightens the wrist cord and ties it off.

GHAZI

Your binds will keep you from  
bleeding to death.

Preston can hardly speak. Henri nods to Ghazi. Ghazi pulls tight the cord at Preston's elbow.

HENRI

The codes, Agent Preston.

Preston hesitates. A nod from Henri. Ghazi chops off Preston's forearm as though he were swatting at a fly. The horrid sound of the blade smacking the cutting board.

Preston screams. Blood is all over him. On his arm. On his shirt. Down the side of the chair. On the floor below.

HENRI

I don't play games, Agent Preston.  
You will give us the codes or we  
will cut you up, piece by piece,  
until you do.

He motions Ghazi to the other side of the chair. Ghazi steps between Sabeer and Preston. Sabeer watches, powerless. Ghazi looms over Preston's intact arm.

HENRI

As it is now, you have one hand  
left with which to type. With  
which to caress your wife's cheek.  
To hold your children's hands...

Preston quivers and sweats. Almost hyperventilating.

HENRI

If you do not give us the codes the  
next time I ask, I will have to  
type the information in myself.

Preston lowers his face, defeated, but doesn't answer. Henri nods. Ghazi tightens the cord at Preston's wrist.

PRESTON

Wait!

Henri grins. Sabeer lowers his head.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Four cells. Four prisoners. All on the floor. One PRISON GUARD, with a machete sheathed at his side, patrols the cells. Inspects the prisoners...

MacDougall -- motionless near his cell door. Carla -- on her side with her eyes closed. Dunne -- face down, bloody and beaten. Joyce -- detached. Broken. As if her mind is gone.

The guard turns to the door.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

The guard steps outside. Pulls out a cigarette and lights it. Idly surveys.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Carla kicks her shoes off. Raises her knees, positions to press down on her hand with her back. Dunne's eyes flicker with curiosity. She wiggles a bit and then... a loud echoing SNAP. She squeals, clenching her jaw. Breathes rapidly through gritted teeth. In utter anguish.

Dunne watches, confused. Carla raises her left elbow and pulls until... her hand is jerked free. She grinds her teeth in pain. Examines her shaking hand...

The bone running alongside the back of her hand and up to her small finger is shattered. Tiny bumps cover the side of her hand -- bone fragments. Dunne's eyes pulse with horror.

Carla rolls over. Presses herself to her knees, ignoring her horribly convulsing hand with an intense focus.

She deliberately dry heaves. Choking and gagging, until she vomits. Yellow bile mixed with clear pepsin spews from her mouth and splats quietly onto the floor. Then...

A tiny canister hits the floor. She wipes it off as best she can and sets it onto a clear spot on the floor. Wipes her fingertips clean. She holds the canister in her convulsing hand and carefully pulls it apart.

Pours a white powder from it, into a small pile in the vomit. Dunne raises his head, astonished. She pats and stirs the index and middle fingers of her damaged hand in the powder and bile, mixing them. Covering her fingers with the mixture.

She hoists herself to her feet. Staggeres barefoot to the cell door. She is weak but her focus is amazing. She uses the bars to help hold herself up.

CARLA  
Guard! Guard!

EXT. PRISON - DAY

The guard turns his head to the door, having heard her. Drops his cigarette and squashes it with his foot.

INT. PRISON - DAY

The guard enters. Sees Carla standing by her cell door.

GUARD  
What do you want?

CARLA  
Is it true what they say about  
Muslim men?

GUARD  
What are you talking about?

CARLA  
That they marry virgins so no one  
will find out what small penises  
they have?

The guard, furious, steps to Carla's cell. Reaches through the bars and grabs her by the hair.

GUARD  
I'll instruct you --

Carla shoves her hand into his mouth, gagging him. Hooks her other arm around his neck. Holds him close. He chokes, trying to eject the foul substance.

He pulls his machete. Draws back. Carla grabs his sleeve. The cage door RATTLES as they struggle. Then... the guard starts to relax. His eyes widen in horror. His body goes limp, held up only by Carla's arm.

She wraps her injured arm around his neck to hold him. Digs through his pockets and produces... the cell key. Lets the guard's body collapse to the floor. Unlocks the cell. Shoves the guard's dead body as she forces the door open.

The key drops to the floor... right in Dunne's line of sight.

Carla grabs the guard's machete. Turns her attention to MacDougall. Steps by his cell where he lies motionless by the door. He looks up at her. It's all he can do.

She leans down and shoves the blade between the bars... into his side. His eyes pulse with a small grunt. She speaks with the British accent of the Black Witch.

CARLA

It only hurts initially. Then for a moment you wonder if you haven't gotten... used to it.

She pulls the blade out.

CARLA

Then comes the euphoria. And you realize the fear of death you've had all your life is unjustified. Then you feel foolish... and welcome it.

She rises with the machete. Turns to Dunne. He's shocked by everything he's witnessed.

CARLA

I'm not a monster, Mr. Dunne.

She takes a step toward his cell.

CARLA

Oh yes. That's the dark secret of this world. The most cruel and vile people are actually the most... sensitive.

She steps to the door. Cracks it open. Peeks out.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Preston's hand has been released. He types on the computer. Ghazi stands over him with the machete. A special page for the FBI appears on screen. Preston's fingers hover over the keys. Henri pulls his pistol. Aims it at Preston.

HENRI

If you try to warn your associates, Ghazi will cut you to pieces.

He turns toward the doorway.

HENRI

Guard!

EXT. INTERROGATION BUILDING - DAY

The door guard cocks his head, having heard Henri. Turns and enters the building.

INT. INTERROGATION BUILDING - GUARD ROOM - DAY

The guard walks through a small room just outside the Interrogation Room. There's a small window with no glass, for a gun to be fired from.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The guard passes through the doorway. Henri gestures for the guard to post to the side of the entrance. Turns to Preston.

HENRI  
Remember your family.

Preston stares at Henri a moment, terrified. Proceeds to type. Henri watches. A thin smile stretches across his face. He sits on the table. Sets his gun down.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Carla slips out the door. Dunne turns his attention to... the key. He struggles to sit up, like a man possessed. Pulls at his binds with all his might. Grabs one strand and tugs it, eyes ablaze.

He tugs so hard, the binds cut into his skin. He lies on his side, pulling with fury. Yelling. The pulled cord stretches. The cords around his wrist tear his flesh. His fist balled up. Red and bruised. Knuckles white hot.

The pulled cord SNAPS. His arm jerks free. He wrestles himself back onto his knees. Tears at the cords around his wrist -- digging into his own flesh -- to loosen them.

He furiously tugs until relief comes. He's able to free his wrist from the pain. Raises his eyes to... the key.

He slides onto the floor. Stretches his arm through the bars. He can just barely brush the edge of the key.

He pulls his arm back and grabs the cord. Uses a little loop of it to reach for the key again. This time, he hooks around the key and is able to pull it enough to reach it with his fingers and... he's got it.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Preston types. Ghazi and Henri watch. Sabeer slowly raises his head toward the doorway. His eyes widen...

The guard stands with his arms crossed. In the doorway, just to the side and behind him... Carla stands quietly, with a machete hanging in one hand. Her other hand still quivers.

Sabeer glances around. No one has noticed but him. He looks back toward the door. Ghazi slowly looks up, eyes widening. Henri notices Ghazi. Leaps off the table, whips around.

SABEER

Tagati.

The guard sees her, draws his pistol. Carla slices his hand off with the machete. The guard screams. His hand drops to the floor with the pistol still in it.

Carla swipes the blade across his throat. CHING! Across the concrete wall. His body drops to the floor and his head rolls away separately.

Henri's attention snaps to his pistol. He reaches across the table. Just as he's about to grasp it... SLAM! Carla's machete chops like a meat cleaver, slices off his hand.

Henri screams, jerking his severed arm away. Clutching it with his other hand. Carla wipes Henri's hand and gun off the table like a chef wiping chopped vegetables off a cutting board. Henri slumps into a corner with blood all over him.

Ghazi starts to make his way around the table. Carla kicks the table into him and throws him off balance. He regains his footing, shoves the table away. Steps out to face off.

Preston struggles to push his chair away from the table. Maneuvers toward Henri. Stomps and kicks at Henri's face.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Dunne staggers to the door. He pauses at Joyce's cell. She lies motionless, her expression blank. She's there physically but not mentally. Dunne peeks out the door and scans the area. Then slips out.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Ghazi brandishes his machete, trying to scare Carla. She sways rhythmically, like a tribal dance. When Ghazi thrusts, Carla spins into a deep stance and... slices clean through his leg below the knee.

Ghazi screams. His leg slips off his shin. His arms slam onto the table, catching himself. Carla rises in a blur and... WHACKS Ghazi's machete-hand off.

Ghazi screams. Falls off the table, onto the floor. Carla looms over him. With a WHACK, the screaming ceases.

Henri tries to deflect Preston's barrage of stomps. Preston finally exhausts himself, slumps in his chair. Henri pushes from the corner. Desperately crawls away on his elbows and knees until... he arrives at Carla's feet.

He climbs onto his knees. Carla stands over him with the machete. His already horrified face stretches even longer.

HENRI

I give up! I surrender to the FBI!

She gazes mercilessly down at him. Draws back the machete.

HENRI

I know things! They need me!  
Noooooo!

WHACK! The pleading stops. She raises her eyes to Sabeer. He watches, frightened. She shoves the table aside.

Dunne crouches down quietly in the doorway. Carla cocks her head. Aware of his presence. She focuses on Sabeer, with a small grin on her face.

Dunne notices... the guard's severed hand. His gun is still in it. Sabeer's face is flush with both fear and sadness. Carla raises the machete to his abdomen.

SABEER

I knew this day would come.

DUNNE (O.S.)

Stop!

Carla pauses. Turns to see Dunne... pointing the gun at her.

DUNNE

He doesn't deserve to die.

CARLA

Is that true, Mr. Talal? Tell Mr. Dunne why you don't deserve to die.

Dunne looks into Sabeer's anguished eyes.

SABEER

I was there that day.

Dunne can't absorb it. Tears run down Sabeer's cheek.

SABEER

I was young and stupid. But I was there that day. I saw you. You looked right at me.

The realization starts to set in on Dunne's face.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - EMBASSY - DAY

Fifteen years earlier. The van screeches up. The door opens as the gunman approaches. Dunne shoots the gunman down. His eyes meet with the masked man... Sabeer's eyes.

SABEER (V.O.)

I did not know they were going to blow the foundation.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Sabeer gazes at Dunne with moist eyes.

SABEER

Until I saw it with my own eyes. That is why I left Al Din. I'm so sorry.

Sabeer weeps. Dunne stares, dazed. Lowers his gun.

SABEER

I'm so sorry --

His words are cut short as... Carla sticks the machete into his abdomen. Sabeer's eyes go wide.

CARLA

(to Dunne)

It might interest you to know that the driver was a future Imam named Rafi.

She chops at Sabeer's binds -- releasing him. Sabeer slumps in his chair. Slides onto the floor as Carla backs away. Dunne goes to Sabeer. Holds his head in his arms.

SABEER

Can you ever forgive me?

DUNNE

Everything's going to be all right. Nadia's waiting. She's waiting for you.

SABEER  
No more stories.

Sabeer succumbs. Carla stands a few meters behind Dunne.

CARLA  
Poor Mr. Dunne. You'll always be  
digging through that rubble and  
you'll always find me.

She saunters off. Dunne raises his eyes with a revelation.

DUNNE  
You're that girl.

He stands. Carla has her back to him.

DUNNE  
From the embassy.

As she turns to face him...

FLASH-CUT -- Dunne turns over the soot covered girl from the  
debris the day his wife died.

CARLA  
My mother was prepared to deliver  
the names of all the members of Al  
Din in exchange for protection.

All Dunne can do is stare in shock.

INT. EMBASSY - DAY

It's the day of the bombing. Abby and Badi'ah's mother  
frantically shove young Badi'ah under Abby's desk. The whole  
room is crooked.

CARLA (V.O.)  
All she asked was a taste of the  
same freedom most people take for  
granted.

The gold locket drops onto the floor by Badi'ah. She sees  
it. Reaches out and grabs it.

CARLA (V.O.)  
The locket fell quite by accident.  
I picked it up and your wife gave  
it to me for comfort. There wasn't  
time for much else.

Abby hastily closes Badi'ah's hand over the locket just before she slips away.

CARLA (V.O.)

But as I lied beneath that desk with that keepsake clenched in my fist, I looked at the faces of two mothers.

Badi'ah's eyes catch Abby and her mother. Both women watch Badi'ah with tremendous sadness. Cracked walls give way.

CARLA (V.O.)

One sad for the child she had... the other sad for the child she'd hoped for. Both having exercised their last maternal acts.

EXT. OUTSIDE EMBASSY RUBBLE - DAY

It's the scene of chaos after the demolition. A rescue worker carries Badi'ah to an ambulance. She's placed on a stretcher. Then into the back of the ambulance. She opens her hand to reveal... she's still holding the locket.

CARLA (V.O.)

It's astonishing, the comfort a mere locket can grant.

EXT. BADI'AH'S BACKYARD - DAY

The young girl goes through her husband's papers while his dead body lies in the yard.

CARLA (V.O.)

After my mother was killed, I was returned to Algeria.

She studies one of the documents carefully.

CARLA (V.O.)

Even at my youthful age, I understood the advantage of making oneself valuable to some government or another.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Dunne raises his gun at her, repulsed yet sympathetic.

DUNNE

That doesn't excuse what you've done. What you've become. You're sick.

CARLA

Have you ever been so committed to a cause, Mr. Dunne, that you forgot everything else around you... even yourself?

FLASH-CUT -- Dunne searches through debris at the embassy.

CARLA

You didn't care who lived or died?

FLASH-CUT -- Dunne pulls a young Badi'ah from the debris.

CARLA

Except that one thing that meant so much to you...

FLASH-CUT -- The locket opened, showing the picture of Abby and Dunne smiling happily.

CARLA

A picture, for which you'd toss your life away like a soda tab... just to be a leaf in its background?

Dunne slowly lowers his gun.

CARLA

Would you die for that cause?

She turns and steps into the guard room.

INT. GUARD ROOM - DAY

Dunne enters. Carla stands at the window, staring out.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

The convoy arrives, carrying Larissa and Vanya. Al Din soldiers converge upon the area.

INT. GUARD ROOM - DAY

Dunne steps to the window and looks out.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

Larissa and Vanya with his small army approach, escorted by armed Al Din soldiers.

INT. GUARD ROOM - DAY

Dunne stares. Entranced. Fixated.

CARLA  
Would you kill for that cause?

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

Dunne steps outside, gun in hand, and approaches. Vanya notices. Doesn't know who he is. Dunne is beaten and bloody but hasn't attracted much attention yet.

He raises his gun, points at Vanya. Vanya's eyes widen but before he can react... BANG! Dunne fires off a round. The bullet rips through Vanya's neck, spattering blood all over his face. He falls back holding his neck.

RUSSIAN BODYGUARD  
It's a trap!

The Russians pull out guns. The Al Din soldiers pull out guns. Dunne lowers to one knee, firing off rounds like he's gone crazy. Larissa runs for cover.

The entire camp center erupts into a war zone. Bullets rip everywhere. People run for cover behind trucks or buildings. Pieces of buildings are blown off as bullets riddle them.

Larissa runs to the wood-line and jumps into the bushes. People are being shot -- blood splashing -- and blown down in every direction. Dunne, on his knee, fires nonstop in the middle of it all.

INT. GUARD ROOM - DAY

Carla watches from the window. Her eyes pulse.

CARLA  
It's beautiful.

A piece of wall by the window is blown off by a bullet. Carla mildly flinches as broken rocks are flung into the air. She calmly resumes watching.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

A bullet rips through Dunne's shoulder. Throws him onto the ground. He fights to get up. A bullet rips through his thigh. Then another hits him in the side. Then the chest.

Dunne goes down. The noise of battle chisels down to sporadic gunfire until... two final soldiers, one Russian and one Al Din, whip toward each other in the heat of battle and... BANG! BANG! They gun each other down.

Silence. The battlefield is now just a smoke filled body dump with an eerie silence looming over it.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY - LATER

Dead bodies everywhere. It's a massacre. The air is still smoky. Larissa makes her way through the carnage, coughing occasionally. She notices Dunne lying on the ground. Steps to him. He strains to breathe.

LARISSA

Damn, Dunne. That was badass.

She turns around and goes toward the interrogation room.

INT. GUARD ROOM - DAY

It's empty. Larissa passes through.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Larissa enters in disbelief at the state of it. Blood is everywhere. She tries to assess all the bodies. Preston groans. Alive -- barely. She steps to him.

LARISSA

You're a mess, Preston.

(aims her firearm)

I better clean you up.

BANG! Preston's body jerks from the bullet, then becomes motionless. As she starts to pull away, she notices... something glimmering, sticking out of Preston's pocket.

She reaches in. Pulls out the locket. Squeezes it in her hand. As she exits, she pauses to look at... Carla's body lying still on the floor, her throat cut.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

Larissa steps out of the guard room. Heads toward Dunne.

LARISSA  
There's good news and bad news all  
around, Dunne.

She steps to him.

LARISSA  
The good news is that you fucked  
everything up and you're a hero.

Holds out the locket.

LARISSA  
For that, you get your precious  
locket back.

Drops it onto his body.

LARISSA  
Unfortunately, that's bad news for  
me. So I've had to change the plan  
and I'm going to have to take  
credit for a lot of what you did.  
So the new good news is that now  
I'm gonna be the hero.

Points her gun at him.

LARISSA  
Unfortunately, that's bad news for  
you.

Dunne struggles to speak.

DUNNE  
Black... Witch.

LARISSA  
(giggles)  
No, I'm not the Black Witch, honey.  
I told you, for me it's just plain  
ole greed.

Larissa gasps as a machete blade shoots out of her abdomen.  
Carla leans over her shoulder from behind.

CARLA  
And that's what makes you so  
reliable.

She takes the gun from Larissa's hand just before... Larissa falls to the ground. Carla kneels by Dunne.

CARLA

Oh, Mr. Dunne. Do you know what I love so much about you? For better or worse, you always have something in your life that's more valuable to you than life itself.

Dunne reaches up, touches her throat. In a nurturing way.

DUNNE

Your throat?

CARLA

Regrettably, I found it necessary to cut it. At least superficially.

Dunne limply drops his hand with a slight smile.

DUNNE

You're crazy.

She looks at him with a hint of sentimentality.

CARLA

I often wonder if our life paths had been different, if we would have turned out the same.

DUNNE

You never struck me as the romantic type.

CARLA

It's emotionally indulgent to ponder what might have been, I know.

She looks at Dunne in a manner that might be mistaken for tenderness.

CARLA

Still I wonder, if under different circumstances, I might not have been someone's Abigail.

Dunne strains to smile.

DUNNE

You can start over. I do it every day.

Carla smiles faintly. Takes the locket and tucks it into Dunne's pocket.

CARLA  
So do I, Mr. Dunne.

Dunne drifts into unconsciousness. Carla stands with Larissa's gun in her hand. Dunne turns his head limply and murmurs softly in his sleep.

DUNNE  
Joyce...

Carla cocks her head, strangely saddened.

CARLA  
Sleep well, my odd companion.  
You'll always be my savior. And  
I'll always be your frightened  
young girl, hiding under a desk and  
clutching your locket of hope.

She watches a moment longer, indulging in nostalgia.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY - LATER

A MEDIC looks down. A chopper flies loudly overhead.

MEDIC  
Hang on! You're going to be all  
right!

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

FBI AGENTS stand at the edge of the river. DIVERS pull the uranium container from the water. An AGENT smokes a cigarette. Blows smoke and speaks to the COMMANDER.

AGENT  
Damn. Dunne's a hero.

The commander talks into a radio.

COMMANDER  
What's going on back there?

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

Federal agents sort through the carnage. A SECOND and THIRD AGENT look around in awe at the devastation.

SECOND AGENT  
Shit, what a mess.

The third agent talks on the radio.

THIRD AGENT  
So far we've only found three survivors. Bicksler and Dunne are on one medevac. Cook just left on another.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

The commander responds.

COMMANDER  
What about the Black Witch?

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

The third agent looks at the ground, responds.

THIRD AGENT  
She's dead.

The second agent looks down. A woman's legs extend beyond the hem of Carla's dress.

SECOND AGENT (O.S.)  
So this is the Black Witch?

THIRD AGENT (O.S.)  
Yep. Somebody finally put a bullet in her head.

The woman who lies on the ground motionless... is Larissa. Wearing Carla's dress. A bullet wound on her forehead.

INT. MEDAVAC - DAY

A loud chopper. The medavac PILOT speaks into the back with a raised voice.

PILOT  
Just hold on, Larissa. We're almost there. You're gonna be all right.

Behind him -- unseen by him -- Carla sits up in the  
stretcher, wearing Larissa's clothes. She looks at the pilot  
with an evil glare. A ghoulish smile across her face.

CARLA  
I feel better already.

FADE OUT.

THE END