

A DARK REFLECTION

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. AIRLINER - NIGHT

The 50-passenger plane cruises over a darkened land. Most windows are dark; a few ghosted by yellow light. The ENGINE'S DRONE is a lonely sound in this vast blackness.

INT. AIRLINER CABIN - NIGHT

Half of the seats are occupied; the PASSENGERS asleep. A few reading lights are on, lending a dim glow to the cabin.

MAE HILTON (30s), attractive, is having a nightmare, judging from the grimace distorting her face. Her eyes suddenly snap open and she stares around her in a panic.

She relaxes and takes a deep breath. Then a FLASH at her side startles her.

HER POV - THE WINDOW

In the distance LIGHTNING crackles into life momentarily. Then MORE LIGHTNING FLASHES are born and quickly die.

BACK TO SCENE IN CABIN

Mae rubs her eyes, unbuckles, stands up. She walks down the length of the cabin, glancing at the sleeping people.

REAR OF CABIN

Mae stops in front of the lavatory door, notices the FLIGHT ATTENDANT slumped in the nearest seat, fast asleep. Mae shrugs, opens the door and steps in.

INT. LAVATORY

Mae turns the faucet on, holds her hands under the water, then splashes her face. She straightens up and stares into the mirror.

HER POV - MIRROR

Her haggard face stares back at her, then slowly the image loses focus, blurs, dissipates...and a NEW IMAGE appears:

INT. HILTON LIVING ROOM - DAY - 10 HOURS BEFORE

IN THE MIRROR we SEE the expansive room filled with leather and glass furnishings--a room designed to please an unsophisticated man. That man is BRYCE HILTON, 40s, tall, muscular body going soft.

He feeds a log into the blaze in the fireplace then crosses to the bar. He addresses DR JAMES COCKRELL, who's lounging on a big sofa, cocktail in hand.

HILTON
So you tested that formula we
borrowed from Lassiter Biochem?

Cockrell, 30s, handsome, sneers at Hilton's back.

COCKRELL
Killed every rat and monkey in the
lab.

HILTON
What about side effects?

COCKRELL
Uh, Bryce, what side effect could
be worse than death?
(laughs)
CIA's gonna give us a fortune when
we demonstrate it.

Hilton picks up a plastic bottle from the bar top and squeezes a dollop of the clear gel on his hand.

HILTON
Or we could sell it to the Ruskies.
Or Chinese. Save them the bother of
stealing it from the CIA, huh?

He laughs as he rubs the gel on his hands. He looks OS.

HILTON (CONT'D)
You'll be able to buy every fucking
dress in Paris, Mae.

MAE (O.S.)
You always know just what a girl
wants, Bryce.

Hilton's smile turns into a rictus, his body spasms, and he collapses, the side of his head smashing into the bar's edge.

Cockrell gets up languidly and crosses to the body. Mae walks into view, her back to the mirror, and stares at the body. A puddle of blood spreads out from underneath Hilton's head.

COCKRELL
Unfucking believable. The cops will
blame the fall for his death.

MAE
They'll still run a toxicology
screen.

COCKRELL
ZR23 is undetectable, Mae.

MAE
Famous last words, James.

She bends down, pulls the hand holding the bottle out of the spreading blood, and takes the bottle.

COCKRELL
Don't think that hand sanitizer is
gonna be one of our big sellers.

Mae stands and walks toward us, stopping when her face fills the mirror. Her face is devoid of expression.

MIRROR GOES BLACK for several beats, then the IMAGE OF THE LAVATORY is reflected back in the mirror.

BACK TO SCENE IN LAVATORY

Mae sighs in relief, then her jaw drops open when she realizes HER IMAGE ISN'T BEING REFLECTED BACK.

REAR OF CABIN

The lavatory door flies open and Mae staggers out, hands over her mouth. She spins around in a panic and screams: all of the PASSENGERS HAVE DISAPPEARED.

GALLEY AT FRONT OF CABIN

Mae stumbles her way to the front of the cabin, eyes avoiding all the empty seats around her.

MAE
No...no...no...

She stops at the cockpit door and bangs on it.

MAE (CONT'D)
Open up! What's going on! Open up!

She kicks the door several times. Finally backs away, tears streaming down her face.

CABIN

Mae stumbles back to her seat.

MAE
Where is everybody?

She sinks down in her seat, stares ahead blankly, then grabs her handbag from the seat next to hers. She fumbles it open and pulls out a bottle of pills.

Then her hand freezes, the fingers spring open, and the bottle slips away to the floor. She reaches back into the bag and pulls out the bottle of hand sanitizer:

INSERT - BOTTLE

Bloody finger smudges have dried on it. Hers.

MAE (O.S.)
His blood....

BACK TO SCENE IN CABIN

A SOFT THUD makes her jump. She turns around and screams:

HER POV - WINDOW

Her own face is pressed up against the window. The face is pale, the eyes dark, the hair twisting wildly in the jet stream. Mae #2 frowns. Her VOICE can be heard faintly:

MAE #2
No way the ZR23 could've worked its way into his bloodstream so fast, right? Right?

BACK TO SCENE IN CABIN

Mae ejects from the seat, face contorted in terror, breath coming in gasps. After a few beats, her eyes close and she subsides to the floor.

EXT. AIRPORT TAXIWAY - DAWN

The plane is parked on the taxiway. Faces press at the windows, looking down at the AMBULANCE parked in front of the passenger loading stairs.

TWO EMT's walk a gurney down the steps. Mae's body is in a bodybag. The MEDICAL EXAMINER (50s) follows, bag in hand.

By the side of the elevator stand two cops: DETECTIVES TED SIMAK (40s) and HANK DIAZ (30s). They watch the body being loaded, then shift their attention to the ME who joins them.

DETECTIVE SIMAK
Any idea what killed her?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Not yet. But it's weird.

DETECTIVE DIAZ
What is?

The ME is lost in thought as he watches the ambulance depart.

DETECTIVE DIAZ (CONT'D)
Doc? What's weird?

The ME walks away. The Detectives exchange a look, then jog to catch up with the ME.

DETECTIVE SIMAK
Doc, you gonna tell us what the problem is?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Oh. Right.
(pause)
She's been dead for ten or twelve hours.

DETECTIVE DIAZ
But the flight was only ninety minutes long.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
That's right.

The perplexed Detectives stop and watch the ME walk away.

FADE OUT.