

DAGGERMAN MEETS EXACTOWOMAN

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

On the sandy shore, LEWIS (9), builds sandcastles with his sister, OLIVIA (7). Their mother, ELLEN, sunbathes close by.

Lewis stands up and pretends to be a giant monster. He steps on and kicks the sandcastles. Olivia cries and Lewis laughs.

Lewis runs into the water. He dives and submerges himself.

He opens his eyes and sees a strange fish with two antennae-like tendrils. Lewis reaches his hand towards the fish.

The fish lashes out with a tendril and slices Lewis' finger.

Lewis emerges from the water and examines his bloody wound. He bawls and runs back to shore to show his mother.

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Ellen stands in front of the stove. She hums a tune and stirs a batch of oatmeal inside a large pot.

She grabs a jar of maple syrup and adds some to the mix. Lewis enters and keeps his distance from his mother.

LEWIS

Mom?

ELLEN

What is it, sweetheart?

LEWIS

What's happening to me?

ELLEN

What do you mean?

Ellen turns to look at her son. She drops the jar of maple syrup and it breaks against the floor.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Oh, my God! Are you all right?

Lewis has sporadic black bumps protruding from his flesh and the pyjamas he wears are severely torn.

Ellen rushes to her son and takes hold of his wrist. She lifts Lewis' arm to her face to look closer at the bumps.

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
What on Earth are these?

The bumps are small and oval-shaped, with what appears to be a dull edge across the middle of each one.

Ellen uses her thumb to feel one of the bumps on Lewis' hand. Upon contact with the strange defect, Ellen's thumb severs.

Her thumb drops to the floor and Ellen winces in pain. She stares at her injury and cries out. Lewis is shocked.

LEWIS  
I didn't mean to!

Olivia enters.

OLIVIA  
What's wrong, mommy?

Ellen and Lewis turn to where Olivia stands. Olivia sees the bumps on her brother and screams in fear.

ELLEN  
Quiet!

Olivia stops screaming.

Ellen picks up her thumb. She goes and takes hold of Olivia's wrist. Ellen turns back towards Lewis.

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
Lewis. Wait here. I need to go to the hospital with your sister.

LEWIS  
What about me? I think there's something wrong with me.

ELLEN  
Nothing's wrong! Just stay inside. Stay hidden. We'll be right back.

Ellen guides Olivia out of the room and out the front door. Lewis stands still, where his mother and sister left him.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

The PRINCIPAL sits behind his desk. Ellen sits opposite him.

PRINCIPAL  
We will be sorry to see Lewis go. Are you sure you won't reconsider?

ELLEN

No. My mind is made up.

PRINCIPAL

Very well, the choice is yours.

Ellen stands up from her seat.

ELLEN

Are we done here? I have a prior commitment I need to attend.

PRINCIPAL

If you don't mind, I have one more question for you, Ms. Findley.

Ellen checks her wristwatch.

ELLEN

I'm in sort of a rush.

PRINCIPAL

This won't take long.

ELLEN

What is it?

PRINCIPAL

Please, sit back down.

Ellen glares at the principal and sits down.

PRINCIPAL

I'm curious to know why you won't be homeschooling Olivia as well?

ELLEN

She hasn't suffered any stress or anxiety from attending your school.

PRINCIPAL

That's good to hear.

ELLEN

Then, what's with the face?

PRINCIPAL

I'm surprised to learn your son is an exception. Lewis is a very bright student and well-liked by both his peers and his teachers.

Ellen's eyes well up with tears.

ELLEN

How dare you question me.

The tears roll down Ellen's cheeks. She wipes them away.

PRINCIPAL

You misunderstand.

ELLEN

I know what's best for my children.

PRINCIPAL

I agree completely.

ELLEN

Can I go now, finally?

PRINCIPAL

Of course.

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

An open book rests on a music stand. Lewis reads out loud, in the same voice he had before his bodily changes.

He's almost completely covered with what look like thick fish scales, except they jut out and are exceedingly sharp.

He looks almost like a human-shaped pinecone. Only his eyes and the bottoms of his feet remain scale-free.

LEWIS

Swift as a shadow, short as any  
dream: brief as the lightning in  
the collied night, that in a spleen  
unfolds both heaven and earth-- I'm  
done with these pages, mom.

Ellen paces the cement floor.

She slows to a stop and looks over at Lewis. She walks to the music stand and turns to the next pages of the book.

ELLEN

Go on, then.

Lewis resumes reading.

LEWIS

And ere a man hath power to say  
Behold! The jaws of darkness do  
devour it up-- Are you listening,  
mom? How am I doing?

Ellen wasn't listening. She continues to pace back and forth.

INT. CONVENIENT STORE - DAY

A store CLERK stands behind the counter. A customer pays for some items. He gathers his purchases and heads for the exit.

Ellen is next in line. She approaches the counter.

ELLEN  
A pack of cigarettes.

CLERK  
What kind do you want?

ELLEN  
Any kind, just make it snappy.

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - BASEMENT - DAY

Ellen sits in front of Lewis with a lit cigarette in one hand and a textbook in the other. She reads from the textbook.

ELLEN  
The Great Lakes, also called the Great Lakes of North America, or the Laurentian Great Lakes, are large freshwater lakes connected within mid-eastern Canada. What are the names of the Great Lakes?

LEWIS  
Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, Lake Superior.

ELLEN  
Well done.

Ellen takes a drag from her cigarette.

LEWIS  
Thanks! Do you want to know how I knew the answer to that?

Ellen blows out the cigarette smoke. She smirks bitterly.

ELLEN  
Tell me later. Let's try a harder question. The Great Lakes connect to what ocean? Via what river?

LEWIS

I know this one! The Atlantic Ocean  
via the Saint Lawrence River!

Ellen closes her eyes and rubs her temples with her fingers.

She takes a final drag from her cigarette. She jabs the  
cigarette onto an open page of the book to put out its ember.

Ellen drops the cigarette butt at her feet, with three others  
she put there earlier. She slams the textbook shut.

ELLEN

That's enough geography for today.  
Now, on to math. Multiplication.

LEWIS

Dang it, I hate math!

ELLEN

Will you quiet down? Your voice is  
like a drill going into my head!

LEWIS

I'm sorry. I don't hate math. I  
just wish I wasn't so bad at it.

ELLEN

Well, practice makes perfect. Do  
you want to grow up smart? Or dumb?

LEWIS

I am smart!

Ellen rises quickly from her seat.

ELLEN

For an obnoxious fish-boy, you are!

Lewis looks down in shame.

LEWIS

I'm sorry, mom. I won't yell ever  
again, I promise.

Ellen stares angrily at Lewis, her breathing heavy. She turns  
and heads for the stairs.

ELLEN

I'm giving you another half-day.

Ellen stomps up the steps and out of the room.

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ellen lies awake in her bed. She tosses and turns.

She flails her arms and legs under her bed sheets. She kicks her comforters off her body and onto the ground.

Ellen punches the headboard of her bed. She screams.

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lewis sleeps on a big pile of soil, one of the few things his scales won't cut through. His mother's scream wakes him.

Lewis turns to the door at the top of the staircase.

Ellen opens the door and stands in the doorway.

ELLEN

It's time for school.

Ellen slowly descends the stairs. Lewis gets out of bed.

LEWIS

Already?

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - BASEMENT - LATER

Ellen sits in front of her son and holds out a cue card with a math equation on it. The card reads:

$11 \times 9 = ?$

Lewis stares hard at the equation.

LEWIS

Ninety-one?

Ellen turns the card over and reads it.

ELLEN

Wrong.

Ellen flings the card at Lewis' face. His scales shred the card into tiny pieces. The bits of paper drop to the floor.

LEWIS

Please, stop that.

ELLEN

Stop what?



Ellen does the same thing with the next card in the stack.

LEWIS

That.

ELLEN

That! Do you have any idea how you sound? You sound ridiculous. You sound like a freak. Do you want to stop sounding like a gross freak?

Lewis cries silently.

LEWIS

Yes.

ELLEN

Let me help you, then.

LEWIS

Okay.

Ellen stands up and enters a storage closet. She pulls on a long tether to turn on the lightbulb attached to the ceiling.

Ellen rummages through the closet. She finds a pair of bolt cutters and carries them over to her son.

ELLEN

Open your mouth.

Lewis eyes the bolt cutters, frightened by how they look.

LEWIS

Why?

ELLEN

I'm going to teach you another lesson. Are you ready for it?

LEWIS

I guess so.

ELLEN

Good. Open your mouth. This is just another reading exercise.

Lewis opens his mouth wide.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Stick out your tongue.

Lewis sticks out his tongue.

Ellen pulls open the bolt cutters. She places the edges of the blades on the left and right sides of Lewis' tongue.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Say ahh!

Ellen cuts off Lewis' tongue. Blood spurts and drips from his wound and Lewis screams in pain.

Lewis sees the deranged look on his mother's face. He runs to the corner of the room and cowers there.

Ellen drops the bolt cutters and walks over to her son.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

That was so I can love you better.

Ellen turns around and leaves her son to wallow.

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Ellen is on the phone with a government official.

ELLEN

No, Tuesday is no good for me. In fact, I'm busy all this week. Can we do Saturday? Fine then, Friday.

Olivia (8) enters and takes a seat.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Yes, fine. Goodbye.

Ellen hangs up the phone.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I'm such an idiot. I should have told the truth from the start.

OLIVIA

You did nothing wrong.

ELLEN

What am I going to do? They're going to throw me in prison.

OLIVIA

Everyone will be on your side.

ELLEN

Not after what I did.

OLIVIA

You were under a lot of stress.

ELLEN

I cut out his tongue! Now, my own daughter can't look me in the eyes.

OLIVIA

Don't worry, mom. I have an idea.

INT. FINDLEY FAMILY HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lewis (10) sleeps on his pile of dirt. Ellen stands at the bottom of the stairs. She shines a flashlight on Lewis' face.

Lewis wakes up. He rises and goes to the foot of his bed to greet his mother.

ELLEN

Lewis. You need to leave. The police found out what happened to you and they're coming to arrest all of us. If you don't go, your sister and I will be put in prison. Is that what you want?

Lewis shakes his head, no.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

You must escape into the woods. Do you remember where they are?

Lewis nods his head, yes.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Not far from our house. In the forest, there will be plenty of places to hide. Remember, if you get caught, the government will steal you and dissect you. They want to torture and kill you. Never leave the woods and never return here, for the sake of you and your family. Remember that.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

In a small room lined with chairs, a woman, RITA (39), sits and watches the news on a TV mounted to the wall.

On-screen, a group of FRIENDS frolic in a river by the woods.

One of the friends, the one holding the camera, swings back and forth on a tire swing. He launches far, into the water.

The camera operator swims to the surface. He and his friends laugh and splash each other.

A twig snaps close by.

The camera holder turns and spots Lewis (11), peeking out at the friends from behind a tree.

FRIEND #1  
What was that?

He zooms in on his camera. Lewis finds cover.

FRIEND #2  
What was what?

FRIEND #1  
Hey! We see you! Come on out!

Lewis turns and runs away from the group.

FRIEND #3  
Oh shit! Did you see that?

FRIEND #4  
It's a monster!

FRIEND #2  
Come on! Let's get it!

The friends hurry out of the water.

FRIEND #3  
Grab your shoes!

The camera is dropped to the ground and it points to the sky. The screen cuts to black.

The footage returns. It shows the group of friends continuing to chase Lewis, deep in the woods.

FRIEND #2  
Slow down!

FRIEND #1  
This is insane!

Lewis turns and sees the group is gaining on him. He screams.

FRIEND #4  
It sounds so freaky!

FRIEND #2

What is it? An alien?

Lewis slices through the thick trunks of two tall trees. The trees tip over in the direction of his pursuers.

FRIEND #3

Run! Get out of the way!

FRIEND #4

The trees! It cut the trees!

The camera operator records a tree crash down onto him. The footage glitches and the screen cuts to black.

Behind a desk, sits two NEWS ANCHORS.

NEWS ANCHOR #1

Today marks the nine year anniversary of the murder of twenty-year old Dean Russels. The footage you just saw was shot by Russels, leading up to his death.

NEWS ANCHOR #2

Russels' killer, dubbed the Woodland Monster, has yet to face justice. Since the deadly encounter, countless others have claimed to have seen the creature. The documentation recorded by Russels is touted by many to be definitive proof a real life monster lurks in our woods.

A door opens. DR. KESSI exits his office with a PATIENT.

DR. KESSI

Remember to set daily reminders. Missing just one dosage would be like pressing a restart button. Call or text me if you notice any pain or discomfort during the exercise regiment I prescribed you.

PATIENT

Thank you so much, doctor.

DR. KESSI

Mrs. Newbar.

The patient walks towards the exit. Dr. Kessi turns to Rita.

DR. KESSI (CONT'D)  
Welcome back, Ms. Gilrose.

INT. HOSPITAL - DR. KESSI'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Kessi sits behind his desk, Rita sits across from him.

DR. KESSI  
I have bad news and good news.

RITA  
Give me the bad news.

DR. KESSI  
Your test results undoubtedly show  
an inability for you to give birth.

RITA  
Tell me something I don't know.

DR. KESSI  
The good news is, you are in a  
unique position to undergo a  
procedure. If you agree to it, we  
would essentially splice your  
reproductive genes with that of an  
exotic fish. Doing so might grant  
you reproductive function.

RITA  
How effective is the procedure?

DR. KESSI  
That we do not know.

RITA  
What's the worst that could happen?

DR. KESSI  
The potential side effects are near  
endless, Ms. Gilrose. If you  
volunteer, you would be the first  
human test subject. I'm sure you  
would like time to decide.

RITA  
I want to volunteer. What is there,  
a consent form I need to sign?

DR. KESSI  
Quite a lot of them, actually.

RITA

When can I have the operation?

DR. KESSI

Whenever you are ready. The procedure is short and simple.

INT. OPERATION ROOM - DAY

Rita lies on a stretcher dressed in a hospital gown.

Her back is lifted and two poles prop up her legs. A sheet covers her lower half.

Dr. Kessi sits at the foot of the stretcher, wearing a hazmat suit. He reaches inside the sheet covering Rita.

He injects her with the fish genes.

Dr. Kessi takes away the poles and guides Rita's legs onto the stretcher. He nods to four other doctors in hazmat suits.

Two doctors lower the back of the stretcher. The four of them wheel Rita over to what looks like a CAT scan machine.

The doctors lift Rita onto the bed of the machine.

Dr. Kessi walks over to the machine. He activates it and the cylindrical construct lights up.

The bed Rita is on slides inside the cylinder.

Dr. Kessi administers a radioactive current onto Rita and the device emits a loud beeping sound.

INT. RITA'S HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Rita walks in, covered in the same super sharp scales Lewis has. She stands in front of her mirror and stares at herself.

Rita slowly reaches her hand. She presses her fingers against the glass reflecting her face and the mirror shatters.

Rita's scales quiver. She looks down at her body.

Dozens of round, bright-orange eggs drop from between her scales. They bounce off the floor and roll in all directions.

Rita sheds over one hundred eggs. Some rest by her feet.

She bends down and hesitates to pick one up.

Rita takes hold of an egg and it does not break. She gasps and clutches the egg close to her heart.

She looks closely at the egg.

INT. RITA'S HOME - FOYER - DAY

The house is in total disarray. Severe damage done to the walls, floors, doors, and furniture. The power is off.

Rita's friend, MAX, bangs on the front door with his fist.

MAX (O.S.)

Rita! Rita, are you in there?

Rita moves fast and agile. She exits a lounge area and enters the bathroom right across from it to hide.

RITA (O.S.)

What is it, Max?

MAX (O.S.)

Rita? I've been worried sick! It's been days! Why haven't you texted?

RITA (O.S.)

I needed a break.

MAX (O.S.)

Can I come in?

RITA (O.S.)

The door's unlocked.

Max enters and is quick to notice the immense destruction.

MAX

What the Hell? What happened here?  
Rita, where are you? This is crazy!

Max steps carefully through the breakage.

INT. RITA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Max spots a hole in the floor leading to the basement, and a hole in the ceiling leading to where Rita's bed used to be.

He sees at one corner of the room, a huge pile of dead eggs laid by Rita. The decaying, grey eggs reach the ceiling.

Rita sneaks behind Max and stops near the exit of the foyer.



RITA  
We need your help, Max.

Max jumps and spins around. He screams at the sight of Rita.

MAX  
Rita! Is that you?

RITA  
Yes. I underwent a procedure.

MAX  
What procedure?

RITA  
Dr. Kessi said it would give me  
babies and he was right! Look!

Rita reaches out her cupped hands, holding some of her eggs.

RITA (CONT'D)  
I think I've got it all figured  
out. In order for my babies to  
hatch, they need to be fertilized.  
That's where you come in. Please?

MAX  
Are you out of your mind? Rita,  
that hospital made you into a  
monster! Have you seen yourself?

RITA  
This has been my lifelong dream,  
you know that, and I'm so close.

MAX  
Get out of my way.

RITA  
I will.

Rita crouches down and places her eggs gently onto the floor.  
She stands back upright, arms out and hands cupped.

RITA (CONT'D)  
After you give me your sperm.

Max hurries over to Rita.

MAX  
I said move it!

Max forcefully extends his arms into Rita to push her. Rita  
doesn't move an inch, instead, Max's arms are cut to ribbons.

Max backs away slowly from Rita.

Some of what's left of his hands and forearms dangle from his elbows, the rest is on the floor.

Max examines his wounded arms and screams. He passes out.

Rita steps forward.

She bends down and cuts through Max's pants where his crotch is underneath. She slices open the front of Max's underwear.

Rita places her hands around Max's testicles and squeezes them. Blood and semen cling to her hands.

She gingerly goes over to her eggs and picks one up. She rubs the mucus all over it. The egg loses its lustre and dies.

Rita cries out in sadness and frustration.

EXT. RITA'S HOME - DAY

Four SWAT vans arrive and lurch to a stop on the road. The back doors to the vans burst open and SWAT teams rush out.

SQUAD ONE advances onto the porch.

They lean against the wall on either side of the front door.

Squad Two takes cover, their rifles pointed at Rita's home. Squads Three and Four go and guard the other exits.

The SWAT leader does hand and arm motions towards Squad One.

Squad One activates flashlights attached to their guns.

A member of Squad One nearest the entrance steps in front of the door and kicks it open.

INT. RITA'S HOME - FOYER - DAY

Squad One rushes inside and breaks off into separate spaces.

One stomps into a lounging area and searches potential hiding places at a rapid pace.

SQUAD ONE #1

Clear!

One kicks down the already damaged door to a bathroom. He goes in and checks the bathtub and a closet.

SQUAD ONE #2

Clear!

One opens another closet door. He uses the barrel of his gun to look between clothes on hangers.

SQUAD ONE #3

Clear!

Two from the squad maneuver to the living room.

They each step over the pale, dead body of Max. Pools of blood cover the floor from the body's severed arms and groin.

SQUAD ONE #4

I've got a visual! The living room!

The rest of Squad One heads for the living room.

SQUAD ONE #3

Sanders has visual!

SQUAD ONE #2

Everyone to the living room! Move!

INT. RITA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Squad One converges and aims their guns at Rita.

SQUAD ONE #1

Put your hands up!

SQUAD ONE #4

Hands up! Show us your hands!

Rita stands facing the SWAT team, her hands up in the air.

SQUAD ONE #2

Target appears to be wearing full body makeup. No clothes.

SQUAD ONE #1

Target is non-responsive!

Rita remains motionless, hands raised.

SQUAD ONE #3

She's mobile!

SQUAD ONE #1

She's attacking! Open fire!

One of the team mates steps forward and sprays Rita's body and head with bullets. Her scales tear the ammo to shreds.

Rita is unharmed by the barrage of bullets.

EXT. RITA'S HOME - DAY

The SWAT leader listens to Squad One over the radio.

SQUAD ONE #3 (V.O.)  
Everybody, shoot to kill!

The SWAT leader hears stifled gunfire. The gunfire gradually ceases. A member of Squad One screams in pain.

SQUAD ONE #1 (V.O.)  
It's no use! Retreat! Retreat!

The final person alive on Squad One runs out of the house and onto the porch. Rita follows after him.

Rita swings her arm over her head and strikes with the edge of her hand the top of the fleeing team mate's helmet.

She slices down his head and neck, through his chest and stomach. The squad mate is nearly cut in half.

The cleaved body falls down the porch steps and its guts spill out. The SWAT leader and Squad Two open fire on Rita.

Rita hurries down the porch steps and past the SWAT teams. She runs full speed down the sidewalk, away from her house.

The SWAT leader chases after her. He slows to a stop and lifts his walkie-talkie to his face.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Rita runs along the middle of the road, past people walking on the sidewalks and others driving or biking on the road.

All those who notice Rita stop to point and stare at her.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Rita walks through the woods and admires its beauty.

She hears rustling in a nearby bush. Lewis (20) steps through the bush and shows himself to Rita.

They stare at each other.

Rita approaches Lewis. They are inches apart. Rita touches Lewis' chest. She rubs his face. Rita's scales rattle.

Rita sheds dozens more eggs onto the forest floor. Lewis stares at the eggs in awe. Rita leans in and kisses Lewis.

Lewis' scales quake. Semen oozes from between his scales and drips to the ground. A puddle forms at his feet.

Lewis' sperm envelop one of Rita's eggs. The egg glows even brighter. An embryo grows inside. The egg grows much bigger.

The egg breaks open and out pours a baby with the same scales Lewis and Rita have. Rita picks up her and Lewis' baby.

Rita and Lewis stare lovingly at their creation.

FADE OUT.