

"VEILED THREATS"

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LOGLINE:

A woman struggles with her impending walk down the aisle as she experiences fear instead of joy due to a seemingly violent stalker. When she identifies who the "stalker" is, she realizes she must confront her past before stepping into a new future with her husband to be.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

A CAR SCREECHES to a halt at a light. LAUGHTER erupts from inside. It's JULLIA, 30s, attractive, steering a convertible toward a new start. Her sidekick is CHELSEA, 17, little sis.

JULLIA
I should look where I'm going.

CHELSEA
Be careful with the merchandise.

She HONKS the HORN. YELLS to the great outdoors:

JULLIA
I'm getting married!

PASSERSBY LAUGH, CLAP. A MAN, 50s, on a bus bench frowns.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
Hater.

The light changes. She peels off with another TIRE SCREECH.

EXT. WEDDING DRESS SHOP, PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Jullia parks. Glances at Chelsea applying gloss. Again.

JULLIA
Are you going for Betty Boop?

CHELSEA
I'm going for impact.

JULLIA
Hurry up. Everyone's waiting and--

In her rear view mirror, a strange man moves slowly toward them. FOOTSTEPS CRUNCH on the gravel. Chelsea opens the door.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
Get back in!

CHELSEA
You just told me to get out.

JULLIA
I said get back in!

CHELSEA

Whatever.

LOCKS FLIP. The top lowers. ENGINE STARTS. His face is in shadows, but his hand reaches for the handle. She backs into reverse, swerving the car in an arc.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)

Hey! What are you doing?

Jullia guns it out of the lot, a dust trail behind her.

INT. WEDDING DRESS SHOP - LATER

Chelsea, the Mom, CAROL, 60s, and Jullia's bestie LINDA, 30s.

LINDA

What happened out there?

CHELSEA

I don't know. She just freaked out.

CAROL

Stop it. She'll hear you.

JULLIA O.S.

Be right out. And I can hear you.

CAROL

You sure you're okay now?

JULLIA O.S.

I just got spooked or something.

The DRESSMAKER, 50s, proudly escorts her to the group.

JULLIA

Spoiler Alert: It's hot!

She turns the corner, turning, showing off.

CAROL

Jules! Oh, you look lovely!

The dressmaker fusses with the folds of the dress, adjusting the huge satin bow that drops into a train.

CHELSEA

You look like a giant present.

LINDA

Where's the veil? Let's see it.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the dressing room, she adjusts the veil in the mirror.

CAROL O.S.
Stop primping and get out here!

FOOTSTEPS. They stop. Right outside the dressing room door.

JULLIA
Linda? Chels?

Silence.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
Stop jerking around you guys.

She flings the door so hard it HITS the WALL. He's there again. The MAN IN SHADOWS, 30s, slender, faceless.

MAN IN SHADOWS
Is this how I get your attention?

JULLIA
What do you want?

MAN IN SHADOWS
Just what you owe me.

He lunges, reaches under his jacket. SHE SCREAMS like a siren. CRASHES into the WALL, hands in a defensive position.

Her mother is there first.

CAROL
What happened?

She points to the broken door at the end of the hallway.

JULLIA
He keeps coming.

Carol lifts the veil. Finds her daughter's face: TORTURED.

INT. CHURCH WEDDING REHEARSAL - DAYS LATER

The wedding party scatters among the pews.

LINDA
Something's really off with Jules.

CAROL
She's just got a little cold feet.

LINDA

Yeah, but it's cold feet like the morgue. Murderous phantom stalkers?

CHELSEA

It's sort of like being at our own personal Halloween Fright Night.

INT. CHURCH ALTAR - MOMENTS LATER

Jullia holds the arm of her Dad, JOHN, 60s. She scans the room, finds a stained glass angel to focus on. Relaxes.

PASTOR MIKE, 50s, is running things.

PASTOR MIKE

Jullia, as you've asked, this is where I announce your wish to make yourself a gift to your husband.

In the hallway next to the altar, slow FOOTSTEPS ECHO.

PASTOR

So. Take Robert's hand--

Pastor Mike stops. Follows Jullia's gaze.

PASTOR (CONT'D)

Jullia. Take Robert's hand.

But, she doesn't move. The Man In Shadows is there again.

MAN IN SHADOWS

You know, don't you? Why I'm here?

Silence.

MAN IN SHADOWS (CONT'D)

Matthew 5:23-24. *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar..."*

He pauses. Waits for a response from her. Continues.

MAN IN SHADOWS (CONT'D)

...First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

She's at the altar, frozen now.

ROBERT
Are you okay?

PASTOR MIKE
Perhaps we'll do the vows later.

MAN IN SHADOWS
Vows? Your promises are POISON!

That HITS her like a SHOT.

PASTOR MIKE
Let her rest a minute.

MAN IN SHADOWS
No rest until I get what I want!

The Man In Shadows lunges, grabs for her throat.

JULLIA
Get away from me!

Jullia bolts up the aisle. Away from the altar.

ROBERT
What did I do?

The Pastor starts covering prayers, warrior prayers.

PASTOR
Father, in Your Son Jesus' Name, we
cleanse this place of any harboring
spirits. Squatter spirits, be gone
from this family. Now!

Robert stands alone at the altar.

INT. CHURCH LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Carol, Chelsea run through the church lobby to catch Jullia.

CHELSEA
Mom? About Halloween Fright Night?

CAROL
Yeah?

CHELSEA
I take that back.

CAROL
Good.

CHELSEA

This is more like a slasher movie.

They watch as Jullia's CAR SKIDS away from the church.

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATER

Jullia drives hurriedly. In the front seat: a box with a bow.

EXT. HOUSE IN A NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

She KNOCKS at the DOOR. Someone opens it. It's the Man In Shadows. His face still obscured.

JULLIA

Hello, Kevin.

KEVIN / MAN IN SHADOWS

What do you want?

JULLIA

To come in maybe?

INT. KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The vibe is two prize fighters in the ring. Ali vs. Norton. Tyson vs. Holyfield. The starting BELL SOUNDS.

KEVIN

I thought you were getting married.

JULLIA

I am.

KEVIN

What are you here for then?

JULLIA

To make it right.

KEVIN

I'm haunting you or something?

JULLIA

How did you know?

KEVIN

Because you can't do what you did and not feel guilty. Not see me everywhere, in everything you do.

A beat.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
It's killin' you, right?

JULLIA
Yes.

KEVIN
Just remember. You walked out on
love. Love didn't walk out on you.

JULLIA
Was it love?

KEVIN
You wouldn't be here if it wasn't.

A beat.

JULLIA
I just got tired.

MEMORY HIT: The two of them arguing; her on defense.

KEVIN
Tired of being my woman?

JULLIA
Tired of trying to be loved.

A hard hit. He's stunned now. Come at him again.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
I scrapped for every little bit.

MEMORY HIT: Her walking off, down a path. Talk to the hand.

KEVIN
I had to test you. See what you
were made of. Push you.

JULLIA
You pushed me away.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Robert calls Jullia's phone again. No answer. He hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They're both exhausted. Hanging onto ropes now.

KEVIN
Better check in with Bobbie Boy.

JULLIA
Always got those words, don't you?

KEVIN
A few more: WHAT. DO. YOU. WANT?

JULLIA
To get out of bed with you.

KEVIN.
We've never even slept together.

JULLIA
No. But, we're tied up so tight.

MEMORY HIT: The bond was strong. They could've made it.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
I want to get loose.

KEVIN
Go ahead. Walk down that aisle.

JULLIA
I can't.

MEMORY HIT: Man In Shadows screaming the Scripture at her.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
I need you to forgive me. For just walking out. For just leaving.

KEVIN
Clean it up nice and good for you, huh? Make you feel okay?

JULLIA
Yes.

KEVIN
I can't do that. I had your heart. I had it! And you took it back!

JULLIA
Yes. I did.

KEVIN

You took it and gave it to Robert!

JULLIA

No! I took my heart and gave it to God! Robert found it there.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S PRAYER CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

A quiet room. Robert's on the floor, praying.

INT. KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

KEVIN

So that's how he got me? He did what I couldn't do?

JULLIA

What you wouldn't do.

Count him down now: 1-2-3-....

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

The room is quiet. She pushes the box with the bow at him.

JULLIA

Open this.

KEVIN

What is it?

JULLIA

Something you once gave me.

He opens it. A supernatural GLOW SHINES out, finally taking his face out of shadow. Handsome dude.

JULLIA (CONT'D)

You once gifted me with your heart.
You need it back now.

She smiles, tentatively.

JULLIA (CONT'D)

But, don't keep it. Give it to God.

She points to the framed picture of a woman on his table.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
Let that chick go there to find it.

He smiles for the first time.

KEVIN
So. This Robert cat's alright?

JULLIA
You'd like him. If, you know, you didn't already hate him.

They both laugh.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
Let's pray?

They join hands. Tearfully hashing it out on the floor. The last SHREDS of soul ties TEAR. Kevin looks up first.

KEVIN
I forgive you.

CUT TO:

EXT. KEVIN'S PORCH - MORNING

Under the sun of a new day, he tests their old chemistry.

KEVIN
Indian Giver!

She tosses the ball back.

JULLIA
Re-Gifter!

He lifts the box with the bow. Pounds his chest meaningfully.

KEVIN
Thanks for this.

They wave. Her CAR DOOR. His FRONT DOOR both SHUT. Jullia drives off. Convertible top down again. Hair flying. Free.

CUT TO:

EXT. CURBSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Too free? Jullia looks up at a POLICE OFFICER, 40s.

JULLIA
Officer, here's the thing--

She lets it rip.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
I've got exactly one hour to be at my wedding. A wedding no one thinks I'm going to be at, including my fiancée, who is a really, really good guy and doesn't deserve to be left at the altar...

The officer narrows his eyes. Crosses his big arms.

JULLIA (CONT'D)
Mercy?

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - LATER

A procession of squad cars, SIRENS BLARING, leads Chelsea's car. They park curbside, LIGHTS FLASHING. She pulls in with her customary SCREECH. She hops the steps; veil in her hand.

INT. CHURCH LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Carol paces in the lobby.

CAROL
What's going on? Where you been?

JULLIA
I spent the night with my ex.

CAROL
You what?

JULLIA
I'll explain later. How's Robert?

CAROL
A little lonely right about now.

Carol opens the sanctuary door. Robert is alone at the altar. Jullia's father gives her his arm. No questions asked.

JOHN
Get this show on the road?

JULLIA
Pedal to the metal!

JOHN
Burn us some rubber?

CAROL
No! She'll go screeching off again!

John LAUGHS; grabs the door handle.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Wait! Your veil!

Mom adjusts the veil, pulls the tulle down over her face. The doors swing open to collective HUMS of approval from GUESTS.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH ALTAR - MOMENTS LATER

Jullia and Robert turn to exchange vows. FOOTSTEPS, heading slowly up the hallway next to the altar. Jullia looks over.

PASTOR MIKE
Do you, Jullia, take--

Pastor Mike pauses. Looks toward the hallway. FOOTSTEPS.

ROBERT
Babe?

A face peers around the corner. It's JAYDEN, 6, Robert's nephew. From behind, a gentle hand pushes Jayden forward.

PASTOR MIKE
I see we've found the ring bearer!

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH ALTAR - MOMENTS LATER

The ceremony concludes.

PASTOR MIKE
Robert, quick. Kiss the bride.
Let's make this thing stick!

Robert lifts layers of tulle. This time, the face beneath the veil is radiant. BEAMING! CHEERS go up in the church.

FADE TO BLACK.

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