

UNLIKELY STORY

by
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FADE IN

CLOSE on the MUSTY PARCHMENT PAGE OF AN ANCIENT TEXT, the image of Cinderella slipping her foot into the glass slipper, drawn in brilliant saturated colors -

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It came from the forest, this book of lies -

The PAGES OF THE BOOK FLIP through familiar etchings of Snow White, The Little Mermaid, Sleeping Beauty, Rapunzel-

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The princess lives, the witch must die,

The BOOK'S PAGES FLIP FASTER -

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We learned our lesson well, until there were no more stories to tell -

The BOOK SLAMS SHUT. On its MUSTY WHITE COVER, A PRINCESS WATCHES FEARFULLY as a PRINCE SLAYS A HIDEOUS WITCH -

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We believed it, we sealed it tight, but one day she will return -

The COVER GLEAMS BRIGHT WHITE, as if glowing from within -

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A new witch, to bring back red to this orgy of white.

A WRINKLY OLD WOMAN'S HAND PICKS THE BOOK UP -

MATCH CUT

INT. CAVERNOUS LIBRARY - DAY

The BOOK hits the librarian's counter -

PAN UP to MRS. BOGUINSKAYA, extremely Russian, who SCOOTs another pile of books next to it, looks up -

MRS. BOGUINSKAYA

Genevieve, honey, it's 7 in the morning -

WIDE on the vast Reading Room of the San Diego Public Library - there's only ONE PERSON in it, deep in the background, huddled at one of the long tables -

MRS. BOGUINSKAYA (CONT'D)

I need my smoke break, Genevieve, so if you're going to check something out -

CLOSE on the back of GENEVIEVE LIKELY'S head, her EXTREME JAPANESE DOLL BOWL CUT. She's huddled over a desk, ATLASES, GIANT POSTER MAPS in front of her -

GENEVIEVE (O.S.)

I have to finish these for first practice-

Mrs. Boguinskaya starts packing up -

MRS. BOGUINSKAYA

First day of school - you should be at home, choosing what to wear -

Genevieve GATHERS HER THINGS - TURNS AROUND.

GENEVIEVE

We have a team uniform.

As she walks to the desk, we observe this delicate creature with ladybug eyes, Harry Potter glasses, pale stick arms, legs. Too odd to be stamped with ugliness -

She places a book on the desk - ATLAS OF CANADIAN RIVERS -

MRS. BOGUINSKAYA

You will win again.

GENEVIEVE

I've got a good team.

MRS. BOGUINSKAYA

Ah, there is no team without the captain.

Genevieve smiles, takes her book.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Foggy morning. Genevieve walks alone through the dark, silent streets of suburban La Jolla, narrow roads that separate strip mall from thick, towering forest.

SOUNDS of an approaching car in the distance -

GENEVIEVE

(sings softly)

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas -

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

UGLY FRESHMAN!

Genevieve WHIRLS AROUND, sees BRIGHT-LIGHTS in her face - DROPS HER BOOKS and JUMPS to the side of the road to avoid the car as it high-tails by -

She looks up from the ground to see whose inside, but she's BLINDED by the AFTERHAZE - all she catches is a DRAGON TATTOO on the ankle of a girl's leg out the window-

In the silence -

GENEVIEVE

I'm a senior.

She picks up her books, suddenly notices that the one she checked out isn't the ATLAS, but rather the MUSTY WHITE BOOK FAIRY TALE BOOK we flipped through earlier -

Genevieve OPENS IT to the INSIDE FRONT COVER, where she finds a picture of a FOX, drawn in full-color, calligraphic words surrounding it in a circle:

PROPERTY OF L.M.W.

Genevieve thumbs through the book - familiar images of fair beauties, hideous witches -

She flips all the way to the BACK INSIDE COVER, where the FOX appears next to the giant word WARNING, bold, red -

Genevieve's eyes widen as she reads the warning -

Warning:

If you find yourself in possession of this book and you are a beautiful princess, kindly return it to the nearest forest.

If, however, you are not a princess and therefore an ugly witch, then I will be visiting you shortly to ensure that you learn the difference.

Genevieve's eyes grow wider.

CLOSE IN TIGHT on 'UGLY' - TIGHTER, TIGHTER, UNTIL - SUDDENLY, the book SLAMS SHUT.

Genevieve takes the book and HURLS IT INTO THE FOREST. She wipes her shirt, keeps walking.

But we DON'T FOLLOW - we stay in this frame, looking at the FOREST where the book now resides. We wait, we wait - and then - a SILENT EXPLOSION OF LIGHT within, obscured by the density of fog and trees.

As the fog clears, we see a SHADOWY FIGURE emerge from the forest - as he approaches the camera, we start to get a better look at his BROWN VELVET OVERCOAT, his chocolate-colored GLOVES, his tall TWEED TOP HAT tipped downwards -

The MAN turns RIGHT, follows GENEVIEVE -

WIDE on the view of this street - GENEVIEVE about a hundred yards ahead, this MYSTERIOUS FIGURE walking behind her, his footsteps silent.

Just when we think the man is dangerous, that he might start to accelerate his follow, he does something terribly odd - HE TURNS.

Let's follow him, shall we?

BEGIN CREDIT ROLL

EXT. CORONADO HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Our MAN OF MYSTERY emerges walks up the street towards a building that looks like a prison compound -

Through the FOG, we see the MARQUEE - 'CORONADO HIGH SCHOOL' - the BANNER underneath: 'WELCOME BACK STUDENTS!'

EXT. CORONADO HIGH SCHOOL - ATRIUM - DAY

The man emerges into the TWO-FLOOR, SQUARE-SHAPED ATRIUM. As the sun rises, it beams upon the strip of concrete that connects the opposite sides of the square, creating the illusion of a golden path.

He down a long hallway, past a banner on the wall reading 'RESPECT YOUR 'LEADERS'', past three huge poster-sized pictures lined up next to this banner. First, there's a country blonde with princess ringlets, holding a pom-pom, the name DANI in big block-letters at the bottom of the poster. The next one says, 'ANYA,' and offers a glamour shot of an anorexic-looking brunette, all angles and bones, in her cheerleading uniform. And finally, there's SUMMER, who looks too fat to be a cheerleader, but has the requisite bows in her hair and plastic smile.

Our man pays no attention.

He finally comes to a stop in front of a TINY BULLETIN BOARD in the dank corner of the hallway. It reads 'GEOGRAPHY BEE' on the silver placard at the top.

PAN DOWN to a crinkly newspaper article with a picture of Genevieve holding a huge trophy, surrounded by HER OUT-OF-FOCUS TEAMMATES - CLOSE IN on Genevieve slowly -

CLOSE IN on our man's BLUE EYES, twinkling, conjuring.

INT. PRINCIPAL DUNLOP'S OFFICE

CLOSE ON a gold name placard: PRINCIPAL DUNLOP.

PAN UP to PHILIP DUNLOP, 50s, ox-built Harvard alum with leathery tanned skin and a silver toupee, as he gets settled at his desk, wafts smoke from his hot coffee.

He turns on his computer, looks at a picture of his daughter SUMMER DUNLOP on his desk, in a CHEERLEADING UNIFORM - ah, we recognize her from the hall poster -

Dunlop SMILES, starts sorting through mail -

KNOCK, KNOCK -

PRINCIPAL DUNLOP

Come back in an hour. Still on vacation.

He keeps sorting. After a moment, he glances up -

There's someone in the CHAIR OPPOSITE HIM - we can't see who it is - just a HAND on the armrest -

PRINCIPAL DUNLOP (CONT'D)

I didn't hear - You can't just - please come back when you have an appointment -

MAN

I've come to give you my class list.

Dunlop looks up at him incredulous.

The MAN'S hand points at Dunlop's desk -

MAN (CONT'D)

Right there.

Dunlop looks down, picks up a PIECE OF PARCHMENT sitting on his desk, reads it with wide eyes, looks up urgently -

PRINCIPAL DUNLOP CONT'D

Excuse me - who are you - I'm calling -

He reaches for the phone -

The MAN THRUSTS OUT HIS FLAT PALM - bewitched, Dunlop stops his arm, retreats, looks up calm and serene.

PRINCIPAL DUNLOP

Why of course. I'll make sure their schedules are changed.

Dunlop looks down at the scroll -

The MAN LOWERS HIS HAND; it disappears behind the chair.

Dunlop IMMEDIATELY LOOKS UP, suddenly alert - BUT THE CHAIR IS EMPTY, the DOOR CLOSED.

He looks down at this desk - just the mail, and a BLANK PIECE OF PARCHMENT. He looks at the PARCHMENT as if he's NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE - rubs his eyes -

Parchment's still there. He holds it to the light, but it's very much blank -

His PHONE BEEPS -

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Why you giving me all these schedule changes - School starts in two hours -

Dunlop rolls his eyes, presses the speaker button -

DUNLOP

Then better get moving.

He crumples up the parchment, THROWS IT IN THE TRASH -

CLOSE on the parchment uncrinkling - a quarter-full open BOTTLE OF WATER next to it tips, spills, and we watch the liquid magically turn to ink on the parchment - ah familiar names - GENEVIEVE LIKELY, SUMMER DUNLOP, DANI -

DISCARDED MAIL's thrown on top, obscuring our view -

SOUND OF CREAKING NOISE OUTSIDE -

Dunlop turns, watches THE SECURITY GUARD OPEN THE GATE -

PAN UP to the rising sun, a perfect orange sphere -

MATCH CUT

EXT. CORONADO HIGH SCHOOL / PARKING LOT - DAY

CLOSE on a FLUORESCENT ORANGE FRISBEE, crashing and burning to the pavement like a runaway UFO.

Two tan, muscular legs jog into frame and pick it up just before it smacks into a shiny Mercedes. PAN UP low-riding khaki shorts, tan-line curve between stomach and hipbone, sweaty, six-pack, hairless chest, all the way to the face of a divinity. Meet HUNTER SYLO.

HUNTER CONT'D

(80s Madonna birdcall)

Ooh - ooh -

He lets the saucer fly. We FOLLOW IT -

EXT. CORONADO PREP PREP SCHOOL - DAY

Slicing through the mopy hair of TWO DIMINUTIVE FRESHMEN BOYS, trying to decipher the school map at the curb-

Just under the hem of the short short green skirts of a PACK OF CHEERLEADERS leaning against a tree trunk-

Towards the chest of an EMACIATED SKATEBOARDER on his board who ducks under it as if riding a Maui wave -

Past TWO SIDE-BY-SIDE NEON POSTERS, advertising HOMECOMING DANCE TICKET SALES -

Slashing through a big circle of smoke blown by a GOTH COUPLE, lying side by side on a stone bench -