

A WAY IN

Written by

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BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: The Devil pulls the strings which make us dance; we find delight in the most loathsome things; some furtherance of Hell each new day brings. - Charles Baudelaire

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - COUNSELING ROOM - DAY

SUPER: Walter Reed National Medical Military Center 2010.

Spartan. Cinder block walls painted white. A Poster on the wall depicts U.S. Soldiers with "Army of One" written at the bottom.

A WOMAN'S hands comes into view. They're partially bandaged. The skin protruding from the beneath the dressing is burnt, scarred, scabbed over.

MOLOCH (V.O.)
(deep-demonic)
I'm waiting for the right time. Be
sure... I'm coming.

ANDREA (20s) African-American, the heart of a fighter, in camouflage uniform, leans forward in her chair, ignores the voice, regards her mangled hands.

She tries to close them shut, but can't. Blood trickles in the creases of her fingers. She winces in pain.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Andrea?

Andrea snaps out of it. Wipes her hands on her pants.

DOCTOR (40s) holds a clipboard on his lap. Beside him a circle of battle-scarred SOLDIERS all seated in cheap government chairs.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

ANDREA
Yes, sorry, Doc.

Sitting mixed in with the soldiers is NICK (30s) thin and lanky, the fire in his eyes long extinguished. He's seen too much.

DOCTOR
It's your turn.

Andrea hesitates, shakes her head.

ANDREA
Not, today.

DOCTOR
It's part of the healing process.
You have to try.

ANDREA
I really--

DOCTOR
I can't vouch for your progress if
you don't participate.

Andrea closes her eyes, takes a deep breath. She focuses back on her hands.

ANDREA
(mumbles)
Kandahar.

DOCTOR
You have to speak up, Andrea.

Andrea straightens up.

ANDREA
Kandahar. We were just outside
Kandahar.

DOCTOR
Go on.

Nick studies her. Pity in his eyes. He nods. She presses forward.

ANDREA
Simple resupply convoy. Ten
vehicles. A Marine escort. I felt
safe. I really did.

Andrea's breathing labored. Starts to panic.

DOCTOR
It's okay. We're all here for you.

Nick nods, gives an assuring look. She musters her courage.

ANDREA
But... then it happened.

PRE-LAP SCREAMS.

BOOM. An explosion.

CUT TO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. HUMVEE - DAY

Smoke-filled, canted on its side. SCREAMS and fire penetrate the smoke from the front seats.

Andrea in full combat gear, unconscious in the back seat. She snaps awake, disoriented. She unbuckles herself, falls with a *THUMP*.

SOLDIERS (O.S.)
Help! Help us! We're burning!

Andrea reaches between the front seats, radio equipment block her. Fire licks her hand. She retracts it.

ANDREA
I'll get us out!

She climbs onto gear, presses her shoulder against the armored Humvee door. Hits it.

WHAM.

WHAM.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
Damn it!

She squats down, hits it with all she has.

WHAM.

EXT. HUMVEE - DAY

The door flies open. The front of the Humvee mangled and on fire.

She lifts herself out. Falls to the dirt.

GUNFIRE all around.

SCREAMS from inside the Humvee.

She jumps to her feet, grabs the front door handle.

SIZZLE.

The metal door handle hot as lava. She screams in anguish as she tugs. Can't get it. She falls on her butt.

The scorched earth beside. A bleached white cow's skull seemingly out of place at its center.

EXT. DESERT PLAIN - DAY

An IRAQI SHEPHERD (50s) watches Andrea and the carnage from a distance, his eyes milky white, his smile evil. He holds a gnarled wooden staff.

IRAQI SHEPHERD
(deep-demonic)
You're the one.

Satisfied, he turns and walks away.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. HOSPITAL - COUNSELING ROOM - DAY

Tears run down her cheek.

ANDREA
I... I couldn't--

NICK
You did your best. It's not your fault.

Andrea nods.

DOCTOR
Glad you opened up, Andrea.
(to the soldiers)
Great session guys. That's enough for today.

Soldiers pat Andrea on the shoulder as they leave. They understand. They know.

Nick rubs her shoulder. She looks up and smiles at him.

NICK
Ready for that five star government chow?

Andrea smiles.

ANDREA

Yeah.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Nick smokes. Andrea beside him on bench. The vast hospital behind them.

ANDREA

That's going to kill you one day.

Nick chuckles.

NICK

If it does, that'll be the least of my worries.

She's not amused. He takes a long drag.

NICK (CONT'D)

Fine.

He puts the cigarette out.

ANDREA

Do you hear things?

NICK

Like what?

ANDREA

I don't know. Voices.

Worried.

NICK

No. What do they say?

ANDREA

I don't know. Random things. Most of it doesn't make sense.

NICK

Hmmm. You tell doc about it?

ANDREA

Yeah. I'm on meds. Never mind.

She reaches out for his hand. He smiles, takes it.

They both enjoy the sun, look at the clear blue sky.

NICK
Therapy's almost done. What're you
doing after that? Re-upping?

Andrea laughs.

ANDREA
Hell no. You?

NICK
Hell no.

Andrea looks away.

ANDREA
So you going to tell me?

NICK
Not much to tell.

Nick nervously shakes his legs.

ANDREA
I missed it. I'd like to hear it.

NICK
Well, guess you have to wait until
it's my turn again.

ANDREA
Oh, you gonna do me like that?

Nick chuckles.

NICK
It happened so fast. I really
didn't have time to react.

Andrea listens intently.

NICK (CONT'D)
I was on guard duty at Black Horse.
Sniper got my buddy, Hoskins.

Nick looks up to the sky.

NICK (CONT'D)
I heard the gunshot. Then something
clunks my helmet and Hoskins drops.
I crouch down and see his skull is
caved in. I yell for a medic and...
that's it.

ANDREA
I'm sorry, Nick.

NICK
Do you know what hit my helmet?

She shrugs.

NICK (CONT'D)
It was a piece of his skull. When I
got back to the barracks to clean
up, I...

Nick struggles to get it out.

NICK (CONT'D)
I had pieces of his skull and
brains all over my uniform.

Andrea hugs Nick.

ANDREA
I'm sorry, baby.

Nick wipes his tears away.

NICK
The past is the past, right?

ANDREA
The past is the past.

NICK
So if you're not re-upping, you
going back to Georgia?

ANDREA
No, nothing left for me there.

NICK
You should come with me.

ANDREA
To New York?

NICK
Yeah, why not?

ANDREA
I--

NICK

I got a farm, plenty of land. Lot's
of lakes to go fishing. We can
start all over again. Start fresh.

Andrea smiles.

ANDREA

I'd like that.

PRE-LAP Water *TRICKLES*.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE - DAY

SUPER: Ten years later.

Fogged over, the atmosphere dark, ominous.

Dead brittle pines trees surround the water.

Besides the trees, no birds chirp, no movement, no signs of
life, nothing.

Just the sound of water. Not the paradise Nick promised.

Nick hunched over the water, tries to wash the blood off his
hands.

ANDREA (O.S.)

Nick?

Nick washes his hands with more vigor.

He rotates his hands palm up, palm down. The blood stained on
his hands.

NICK

(desperate)

I can't get it off.

ANDREA

It's all right.

He dips his hands into the water, again and again, the blood
won't come off.

NICK

Fucking, Hoskins.

Andrea kneels down beside him, takes his hands.

ANDREA
Let me help you.

Nick doesn't respond, stares at his hands.

Andrea cleans them.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
That's it. It's coming off now.

NICK
There was this boy, he looked like
Jacob--

ANDREA
Hush now. It wasn't your fault.

Andrea gets the blood off his hands.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
See, all gone.

Nick looks down at his clean hands.

He looks across the pond, his eyes adjust, a strange FIGURE stands half submerged in the calm waters.

The figure has the head of a calf and the torso of a man, demonic. Breath plumes out of it's nostrils.

Nick smiles at the beast, returns his attention to Andrea.

NICK
Do you really think so?

ANDREA
We did our part. No more wars. No
more bloodshed.

Nick stares at Andrea, his eyes blacken, his voice deepens.

NICK
Some things you can never escape.

With lightening speed, he reaches out, chokes Andrea.

She falls backwards.

He straddles her, watches her struggle to breathe. Her face reddens. She tries to fight him off, but it's useless.

ANDREA
(gasps)
Nick, Nick.

Life drains from her.

Nick's face contorts into a rictus grin.