

THE RED WITCH

Written by

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Third Draft

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INT. MAIA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

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A BSA degree PLAQUE in AVIATION MAINTENANCE diploma displays on a wall for MAIA LIBRETTO, age 28, from CORNELIUS COFFREY AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY.

*

MAIA (O.S.)

It's over. The pain stays. Why?

Someone off-screen throws a FRAMED WEDDING PHOTO of Maia and ALLEN LIBRETTO, age 31, against the wall under the aviation plaque. The frame BREAKS, the glass SHATTERS to the floor.

*

Maia VENTS anger, her voice RAGES. She BREATHES mindfully, in a STEADY FLOW, in-and-out. Maia's breaths QUIET bit by bit.

*

INT. MAIA'S LIVING ROOM - COFFEE TABLE - DAY

A ripped-opened ENVELOPE and half-crumbled JUSTICE COURT RESTRAINING ORDER lie on the COFFEE TABLE.

INSERT - THE RESTRAINING ORDER reads:

"Ms. Rede Wechsler verses Mrs...(unseen name)"

A BROOM SWEEP of BROKEN GLASS sounds in the background.

INT. MAIA'S LIVING ROOM - MARIO'S SOFA - DAY

Maia wears a tearful, upset expression and a woman's coverall(with a WEST EDEN AIRPORT label. She sweeps into a standing dustpan the damaged framed wedding photo.

*

Maia empties everything of it in a small trash container. The small trash container has DISCARDED WHITE PRIDE ITEMS, DVDs, magazines, and a tiny racial hate flag mixed with junk.

MARIO, age 8, the lazy cat, lies on a sofa as he watches Maia unzip the top part of her coveralls. It reveals her t-shirt.

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INT. MAIA'S LIVING ROOM - SMALL CABINET CORNER

Maia unlocks the CHINA CABINET DRAWER and removes a SILVER HAND PISTOL with her dominant hand. Maia holds it upright. She clocks it.

Mario, motionless, studies Maia in keen observation.

MAIA

You give me the evil eye, people
pinned on me. Think I should stop?

*

*

(MORE)

MAIA (CONT'D)

Kitty, when justice calls, I'll
answer it on my terms.

*
*

Maia pockets the pistol inside her jumpsuit chest pocket.

MAIA

Heaven blesses you can't talk back
and lash me a guilt lecture. We'll
celebrate my victorious return.

EXT. MAIA'S FRONT DRIVEWAY - DAY

Maia unlocks her car with a day-packer bag in hand. DARCY,
age 54, attired in a Sheriff uniform with a badge, approaches
her from behind. Maia senses him and turns around.

*

MAIA

You haven't thought about giving it
up? The debate is tiresome, don't
you agree?

*
*
*
*

DARCY

I worry about my only child. It's
what you'll expect from a single
parent.

MAIA

I'm not your little girl anymore.

Maia opens the car door and tosses the day-packer on the
passenger seat.

DARCY

I stand corrected. You're my
widowed daughter horribly answering
her grief with a vengeance.

MAIA

Let's not rehash that conversation.
If you please, I have an objective.

She gets into her car and fires the ignition. Darcy reaches
with his arm and touches her window with a flat palm.

I/E. MAIA'S FRONT DRIVE - MAIA'S CAR - DAY

DARCY

Violence never cools anger. It
diminishes the peace left over.
Stay away. The creature maintains a
cruel killing record--no losses.

*

MAIA

I'm focused on what she did to
Allen. It's my decision, Father.

Maia slowly paces her auto out the driveway to not harm
Darcy. He releases his hand off the vehicle. Maia's car
reverses. She drives down the street.

Darcy walks to his Sheriff SUV parked in front of the house.

I/E. MAIN STREET - DAY

Maia drives towards a store MARQUEE LIGHT SIGN. It announces
a sale. Maia notices it. The marquee sign alters its message.

INSERT - MARQUEE LIGHT SIGN reads:

"Silly girl, don't let me put your lights out. Regards, RW."

The business marquee sign returns to its sale message.

I/E. ORDINARY HIGHWAY - DAY

Moody Maia drives. She turns on the radio to music.

STATIC sound issues from the radio. Maia changes the
channels, but the noise remains. It morphs into a SULTRY
FEMALE VOICE.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER, age 29, controls the sound system.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER (O.S.)
Ignoring the restraining order?

MAIA
Why are you mucking up my radio
from nowhere?

*
*

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER (O.S.)
From my nowhere, the place you are
heading to assault me the same way
your hubby died doing so. Pity you.

Maia attempts to switch off the radio. It can not turn off.

MAIA
The cabin air filter failed. Kick
yourself out of my system, Witch.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER (O.S.)
I can do better than that.

Maia's car falters and it shuts down at the roadside. Maia pounds the dashboard, she GRUNTS in frustration.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER (O.S.)
Relish your walk home, Sweetie Pie.

EXT. HIGHWAY EDGE - CLOSE BY EXIT 17 - DAY

Maia hikes with her day packer bag. Her cellphone rings.

INSERT - MAIA'S PHONE SCREEN shows: Darcy's picture as Dad.

Maia pockets the phone.

Maia discovers an ABANDONED AUTO with an ORANGE VIOLATION STICKER. Maia examines it. She checks the doors and finds one of them unlocked. *

She POPS the hood from inside the driver's side, it opens. *
Maia peers in under the hood and fiddles with the car parts.

EXT. HIGHWAY EDGE - EXIT 17 - DAY

The crumpled orange violation sticker adheres to the breezy grass. It reveals oil dirty woman's fingerprints. *

Maia's abandoned auto drives off the highway onto exit 17.

I/E. ABANDONED AUTO - TOWN ROAD - DAY

Maia stops at a red light. She sees a daily newspaper on the passenger's seat.

INSERT - Newspaper Headline reads:

"Jury Declares the Red Witch Innocent by Self-Defense."

Maia picks up the newspaper. She reads it closer.

INSERT - Newspaper article text reads:

"The victims' families and supporters were outraged at the decision. Libretto's widow was absent from court hearings. But his mother, Lea Libretto, cursed the defendant. "She a monster-murderer who deserves to be burned alive," said..." *

A horn BEEPS behind the abandoned auto. It surprises Maia. She sees the green traffic light and drives.

EXT. - EASTWIND PATH - DAY

Maia comes to a junction where the wooded path splits into two directions with signages. *

INSERT: The left side signage reads:

"To RW's Residence. By Invitation Only. No Trespassing."

Maia's phone rings. She looks at it and frowns.

MAIA

Hello, Dad.

INTERCUT - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DARCY'S DESK

Darcy sits at his desk, he holds the phone to his ear. *

DARCY

They found your car. Where are you?

INTERCUT - EASTWIND PATH

MAIA

I'm where I want to be.

Maia ignores the signage, she takes the Red Witch's path.

INTERCUT - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DARCY'S DESK

DARCY

Something terrible about Allen, he accepted a wager to eliminate the Red Witch. We took the solicitor in custody. Justice will be done.

INTERCUT - RW PATH

Maia stops, she kneels to the ground in distress. *

MAIA *

What else have you hidden from me? *

INT. - SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DARCY'S DESK *

Off-screen, someone TAPS his office windowpane. A door OPENS. Darcy looks up. He signals five fingers for five minutes. The door CLOSES. *

DARCY

Need I speak about this jackass's prejudice? Why not attack an alien instead of an Asian or Black person? It's the Allen you married. *

INTERCUT - RW PATH

Maia stands up and continues her trek.

MAIA
Are you blaming me?

INT. SHERRIFF'S OFFICE - DARCY'S DESK

DARCY
Maia, reverse your course. We'll
talk later. Federal agents paid me
an impromptu visit. Maybe, it's
about a cold case. I have to go.

EXT. RED WITCH'S PATH - BUNNY TRAP STOP - DAY

Maia circles her views around in the area. She sees a
momentary blurry flash of a red female figure in clothing
behind the trees, vanishing in the foliage shadow.

Maia trembles. Her hand presses against her chest, where she
feels a little budge of the pistol. She touches the zipper.

She returns her sight to the path, looks forward, and sees a
darkened cat figure in the middle of the trail.

Maia walks closer and closer to it. The motionless cat seems
to wait for her.

EXT. RW'S PATH - MARIO MEET-UP - DAY

It is Mario, the same silent, lazy cat. It stares at Maia

MAIA
Mario. It can't be. No. How did you
get here?

MARIO
How did you get here, Maia?

Maia gasps. The Mario's voice shocks her.

MAIA
I'm not losing it. Nah. Cats don't
talk. It's a trick by the Red
Witch. It has to be a joke.

MARIO
Stop the nonsense, Maia. It's me. I
speak very well without her aid.

Maia rubs her face and laughs.

MAIA

How can you talk without moving
your mouth?

MARIO

Cats have a keen ability to
communicate when it is necessary.
Don't let me explain the basic
stuff. There's no time for it.

Maia rubs her face and laughs.

MAIA

Say to me what is necessary.

MARIO

Get out of the forest before the
Red Witch finds you.

*

MAIA

Sugar, I can't. I must see her.
Maybe by then, I'll know this
nightmare is over.

*

MARIO

It's your life, Babe. I will donate
your goods to charity. Farewell,
Darling.

Maia trudges some distance from Mario, and she turns around.
The cat disappears.

*

*

EXT. THE FOREST OF DEATH - DAY

Maia twists off the wedding ring from her hand and throws it
into some foliage. Maia passes by boring trees.

*

*

Maia sees something terrible. Whatever it is, it frightens
her. She SCREAMS.

*

Some of the trees feature protruding from their trunks, human
heads, hands, few body parts layered by the trees' bark. The
faces appear in painful suffering, mouths, and eyes opened.

*

Maia recognizes one of the male heads. She steps close to it
and feels it.

*

MAIA

Allen?

Maia stumbles backward and falls at a tree's base. She perceives a woman's bitter bark-layered face on it. *

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NEARBY THE FOREST OF DEATH - DAY

Red Witch/Rede Wechsler peeks through a small opening of thick leaves with her eye surrounded by red-skinned eyelids and lusty eyelashes. She watches Maia get up and scampers. *

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Maia scurries further into the clearing, an eerie, vocal ECHOS from all directions.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHLER (V.O.)
Your father disgraced you. He didn't say anything about our discussion? On the day he investigated Allen's death. *

Maia searches all around her not to find the vocal source. *

MAIA
Contentious woman, come out and tell me. *

RED WITCH/REDE WECHLER
Have you wondered why Allen's body was not recovered hmmm? Or *Daddy* didn't explain to you what kind of double-crossing fiend he has been. *

MAIA
What? *

RED WITCH/REDE WECHLER
He's the actual solicitor who hired Allen. Good news. I am having the Sheriff snapped in handcuffs today. *

MAIA
You're lying. No. It's not true. *

Maia flees. She cries.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - SOUTH EDGE - DAY *

A dart strikes her calf. Maia YELLS in pain. She falls to the forest floor and shakes uncontrollably in the leaves. *

Maia's eyes and mouth are wide open, her body like hard rock. She can't move, not even a minor struggle.

Out of the darkness of the foliage, the Red Witch approaches Maia with a dart gun and portable hiking gear.

The Red Witch/Rede Wechsler, a beautiful woman with small horns on her forehead, crimson skin, and lovely hair, wears stylish outdoor clothing.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - SOUTH EDGE - DAY

Rede kneels next to Maia, she strokes her hair tenderly. Maia fixates on her in awe. Reba pulls the dart out of her calf.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER
The police are on their way. Guess
what? I found your ring. You can
sell it for a bond payment.

Red Witch takes an ELECTRONIC SYRINGE out of her gear and shoots Maia in her arm. The syringe illuminates in blue. Maia starts to recover.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER
What is it about you, unlike the usual haters? Breathe slowly. That's it. Good. You had some practice.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER
Speak.

MAIA
I did not come here to kill you.
Look. The gun is in my inside
breast pocket. It's unloaded.

The Red Witch unzips the top of Maia's coverall to retrieve the silver pistol.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER
Why bring it? To threaten me?

MAIA
The authorities assigned you to
collect weapons from the public. I
wish to give it to you in person.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER
I handle it at the office. Again,
why?

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - SOUTH EDGE - DAY

Red Witch removes a water bottle from her gear. She funnels
Maia slips of water. She holds Maia in her arms.

MAIA

I yearn for a great escape. Allen
was a hurtful jerk. Thank you,
Sister, you saved me.

The Red Witch tears a little.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER

But--all those incidents, it makes
no sense. You despised me.

MAIA

It was Allen's crappy family. Too
much nasty pressure. What's true is
I want to be your friend.

Rede tilts her head heavenwards. She laughs.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER

I didn't see that one coming.

Maia tries to smile at her. Rede embraces her.

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER

My name is Rede, the pleasure is
mine.

(Beat)

Sorry about your Dad. I can not
account for his twisted motives.

MAIA

I'll deal with it as the time takes
flight. (Beat) Why do they call you
the Red Witch?

RED WITCH/REDE WECHSLER

I don't care for witchcraft.
Honestly, I haven't a clue. People
can be dumb-blind but never us.

END