

Captivated: Nick

written by

Erik Blair

Address  
Phone  
E-mail

SCENE 1

*Audience members wait outside on the patio, sent there by Thea as they arrive. When time, she appears.*

THEA

[Names], we're ready for your appointment.

*Thea's voice is bored, almost nasally as she leads 4 people from the outside patio into the waiting room.*

THEA (CONT'D)

Before Dr. Polidori can see you, we need each of you to sign the patient waiver. No pushing, no shoving. Step into my office one at a time. Any questions?

*She makes sure the audience is clear and then has the first member step into the smaller office. The waivers are ready on the table that Thea sits behind.*

THEA (CONT'D)

Name? Age? Do you have insurance? Please fill out form now.

*As the audience member signs, Thea continues rapidly, one speech for each audience member.*

THEA (CONT'D)

Audience #1: I also need to ask you whether you are afraid of sleep, animals, witches, germs, women, foreigners, disease, love, children, tornadoes, insects, feet, open spaces, clowns, mirrors, men, the color white, gravity, death, or giving birth to a monster.

THEA (CONT'D)

Audience #2: I also need to ask you whether you are afraid of darkness, choking, chickens, heights, flowers, people, numbers, pain, bacteria, stairs, books, dogs, reptiles, snow, sun, blood, ferns, school, speed or the numbers, 8, 15 or 7,201.

THEA (CONT'D)

Audience #3: I also need to ask you whether you are afraid of flying, society, thunder, crowds, cooking, touching, holes, plants, imperfection, computers, dirt, bears, accidents, marriage, trees, the sun, illness, doctors, life or being ridiculed by your best friend at a rock concert.

THEA (CONT'D)

Audience #4: I also need to ask you whether you are afraid of flight, needles, spiders, snow, disorder, amphibians, dentists, rain, ugliness, childbirth, houses, beards, teenagers, horses, water, the moon, electricity, phobias, fire or dying while falling out of a moving rollercoaster.

*If the audience member answers yes to any of them, Thea nods. If they say no, Thea nods. If they hesitate, Thea glares.*

THEA (CONT'D)

You want the Doctor's help or not? Answer the question!

*When they have answered and signed the waiver, Thea takes it and makes a big notation on it: PERFECT SPECIMEN. Then she sends them back and asks for the next one. Once all are waived, Thea stands.*

THEA (CONT'D)

Step through the door and relax on one of the mats inside. You may sit or lay upon the mat however you wish. For now.

*She opens the door to the larger space. Inside are four mats placed upon the ground and one chair with a wall (fake) behind it.*

*Sitting in the chair is Dr. Victoria Polidori, making notations in her journal. She pays no attention to the audience as they arrange themselves.*

*Thea watches to be sure that they sit correctly.*

THEA (CONT'D)

The Doctor will see you now. Good luck.

*She smiles, a nasty smile, and closes the door.*

## SCENE 2

*Once the door closes, Victoria finishes a last note, nods and snaps the book shut as loudly as possible. She finally turns to look at the audience.*

*Throughout the entirety of this performance, she will only look at one audience member at a time. Any statement or question she asks will be aimed only at one person. If there are responses from the audience, she will react as though whatever answers she get are only one answer, even if multiple people respond. She only changes her focus from one person to the next between moments/beats/answers.*

*The goal is for her to speak to everyone as though she were only actually speaking to ONE person.*

*She begins by looking at one person.*

VICTORIA

Ah. You've come back for another session. It is good to see you once again.

*She shifts her gaze to another audience member.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Not every person is willing to acknowledge when their mental state has been compromised.

*Shifts to a 3rd.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

But you and I both know that your current confusion stems from a deep-seated condition.

*Shifts to the 4th.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You have questions you want answered. I hope we can accomplish that together, to get to the bottom of what bothers you.

*She opens her book once more and stops looking at any audience member as she looks at it.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Let's begin today's session with a quick set of word associations, shall we? Any problem with that?

*She pauses a moment to see if there is a response. If so, she makes a note in the book. If not, she nods.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Do not hesitate. Do not think hard. Simply respond to each of these words out loud, as fast as you can.

*As audience members respond to her words, she makes notations in the book. She starts slowly, then gets faster until at the end she is speaking too quickly for people to respond.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Love. Speed. Destruction. Storm. Grief. Loss. Question. Need. Father. Death. Loss. Monster. Sadness. Violence. Loss. Pain. Body. Loss. Cruel. Loss. Happy. Loss. Fake. Loss. Injure. Loss. Sacrifice. Loss. Anger. Loss. Loss. Loss. Loss. Loss. Loss. Memory.

*She pauses suddenly at the last word, letting the audience catch up with anything they've been trying to say. She waits for silence.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

That was very telling. Thank you.

*She makes a notation in the journal and closes it once more. Looks at one audience member.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Now let's move on to your biggest question for today.

*2nd audience member.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I want you to think carefully before you answer again.

*3rd.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

When you do answer, I want you to reply in one sentence only.

*4th.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Remember. Think carefully before you speak. You only have one try.

*She raises one hand with a pointing gesture to make the audience wait. She opens her journal and raises her pen once more, not looking at anyone.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

When I say now, answer this question. Why are you here today?

*She pauses an uncomfortably long time.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Now.

*She lets the audience respond as they wish, writing in the journal. When they are done, she makes one final flourish, closes the journal and lays it on the table next to her.*

*1st audience member.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

That is a very interesting answer. I was curious whether it would come up or if you would lock away your subconscious.

*2nd.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Of course, helping you with that would take more sessions to sort out. We'd need to set up future appointments.

3rd.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

We would need to delve deeply into what makes you tick. Your likes, your hates, your dreams. Your fears. The danger you are in right now.

4th.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Does that sound like something you are truly ready to do? Because once you open that door, there is no shutting it.

*She smiles, and it's the darkest smile Victoria's ever offered. She turns back to the 1st audience member again.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Perhaps you should first decide whether you wish to see me again at all after today. I'm not certain you will.

*2nd audience member.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I know you've been worried about the past as well, you see. Something you can't quite remember. I am correct, am I not?

*Third.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Even contemplating a journey into one's past is risky, you know. There is no place more dangerous to explore than what we have forgotten.

*Fourth.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

But you are equally fortunate that you came to me. I have the necessary skill to help you dredge up whatever is wedged inside that hole in the back of your mind.

*First.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I hold the tools to wrest open the rusty hinges of that secret space you try so desperately to keep hidden from the light.

*2nd.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Some of it is because of my particular training. Some of it is because I've dealt with many like you before. But the big secret is that I already know you.

*3rd.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

There isn't any part of your memory that I haven't already seen, you see. Not a single moment of your existence that I can't already guess or fathom or understand on a deeply personal level.

*4th.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You are an open book to me, from cover to cover. And I have been reading you for as long as you have known me. Ah, I see confusion on your face. Let's see what we can do to clear that up.

*She stands from the chair.*

### SCENE 3

*Victoria looks from one to another as she talks.*

VICTORIA

Now that you're here in my office, we are going to take a little trip through the layers of your mind. An express train back to the moment that haunts you most. The moment that frightens you, even now, simply because I speak of it.

*She slowly moves through the empty space between the mats until she stands at the other edge.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

But for this trip to work, I need to guide you through a hypnosis session. If you follow my directions, you will find your mind slipping back to that dark moment in your past. You will find yourself there once more, ready to experience events as they happened.

*She smiles coldly at each of the audience members as she continues to talk.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I trust you are ready to proceed.

*She begins to pace slowly back and forth.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

First, I need you to lie down on your back on the mat. Head near me.

*She waits until the audience starts to do so.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

When you are in place, I will project a relaxing image on the ceiling. Focus on that image as I speak. That image and nowhere else. Do you understand?

*She makes certain that everyone responds yes before going on.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

If I ask you to do something in any way, you will obey. If I gesture to you, you will follow my command. If I ask you to speak in any way, you will answer out loud. It is imperative that you obey me. These rules will keep you safe as you explore the past. Are my instructions clear?

*She again waits for an affirmative from each.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Then we begin.

*The projection begins playing on the ceiling, a rotating image that is actually designed to create a hypnotic feeling. Music/sound effects begin playing.*

*Victoria begins to speak in a calm, measured tone as she paces. Exactly like a hypnotist.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Keep your eyes focused on the image on the ceiling. Breathe in. Breathe out. If you need to look away, you may look at my face for a moment. Then return your gaze to the ceiling. Breathe in. And out.

*She continues to pace at the top of the mats (to pull focus away from the wall being removed.)*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Keep looking. Listen to my voice. You are becoming calm. Peaceful. Breathe in. And out.

*Her voice remains calm and clear.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Keep focusing. Your mind is beginning to slip out of the current time of 2018. You are moving backwards in time. Focus on the ceiling.

*She continues to walk, watching the audience.*



VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You have no fear. You are completely calm. Serene. Awake but no longer here. Breathe in. Breathe out. You are moving back through 2018. Focus on the ceiling. Into 2017. Breathe in. Remain calm. Into 2016. Breathe out. Focus above only. 2015. Almost there.

*She moves to stand in the center, above their heads.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And now you reach that moment: Christmas Eve, 2014.

*She looks up as well as she speaks.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Now, close your eyes and let your mind recall that date. There was a poker game that evening. A special game that means something to you. Visualize the game in question. Imagine the idea of a poker table. Cards. Pretzels. Drinks.

*She drops to her knees by audience #1 and whispers only to them.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Open your eyes.

*As the audience member does, he sees that the wall is gone and a poker table is now visible. There are cards at the table and four signs at each chair that say, "Nixon," "West," "Davidson" and "Polidori."*

*She gestures for #1 to stand up as she talks.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Imagine that you remember the guests who were there that evening.

*She guides #1 to the chair that says "West" and gestures for him to sit. She will repeat this action with each of the remaining audience members, seating each of them at a different chair, as she talks.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Can you do that? First was Charles Nixon. A widow who won a significant malpractice suit against the hospital where his wife had died. Where my husband had killed her when he was drunk.

*She moves to #2.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Stay focused on that poker night. Can you feel the cards in your hand?

*Drops to her knees.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
(to #2)

Open your eyes.

*Gestures, etc.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

The second guest that night was the hospital lawyer, Oliver West. Furious at losing the law suit and at no longer being the lover of the woman who ran the game. Do you remember her perfume yet?

*She moves to #3.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Keep your eyes closed. Think of the possibility of winning a little money that night. Of holding \$10,000 in your hands in chips.

*Drops to her knees.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
(to #3)

Open your eyes.

*Gestures, etc.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

The third guest that evening was dear, sweet, naive secretary Leah Davidson. Only there because my husband left her a hefty sum in his will. So I felt it only appropriate to suggest that she be invited to a game with so many people related to him.

*Heads to #4.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Remember that strange warm day, cold night combination that only happens in Los Angeles in December.

*Drops to her knees.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Open your eyes.

*Gestures, etc.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And of course the last guest there was Victoria Polidori, psychiatrist and not really much else any more since Grant died. Oh, yes. I was there that night. It's why I can help guide you on what happened. I saw all of it.

*Once the last audience is seated, she finishes.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Now keep your eyes closed. Take a long, deep breath. Exhale and relax. When I say begin, you will open your eyes. And you will be back there, on Christmas Eve, 2014. Are you ready?

*She waits for responses, then stamps her foot.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Begin!

*The music abruptly changes to Christmas music and Abigail Simmons walks in. We are now in the past.*

SCENE 4

*As Abby enters the room, she's got a bowl of pretzels in one arm and a box of LaCroix in the other. She looks harried, frustrated and frankly a little strung-out (could be stress, could be drug-related.)*

ABIGAIL

I'm so sorry that I ran out of snacks so fast. You'd think that I would be better prepared after running these games for so long.

*She slams the bowl on the table.*

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Then again, when I used to have these at my old job, there were tons of drinks and food around. One of the perks of playing poker at a funeral home--lots of wakes to skim a little off the top. HA!

*She laughs a little too loudly, and then realizes she's done so and is acting a little strangely. She smiles and puts the LaCroix down more gently.*

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Here. This is called LaCroix--it's like Perrier but... funner, I think? At least that's what it seems like from the packaging. I used to drink it when I lived in Chicago and now they have it here, too. Better than drinking alcohol all night, right? Right?

*Abigail pulls out LaCroix and hands them to everyone at the table.*

*Victoria, who has been watching all of this, roams the edge of the room as she talks.*

VICTORIA

Abigail Simmons. Once the manager of the Simmons Funeral Home, owned by her father of course. Held monthly poker games at the home to 'supplement' her income.

ABIGAIL

Oh, shoot. I forgot the Doritos!

*She runs back out of the room.*

VICTORIA

The last year hasn't been kind to her. Her father found out that she was accepting bribes to get better treatment and fired her.

*Abigail runs back inside with Doritos.*

ABIGAIL

Anyone need anything else?

*She starts making plates of snacks for the people at the table.*

VICTORIA

He also cancelled her credit cards, had her car repossessed and threw her out of the guest house at his place she'd been living in rent free.

ABIGAIL

Play cards, everyone! Why are you just sitting there? Cards are why we're here, right? Get to it! HA!

VICTORIA

If she sounds a little desperate, don't worry. She is.

ABIGAIL

I guess Christmas Eve's not a good night for a game, is it?

VICTORIA

It had nothing to do with the date. These games were the only remaining source of income, and the clientele was drying up.

ABIGAIL

Anyone need more chips? I mean poker chips! Anyone?

VICTORIA

It wasn't a pretty sight.

ABIGAIL

Seriously, play poker people!

VICTORIA

And so we did all pick up the cards we'd been dealt. Go ahead. Check your hand out.

*She waits for the audience to check their cards.*

ABIGAIL

Who's starting the hand?

VICTORIA

It was my turn to start, so I said so.

*She looks at the person in 'her' seat and waits for them to say it. If they do, she smiles. If not, she repeats the last sentence again to stress it.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

This was 5 card stud poker. You only had the cards you had. I had a great hand--2 pairs. So I put three red chips in, a \$300 bet.

*Again, she waits for the audience member to do it.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Then I watched to see what everyone else did and we played the hand through.

*She waits to see if people play. If they do, great. If not, she repeats the sentence, stressing that it's important to remember the night in its completion.*

*To be clear, the rest of the hands are as follows. West has 3 of a Kind, all 4's. Nixon has 3 of a kind, all 6's. Davidson has 2 pair, Aces and 10's. Theoretically, Davidson should win--but whatever happens, happens.*

*As the hand is played, Victoria and Abigail continue to talk. When the hand finishes, Abigail shuffles and sets out a new hand that can also be played.*

ABIGAIL

So, Oliver, how are you? I haven't seen you in a few months.

VICTORIA

Oliver wasn't over Abigail, so he'd been absent. But he didn't want to come across as bitter. So he said the best thing he could think of.

*And she waits for the person at West's table to speak. Again repeating if necessary.*

ABIGAIL

Oh. Well, I hope you know that I still care about you and I'm so glad we can be friends now.

VICTORIA

Not what he wanted to hear at all. So he responded as best he was able.

*Rinse. Repeat. The goal is to get the audience to help tell the story here.*

ABIGAIL

Well, good. I think. And you, Leah! I haven't seen you since the wake.

VICTORIA

Leah was shocked that Abigail would so easily mention the wake for Grant Polidori, my husband. So she told Abigail off, then and there.

*Rinse. Repeat.*

ABIGAIL

What the hell? I was only trying to be nice.

VICTORIA

The rest of us also chimed in on Abigail's side.

ABIGAIL

No. It's okay, everyone. Leah just wasn't thinking, were you?

VICTORIA

Leah damn well was thinking--she admired Grant for helping her daughter get an operation free when the insurance didn't pay. So she responded with even more anger.

ABIGAIL

Look, if you're going to treat me this way, I don't even know why you came.

VICTORIA

She came because I invited her, which I pointed out.

ABIGAIL

Then why did YOU want her to come?

VICTORIA

That was a great question whose answer wasn't ready to be sprung yet. So instead, I gave some platitude answer that would suffice.

ABIGAIL

Very well. I just think we should all remember to be careful at poker games. Emotions can run high.

VICTORIA

That was when Charles, never a tactful individual, made a joke about emotions not being the only thing high here.

*If Charles makes the joke aimed at Abigail, great. If not, Victoria says this instead.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

A joke aimed at Abigail, of course.

*Either way, she continues.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Abigail did look strung out in those days. So much so that Oliver asked to speak to her alone for a moment.

ABIGAIL

Oliver, I'm fine. Okay? I don't need you to be savior.

VICTORIA

Charles laughed loudly at that. Oliver tried to make it better.

ABIGAIL

I said enough, Oliver. Or you can go, too.

VICTORIA

I pointed out that she didn't seem to have enough guests to keep tossing them out.

ABIGAIL

But that's exactly what I'm going to do if you, you, you AND you all don't start playing poker and stop insulting me.

*She points to each of the audience members.*

VICTORIA

That was it. Abigail was about to end the evening early. It was time to make it clear why I'd invited everyone. So that's exactly what I said.

ABIGAIL

Okay? So there WAS a point. And it is?

VICTORIA

I smiled and clapped my hands three times loudly.

## SCENE 5

*The door opens and Santa Claus and one of his elves enter the room. Santa Claus is Ely. The Elf is Henry. Santa has one package. Henry has four smaller ones.*

SANTA CLAUS

Ho, Ho, Ho. Merry Christmas.

*Santa sounds enthusiastic. The Elf does not.*

ELF

And a joyous and bright new year to all.

ABIGAIL

You...you brought Santa and an elf?

VICTORIA

I had indeed. And they were there with presents, as I proudly announced.

ELF

Here. Don't open them until everyone has one. Okay?

*Henry starts passing out his gifts to the three audience members who aren't 'Victoria'.*

VICTORIA

The reactions to the gifts told me everything I needed to know about the state of my poker playing fellow guests. One of them shook it carefully, smiling. One just stared at it. And one quietly complained that they didn't celebrate Christmas.

*Which audience member does what is up to them.*

SANTA CLAUS

But those aren't the only gifts! I have one for little Victoria, too.

VICTORIA

I glared at the comment from 'Santa' but took his gift and held it for all to see.

ELF

You can all open your presents now.

*When they open the presents, each of the three has a festive glass. Victoria has a bottle of cider.*

SANTA CLAUS

A gift to celebrate friendship and joy among friends and acquaintances! What a fantastic set of gifts "Santa" brought you! Ho, ho, ho!

ELF

Ho. Ho. Ho.

VICTORIA

I raised the bottle and announced that it had been over a year since Grant died. And since I was finally ready to move on to the next step of my life, I thought it was only right to arrange to get everyone who had been at the wake to this game so I could celebrate that moment.



*She waits for the audience member to get -all- of that out, prompting if she has to do so.*

ABIGAIL

Well, I think that's really sweet.

VICTORIA

Nixon seemed upset it wasn't something stronger, as he mentioned his favorite drink ever.

ABIGAIL

But it's meant as a sweet gesture.

VICTORIA

West complained that the bottle wasn't even going to be enough to make the party 'fun'.

ABIGAIL

I have more alcohol is that's what we really need.

VICTORIA

Leah, meanwhile, seemed upset. She had clearly seen something when Santa walked in, but she wasn't willing to speak out loud. She just reacted like a woman who wanted to flee but couldn't figure out how.

ABIGAIL

Hey, are you okay, Leah?

VICTORIA

Leah finally gathered her courage and whispered that Santa Claus looked familiar to her.

SANTA CLAUS

Ho, ho, ho! Of course I do! I'm Santa Claus!

VICTORIA

I told him to move on. Quickly.

SANTA CLAUS

As you wish. We also have a present for the host of the gathering, Abigail! Something truly special that we left in your office!

ABIGAIL

Really? Something for me?

*She looks at the 'Victoria' at the table.*

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

That's so nice of you.

VICTORIA

I smiled and told her to go see what Santa had gotten her.

ELF

Yes, it's right inside here.

*He opens the door and leads Abigail inside the office. Santa gives a significant look to 'Victoria' at the table and follows.*

VICTORIA

I immediately poured out three drinks and told everyone to say cheers and bottom up the drink. And they did so.

*There is a loud sound from the office.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Leah gasped at the sound, making everyone else jump. Then she turned to me to ask me what the gift was in the office.

*There is a second loud sound.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Charles asked the same question, followed immediately by Oliver. I just smiled and suggested maybe Abigail was on the naughty list.

*As soon as 'Victoria' says that, the door swings open and we can see that Santa is watching coldly as the Elf strangles Abigail. Santa realizes the audience is watching and closes the door, smiling at them.*

*If the audience does nothing to stop it, Victoria says this.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Perhaps if those at the table had done something right then, they might have saved poor Abigail Simmons. But they just sat there, frozen, and wasted the moment.

*If the audience starts to do something, Victoria raps out the following.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

[Whichever 'character' starts to move] started to get up, to do something, and I yelled at him/her/them to SIT DOWN.

*She will glare at 'Victoria' until she does it.*

*If 'Victoria' starts to do something, Victoria says the following.*

*If either of the other two options happen, Victoria also says this AFTER saying those.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I almost changed my mind at that moment. I had started this. I could stop it. Perhaps.

*Victoria begins to circle the table, looking in audience members' eyes. Trying to get them to understand.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

But then I thought of Grant, poor dead Grant and my plans to reanimate him. If I were going to succeed in bringing my husband back, poor Abigail had to be removed. She knew that I'd only pretended to have his body cremated. That made her a loose end. She had to die before he could live.

*Abigail stumbles through the door, gasping, at the end of her life. She reaches the table, trying to get help from someone, anyone.*

*Then she falls to the ground. Dead.*

*Santa and the Elf enter the room.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I asked Santa if he had it from there.

SANTA CLAUS

Of course, Victoria. Henry and I have it all planned out.

VICTORIA

I thanked Ely for helping me. That was Santa's name, you see.

SANTA CLAUS

Anything for you, Victoria.

VICTORIA

The rest of the people at the table finally found their voices, each of them exclaiming in some sort of comment or fear.

ELF

You should all be more worried about yourselves.

VICTORIA

Henry, my Elf and Ely's servant, was as always more concerned with death than anything else. He also was very good with the time it took for poison to work its way through a system. That's why it was only seconds after his comment that those who drank my cider began to feel their insides cramp.

*Victoria walks by Nixon, West and Leah as she talks.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Nixon called me a name. West promised we'd be caught and prosecuted. And Leah--she finally opened her mouth and pointed out that Santa Claus was actually Danny Harris.

SANTA CLAUS

Who? That's not my name, lady.

VICTORIA

I just smiled back at her. Santa's name *had been* Danny, once. But Danny had been the man who killed my husband while driving drunk. I thought that made him an excellent specimen to experiment on before Grant. So I killed him and brought him back.

*She smiles at Santa.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I should have named him Beta.

ELF

They should be dead in the next 60 seconds, Ely.

SANTA CLAUS

Good. We can use them as well. Can't have enough spare parts.

ELF

As you wish, Master.

*They move Abigail out of the room.*

VICTORIA

And as I watched, the only other loose ends from my wake all died. In terrible pain. Watching me in shock as they realized I had manipulated them all to this moment.

*She and 'Victoria' watch as the audience 'dies.' If they don't respond well to this moment, Victoria moves on faster.*

*Victoria claps her hands once.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And the moment is complete. I want you to envision yourself moving back to the present. As though you were walking back to the space on the floor you were on before. Lying back down. Closing your eyes once more as we move towards the present. To November 2018.

*If that is not enough info, she guides them back, makes them close their eyes so they can't see the office return. Once the wall is ready, she continues.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I am now going to count from 3 to 1. When I reach 1, you will open your eyes and be completely conscious. 3. You are getting ready to wake. 2. You are moving quickly back to the present. And 1. Open your eyes.

*When the audience opens their eyes, they now see that Abigail is lying between the mats, arms tied in front of her. Victoria only looks at her from now on.*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Are you awake, Abigail? Or should I say, Justine? Have you remembered that night, now? The night that Henry killed you?

ABIGAIL

That--that can't be a real thing.

*Victoria smiles that same dark smile.*

VICTORIA

It's quite real. In fact, it's how Ely got his hands on you. Just as I reanimated him, he in turn reanimated you.

ABIGAIL

No. My name is Justine. I'm not Abigail.

VICTORIA

True. You're not her anymore. Not all of her anyway.

ABIGAIL

What--what do you mean?

VICTORIA

Let's just say that Ely hasn't kept all of your body in his numerous attempts to make you perfect.

ABIGAIL

You monster!

*Victoria laughs, a full and throaty laugh.*

VICTORIA

Oh, my dear. Don't you get it? I'm not the monster. You are. And you've begun to break. Causing problems at my party. Demanding things from Ely he simply can't give you. Trying to find your past. Reaching out to that hacker. Shame on you.

ABIGAIL

You can't get away with this!

*Victoria stands, walks slowly to stand over Abigail.*

VICTORIA

But we have, my dear. Ely's tried to make you 12 times before. Each one a failure. And every time he decides to start over, I get a session with you. A chance to make sure that you know *exactly* what has happened before he reboots everything again.

ABIGAIL

Why would you do that?

VICTORIA

Because I *can*, "Justine". Because I'm a Frankenstein.

*Abigail screams in terror. Blackout.*

THE END