

SLEEPING TITANS

Written by

Sierra Lawson

TEASER

EXT. OLD COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

SUPER: 1901. GUISIPEAK, LOUISIANA.

UNKNOWN WOMAN'S POV: She searches for a spot to hide along a open road as an ANGRY WHITE MOB approaches. She darts and ducks behind an abandoned carriage.

She frantically peaks down at her brown-skinned hands covered in fresh blood.

A sudden and massive rainstorm hits. It's hard to see. An ANGRY MOB MEMBER points near her hiding spot.

ANGRY MOB MEMBER #1
She's over there! Don't let her get away!

She bolts. She glances down at her bare and battered feet. They hit the ground, hard. One foot in front of the other.

EXT. WOODED AREA - CONTINUOUS

UNKNOWN WOMAN'S POV: The angry mob closes in. Hound dogs follow impossibly closer and closer behind her trail. Her breath is heavy and panicked. She spots a river up ahead. She bounds towards it.

She begins to hum a strange tune that drowns out all other background noise. It sounds something like a lullaby that chokes with sadness. This is WINIFRED'S LULLABY.

She finally reaches the river. The current CRASHES violently against sharp rocks. It's almost beautiful.

The only sound is this strange lullaby. It grows louder and louder still.

A loose hound dog SNAPS its snarling teeth near her backside. There's no time; she jumps into the angry river.

She tries to swim to the surface, but the waves crash too violently. She's sucked under,

She gasps for air that becomes more and more elusive. The current drags her towards a large boulder. She closes her eyes. A sickening CRACK is heard.

ACT ONE

SUPER: PRESENT DAY. GUISIPEAK, LOUISIANA.

INT. KELLEN P. BEAUCHAMP HIGH SCHOOL - SWIMMING POOL - DAY

A GUNSHOT is fired into the air.

LYRIC ATWATER (16) (African-american female, chip on her shoulder, but naturally good-hearted) pushes off the edge of a short course swimming pool. She butterflies her way to the other end, with impressive speed and control. She pushes herself out of the water and gasps for air.

COACH HILL (40) (female) helps to pull Lyric out of the pool. Lyric looks at Coach Hill, waiting impatiently. Coach Hill checks the timer she's holding.

COACH HILL
One Minute, 3 seconds.

LYRIC
Fuck!

COACH HILL
Hey!

Lyric's about to lose it. Coach Hill grabs Lyric by the shoulders.

COACH HILL (CONT'D)
Breathe in. Hey! Do it. Now!

Lyric complies, angrily.

COACH HILL (CONT'D)
Good. Now. I agreed to help you on the side if you took this seriously. A freshman could do 25 meters in 20-30 seconds. What the hell are you doin' out there?

Lyric is hesitant to answer.

LYRIC
I've been busy. I've got a lot going on--

COACH HILL
Oh yeah? You got a boozy wife and an autistic kid at home too?
(MORE)

COACH HILL (CONT'D)

Lyric...I can't keep doing this if
you're not going to take it
seriously. I want to let you back
on the team but--

LYRIC

I just need a chance, Coach.
Please, I'll keep doing my
drylands. I'll build my stamina
back up. Just...please.

Lyric's biting back tears. Coach Hill gives in.

COACH HILL

Saturday. 6am. Here. No excuses. No
bullshit. Alright?

LYRIC

I swear. Yes. No bullshit.

Coach Hill leaves the pool area. Lyric grabs a towel and
heads to the --

INT. KELLEN P. BEAUCHAMP HIGH SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM - CONT.

A GROUP OF TEENAGED GIRLS get changed for next period. Lyric
puts her hair in a messy bun in front of a mirror. From the
corner of her eye she can see someone staring at her from
behind.

It's TRINITI (17) (Caucasian female, bratty girl with a hard
exterior, and an ulterior motive in everything she does). She
saunters over to Lyric in a bra and panties.

All eyes are on her. She revels the attention as if it's
manna from heaven.

TRINITI

Hey Lyric. I didn't know you had
gym this period.

Lyric gathers her things. *Here we go.*

LYRIC

I don't. Goodbye.

Triniti blocks the exit.

LYRIC (CONT'D)

Let me pass.

TRINITI

Where are you off to? Sacrificing
goats and birds with your mommy?

A CROWD is gathering. Lyric eyes them, deciding.

LYRIC

Triniti. I don't need any shit from
you today. I'm late for work.

TRINITI

You have a job? What for?

LYRIC

(sardonically)
For fun. Move.

Lyric tries to pass by Triniti and her MINIONS.

TRINITI

I know you put that fucked up
bloody tampon in my locker last
month. Is that some of your nasty
witchy voodoo shit?

Lyric turns on her heel, fired up.

LYRIC

If I wanted to put a fix on you,
there wouldn't be a question about
it. But lets not act like you don't
have a long LONG line of admirers
that would love to make their
territory in your dirty ass locker.

A smug Triniti grabs a nearby Starbucks cup and throws the
contents on top of Lyric's head. Lyric is stunned into
silence.

THE CROWD

Ooooooooo! Oh my god!

The girls stare each other down. Lyric gets a look in her eye
like she's possessed. Triniti looks...worried.

EXT. KELLEN P. BEAUCHAMP - CLASSROOM - DAY

A door closes on us with a sign the reads "DETENTION HALL".
Through the door window we see Triniti sits with a black eye
and a busted lip as she files her nails.

Lyric sits with her head drenched in Iced Caramel Macchiato
with a small smile on her face. She doodles in her notebook.

INT. BOBBY'S DINER - DAY

BERNADINE 'BERNIE' ATWATER (32) (African-American female, super woman with a broken back) walks over to a big party of ELDERLY GUESTS with a birthday cake in hand. The party sings 'Happy Birthday' to YULA-MAE (89) (African-american female).

BERNIE

Happy Birthday, Yula-mae.

(whispers)

I got some rum raisin ice-cream
tucked up in the back for you.

YULA-MAE

God bless you, baby. God Bless you.
Don't tell my Godson before he get
to fussin' to me about all the damn
sugar.

Bernie leaves with a wink and checks on her other tables.

BOBBY (40) (African-american male) breezes past Bernie and makes his way to the back office. Bernie rushes after him.

Just as she is about to open her mouth to speak, Bobby slams the office door in her face.

BERNIE

(mutters)

Fat motherfucker.

Bernie takes a paper out of her apron and scribbles something down on it. She slides the note under his office door. She listens for his shuffling on the other side.

Beat.

BOBBY (O.C.)

Get back to work, Bernie!

Bernie walks back over to the large party, annoyed.

BERNIE

Ya'll need anything else? I'm about
to head out.

YULA-MAE

Let me walk you to your car, baby.

BERNIE

Oh, please, Yula-Mae--

YULA-MAE
Shut up girl, and help me out of
this chair.

Bernie obeys and leads Yula-Mae out the door.

EXT. BOBBY'S DINER - DAY

Yula-Mae takes a cigarette out of her purse and puts it in
her mouth.

YULA-MAE
You got a light, baby?

Bernie is amused.

BERNIE
On a highway to hell, huh?

YULA-MAE
And I plan on riding it hard and
long.

The women laugh. Bernie pulls out a lighter and lights Yula-
Mae's cigarette.

The women take in the sights for a while.

BERNIE
So...eighty-nine years old. I'm
shocked you still got people left
to celebrate with.

YULA-MAE
(beat)
You can be a real dark bitch, you
know that?

BERNIE
Yeah. That's why you like me.

The women laugh again.

YULA-MAE
Yeah, it's true. Bernadine, you
tell your mama I need some new Gris-
gris bags. My hand is itching, and
I want to hit the casino. I need
all the help I can get.

BERNIE
She's supposed to send more down
from the shop.
(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

I'm not sure what's taking so long though. I'll get you down for first delivery when they come in.

YULA-MAE

Yeah, alright. Baby...you've been looking heavy in the eyes lately. Everything going alright with you?

Bernie smiles, unconvincingly.

BERNIE

Yes, ma'am. Everything's fine...let me help you back inside.

YULA-MAE

Get the hell off of me, girl. I know how to walk. I need to get back to what's left of my party crew before they die.

Yula-Mae walks back into the diner. Bernie heads to her car with a chuckle. Right when she gets to her car she drops her keys, and bends to pick them up.

A YOUNG BLACK BOY (8) watches her as she does this. She watches back, uneasy.

BERNIE

Where ya mama at, boy?

The young boy shrugs. He stares at Bernie, unblinking.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

You want a me to tap dance for you or something?

The Young Boy's about to open his mouth to speak when suddenly his nose starts to bleed. Bernie clicks her teeth, and reaches into her purse for a tissue to offer.

She takes her eyes off of the young boy for a second. When she looks back up...he's gone. *Where did he go?*

Bernie shivers and quickly gets into her car.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Lyric bursts through the doors of a bustling cafe. She elbows her way to the cash register. EVIE (17) (Latina, strong willed, with a tongue of silver) takes orders as quickly as she can with a line of customers growing out the door.

LYRIC
Why is it so busy?

EVIE
Um, because I'm the only one here
taking and making orders, *estupida*.

LYRIC
Hey. That wasn't on the vocab list
this week. We agreed. You can only
say words in Spanish I know.

EVIE
This is a new one. Special for you.

Lyric hurriedly puts on an apron. She jumps in and starts
making drinks.

EVIE (CONT'D)
I can't keep covering for you every
damn day, Ly. It's not fair. I got
shit to do too.

LYRIC
Yup. Got it.

Lyric is trying to push through. Evie clocks it and drops it.

EVIE
Te quiero, puta.

Lyric stops and beams at Evie.

LYRIC
Yeah, I know that one.

Evie beams back. The girls buckle down and get to work.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Evie and Lyric walk home, exhausted.

EVIE
How was school?

LYRIC
Triniti tried me again.

EVIE
Ay Dios, just beat that bitches ass
already.

LYRIC
(amused)
I kind of did.

Evie gapes.

EVIE
No fucking way!

LYRIC
That's why I was late. I got
detention.

EVIE
Well, forget everything I said
about being mad. You should have
BEEN beat her ass. She's so in love
with you, she don't know what to do
with herself.

LYRIC
Evie, why do you always say that?
That girl don't like me. She
definitely doesn't love me.

EVIE
Then why is she always doing extra
shit to get your attention? She's
like a fucking little toddler
throwing tantrums so you'll notice
her. I should know!

LYRIC
How is the lil *papi*? You need to
let me come babysit soon.

EVIE
He has two new teeth. He let all
the neighbors know, crying all damn
night. Look.

Evie pulls out her phone and shows a picture of a TODDLER BOY
with a gummy smile to die for.

LYRIC
Awww. Little Micah. He's perfect.

EVIE
I know right.

Evie gets a notification on her phone. A news app reads,
"Liam Beauchamp caught in another sex scandal ahead of Gerald
Beauchamp's re-election campaign."

LYRIC

Ugh. That sicko is at it again.

EVIE

Yeah, probably fucking corpses now.
But hey look.

Evie zooms in on LIAM BEAUCHAMP's (30's) (Caucasian Male) picture.

EVIE (CONT'D)

He's got that weird Idaho hickie on
his hand like you do.

LYRIC

Shut up, let me see.

Lyric eyes the picture. She's unconvinced.

LYRIC (CONT'D)

That's a shadow. Turn up the
brightness and it goes away.

Sure enough, Lyric turns up the brightness on Evie's phone
and the mark goes away.

LYRIC (CONT'D)

And it's not a hickie, it's a
birthmark. *ESTUPIDA*.

Evie shoves Lyric, playfully. She snatches her phone back.

EVIE

Yeah, whatever. I thought you were
supposed to be getting us a car so
we don't have to walk no more. I'm
tired of this shit.

LYRIC

Yeah, one day when I'm rich and
famous I'll get us a car.

Evie groans, annoyed.

LYRIC (CONT'D)

I can see it. Me with a car, you
with your GED. A nice little
wardrobe of fresh baby drip for
Micah. All the crab legs and
empanadas we can eat.

EVIE

Hey, That's racist. Don't be
assuming! I like crab legs too,
bitch.

The girls laugh, making their way home.

INT. ATWATER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bernie burns sage as Marvin Gaye plays in the background.
This is a modest home. It's small, but cozy.

Lyric enters and drops her book-bag on the ground. She starts
to walk towards the kitchen.

BERNIE

(shouts)

Lyric! You're home.

Bernie grabs Lyric up in a tight hug.

LYRIC

Why are you yelling? Why are we
hugging?

BERNIE

Don't be like that. I hug
you...don't I?

Lyric stares at Bernie, utterly confused.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Francine is here! Isn't that a nice
surprise?

Lyric gets it immediately. Lyric kicks her shoes off by the
door. She hurriedly places her book bag neatly on the couch.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Don't pull out any cash.

LYRIC

I know.

INT. ATWATER HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Lyric and Bernie walk in as FRANCINE (50) (Haitian female
with an accent, someone that you would NOT want as an enemy,
but not really as a friend either) smokes a cigarette at the
kitchen table.

FRANCINE

Aww sweet baby. Gimme a kiss.

Lyric kisses Francine's cheek.

LYRIC

Hey, Francine.

Francine cuts an eye at her.

LYRIC (CONT'D)

Granma. Sorry. Hello.

FRANCINE

Your mama only calls me that to
make me mad.

BERNIE

Well, we agreed that she could
choose what she felt comfortable
with as she got older. So.

FRANCINE

Ungrateful your mama is, Ly Ly.
She'll do anything to remind
everybody that we're not blood.
She's ashamed of me, your mama.

BERNIE

I am not ashamed, Francine. Don't
tell her that.

FRANCINE

I'll tell this girl what I like!
She the only one happy to see me,
huh, *chere*?

Awkward beat.

LYRIC

And that's my cue.

Lyric turns to leave.

BERNIE

No! No. We're all going to behave.
And eat. I was gonna make dinner,
so. Let's just make dinner
together. Like a family.

No one is super pumped about the idea.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Lyric, fill up a stock pot half
with water. We can do spaghetti.
Francine, put that cigarette out.

Francine lights another cigarette. There's an awkward
silence, save for the Marvin Gaye. Lyric looks for a pot.
Bernie starts to unpack a grocery bag.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

I need more gris-gris bags. I can't
afford to lose any clients. Did you
come to drop them off?

FRANCINE

I seem to find myself in a bit of a
bind, Bernie. I need to stay here a
couple days.

Lyric braces for impact. Bernie almost rips a cabinet door
off it's hinges from trying to restrain herself.

BERNIE

Is that right?

FRANCINE

It's no thing. I'll be gone before
you even notice I'm here. I just
need a bed and a couple dollars to
wade me by.

BERNIE

I don't have 'a couple dollars'.
Please...put the cigarette out.

FRANCINE

Pssh. I see that shiny car outside.
That fancy purse you walk around
with. Your fresh manicure. You
don't fool me.

BERNIE

That 'shiny' car that needs a new
starter. That 'fancy purse' from
Walmart. The 'fresh' manicure I did
MYSELF.

Lyric goes to fill the pot with water at the sink, but
nothing comes out. *YIKES*. She doesn't want to say anything.
But Francine clocks it.

FRANCINE

Your pipe broke?

Bernie turns to see what she's talking about. She keeps trying to turn the sink handles, then realizes.

BERNIE

Lyric, did you pay the water bill?

Lyric blanches. *FUCK.*

LYRIC

Mama--

BERNIE

Forget it. Fucking forget. We'll just go to sleep for dinner.

Bernie storms off. Francine stares at Lyric.

FRANCINE

A shame. A mother can't provide clean water for her own daughter. I weep for you, child.

It's Lyrics turn to storm off now. Francine goes back to her cigarette. Marvin Gayes 'Mercy Mercy Me' plays in the background. Francine hums along.

END ACT ONE