

Project Imago Dei

By

Nabilah Delowar

a story by Nabilah

INT.HEATHROW TERMINAL 4, UNDERGROUND - DAY

SERENA, a young black woman of 22, tall, slim and perfect posture, looks around nervously, tapping her shoes, continuously checking her phone. It's 3:37 PM

WOMAN ON UNDERGROUND ANNOUNCEMENT

(O.S)

It is advised to keep your
belongings with you at all times.

A group of people walk out of the platform. Some dressed in well-tailored suits; some wearing casual clothes. A large Indian family walks past with a myriad of luggage; their little boy, 6, carrying a Spiderman action figure, bumps into Serena, enabling her to snap into reality.

LITTLE BOY

(shyly)

I'm-I'm very sorry, Madam.

MOTHER

(in Hindi)

Alright, come here now.

SERENA

It's all good.

The train is still at the platform. Serena looks at it and then at the screen above, on the wall. Departure time: in 4 minutes and then 17.

SERENA

(to herself)

4 minutes. C'mon, David.

As Serena turns around to face the corridor leading to Terminal 4, a man slowly walks towards her. DAVID, 25 years old, tall, clean shaved, white; stands before her as the two stare intently at each other.

DAVID

Ser-Serena, I did not expect to
see you here.

SERENA

(nervously)

We need to talk.

INT. PICCADILLY, TRAIN - DAY.

David and Serena sit adjacent. Not looking at each other.

DAVID

He's not back, I haven't seen him
in ages.

(CONTINUED)

SERENA

(offended, angrily)

Why are you doubting me? I've seen him.

DAVID

(ignoring what she said)

How did you know?

SERENA

I-..I have my resources. I have my eyes on him.

DAVID

No, not that. Did you just predict where I'd be? In London? What day... and time?

SERENA

(looking at him for a brief moment, ignoring what he said)

I know he's here in London again. In Stratford, East London. I think he has last seen at 2:31 PM yesterday, I saw him an hour later. He was wearing a white shirt and grey trousers. He-he...lost a lot of weight. Doesn't look like himself anymore.

Serena takes out a bunch of pictures and quickly hands them to David, as if she doesn't want anyone to look at them.

The subject of the pictures is a man in his 50s, medium stature, extremely skinny, tanned. The man goes by the name of JUSTICE.

DAVID

(chuckles for a brief moment)

Ugh, good old Justice. Great name, honestly.

(sincerely, looking at her)

I can't help you.

Serena looks up, directly into his eyes with her teary eyes and shakes her head. David sighs, looking at his own hands.

The train stops at Hammersmith and Serena gets off, leaving David alone. The two look at each other with disappointment.

(CONTINUED)

SERENA
Good luck with your conference.

The train departs.

EXT. HAMMERSMITH STATION, PLATFORM 9 - DAY

Serena looks at the time. 4:07 PM. As she's about to put the phone away, she receives a call. The screen displays the name 'CALLUMS'.

Serena is hesitant about picking up, but after 10 seconds she convinces herself to respond.

CALLUMS (O.S)
You've been hiding for a long
time, Miss. We'll be in touch
soon. Don't you disappear again,
dear.

As the caller hangs up, Serena lowers the phone and puts it in her pocket.

She looks up at a pillar in front of her to find 4 identical missing person notices attached to it. The missing person? It's her.

"Missing Person:

Name: Serena

Surname: n/a

Height:

*5f10 Last seen wearing a
white dress in Stratford Centre, East London*

Call local authorities if you've seen her"

SERENA
It's good to be back, I guess.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY.

ASMAA, a 17 years old Bangladeshi girl, scrolls through her phone, anticipating a call. Clearly irritated.

A bunch of young TEENAGERS walk past, blasting music from their phones and conversing loudly.

Suddenly, a POLICE CAR rapidly approaches the street corner, harshly halts. A young police officer, JAMES, 27, black, leads the way to Asmaa, slowly walking.

He's followed by TWO OTHER MEN, both slightly older than him.

(CONTINUED)

The camera moves and stays on Asmaa for a moment, she knows what's about to unfold.

The officers reach Asma, who stands immobile.

JAMES
They need you.

ASMAA
(firmly)
I'm waiting for a call. Don't bother me.

JAMES
Callums doesn't care.

ASMAA
Yes, but you see? I do. As far as I'm concerned I have nothing to do with him. I won't work for him, I won't listen to wh-...

Unexpectedly, James interrupts Asmaa by violently hitting her on the nose. The screen goes black, blank.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - EVENING

The scene opens up with Asmaa waking up, gory from her nose and mouth. Everything appears blurry but when it adjusts, we see Asmaa is heavily chained to a chair.

James approaches her in the badly lighted room, following someone unfamiliar to Asmaa, Justice.

JUSTICE
(sits on a chair opposite her)
So, 17 huh? Quite young, don't you think?

JAMES
Yes, sir. Quite young.

JUSTICE
I wasn't speaking to you. I want her to talk to me.

Asmaa looks at him, not energetic and clearly on the edge of passing out again. No response from her.

JUSTICE
Hmm... I don't like that.
(getting up, walking around and the chair and then Asmaa)
I expect you to respond. You belong to me now. You won't have
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUSTICE (cont'd)
the privilege to dismiss me like
this.

ASMAA
You're not Callums.

JUSTICE
No, no... I'm not. I'm someone
better. Someone that will help
you get where you want to be in
the future.

ASMAA
I'm okay, thanks.

JUSTICE
Yes... Miss Independence? You're
part of the team now.

Justice smiles, blows a kiss at Asmaa and walks away with
James following him.

Asmaa is alone, sitting quietly, not panicking, but rather
comfortably with a confident look on her face.

INT. SERENA'S APARTMENT - EVENING.

Serena walks into an apartment, exhausted.

The apartment looks dirty, neglected.

On the coffee table in front of her in the living room, we
see a bunch of letters, taxes and bills, addressed to the
name of SABRINA HILLS.

Serena looks at them intently. Teary eyes.

FLASHBACK --

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Serena and Sabrina, both young girls of 18, are seen
running very fast.

SERENA
(breathless)
Sabrina, please... let me protect
you.

SABRINA
You're running with me. Don't
stop.

(CONTINUED)

SERENA
Sabrina, listen to me. You keep
running.

SABRINA
We both will.

Suddenly, a black Audi car approaches the two young women,
running very fast.

The window of the driver rolls down and a SHOT is heard.

Sabrina falls down, bleeding from her stomach. She vomits
blood.

Serena screams, cries.

SABRINA
You run now. Serena, run.

BACK TO REALITY --

Sabrina's voice echos in Serena's mind. The same sentence.
"You run now".

SERENA
I'm done running now, Sab. I will
avenge you, you'll see.

Serena snaps back to reality when someone rings the bell
twice. She panics, no one should know she's alive. She
walks very slowly towards the door. One step at a time.

Through the glass door of her apartment she can see the
silhouette of a medium sized man. Patiently waiting on
her.

It's David.

DAVID
Trick or treat?

Serena hastily opens the door, pulls David inside and
pushes him onto the wall with full strength.

SERENA
How did you know I'm here?

DAVID
How did you know I'd be in
London?

Serena lets him go. David adjusts his clothes.

SERENA
David, I don't need you to tell
me I'm doing something wrong. I
need to find him and end it. Now.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

Oh, no. I'm not here for him. I'm here for Sabrina.

As both walk into the living room, David notices the mail on the coffee table, picks them up and sighs.

DAVID

I can't believe she really left us.

SERENA

David, it's been 4 years. Why are you reacting like this now?

DAVID

You lost a friend, but so did I. You were there with her when it happened. I never got to say goodbye.

SERENA

She died in my arms. I saw her soul leave her body. It wasn't a pleasurable goodbye, David. It wasn't how I pictured I'd lose her.

DAVID

I-...I just miss her.

SERENA

She's gone.

DAVID

But you're here.

SERENA

And I hate myself for that.

They are both evidently sad. Neither knows what to do next. A part of them was lost when Sabrina died.

DAVID

I never addressed what happened. I-... it was too much to handle. Our whole team dismantled. You need to know that I cared.

SERENA

I wish you cared more.

DAVID

I needed you to know that. That's all...I-...I'm sorry. Okay?
(pause) I should leave. Yeah...

SERENA

Yeah, uhm.. It's late.
(walking up to the door and
opening it for him).
Goodnight.

DAVID

Goodnight.

David leaves. Serena is heartbroken. She misses her friend profoundly.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - EVENING

Asmaa is alone in the room once again. She tries to break the chains, tries to escape somehow. Over and over again. Her actions are futile.

James walks in the room. A paper bag containing a burger and fries in his hand.

ASMAA

I'd...ehm... like to speak to
your boss. The guy that was here
before? Justin?

JAMES

Justice.

ASMAA

Yeah ehm, right.

Asmaa sees the food in his hand.

ASMAA

I suppose that's for me?

JAMES

Maybe. Depends on what you choose
to do.

ASMAA

Oh dude, c'mon. Can you like not
play these games?

Justice walks in. Energetic, sassier than ever. Walking quite fast.

JUSTICE

James, give her the food.

James throws the paper bag at her.

Asmaa realises she won't be able to eat with her hands chained to her back.

(CONTINUED)

ASMAA

Oh yeah, right. Like that helps.
Unchain me, you idiot.

JUSTICE

Oh no no no. You need to be
nicer.

ASMAA

Where's Callums?

JUSTICE

Not here.

ASMAA

Do you work for him? Or...does he
work for you? I didn't get the
memo.

JUSTICE

We're a team. We pass on
responsibilities to each other.
Callums won't be working with you
on this project.

ASMAA

Working? What...what project?

JUSTICE

Imago Dei.

ASMAA

Yeah, ehm...okay.

JUSTICE

Do you know what that means?

ASMAA

Do you think this is the face of
someone who knows what that
means? Yeah, no... of course I
don't know.

JUSTICE

Genesis 1:27. "God made humans in
his image, his likeness".

ASMAA

Didn't think of you as the
religious type.

JUSTICE

Do you read the Bible?

ASMAA

Again, you know nothing about me.
C'mon. Do I look Christian?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ASMAA (cont'd)

(pause) Listen, dude. There must be a reason why you chose to kidnap me and bring me here. You must know something about me.

JUSTICE

I don't like that word. 'Kidnap'. So negative.

ASMAA

Dude, I don't care.

JUSTICE

BEING PART OF THIS PROJECT IS A PRIVILEGE!

ASMAA

Cool... what's the point of this? God's likeness...

JUSTICE

God's image and likeness. Strive to be divine.

ASMAA

So, you wanna be like God? That's... why don't you go to church?

JUSTICE

God's image and likeness. We can create that. Here at PID you can have all the resources necessary for you to be God-like. A God that chooses what they want. No need for you to suffer anymore. It's all on you...

ASMAA

And how do you plan to do that exactly?

JUSTICE

Simple: division, subtraction, addition, multiplication.

The two look at each other. Crazyness drives Justice. Asmaa is simply perplexed.

JUSTICE

The first step: you divide the worthy from the unworthy. People that have potential and...are willing to work hard.

(CONTINUED)

ASMAA

And then?

JUSTICE

Step two: you subtract people that end up failing... People that we thought would be worthy, but didn't work hard enough or...simply died (chuckles)

ASMAA

Dude, that's... messed up.

JUSTICE

Don't interrupt.

Justice has completely gotten Asmaa's attention. It's hard to process, but interesting.

ASMAA

You're telling me you could possibly kill people and you expect me not to comment? No questions at all?

JUSTICE

Yes.

ASMAA

(rolling her eyes)
Cool, then.

JUSTICE

Were was I? Oh...ehm. Step three, right? That's the addition phase. We add to those who are worthy attributes that are God-like. We'll enable them to develop almost a sixth sense...like... omnipotence.

ASMAA

Huh, creative.

JUSTICE

Quiet. (pause). Did you know that we don't fully use our brain? Like, majority of it... it's not used. Just there.

Asmaa nods her head.

JUSTICE

That's stage four. Being able to control your whole body and your surroundings and then... we multiply. We recruit many more.

Asmaa is in disbelief, but interested. Something inside her has awoken, something bad.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Serena, wearing large clothes and sunglasses to hide her identity, hastily walks out of a coffee shop and immediately receives a phone call. Same old number. Perhaps Callums.

ON THE PHONE --

CALLUMS (O.S)

Serena, you're advised to stay where you are. Do not move. Do not try to run.

SERENA

Don't you dare say my name.

CALLUMS (O.S)

We got eyes on you.

SERENA

Just tell me what you want. What? JUST TELL ME! Stop haunting us, stop haunting young people like us. Stop it.

CALLUMS (O.S)

There will be a white car approaching you in about 10 seconds. Get in it.

SERENA

Where are you taking me?

CALLUMS (O.S)

To buy you a white dress.

INT. EMPTY ROOM - EVENING

Asmaa is finally out of her chains. Sitting comfortably on the chair where she was bleeding, while eating the burger James had previously deprived her of. It appears she gained their trust.

James walks in.

JAMES

You need to get cleaned up. Let's go.

(CONTINUED)

ASMAA

You're letting me go?

JAMES

No, we're getting to work. You have to start straightaway.

ASMAA

I didn't agree to this. You know that, right?

JAMES

Does it look like you have a choice?

ASMAA

No, but... I can kill you if needed and escape.

JAMES

Yeah, right. Here's your clothes.

James throws a white dress and a toothbrush at her.

ASMAA

A toothbrush, wow... how thoughtful of you...

JAMES

Now I'm supposed to be briefing you, except for the fact that I don't feel like talking. All you need to know is that when you see the girl you capture her and bring her to us. That's all.

ASMAA

Her? Who's her?

JAMES

Some chick named Serena.