

The Disappeared by Jessica Harris

FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM DAY

A private school. All the students are uniformed in blazers and khakis or skirts. Most students are busy punching the buttons on their cell phones and then looking up at each other and quietly giggling. One or two students in the back of the room are sleeping. Only a few students appear to be engaged in the lecture.

A TEACHER lectures at the front of the room and motions to a screen on the front wall, a sort of digital chalkboard or projector.

The screen says "CIVIC RECONSTRUCTION: Working together

to with the government to make our world a better place."  
The teacher seems out of place in her clothing. Her uniform is very stiff and structured, but her eyes show she is gentle, kind, and at times frazzled. Her vibe is more kindergarten teacher than the school marm, rule enforcing outfit suggests.

MARLENE sits in the back of the classroom looking bored. She tilts her head to the side and rests it on her palm. With the other hand she taps a pen on the desk.

MARLENE (VOICEOVER)

I swear school gets longer and more tedious as each day goes by. I suppose one thing was different: Civic Reconstruction classes. Every day at school for the past 3 years, I've wasted 90 minutes of my life in these classes learning about being a better citizen.

A teenaged boy named ISSAC raises his hand. The state of his hair seems to mimic the state of his mind: confusion.

ISSAC

I don't know. Is it because the government officials know everything?

TEACHER

Not quite Issac. As a citizen, it is your duty to vote and elect officials who will look out for your best interests. And that is the reason that you should feel secure about the choices the government makes, and

why you should trust them and their policies. Do you know which of the basic principles that fulfills?

ISSAC

What benefits them benefits me?

TEACHER

Hmm, I think more or less.  
The TEACHER checks the manual.  
OK, it says, "What benefits one,  
benefits all when we all work  
together as we should."

Marlene rolls her eyes.

MARLENE (V.O.)

Most people at school think of  
Civic Reconstruction as a blow off  
class to goof around in and get the  
latest gossip. I have no idea why,  
but my friends TOM and DAISY love  
it. I think the class is a load of  
crap, but they seem to believe that  
becoming model citizens and the  
supporting the New Government and  
its promised "New Beginning," an  
era of prosperity.

BELL rings.

INT. HALLWAY DAY

Several students pour into the hallway from multiple doors.  
Marlene enters the hallway and walks. The hallway is very  
active. The students are rowdy as though they've been locked  
in cages for hours and are finally getting to roam free.

INT. CAFETERIA DAY

Students are talking, eating, and socializing. It is a very  
active cafeteria.

Marlene approaches TOM, DAISY, and CAMPER, all teenagers, who  
are crowded at a table in conversation. Tom and Daisy have a  
classic preppy look. They look very neat and put together as  
though they spend a good amount of time each morning getting  
dressed and choosing the perfect accessories.

Camper flashes an award-winning smile to a GIRL passing by.  
It's cocky as though he is fully aware that his smile will  
make almost any girl weak in the knees. He winks at her and  
she blushes. He speaks with an English accent.

GIRL  
Hi Camper.

CAMPER  
Hello, there.

Marlene joins her friends at the table.

DAISY, TOM, and CAMPER are all browsing through an ALBUM of  
photographs and videos of them on a boat.

MARLENE  
So what's going on?

DAISY  
Oh, we were just talking about our  
upcoming boating party.

TOM  
Leave it to Daisy to adopt such an  
archaic hobby. I think the only  
one I know who does this is my  
Grandmother.

DAISY  
Hey! I have 10 years of splendid  
memories in here.

Marlene flips through the pages of the book. There are  
several photographs of the four friends and a fifth boy,  
AARI, of the same age. He appears very relaxed and carefree.  
Every page shows all five friends.

MARLENE  
Remember this?

Marlene presses a button and one of the photographs plays a  
video clip. The five friends are on a boat. You can hear  
them yelling at each other playfully and giggling.

AARI'S VOICE  
Nunc et Semper

GROUP'S VOICES  
Always and forever!

Marlene runs her fingers across the image.

MARLENE  
It's not going to be the same  
without Aari. I can't imagine  
having the annual boating party  
without him.

Marlene closes her eyes.

INT. JAVA COFFEE SHOP DAY - FLASHBACK

Marlene opens her eyes. There are mostly students from school inside. The lighting is dim and the colors are unsaturated.

Marlene looks bored. She keeps glancing at her cell. She has a bowl of coffee beans in front of her. Occasionally she absent-mindedly picks one up and nibbles at it.

She sends a text MESSAGE addressed to Aari: WHERE ARE YOU??

FUTUREMAN, teenager, runs into the coffeehouse. He is a student dressed very casually who has the vibe of a Hulk Hogan era or a 1980s High School wrestler. It's easy to picture him in a spandex leotard. As he runs into the room he is very excited and panicked.

FUTUREMAN

Everyone! The craziest shit just happened on my way to Java. I was just driving down the highway and I passed an accident. There was a car that was really banged up. There was a team of medics running around, and I slowed down to see if anyone was inside. All of a sudden, before I could get a good look, the car just exploded! Like, out of nowhere! BLAM! And up it went. I didn't even see the car after it went up. Just a ball of fire where the car was and several flaming pieces of fire drenched metal that flew up into the air and never came back down.

The students in Java are all facing Futureman and listening intently to his story.

FUTUREMAN (CONT'D)

Dude, that explosion was so crazy that it even melted some of the paint off my car. Come check it out.

Futureman exits Java and several students follow him.

The customers inside the coffee shop turn to a digital screen and that is reporting news. A TELEVISION REPORTER is reporting the accident.

TELEVISION REPORTER

Police described the accident as a two-car collision. A man in a white car sped through a light, and he slammed into the victim's vehicle. The victim lost control

of his vehicle and spun off the road. When the medics arrived at the scene, both parties were unconscious. The medics also found the victim in critical state. The medics immediately ran back to the medic truck to retrieve an Emergency Life Kit after establishing that the victim was in critical condition. As the medics headed back to the car, the explosion occurred. Police thoroughly searched the area, but found no traces or remains of the victim.

A MONITOR behind the TELEVISION REPORTER plays a VIDEO showing ambulances.

When the person at fault regained consciousness, his description and the medic's reports confirmed that the victim was a seventeen year-old male named Aari.

The television reporter's voice begins to fade.

TELEVISION REPORTER (CONT'D)

A memorial service will be held for Aari next week. Friends, family, and concerned citizens can meet after sunset this Monday. As always, the new Government will provide counseling services to all members of the community who request it free of charge.

INT. CAFETERIA DAY

Marlene opens her eyes.

DAISY

So what do you think Marlene?

MARLENE

Huh?

DAISY

Do you think white and cream would make a better color palette for the party. The boys want green, but if you side with me, there's a chance we'll get nice looking colors. And don't listen to Camper! He might have charmed Tom to his side, but don't let him trick you too.

MARLENE

Wait-color schemes?

DAISY

I know! Sophisticated - God, I'm  
sophisticated!

CAMPER

Yes. She's so refined. I think  
I'll kill myself.

DAISY

We decided to have a larger, more  
extravagant party since it's our  
last year of A-levels. This party  
is going to be extra special. I  
sent details to your cell; so you  
can look them over whenever.

CAMPER

It's too bad Aari isn't here  
anymore. He was always our tie  
breaker.

#### INT. CAR ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD- NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Marlene and Aari are in the front seats of the car. Each  
appears to be passed out and smoke is filling up in their  
car. They are both sweating and there are small cuts on  
their foreheads and faces.

Marlene's eyes begin to open. Marlene coughs and her eyes  
open.

MARLENE

Aari?

Marlene turns to the driver's seat and it is empty.

A song plays on the radio.

#### INT. BEDROOM NIGHT

Marlene's bedroom. Marlene is in bed the DREAM MACHINE over  
her eyes. They look like large goggles.

A cell phone BEEPS. Marlene wakes up suddenly and pulls the  
goggles off of her face.

Marlene pulls out a small computer and checks the web.

MARLENE (TO HERSELF)

I swear I set this thing to love  
and happiness tonight. I should be  
remembering my childhood or at

least having one of my old pre-set  
favorites. Everything looks fine.  
I wonder if it's not connected to  
the web...

CELL PHONE BUZZES

Marlene picks up her phone

CELL PHONE  
One new message. From Aari.

AARI (O.S.)  
Serva Me, Servabota.

MARLENE  
Who is this?

AARI (VOICEOVER)  
Marie Magdalene, I'm not dead. I'm  
trapped. And soon, you, Camper,  
Daisy, and Tom might all be too.

CUT TO:

INT. MARLENE'S BEDROOM -NIGHT

Marlene wakes up suddenly and takes the Dream Machine off of  
her face. She checks her cell; it reads: NO NEW MESSAGES.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Marlene sits at her desk and is distracted. She continuously  
checks her cell for new messages.

INT. CAR ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Aari and Marlene are in the car. They are both sweating and  
have cuts on their faces. The car is slowly filling with  
smoke. Marlene COUGHS and her eyes open.

AARI  
I didn't die in that car wreck,  
Marlene. Some men took me out of  
the car and then set it on fire.  
You're not crazy and even though  
you're dreaming, you have to  
believe this is real.

INT. MARLENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marlene wakes up and takes off the Dream Machine. She stretches and notices that there is writing on her arms:

USER NAME: AARIROCKS Password: FHDST4805034F

MARLENE  
This can't be real.

Marlene pulls out her cell and types in the information. A log-in success scream loads up and Aari's message box appears.

#### INT. LABORATORY NIGHT

Nothing in the room can be seen. Black.

AARI (VOICEOVER)  
I knew I could count on you to  
believe, Marlene.

The lights turn on. The laboratory has a dark and eerie feel to it. There are several cool, metal objects around. Two large 'M's appear.

#### INT. CAFETERIA DAY

Marlene sits with Tom, Daisy, and Camper. She is doodling 'M's on a sheet of paper.

TOM  
Thinking of working for Mind and  
Machine after you get done with  
school?

MARLENE  
Huh? What are you talking about?

TOM  
Well, you've been tuning us out  
most of lunch and drawing the Mind  
and Machine logo over and over on  
this piece of paper.

DAISY  
Yeah. What gives? We have several  
crucial decisions to make on  
wardrobe for the yacht party.

CAMPER  
Are you thinking of working there  
after you graduate? My father works  
there and he says they're very  
close to a break through in



prosthetics. We might even be able  
to connect to the network  
internally instead of carrying  
around cells.

INT. MARLENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marlene puts on the Dream Machine and goes to sleep.

INT. LABORATORY NIGHT

The room is lit by a large overhead light. It feels more  
like an interrogation room or torture chamber than a  
laboratory. The cold metal instruments around the room only  
add to the chilling feeling. Two large 'M's resembling the  
Mind and Machine logo appear. They are on the laboratory  
jacket worn by the SCIENTIST.

Across from the scientist, Aari is strapped into a chair.  
His face is combination of metal and poorly stitched together  
skin. Bits of his hair are missing, revealing scars on his  
head.

The scientist is reading documents from a folder. The folder  
label says "Aari"

MARLENE (O.S.)

What? Why do you have a file on  
Aari? Give me that!  
Why can't I control my body at all?

SCIENTIST

Well, subject A4, I hope you are  
ready for the testing of the lens  
we implanted in your eye. Assuming  
all goes well, we should be able to  
install a memory upgrade so you can  
store more information and stream  
it over our network faster and with  
improved quality. While you look  
around the room and record what you  
see, I'll watch it from my computer  
over here.

The scientist turns to the computer to set up the experiment.  
He walks towards Aari and adjusts some of the equipment on  
his face.

AARI

You are not in control.

SCIENTIST

Subject A4, if you do not  
cooperate, I will be forced to

sedate you. Now let's begin.

A red dot indicating recording appears and the date flashes.  
It is the same as the current date and time.

SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

Well, according to our stats, you are recording a live feed and your network connection is intact and you are sending the data, but I don't have any video footage on my computer. Perhaps the problem is internal? This is quite puzzling.

I'll have one of the junior technicians look into it later.

The scientist types notes into his computer

SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

Soon you will have some company in the laboratory. Perhaps our new subject will have a better attitude and will help you realize why you were chosen. You can help improve humanity and society. What benefits one, benefits all.

But only when we all work together as we should, A4. Check the weather A4. Storms are likely near the lake this weekend and they are notorious for causing accidents. Someone might disappear, and the body may never be recovered.

EXT. BOAT DECK DAY

Marlene, Daisy, Tom, and Camper are all on a yacht for their annual party. Everyone looks happy and is dressed in shades of white and cream. The boys all wear green accents.

Marlene's cell beeps. She picks it up and there is a message from Aari.

AARI'S AVATAR

Cave mortis.

Marlene looks upset. She tries to log into Aari's account entering the same user name and password. The screen displays: THIS ACCOUNT DOES NOT EXIST.