

Title: Mised
Author: Dianne Kay
Genre: Thriller

Setting: Seattle and Europe
Pages: 433
Period: Now and 2010

Best Medium for Adaptation:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Studio Feature Film | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary | <input type="checkbox"/> Drama/Comedy TV series |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Feature Film | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative/reality TV series | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's TV series |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animation – Feature Film | <input type="checkbox"/> Animation – TV series (adult) | <input type="checkbox"/> Webseries |
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Logline

A woman's world is turned upside down when, after learning that she is the sole heir to her family's fortune, she witnesses a murder and has to fight her way to her freedom.

Brief Summary

Jade Anne receives a letter from her ex-lover, Stephan, telling her she is the sole heir to her family's fortune and that she should go to an abandoned farmhouse to pick up a package. After discovering an old key and coin in a shadowbox, and finding a flight itinerary and tickets in the package, Jade travels to Germany to reclaim her fortune. Stephan catches up with her and accompanies her to the bank to pick up the check. Upon leaving, they are attacked and Stephan kills the assailant. Jade travels back alone to the United States but is arrested on conspiracy to murder charges. Stephan heads back to the United States to testify in defense of Jade, admitting that he was on assignment for the government at the time and had to use Jade to flush out the man that he ends up killing.

Synopsis

FOX, a secret agent, is assigned one last job, and at the mention of a woman he appears to know, he has little choice but to agree.

JADE ANNE is shocked to receive a letter from STEPHAN PELTZINI, her former lover. He informs her that he has discovered more about her family history and that she is the sole heir of the family fortune. He refers to a key in her mother's shadowbox and says it belongs to a lockbox in a bank in Dusseldorf. The letter goes on to say that a package has been left at an old farmhouse they both frequented where they shot targets previously, with information about her ancestors. Her interest piqued, Jade sets off for the farmhouse. Upon arrival, she finds the package but flees in fear after hearing someone else upstairs.

In Los Angeles in 2010, Jade, then known as NADINE HAWKE, interviews for the clinical supervisor position at the GRIFFON Center, a clinic that provides education and treatment for emotionally disturbed youth. After being interviewed by Director GEORGE MARSHAL, Assistant Administrator ELDON WOLF and Clinical Supervisor Stephan Peltzini, Nadine is offered a job working at the Redondo Beach facility. Nadine feels an instant connection with Stephan. As she settles into her new job, a patient, DANNY CLIFFORD, displays a multitude of disturbing behaviors, stemming from his father IVAN's ritual abuse of him.

In present day Seattle, Jade/Nadine opens the package and finds a document in German, a passport, airline tickets and an itinerary for a trip to Los Angeles, Chicago, Amsterdam and Frankfurt, Germany. She also finds a lithograph of the Hawke family coat of arms, a coin that matches one on the family crest, and the key. As her feelings for Stephan resurface, Jade ponders what to do.

Back in 2010, Danny completes a 30-day evaluation at the state hospital during which time Ivan visits, becomes abusive and consequently receives a legal stalking order. As Nadine and Stephan's secret relationship grows, Danny hangs himself. Ivan goes missing and Stephan, blamed by Marshal, accepts a transfer to the island of Tinian in the Marianas. The Clifford file is closed, marked classified. Their relationship discovered, Nadine's employment is terminated. After Danny's mother commits suicide, Stephan warns Nadine that Ivan is a dangerous man and that Marshal and Wolf are well connected within the government and may track her. Nadine is devastated as Stephan heads off to the South Pacific.

In the present, Jade decides to pursue her inheritance and boards a plane to LAX. Wolf finds Ivan, telling him he knows where Hawke and Peltzini can be found. In Los Angeles, Jade has mixed emotions of love and anger as she finds Stephan waiting for her. He tells her his new name is William and that he is going to get her safely to Germany and back in order to collect her inheritance. Marshal receives word from Wolf that Stephan is back in the country. He plans to use Jade as bait to capture Stephan, whom he blames for injuries he suffered while under Peltzini's command to rescue POW's from China in 1975. Wolf tries to intercept the couple at their stopover at Chicago O'Hare Airport, on their way to Europe, but fails.

In Germany, Stephan and Jade are met with Stephan's friend MAXWELL VON HAUFFMEISTER, who puts them up for the night. Stephan/William divulges details of life in black ops, as well as how the military works, and he convinces Jade/Nadine he will keep her safe. He tells her not to let them recruit her as she is an asset.

Arriving in Düsseldorf, they go to the bank, where they are met by banker BENEDICT A. SCHURKE. In the vault, Jade uses the key to open her great, great, grandfather's lockbox, which contains gold and silver coins, amber trinkets, and a dossier, the value of which totals \$3,500,000. Herr Schurke issues a check in Euros under the name, Nadine Parker Hawke. She will need to return to the United States to convert it to US dollars.

As they leave the bank, a MAN tries to grab Stephan's satchel. After killing him, Stephan guides a horrified Jade away. He tells her it was his job. She accuses him of using her for bait as part of

an assignment. Traumatized by witnessing the murder, Jade dissociates from the present. Max meets them in Mainz and drops Jade off at Frankfurt International alone. Stephan will not be returning to the States with her.

In the US, Wolf is blamed by Marshal for losing Hawke and Peltzini and receives a 30-day suspension. Before he leaves, he accesses Marshal's incident report and shifts the blame onto the FBI. Upon arriving back in the US, Jade Anne realizes she will need a lawyer to justify her two identities, as the bank is unable to wire the money due the name on her passport not matching her American ID.

In Germany, William and Max watch as the BBC reports on the man's body being found and the German police having recovered a videotape of the crime. William knows it will not be long before the American authorities have it, and Nadine is in danger being back on American soil. He dreams of the incident in China which injured Marshal. He tells Max that one of the team members, BLAKE BRISCOE, testified and blamed "Fox" for everything going wrong. William suspects Marshal still has an axe to grind. He explains how GRIFFON Center is a shill agency set up under the ruse of a child treatment facility, and how the CIA contacted him to take out Ivan Clifford, a known anarchist with KKK aspirations. They planned to flush Ivan out after his son, Danny was sent to GRIFFON Center, but that obviously did not end well.

With the tape now in FBI hands, Stephan Peltzini is recognized. When it becomes clear that he has gone AWOL, Watchdog orders the field office to find him. After Jade returns home, she receives a letter from Wolf asking her to make contact ASAP. Stephan (a/k/a Fox) finally checks in with his superior, Watchdog, to report his assignment has been completed.

Jade tries to cash the check, but does not have the appropriate identification, so she contacts attorney KALE DAVENPORT, who once helped her recover her severance package from the GRIFFON Center. Kale recommends Jade see a clinical psychologist, DR. GRAYSON MOUNDS, who can help her through the trauma of the murder she witnessed. She also warns Jade she could be charged with conspiracy to murder as she was present at the crime. Jade writes to Stephan at Max's address to warn him. At her first session with DR. Mounds, he tells her she is suffering from PTSD and assigns tasks to ease her suffering.

Kale calls the GRIFFON Center and asks Marshal about Wolf's contacting Jade. Marshal refers her to FBI Agent Blake Briscoe, whom he warns after the call ends. Briscoe tells Marshal that Wolf's informant was Ivan Clifford and confirms why Jade travelled to Germany and that it was Clifford who Stephan killed. Marshal is overjoyed he has evidences against his old adversary.

The attorney tells Jade her check is useless without notarized authorization from the German banker. Kale warns Jade that she faces extradition to Germany if authorities determine probable cause to murder. Jade knows that Stephan is the only one who can prove she did not have anything to do with murder. Jade is subpoenaed to appear at an evidentiary hearing. She and Kale are outraged to hear the charges have been upgraded to co-conspiracy to murder. Deputy District Attorney CALVIN CANTOR tells Jade they can either pursue an indictment against her for co-conspiracy to murder or she can turn state's evidence and tell them where Stephan is located.

Kale informs JUDGE ZACKARY that Jade will be taking the fifth and they need the customary thirty days to file a motion. She hires LT. MITCHELL DRUMMOND as private investigator for the case. He in turn enlists the help of two bounty hunters, RAND Service and BARRY SPARKS (SPARKY), who bug the GRIFFON Center. Stephan receives Jade's letter, which details her charges and the impending court date. He prepares to head back to the US.

Marshal and Briscoe discuss how Wolf had Jade served by Washington police. Marshal is both excited and scared by the prospect of Stephan coming back and testifying. Wolf is told by Marshal that his informant, Clifford, is dead. Marshal threatens to suspend his employment permanently due to his unsanctioned covert operations. Wolf counters by threatening to tell Marshal's superiors about his heroin usage.

Kale notifies Jade that the grand jury found probable cause and she is indicted. Jade is arrested and her cabin is searched. At the arraignment, Kale successfully applies for a waiver for extradition to Germany, as well as bail being granted.

Sparky reports that GRIFFON Center has already been bugged by government plants. He tells Drummond they found illegal contraband in Marshal's office, as well as black and white stills of Jade and Stephan in compromising positions. Sparky gives Drummond a flash drive which shows that Wolf has been tracking Clifford since 2010. It also revealed that Wolf purchased airline tickets for Clifford to travel to Frankfurt, which places Clifford there at the time of the murder. Drummond deduces this information might incriminate Wolf as an accessory to murder, but he is not sure how Kale can use this information, as it was obtained illegally. They also review video evidence of Marshal being blamed by Briscoe for the failure of the plan to use Jade as bait in order to bring Stephan back to the US. Kale is horrified to discover the German banker, Benedict Schurke has gone missing.

In Frankfurt, a lone SNIPER targets two men who he has been told are al-Qaeda. He drops one target, Max, but the other, Stephan/William, eludes him. Stephan suspects he knows who sent this sniper and contacts his superior, GENERAL CALDWELL. Caldwell tells him that Jade will go on grail and he, the general, has been asked to testify about Stephan's placement at the GRIFFON Center.

At a pretrial conference, Kale requests that the defense obtain the victim's name from the prosecution. The prosecution says they are in the same position. The defense's motion to suppress the videotape showing the crime is denied. Dr. Mounds shows Jade methods to help her cope with her ongoing stress. Stephan eludes the authorities and travels to Italy to visit his ailing FATHER., where he says a final goodbye.

On day one of the trial, Jade and the defense are astounded to learn the victim is Ivan Clifford. He prosecution states that Jade arranged to have Clifford murdered and was present at the time of the crime. The defense pleads not guilty and cites the M'Naghten test, which states Jade's capacity was diminished at the time of the murder.

On day two, Kale successfully strikes Marshal's testimony, the judge ruling his judgement is clouded due to his vendetta against Peltzini. On day four, under cross examination, Wolf leaves the stand without permission and is arrested for criminal contempt after Kale proves he played a larger part in the case. On a break, Kale reveals to a devastated Jade that Schurke has gone missing and that there is no trace of the bank transaction ever happening.

On the stand, Jade is pressed hard by prosecution and has to answer questions that plant doubts regarding her innocence and her stress disorder. Her claims are backed up by Dr. Mounds when he is called to testify for the defense.

Stephan surprises Jade at her cabin, telling her he has information for her attorney. He says her cabin is monitored by satellite, the authorities will be coming for him. He tells her that his superior, Caldwell, is willing to testify that Stephan was working in a military capacity. He leaves when helicopters circle overhead.

Caldwell testifies that Stephan was hired to take out Clifford when he resurfaced, having gone missing after his son's suicide. He testifies that Jade had nothing to do with Clifford's death. On the last day of the trial, Stephan arrives to give evidence. He is in protective custody and still faces murder charges. He testifies he was hired to track and kill Clifford, but that the plan failed when Clifford went missing after his son's death. He admits he misled Jade and used her fortune as bait to lure Clifford to Germany to finish the job. Kale moves to dismiss all charges against Jade a/k/a Nadine Hawke, which Judge Zackary grants. Outside the courtroom, Jade tells Stephan she will never forget what he put her thorough, by that she forgives him.

Element Ratings

| | Excellent | Good | Fair | Development Needed |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Concept | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Story | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Characters | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments/Suggestions for Adaptation

Misled is a very well-constructed and taut thriller that could take moviegoers on a terrific ride, and have them invested from beginning to end. From Seattle to Germany and then back to Seattle, this is a story that could find great success on the big screen. The pacing is spot on, there is always something happening, plenty of forward motion, and would definitely keep the viewers interested, so *Misled* does have great potential for adaptation.

Misled is also a love story. Jade's conflicting feelings toward Stephan are fascinating, as well as the love, anger and confusion that bubbles up for the characters throughout the story and leads to a magnificent eruption at the end. Audience members will find Jade and Stephan's relationship endlessly captivating. Jade's conflicting emotions for Stephan make her instantly relatable and

give her such great depth, so the strong characterization needed for an adaptation is certainly there.

It is not just the two leads who make this story interesting, however; there are many juicy supporting roles, such as Kale Davenport and Dr. Mounds. Both are very well fleshed out and would be very appealing roles for actors. The alternative practices that Dr. Mounds uses to help

Jade would be interesting for viewers, and can possibly be used as breathers between the action scenes.

The opening instantly piques interest with the mysterious letter and details of the package at the farmhouse. The warning to Jade to be careful provides the necessary tension and ensures the viewer will worry for her and be on her side, vital for any protagonist. The dialogue is good and really moves the story along. It is realistic and authentic, and each character certainly has a distinct voice.

The finale in the courtroom is well done but after the first two witness's testimonies are shown to be unreliable, it's pretty clear she's going to get off. A spanner in the works at this point would heighten the tension. Alternating between hope and fear for the protagonist is a powerful tool to use, particularly at this point.

Having been put through the ringer, as every protagonist should be, Jade's story comes to a satisfying conclusion, but questions are left unanswered about Stephan. After the final confrontation with Jade, does he get arrested or go on the run again? What happens to him? Perhaps this was done purposely with a sequel in mind. If so, the character is very fleshed out, yet his mysterious and covert life conjures up many questions, making him worthy of another story.

Overall, *Misled* has great potential for adaptation. There is enough drama and conflict here to keep audiences fully engaged. From Jade receiving the letter through the end with the trial, an adaptation will keep audiences on the edge of their seats.

| <i>Final Recommendation</i> | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Strongly Consider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Consider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Consider with Development |