

SPLICE

by

Vincenzo Natali and Antoinette Terry

2.23.06

Current revision by
Vincenzo Natali

BLACKNESS.

A MUFFLED HEART BEAT.

Then...

A SLIVER OF BLINDING LIGHT slices through the emptiness revealing the boundaries of a dark, liquid-filled chamber.

THRRRUMP! The walls involuntarily contract, pushing us forward, toward the excruciatingly bright opening.

THRRRUMP-- THRRRUMP-- THRRRUMP--

Each spasm draws us closer until the we are consumed by whiteness.

This is the POV of an infant at birth.

We have just exited the womb and entered a new world. As our vision adjusts, we see...

INT. BIRTHING ROOM, LAB -- CONTINUOUS

A STERILE LAB. The womb we have just left is not human. It isn't even organic. It's a massive artificial uterus. The name "BETTY" is stamped on the chrome hull.

The people attending our birth are TWO FIGURES DRESSED IN BIO-SEALED SUITS. SUIT ONE rattles off statistics from a computer display...

SUIT ONE

Diaphral pressure's reduced thirty percent.

...While SUIT TWO lowers us into a glass incubator.

SUIT TWO

Okay, shut her down.

SUIT ONE closes the lid.

SUIT ONE

It's sealed.

The two figures stand over us leering through plastic eyeholes. Then, with the faint hiss of escaping oxygen, SUIT ONE's head piece comes off. Underneath is ELSA SHELLEY, twenties, lip ring, bitchy and whip smart.

ELSA

Looks like you, sugar plum.

She puts her arms around SUIT TWO as he unmask himself: CLIVE COLINS, also twenties, blue hair, possessing the twinkling eyes of a dreamer. He beams.

CLIVE
Handsome little devil, isn't he?

INT. LONG CORRIDOR, LAB -- LATER

Sterile, white, tubular, like a path to heaven.

Clive backs into view, followed by Elsa. She points a digital video camera at something just out view, while Clive beckons to it in a sweet voice.

CLIVE
Come on, don't be scared... Atta boy. We won't hurt you. Come on, come on... No, no this way.

ELSA
Move, move... You're blocking my shot.

CLIVE
Excuse me, Ms. Spielberg.

Clive steps out of the way as Elsa opens a door into the next chamber.

ELSA
Okay, here goes...

INT. CONTAINMENT ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Elsa backs in, the camera still rolling.

ELSA
He's so cute.

Slowly, tentatively, a CREATURE comes into the room.

IT IS ANYTHING BUT CUTE.

It has the stance of a small primate. Visible through translucent skin is a vast network of veins and vital organs. A long tail, one which would look more natural on a salamander or a lizard than a warm-blooded animal, extends from the base of the spine. But most shocking of all, is a colorful set of wings which flower from its back.

The trembling, new-born MALE HYBRID looks around the room fearfully.

Without warning, it releases a blood-curdling SCREAM when it sees...

In the corner, squatting in a glass cage, is a similarly formed, but older, FEMALE HYBRID.

POV OF THE VIDEO CAMERA as Elsa ZOOMS IN on the male hybrid's face.

ELSA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
This is just like "Bride of
Frankenstein"!

CLIVE (O.S.)
When will you get it right. It's
the Bride that screams. He's the
groom.

ELSA (O.S.)
Note to self: brush up on Clive's
adolescent obsessions.

ON CLIVE as he snatches the camera from her.

CLIVE
You know, you'd be really hot in a
horror film.

He gets Elsa in a close up.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Come on, let's see it, B-Queen. Be
the bride.

INT. HYPERSPACE CLUB -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON ELSA as she HOWLS with delight.

She is in a ultra-trendy club, dancing in the middle of a
seething mass of bodies to pounding hyper-beat music.

ELSA'S VIDEO FOOTAGE OF THE HYBRIDS plays on a wall of
monitors, while red and gold banners proclaim, "*WELCOME TO
THE WORLD, GINGER AND FRED*".

Clive moves through the crowd, smiling, waving to people,
accepting drinks as they are passed to him. Eventually, he
reaches Elsa, takes her in his arms and kisses her.

Elsa's eyes widen. He has inserted something into her mouth.
She sticks out her tongue to reveal a rapidly dissolving
capsule.

CLIVE
Swallow it.

Elsa downs it with a swig of his drink, while Clive discreetly
drops another pill down his gullet.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
One of the perks of working for a
pharmaceutical company.

Elsa giggles and Clive leans in for another smooch but is stopped short as a SLICKLY DRESSED MAN, surges through the crowd calling...

SLICK MAN
Clive! Elsa!

Clive looks to Elsa. Does she know this guy? She shakes her head.

SLICK MAN (CONT'D)
We have to talk. You two are brilliant. You have an incredible future. I know you're going to have lots of people approaching you, but please, please consider me.

CLIVE
Who are you?

SLICK MAN
I'm an agent, dude.

Jeweled fingers manage to push a card into Clive's palm

SLICK MAN (CONT'D)
I'm talking life rights. Major publishing deals... movies. Internet shopping. Total convergence... Call me!

Clive and Elsa turn to each other. Burst out laughing.

INT. FLESH LOUNGE, HYPERSPACE CLUB -- NIGHT

THE FLESH LOUNGE. We can see why a couple of crazy geneticists like Clive and Elsa like this place. The theme is biology.

Clive calls to the waitress.

CLIVE
Coupla Coronaries, please.

MOMENTS LATER:

Drinks in hand, Clive and Elsa collapse onto a couch made of what looks like human bodies: faces, breasts, penises jutting out of the cushions.

BOOF! Blinding light. A microphone thrust forward.

Squinting under tungsten glare, Clive and Elsa realize that they have been ambushed by JOURNALISTS AND CAMERAMEN. A BEAUTIFUL REPORTER shrieks at them over the music.

BEAUTIFUL REPORTER
Clive, Elsa! Got time for a sound
bite?

Clive looks at her, somewhat dazed.

CLIVE
What's that?

REPORTER
For "Sci-lebrity" on "Sci-Eye". You
know, the Science Network?

Clive turns to Elsa, then back to the reporter.

CLIVE
Are you sure you have the right
people?

BEAUTIFUL REPORTER
This is your party isn't it?

CLIVE
Well, I guess...

BEAUTIFUL REPORTER
Get used to it, kids. You're gonna
be famous.

Elsa smiles, she's got no problem with that.

ELSA
What do you want to know?

The reporter nods to her CAMERAMAN and speaks into a
microphone.

REPORTER
Clive, Elsa. It's no secret that you
have more than just a professional
relationship. One important
question...

She pauses for dramatic effect.

ELSA
Yeah?

REPORTER
How do geneticists *do it*?

Snickers. But Elsa isn't flustered.

ELSA
In a petri dish.

Good answer. Chuckles. Clive looks at Elsa, impressed.
Another reporter pipes up.

REPORTER 2

Clive, why did you enter the field
of genetics?

Clive considers this for a nanosecond. Then ...

CLIVE

To make monsters.

REPORTER 2

Elsa?

ELSA

To get on TV.

More laughter. But we get the feeling that wasn't a joke.

REPORTER 3

Elsa, over here. As a geneticist,
and a woman...

ELSA

Uh huh...

REPORTER 3

Which gender, in your opinion, is
superior?

Without batting an eye...

ELSA

We all start life female. Men are a
mutation.

Big laughs. Clive cocks an eyebrow.

CLIVE

Bitch.

She gives him a big kiss. More flashbulbs go off, but the
moment is interrupted as a SUITED MAN steps between the
geneticists and the reporters.

SUIT

(to the reporters)

Excuse me, but this is a private
function. Dr. Colins and Dr. Shelley
are not permitted to take your
questions at this time.

ELSA

We don't mind.

While the press noisily make their protestations, the suit addresses Clive and Elsa.

SUIT

I'm William Barlow's personal assistant. This event was not authorized. I'm afraid you're going to have to leave.

ELSA

But it's just beginning.

SUIT

There's a car waiting outside.

ELSA

And what if we stay?

SUIT

Dr. Barlow was very insistent.

A tense pause. Clive puts down his drink.

CLIVE

The B-man has spoken.

Elsa reluctantly gets up.

EXT. HYPERSPACE CLUB -- NIGHT

More press. Lights. Microphones, bouncers, partiers, confusion. The suit leads Clive and Elsa to a waiting limo.

A NONDESCRIPT MAN shouts at Clive.

NONDESCRIPT MAN

Hey, Clive!

Clive turns. The Man raises a gun and empties it into Clive's chest.

NONDESCRIPT MAN (CONT'D)

Don't fuck with life.

Time seems to freeze as Clive looks at his body. There isn't any blood, no bullet holes.

NONDESCRIPT MAN (CONT'D)

Next time I use real bullets!

The Man drops his gun and runs but is quickly overtaken by the bouncers who proceed to beat the crap out of him.

Clive looks to Elsa, wide-eyed, riding an adrenaline high.

ELSA

You okay?

He smiles, turns to a CAMERAMAN.

CLIVE
Did you get that on tape?

The Cameraman nods.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
I want a copy.

CAMERMAN
Sure thing, Dr. Colins.

The suit shepherds them into the limo.

INT. LIMO - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Clive and Elsa recline in their plush leather seats, watching the city quietly whip by.

He takes a deep breath.

CLIVE
Holy fuck.

They both break out laughing. Elsa pops open a bottle of champagne from the mini bar, the cork rebounding against the ceiling. She passes it to Clive.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
To us.

ELSA
To you. Most people have to wait
'til they're at least thirty to be
assassinated.

Clive chugs the champagne.

CLIVE
We're fucking stars, El.

ELSA
We are stars.

INT. WILLIAM BARLOW'S OFFICE -- DAY

WILLIAM BARLOW, Clive and Elsa's project manager, middle-aged and strictly middle management.

BARLOW
You are lunatics.

Clive and Elsa are seated by his desk, like a couple of delinquents in the principals office. Elsa defiantly pops NERD candies, crunching them loudly in her mouth.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

Do you know how much damage you've caused?

ELSA

It was just a party.

BARLOW

Which the press was invited to.

ELSA

We didn't invite them.

BARLOW

Oh, and who did?

CLIVE

It was our publicist.

BARLOW

Publicist? You're scientists.

ELSA

The definition's changing. Everybody needs promotion. How do we think we landed this gig in the first place?

BARLOW

You've made a mockery of this program. You'll be lucky if the company doesn't shut us down.

CLIVE

Relax. They won't do a thing. Ginger and Fred are special. And they know it.

BARLOW

Don't be so sure. Frontier research is high risk. I have to work day and night to convince them of its value.

(re: the Nerds)

Would you mind not doing that?

Elsa shrugs, crumples the box and pitches it into a wastepaper basket.

ELSA

Not to self: be grateful for Barlow's tireless defense.

(coy)

You aren't the only game in town, William.

BARLOW
 Go ahead. Sign up with Pharcom,
 Hamilton-Splinter or any of the others
 that courted you. See if they can
 offer the same numbers.

This shuts her up.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
 You want to fly with the big boys,
 then you learn to fly straight.
 Understood?

CLIVE
 Sure.

BARLOW
 Elsa? Yes?

ELSA
 Yes.

BARLOW
 Good.

He takes out envelops.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
 Stock options. A bonus for your
 success.

Elsa reaches for it, but Barlow pulls back.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
 ... If you behave.

She is about to say something, Clive intervenes.

CLIVE
 Hey man, we just need to know what
 the boundaries are.

BARLOW
 I think "geniuses" like you should
 be able to figure it out.

EXT. NOVAPHORM HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

Clive and Elsa step out of a monolithic corporate tower, the
 headquarters of NOVAPHORM PHARMACEUTICAL. They open their
 envelops. Eyes widen at the contents.

CLIVE
 Time to buy some toys.

Elsa nods enthusiastically.

INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The modest apartment is crammed with electronics toys, DVD's, comic books, movie posters and other expensive junk. This is what happens when geeks get an income.

Clive and Elsa are sprawled on the floor, playing "MUTILATOR", an ultra-violent video game.

ELSA

What the fuck is with Barlow? What's he so afraid of?

Clive's DIGITAL MUTANT uses a chainsaw to eviscerate Elsa's GIANT BUG. Then he crushes her with a massive boulder.

ELSA (CONT'D)

(re: the game)

Aww, you prick.

CLIVE

He's just a bureaucrat protecting his ass.

The game resets. Elsa launches an all out assault pounding the fire button on her joystick.

ELSA

Well, his ass is getting in my face. Do you know how much money they're gonna make off us?

Elsa's bug toasts the mutant's arm with flame breath.

CLIVE

Ouch!... Yeah, well that's how it works, isn't it? Exploitation of the artist.

ELSA

I'm getting sick of it. If they're going profit from our brilliance, then at least give us a modicum of freedom... Take that!

Elsa's bug decapitates Clive's mutant with a meat cleaver. Clive drops his joystick in defeat.

CLIVE

Well, what do you want to do? Call up Pharcom? There's an offer on the table.

ELSA

These places are all the same. No, I'm talking about taking control.

CLIVE

How?

ELSA

Let's go the next step.

CLIVE

You really mean that?

ELSA

Why not? Who's going to know? With Ginger and Fred right as rain, we've got time to kill.

CLIVE

You're saying, build the genome?

ELSA

Yeah, then save it for a rainy day.

A beat while Clive considers this.

CLIVE

Let's go.

They drop their controllers and race for the door.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK -- DAY

A brilliant red GTO muscle car blazes through an anonymous set of buildings. Comes up to a security gate, parks in a private spot. Clive and Elsa get out and race into...

INT. SECURITY ENTRANCE, LAB -- DAY

FRANK, portly security guard waves Clive and Elsa though.

FRANK

Evenin'.

ELSA

Quit staring at my tits, Franky.

FRANK

Man's got have some joy in life.

She gives him a wink as she follows Clive around the corner.

INT. GINGER AND FRED'S ROOM -- DAY

A room brimming with caged creatures: a mouse with gills swimming in an aquarium, a bird with fur, a cat with a giraffe's neck. Each cage is labelled with famous actors' names: "Cary Grant", "James Stewart" "Katherine Hepburn"...

And in the center of the room, at the place of honor: "Ginger and Fred", the creatures we have already been introduced to, a little bigger and more matured than when we last saw them.

Ginger and Fred chatter with excitement as Clive and Elsa bounce into the room.

DEXTER (O.S.)

Hey, guys.

DEXTER GORDON, their assistant, thirties, mole-like, with skin that has possibly never been exposed to sunlight, waddles up with a half-eaten donut in his mouth.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

What're you doing here? I thought you were gonna take the day off.

ELSA

Little side project, dawling.

DEXTER

Oooo, exciting.

CLIVE

On the QT, Dex.

Dexter mimes zipping his mouth shut and locking it.

INT. NUCLEAR TRANSFER ROOM, LAB -- DAY

Completely sterile and empty, with one exception: the metal surfaces are covered in colorful refrigerator magnets arranged into nonsense words.

A freaky, hip-hop cover of "*Under My Skin*", rings out as Clive slides into view on a wheeled chair. He skids to a stop next to a massive computer.

He hits the power key and the machine whirs to life, graphics zipping by on the monitor at an imperceptible rate. All the while, Clive raps along to the music.

"I've got you under my skin, I've got you deep in the heart of me, so deep in my heart, you're really a part of me..."

Elsa comes up behind Clive, munching on Nerds. She lets her thick mane of hair cascade over his face.

CLIVE

Smells great. Mango?

ELSA

Mango-peach oatmeal scalp scrub.
Fifty dollars a bottle.

Clive runs his fingers through her hair, finds the perfect strand.

And yanks.

Ouch!
ELSA (CONT'D)

Baby.
CLIVE

Just hand it over.
ELSA

Elsa secures the strand of hair onto a microscope slide. And carefully inserts it into a port on the side of the computer.

SHOOK! It's sucked into the machine.

BLEEP! A virtual rendition of Elsa's hair is displayed on the monitor. It looks like a branchless tree trunk.

Clive hits a command: "ENHANCE". And magnification increases a thousand fold, giving him a view of an individual hair cell. He activates a computer guided laser which cuts open the spherical nucleus of the cell.

Nano-tendrils extract one of chromosomes contained within, then unravel it, revealing an elegantly woven double helix.

A window opens on the screen: "DO YOU WISH TO PROCEED WITH SPLICING PROCEDURE?"

Clive's finger hovers over the return key.

Punch it.
ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive hits "RETURN."

There is a momentary pause and then letters flash by in a dizzying blur:

"ATCTAGCTTTACGGGTATTGGAAACCCTATACCGGACT...."

Every gene is identified: metabolism, musculature, eye colour. Everything.

This is a blueprint for Elsa.

How do I look?
ELSA (CONT'D)

Not bad... with a little work.
CLIVE

Clive types in a command: *"TRAVERSE CERVICAL NERVE. FIND"*
The computer instantly searches for the requested gene.

"TTTCCCCCACCACACTTTACCCGTGTGTGGT..."

BLEEP! The display freezes: *"GENE 49749. TRANSVERSE CERVICAL NERVE."*

Clive types another command: *"SELECT FOR TRANSGENIC INSERTION."*

The computer severs this fragment of the DNA molecule and drops it into a store box of genes. The human DNA graphic is replaced by A NEW DNA SPIRAL, labeled: *"H-437-- HYBRID ORGANISM."* Pieces of it are missing, it's under construction.

Clive hits another command: *"SPLICE"*

...And gene 49749 is welded into one of the gaps in the strand, forming A bridge between two adjacent genes.

INT. NUCLEAR TRANSFER ROOM, LAB -- NIGHT

MONTAGE:

The MUSIC CONTINUES under images of Clive and Elsa tirelessly forming their hybrid creation.

It's like stringing together a necklace composed of countless beads. We see Elsa's name flash by. But we also catch other names, non-human names, the latin genus of different species: *"SIALIA SIALIS, AMBYSTOMA TIGRIMUM, TURSIOPS TRUNCATUS."*

Finally, a very tired-looking Clive plugs in the last piece of the massive jigsaw puzzle of adrenaline, thymine, guanine and cytosine.

The MUSIC CRESCENDOS as Elsa kisses the displayed graphic on the screen. Clive gives her a warm hug.

They have created a new lifeform.

INT. COLD ROOM -- DAY

Elsa and Clive wheel a Dewar tank (a storage box for genetic material) into a walk-in freezer.

CLIVE

All right. Now we put it on ice.

Elsa gives him a mischievous look. She does a U-turn and wheels the tank out of the room.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

El, where are you going?

INT. CORRIDOR, LAB -- DAY

Elsa wheels the Dewar tank down the hall. Clive races to keep up.

CLIVE

Yo. Chick with the long hair.
Whassup?

She runs, giggling like a mischievous school girl into...

INT. BIRTHING ROOM -- DAY

The door swings open as Elsa enters, shuts and locks the door. Clive bangs on it from the other side.

CLIVE

(through the door)
This is rapidly ceasing to be
humorous.

Elsa giggles. She removes the lid of the canister. Mist swirls around the opening like a prop in a magic show.

Using a pair of tongs, she removes a plastic cartridge containing the spliced genetic material.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(through the door)
El. It's illegal.

ELSA

The law specifies human cloning.
This won't be human. Not entirely.

She snaps the cartridge into a servo-guided injection needle. A monitor flickers to life, displaying an enlarged image of a human egg.

CLIVE

(through door)
Hey. I'm not kidding around. Open
the fucking door, s'il vous plait.

Elsa does as she is told. Lets him in. Clive quickly shuts the door behind him.

ELSA

Come on, babe. This is what we always
wanted, isn't it? The inevitable
step. Absolute control over our
biological future. People have
fantasized about it for as long as
they've been dreaming of angels,
mermaids and sphyxes. It's what
we're programmed to do.

CLIVE
This is dangerous.

ELSA
It's our masterpiece. And I know
that you're dying to see if it works.

CLICK.

She hits a button.

Instantly, the needle is inserted into the egg and the genetic material is injected into the nucleus.

Conception.

CLIVE
Fuck.

ELSA
Exactly.

An extruding platform carries the petri dish into "Betty":
the inutero gestation chamber.

Elsa moves Clive's hand to a red button.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Abort it if you want.

A view of the egg in the artificial womb appears ON SCREEN.

They watch enraptured as the petri dish dissolves in the fluid environment, cells replicating at an unnatural rate, gene markers radiating like twinkling stars.

The process is almost mystical. Clive's resistance melts. He moves his hand away from the abort button.

CLIVE
Let's take it to term.

INT. GESTATION CHAMBER -- DAY

In TIME LAPSE we see the cells replicate exponential, growing in numbers, from a few hundred to thousands, millions and then billions. Blood, veins, flesh and bone stitch together.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER -- DAY

A gathering of RESEARCH SCIENTISTS, ETHICISTS, POLITICIANS and LAWYERS.

Clive and Elsa stand at a podium speaking while images of Ginger and Fred flash by on a screen behind them.

Barlow stands off to the side, eyeing the crowd nervously.

CLIVE

When we first applied our xenogenic splicing technique, we thought the successful cloning of these designer organisms was an end in itself: a self-sustaining genetically engineered species, constructed from the spliced DNA of a variety of animals. Just keeping them alive was an accomplishment.

ELSA

However, "Ginger and Fred", as we like to call them, have proven to be much more than just a by-product of our research.

The image on screen switches to a close up of Ginger and Fred's stomachs. Clive takes over.

CLIVE

They produce a unique protein in their skeletal muscle tissue which, as you can see, is stored here....

(pointing)

In this abdominal sack. Once we have gathered enough of the protein to isolate the gene which manufactures it, we will be able to produce it synthetically in mass quantities.

A MAN in the back stands up.

MAN

Jeff Bishop, Associate Dean MIT biotech studies.

ELSA

Question?

MAN

I'd like to express my utter disgust for these abominations and the way in which you have blatantly exploited them for your own self-promotion.

Several people in the audience applaud. Barlow is getting hot under the collar.

MAN (CONT'D)

Furthermore, I believe these so-called "medical benefits" of which you speak are an elaborate smoke screen devised to cover up the sick pleasure you derive from toying with the sanctity of life.

Barlow shoots Clive a warning look: *"don't fuck this up"*.

CLIVE

You be the judge. This protein, CD 356, is a powerful agent for cell reproduction and may be an effective therapy for a myriad of degenerative diseases. In short a unique and valuable new drug.

Barlow relaxes.

ELSA

And secondly, we do get a buzz from fucking with life.

An audible gasp is released by the assembled. Elsa looks at Clive. He just grins. He loves this woman.

ELSA (CONT'D)

So, what? Isn't that what science is all about? It's the insatiable appetite for knowledge. Pure and simple. Face it, the most significant technological advances have come from the greatest evil of all: war. Nazis invented the rocket engine. Does that mean we should scrap the space program? No, of course not. Who cares what the motivation is. The point is, it works. And our evolution as a species is completely reliant on its continued advancement.

Silence. Elsa looks at the sea of stunned faces then over to Barlow silently fuming.

INT. RESTAURANT, CONVENTION CENTER -- DAY

A crowded post-lecture reception. Clive and Elsa surrounded by acolytes and critics alike. Surging through the crowd like a heat-guided missile: Barlow.

BARLOW

Of all the irresponsible, inflammatory, ridiculous things to say...

ELSA

Come on. We're just stirring the pot.

BARLOW

Yes. Well, we'll just see what surfaces. Maybe a confidentiality suit.

JOAN (O.S.)
 You shouldn't be so afraid of
 controversy, William.

A small, but commanding older woman, JOAN KLEIN, Barlow's boss, appears. He withers a little.

JOAN (CONT'D)
 I'm Joan Klein. CEO Novaphorm, bio-
 research division.

Elsa looks pointedly at Barlow as she says:

ELSA
 Yes. Wonderful to finally meet you.

JOAN
 We really don't have enough female
 role models in bio-tech. What you
 have accomplished is so bold. Ground-
 breaking. Really.
 (then to Barlow)
 I think youth has a lot to teach us.
 Don't you agree, William?

Barlow nods, fighting to keep down the bile. Joan goads him.

JOAN (CONT'D)
 Rattle their cages. Excite them.
 That's what we want. You're giving
 a human face to a misunderstood
 science. I'm sure that once seen,
 popular opinion will side with your
 creations. Count on a public
 presentation of Ginger and Fred in
 the next quarter. I'll be in touch.
 (to Barlow)
 Take good care of them.

Barlow nods compliantly. Clive and Elsa stifle laughter.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

Clive and Elsa's GTO bounces over the crest of a hill at eighty miles an hour.

INT. CAR -- TRAVELING -- DAY

Clive guns the motor while Elsa squeals with delight.

CLIVE
 Where the fuck is the turn off?

ELSA
 There!

Clive hits the brakes and skids the car into a sharp turn up a dirt road.

EXT. COTTAGE -- DAY

The GTO comes to a halt in a cloud of billowing dust. As the air clears, we see a QUAIN T LITTLE COTTAGE nestled in the woods. Clive cuts the motor.

CLIVE

I love this, it's so... primitive.

ELSA

Leave me alone. My mom was a fucking hippy.

INT. COTTAGE -- NIGHT

This is where Elsa grew up. We know this because her toys and various artifacts from her childhood are on display. Now, it's renovated into Clive and Elsa's country retreat.

Elsa massages Clive in front of a blazing fire.

ELSA

Amazing how the act of sex, which is so repetitive still holds such fascination.

She pushes Clive onto his chest.

CLIVE

It's our reproductive programming... ouch.

ELSA

Sorry, sweetie.

CLIVE

No, that was a good ouch. Keep going. ...If the sex drive required us to stand on our heads and hum the theme from "*Gilligan's Island*" that's what we'd be doing right now.

Clive flips Elsa onto her back and begins to sensuously kiss her abdomen.

ELSA

At least that would be simpler. Sex is so inefficient. All these orifices and appendages. Awkward timing...

Clive looks up from her belly button.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Not your timing, babe.

He smiles, resumes his descent.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I bet we could design something a hundred times better.

CLIVE

No doubt we already have.

Clive rises over the horizon of her stomach, her panties clasped between his teeth. Elsa giggles. He tosses them to the floor. Now she slides on top of him.

ELSA

What about love?

CLIVE

What about it?

ELSA

Think it's programmed too?

CLIVE

Probably. Insures that the male and female remain together, protect their young.

ELSA

Note to self: encourage Clive's paternal urges.

CLIVE

You don't need to do anything except be Elsa.

Elsa does a headstand and starts singing:

ELSA

Just sit right back and you'll hear the tale...

CLIVE

What are you...?

ELSA

A tale of a fateful trip. That started from this tropic port, aboard this tiny ship...

Clive stands on his head too, joins in.

CLIVE/ELSA

The mate was a mighty sailin' man, the skipper brave and sure. Five passengers set sail that day for a three hour tour, a three hour tour...

INT. COTTAGE -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa are asleep in each other's arms. The fire has been reduced to a few smoldering embers.

BEEP BEEP. BEEP BEEP.

Clive starts. Rises groggily. Finds his pager within the tangle of clothes while Elsa slowly wakes up.

CLIVE

Shit.

She immediately knows what's wrong.

ELSA

Let's go!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa's car races back to the city.

INT. CAR -- TRAVELING -- NIGHT

Clive drives like a madman.

ELSA

Doesn't this *piece de merde* go any faster.

CLIVE

I'm doing a hundred.

Elsa slams her hands against the dash.

ELSA

Vite, vite!

Clive jams the accelerator to the floor.

INT. LAB -- NIGHT

Through the glass doors, we see the GTO screech into view. Clive and Elsa jump out and bound over to the entrance. Clive swipes his card. The door clicks open and they hustle through, rushing over to the

SECURITY DESK

Where there is no sign of Frank, the security guard.

CLIVE

Frank?

Elsa points to a note: "Caffeine fix, back in fifteen."

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Frank!

Clive checks his watch, curses.

FRANK (O.S.)

Over here, Clive baby.

Clive turns to see Frank waddling over to him with a mega-large coffee cup.

CLIVE

Open the fucking door. Please!

INT. BIRTHING ROOM, LAB -- NIGHT

The door slides open and Clive and Elsa briskly enter, hidden within obligatory hermetic suits. At the other end of the room, the artificial womb is belching and groaning, fluid freely evacuating from its chrome hull. In their absence, the computer is conducting the birth on auto-pilot.

Clive glances at the monitor: "*PREPARING BREACH OF FETAL MEMBRANE.*" Clive types a command: "*PURGE.*"

FLOOSH!

Clive and Elsa share a nervous glance before the moment of truth. They wait patiently, but nothing happens.

CLIVE

Something's wrong.

He checks the monitor. There's a strange, dark, pulsing shape which in no way approximates a normal fetus. The machine contracts again, sending more fluid surging out of the opening. But the hybrid remains inside.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Any more pressure and we'll give birth to a pancake.

ELSA

Then it's time to add a little butter.

Elsa immerses her hands into a vat of lubricant.

FLOORP! Elsa reaches in and feels around. Clive watches anxiously.

ELSA (CONT'D)

God, where is it?

She sinks her arm in further. Still nothing.

CLIVE

What?

ELSA
I don't-- OUUUUUCH!

Elsa tries to pull her arm out but whatever is inside now has a grip on her. It yanks her forward so that her skull smashes against the side of the hull.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Clive!

Elsa screams in agony. The fluid at the opening is red with her blood. Clive grabs her, pulls with all his might.

CLIVE
El, hold on!

Tears are streaming down her cheeks. Clive gives one last tug. Suddenly, Elsa is released. They crash to the floor.

Elsa's glove is shredded and her hand is covered in lesions. Blood seeps out.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Jesus.

He tends to her with a sterilizing pad and surgical tape.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
You okay?

Elsa's shaking, but she nods. They turn to the birthing chamber. Clive gathers courage, steps up.

ELSA
Careful.

He draws a deep breath, reaches his hand towards the slit...

FRAPP! SOMETHING explodes out of the chamber, bowling him over a cart of monitors.

In a flash, it's gone, slipping through the cracks between equipment.

Elsa grabs Clive, pulls him to the other end of the room. They look at each other, horror-stricken.

CRASH! A tray of surgical instruments is upended behind them. They scramble away from the noise, cower in the center of the room.

CLANG! It's still moving.

Elsa struggles to her feet, helps Clive up.

They survey the space. It has become deathly quiet. Clive picks up a scalpel, but Elsa signals him to put it down.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Don't hurt it.

She moves a light probe through dark spaces between equipment. Clive joins in the search.

They look everywhere. Nothing. Exchange a glance. How could it have escaped?

SCREEECH! The creature drops from above, grazes Clive's shoulder. Tears at his clothes. Elsa grabs it, drops its wriggling form in an incubator. Slams the lid shut, seals it.

Clive drags himself over to her, looks inside:

THE HYBRID IS UTTERLY INHUMAN: oily black skin, razor sharp mandibles. It stares back at its creators through alien eyes.

ON CLIVE AND ELSA; disturbed, horrified, overwhelmed.

INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Clive soaks in a tub smoking a joint. Elsa lingers in the hall, popping Nerds.

ELSA

You stay in there any longer and you're gonna turn into Clive soup.

CLIVE

I don't understand what we did wrong. I ran the simulation five times.

ELSA

Life's unpredictable, babe. I'm betting we accidentally triggered a redundant gene. We can fix it. We just have to clean out the garbage code.

CLIVE

Oh, great. That's only sixty million genes to sift through.

Elsa sits on the edge, plucks the joint out of Clive's mouth and puts it out in the water.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Hey, man. I wasn't done.

ELSA

Neither am I. We can't give up on this.

CLIVE

Maybe this is a sign, El. Maybe
we're just not ready yet.

ELSA

So, what do you want to do?

CLIVE

We have to get rid of it.

ON ELSA: she knows he's right.

INT. CORRIDOR -- MORNING

Clive and Elsa look grim and exhausted as they come to a door marked, "OBSERVATION ROOM".

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, LAB -- MORNING

Photos and data tacked to the walls show that this was the 'nursery' for a younger Ginger and Fred.

ELSA

(barely able to
acknowledge what
they're about to do)

How?

CLIVE

Fill the room with Co2. I'll do it
alone.

ELSA

No. I want to be here.

She peers through a two-way mirror that looks into

THE CONTAINMENT NURSERY.

It's a holding cell for the hybrid. She reacts to what she
sees inside.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive.

He joins her by the window. His eyes widen.

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY -- MORNING

The hybrid's dark form lies motionless on the floor.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, LAB -- MORNING

Elsa turns to Clive.

ELSA

Dead?

He activates a robotic arm in the containment room, guides it with a joystick, gently prods the creature. With the first touch, the hybrid's body crumbles, a dry, empty husk.

CLIVE
Exoskeleton.

Without warning something darts past the window, so fast as to be hardly perceptible. Clive and Elsa flinch.

ELSA
What -- what was that?

They strain to see but it has disappeared beyond the field of vision. Elsa calls up security cam views of the room.

She finds it on a monitor: a fuzzy, black and white image of the creature, much larger than it was before.

CLIVE
Jesus.

BAM! It leaps against the glass. Clive and Elsa jump back.

The hybrid has morphed into a small female child.

Her cherub-like face is at odds with a body that at best could be described as freakish. Arms are absent. Legs are joined the wrong way and feet are prehensile -- like hands. A tail extends from the base of the spine. She is, nonetheless, recognizably humanoid.

In an instant, she darts out of view again.

Clive is left slack-jawed. Elsa is excited.

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY ENTRANCE -- MORNING

A sign on the door: "HERMETIC ENVIRONMENT, ACCESS PROHIBITED WITHOUT STERILIZED SUIT".

Elsa dressed head to toe in a bio-suit, her face hidden behind an air-filtration mask. She snaps several syringes into a carrying case.

CLIVE
(over comline)
El, this is too fast.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, LAB -- MORNING

Clive speaks into a headset.

CLIVE
We don't know what we've got in there.

ELSA
 (over comline)
*Right. And we won't until I get
 some samples.*

Shaking his head, Clive taps commands into the console. The screen flashes the room's environmental controls -- "LIGHT, TEMPERATURE AND ATMOSPHERE".

CLIVE
 First sign of trouble and I'm gassing
 the room.

ELSA
 (over the comline)
Do that and I'll take off my mask.

CLIVE
 Just be careful.

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY ENTRANCE -- MORNING

Elsa calms herself.

ELSA
 Everything is going to be fine.

She inserts a key card into a security panel. The door slowly slides open. Ahead is the containment room.

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY -- MORNING

Elsa quickly seals the door behind her. Her eyes move from the robotic arm, to a feeding trough, to sensors and cameras which line the walls.

There is no place for the creature to hide and yet she doesn't appear to be in the room.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM, LAB -- MORNING

Clive can't locate the hybrid either.

ELSA
 (over comline)
Did it get out?

He calls up security cam views of the corridor adjacent to the containment room. Nothing.

CLIVE
 Not that I can see.

He looks through the two-way mirror into the containment room, watching Elsa's vulnerable-looking form, worried.

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY -- MORNING

Elsa walks slowly across the room, still not discerning the hybrid's presence. She calls out in a sweet voice as if to a lost pet:

ELSA
Come on out. It's okay. I won't
hurt you. I'm your friend.

She turns, startles herself with her rather inhuman reflection in the two-way mirror.

As she passes a section of wall, we see two black orbs appear then vanish just as quickly. They are a pair of eyes, belonging to the creature. Her skin camouflaged to the texture of the wall.

Elsa senses something, turns around, completely unaware that the hybrid is right in front of her. She steps forward and the hybrid jumps out from the wall and grips her torso with legs and tail.

Elsa SCREAMS.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

Clive watches helplessly as a seemingly invisible force decks Elsa. Before his eyes, the tiny but powerful form emerges as the camouflage pigment bleeds out of its skin.

This fingers race across the keyboard -- "ATMOSPHERIC CONTENT". He types "INFUSE ANESTHETIC EITHER".

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY -- MORNING

Elsa and the hybrid careen into the wall. She drops her carrying case and they roll onto the floor. Finally, she manages to pop the hybrid's grip. Jumps to her feet. She can barely catch her breath. The hybrid looks at her, terrified, ready to pounce again.

CLIVE
(over comlinc)
On the count of three--

ELSA
No, wait!

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

Clive's finger hovers over the "RETURN" key.

CLIVE
Get out of there!

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY -- MORNING

Elsa watches the creature fearful but fascinated.

ELSA
Give me a minute.

The hybrid returns her gaze, equally alarmed by her presence. She cocks her head to one side, bird-like and blinks sideways with a nictitating eyelid.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Unbelievable. Just calm down. See?
Nobody's going to hurt you.

The hybrid glares at her, watching carefully.

ELSA (CONT'D)
There now...

She reaches out with a gloved hand. The hybrid snaps at her. Snarls.

CLIVE
(over comlinc)
El, what are you-- ?

CLICK. She shuts off the comlinc.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

Clive stands, his nose pressed against the glass.

CLIVE
El, can you hear me!

He tears off his headset, pissed.

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY -- MORNING

Elsa focuses all her attention on the hybrid.

ELSA
Please, I just want to help.

The hybrid bares her teeth, whips her tail back and forth. SQUEALS. It looks as though she could pounce at any moment. Elsa cautiously moves towards her.

ELSA (CONT'D)
I know it doesn't look like it, but
we're related...

The hybrid SQUEALS louder. It's clear that Elsa is not reaching her at all. Frustrated, Elsa pulls off a glove, impetuously rips off the protective head gear.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

Clive can't believe his eyes.

CLIVE

Shit!

INT. CONTAINMENT NURSERY -- MORNING

Elsa, unmasked, kneels down to the hybrid's height.

ELSA

See. Two eyes. Nose. Mouth. We're
not so different.

The hybrid is staring at her face. The first human face she
has seen. The snarl drops. She is instantly transfixed.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's it.

Elsa smiles. The hybrid watches Elsa's changed expression
as if it was the most fascinating sight in the world.

ELSA (CONT'D)

We'll be friends. You and me.

Elsa finds her carrying case, opens it. With medical
deftness, she applies a gauge to the hybrid's skin and inserts
a syringe, pulling a blood sample.

The hybrid doesn't particularly seem to notice. She simply
continues to observe Elsa.

Elsa removes the needle. Clicks the blood sample into the
cradle. And startles.

The hybrid is smiling back at her.

FSSSSSS! Elsa sniffs the air. Turns on the comlinc.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive?

CLIVE

(over comlinc)
Get outta there!

The hybrid's smile fades. She becomes woozy. Clive is
gassing the room.

Elsa has no choice but to put here helmet on. Heads for the
door, heartbroken as the hybrid succumbs to the gas and
collapses on the floor.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

Elsa strips out of her bio-suit, lays into Clive.

ELSA

What the hell did you do that for?

CLIVE

I was afraid that she was going to hurt you.

ELSA

I had everything under control. You could have killed her.

CLIVE

I'm sorry. But we can't be too cautious.

ELSA

You're afraid, aren't you?

CLIVE

Yes. Yes, I am. And you should be too.

ELSA

Note to self: become bland corporate puppet.

CLIVE

I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that this... this is... pretty out there.

ELSA

Baby, this is what we always wanted. No one can call us posers. We're the real thing. We did it.

CLIVE

Yes. But what did we do?

ELSA

Something that's going to change the world.

By the expression on Clive's face it's not clear that he thinks that is a good thing.

INT. ANALYSIS COFFIN -- DAY

The hybrid wakes from her forced slumber, finds that she is in a coffin-shaped chamber.

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH!

Bright lights strobe, machinery whirs to life. The hybrid screeches within the chamber.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

Elsa flinches at the hybrid's muted cries.

At the other end of the room, Clive watches the feed from the coffin. X-ray and ultrasound images of the hybrid's internal structure resolve on the screen.

CLIVE

I don't even know what I'm looking at. What are those dark splotches?

Elsa joins him.

ELSA

Lungs?

CLIVE

No...

(indicating another dark patch on the monitor)

Those are lungs. And look at this.

ON SCREEN: A microscopic view of rapidly dividing cells.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

It's like cellular porn.

ELSA

Must have inherited the Ambysotma growth gene.

CLIVE

That means she's aging years with in a matter of days.

ELSA

Maybe.

CLIVE

If that's true then she's going to outgrow this place pretty fast.

ELSA

I think we've stumbled on some kind of dialectic between unrelated genes. They're aware of each other, working together. Building something we couldn't have conceived. It's like she was meant to be.

CLIVE

Or we fucked up. She's totally different from the template.

(a beat)

You know, you shouldn't get too attached to her.

ELSA

What are you saying?

CLIVE

We don't know what's going to happen. She's growing so fast. The chances of malignancies or other... disorders is high. We don't know if... when she might...

Clive can't bring himself to say the word.

ELSA

Well, who does?

Clive nods, feeling the growing divide between them.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Can I get her out of there, please.

CLIVE

Sure... Of course.

Elsa heads for the containment room. Clive looks on with concern.

INT. GINGER AND FRED'S ROOM -- DAY

Clive and Dexter run over stats while Ginger and Fred happily bob in their cages.

DEXTER

They're healthy as can be. You really know how to engineer 'em.

CLIVE

Elsa and I are only as good as the team. And you, my friend, are the team.

DEXTER

Thanks. Maybe, you'd like to let me in on the new game plan?

CLIVE

Oh, I will. A little time is all I ask.

DEXTER

'kay. But the suspense is killing me.

Clive nods nervously.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

The hybrid now the size of a toddler wears something from Gap Kids. The normalcy of her clothes only works to emphasize her strangeness.

Elsa sits on the floor, attempts to feed her a spoon of green nutritional paste. But the creature snaps her mouth shut.

ELSA

It's not so bad.

Elsa encourages the hybrid by sampling the paste herself. She gags.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Actually, it tastes like shit. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't eat it.

As if in response, the hybrid snatches a box of Nerds from Elsa's pocket. Runs to the corner of the room, tears open the package and gobbles down the candy.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Hey.

Elsa watches, an idea forming.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

Elsa mixes Nerds into the bowl of paste. Takes out a spoonful. This time, the hybrid happily wolfs the food down. She bites hard on the spoon and grins like crazy. Her wild eyes stare at Elsa's. A deep connection is forming.

ELSA

That's more like it, huh?

Elsa smiles as she gently wipes the goo away from the hybrid's mouth with her finger.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Good girl.

But the hybrid grows agitated.

ELSA (CONT'D)

What is it, sweetie?

CLIVE (O.S.)

El, what're you doing?

Clive has just come into the room. The hybrid shrinks from him. A snarl forms.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

She's out of containment.

ELSA

Note to self: don't let her out of containment.

(beat)

It's done. What choice did I have.
It's too cramped in there.

SMASH! The hybrid accidentally knocks over a stack of files.

CLIVE

Here's a note to Elsa: Dexter's getting curious.

ELSA

I think we can handle, Dex. What I'm worried about is this room. It's too small. We need a bigger space.

Elsa collects the hybrid, bounces the little creature on her knee.

CLIVE

I can't believe we didn't think this through better.

ELSA

Relax. We'll just take over the storage room.

CLIVE

How're we gonna get past Franky-baby?

ELSA

Leave him to me.

INT. CORRIDOR, LAB -- DAY

Frank reading the sports section and sucking on a mega-big-gulp.

Elsa appears in the corridor in a tight outfit. Very tight. Frank sees her, finishes his drink with a great sucking sound.

FRANK

Well, hello, Dr. Shelley. What can I do for you?

She saunters up to him.

ELSA
 Hey there, soldier. I've got some
 extra take out. Thought you might
 like it.

She plops a food container on his desk.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 Chicken tika and saag paneer. I
 know you like your Indian.

FRANK
 Don't mind if I do. I am a man of
 large appetites.

He ogles her.

ELSA
 I'll bet.

She gives him a wink and heads back into the lab.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

Clive sits on his desk also eating Indian. Elsa plays with
 the hybrid in the corner.

CLIVE
 Well?

Elsa looks at her watch.

ELSA
 Let's get this freak show on the
 road.

INT. CORRIDOR, LAB -- DAY

Clive and Elsa wheel a box labelled "Fragile Materials" down
 the hall, turn a corner.

INT. SECURITY ENTRANCE -- DAY

Frank is fast asleep. Drugged. Saag paneer dribbles down
 his chin. Elsa reaches behind the desk, is about to buzz
 them through the security gate when...

BARLOW (O.S.)
 Clive, Elsa. I need to speak to
 you.

Clive and Elsa see Barlow marching through the entrance.
 They share a look.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

(excited)

We've got a date set for the public exhibition of Ginger and Fred.

Clive and Elsa feign cool.

CLIVE

Great. When?

BARLOW

Exactly three months from now. But before I give my approval I want to be confident that the wrinkles have been ironed out.

ELSA

Yeah. Of course. Whatever you need. We're here to help.

Barlow eyes her, suspicious of her uncharacteristic obedience. He notices the box.

BARLOW

What's that?

CLIVE

Test tubes.

BARLOW

Mind if I take a look?

Before they can protest, he opens the lid, reacts.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

How much ecstasy are you doing anyway?

They look inside. The box is empty. Their eyes dart around the room. Elsa spots the hybrid, camouflaged, sniffing around Frank's half eaten container of Indian food. The creature accidentally knocks the container onto Franks lap. He stirs.

FRANK

Musta dozed off there for a sec.

He busies himself, cleaning food off his pants. Barlow grits his teeth in consternation.

BARLOW

This entire operation is a mess.

Now Clive sees the hybrid, he puts his arm around Barlow, attempts to distract him.

CLIVE

Dude, this presentation means the world to us. We won't let you down.

BARLOW

I should hope not. This isn't a high school science project. My reputation is on the line.

ON ELSA: She points at Frank's crotch.

ELSA

Missed a spot.

While Frank works on the stain, Elsa discretely hoists the hybrid back into the box. She resists, doesn't want to go inside.

BACK WITH Clive and Barlow:

BARLOW

When was the last diagnostic on Ginger and Fred?

CLIVE

Last week.

BARLOW

Last week? We need daily check-ups. I want to see a blood test, stool and epidermal on my desk by this afternoon.

CLIVE

Yeah, okay, no problem.

Barlow turns to Elsa just as she finishes closing the lid.

BARLOW

And where did that box come from?

ELSA

Storage.

BARLOW

Well, put it back.
(to Frank)
Buzz her through, would you?

FRANK

Yessir.

Frank opens the gate and Elsa wheels through with the box containing the hybrid. Clive is about to follow when...

BARLOW

Clive. You dropped something.

Barlow picks an object up off the floor: a baby pacifier.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

What's this?

CLIVE

Uh... Fashion accessory.

Clive wipes it off, sticks it in his mouth.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

All the ravers have 'em.

He suckles it with his teeth and the pacifier lights up.

BARLOW

That is positively infantile.

CLIVE

Guess that's the idea.

Clive quickly turns and follows Elsa to...

INT. CORRIDOR, LAB -- DAY

Clive and Elsa move briskly down the hall with the dolly until they reach a door marked "Storage".

INT. STORAGE SPACE -- NIGHT

A large room, empty but for some boxes of lab equipment. Clive opens the door for Elsa who wheels the dolly in. He shuts and locks the door after her.

CLIVE

Jesus, that was close.

ELSA

We did it, didn't we? Baby is going to be a hundred times happier here.

She takes the hybrid out of the crate, holds her close.

ELSA (CONT'D)

(to the hybrid)

Do you like it, sweetie?

The hybrid looks around the alien environment, curiosity mixed with trepidation.

ELSA (CONT'D)

(to the hybrid)

Don't worry. We'll make it nice.

CLIVE

How long do you think we can keep this up?

ELSA

Long enough. We're the only ones with the key to this room.

CLIVE

Eventually, someone is going to hear her. They'll find out. How're we going to balance this with getting ready for the press conference?

ELSA

Piece o' cake. Can you say "dog and pony show"?

Clive considers this, lightens up.

CLIVE

Hey, maybe we could splice a dog and pony.

ELSA

And then it could do the presentation for us.

They laugh. It's been a while.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Sugerplum, you needn't worry. People are going to love Ginger and Fred. Just like they're going to love her.

And at that moment, the hybrid vomits down the side of Elsa's shirt.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Oh shit. ...Oh, no. Honey.

She puts a hand to the hybrid's forehead.

CLIVE

What now?

ELSA

I think she's getting sick.

Elsa cuddles the little creature.

ELSA (CONT'D)

It's okay. It's okay.

INT. STORAGE SPACE -- NIGHT

Elsa attempts to feed the hybrid from a bottle, but she pushes it away. Her condition seems to be getting worse. Sores are rising on her skin.

Clive looks worried.

CLIVE

Oh, man, what do we do?

ELSA

I don't know.

CLIVE

I knew we shouldn't have taken her out of containment.

ELSA

What choice did we have?

Elsa feels her forehead.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Do we have any antibiotics?

CLIVE

No.

ELSA

This is so stupid. We work for a fucking pharmaceutical company.

CLIVE

What difference does it make? We have no idea how she might react. Drugs could do more harm than good.

The hybrid coughs. She's congested, wheezing, eyes puffy.

ELSA

She's really burning up.

Now the hybrid is having difficulty breathing.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Put her in cold water.

Elsa sticks a thermometer in her mouth while Clive goes to an industrial sink, fills it up.

Elsa reads the thermometer.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Oh god, one hundred and five.

Elsa hurries over. They place the hybrid inside. She cries out, chokes for air.

ELSA (CONT'D)

She can't breath.

Elsa tries to clear out the little creature's nose and throat. It's hopeless. The hybrid is turning blue.

CLIVE

Do you know how to do a tracheotomy?

Elsa looks at him like he's insane.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Do something or she'll die!

ELSA

Like what?

CLIVE

I don't know! Something!

The hybrid is asphyxiating. They have only seconds.

ELSA

That's it. I'm calling an ambulance.

She takes out her cell, dials 911.

CLIVE

You think they'll know what to do?

ELSA

More than we do.

OPERATOR

(on phone)

Emergency services...

ELSA

I need an ambulance. A child is suffocating. I'm at 2344 Empire Road....

Suddenly, Clive impulsively pushes the hybrid underwater.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive, no!

She fights with him.

CLIVE

Get off me! Stop it!

OPERATOR

(on phone)

Ma'm?... Ma'm are you all right?

ELSA

Are you insane?!

They tussle, but Clive manages to keep the creature submerged.

For a moment, we might think that he is trying to kill the hybrid. But then she calms.

And begins to breathe normally.... underwater.

Elsa sees this, sees that the hybrid is breathing through her skin. She pulls back.

CLIVE

I figured out what that other 'blob' is. Amphibious lungs.

ELSA

She can breathe underwater?

OPERATOR

(on phone)

Ma'm, ma'm is everything all right?

ELSA

Yes, we're okay now. Thank you.

She hangs up. Watches Dren with amazement, her condition improving by the second.

INT. STORAGE SPACE -- NIGHT

Dren out of the sink. Toweled off and sleeping peacefully.

ELSA

Did I ever mention to you that you're a genius?

She kisses him. Clive turns on her, very serious, almost angry.

CLIVE

This isn't a joke. We have to be responsible. Study her. Understand how her body works.

Elsa nods.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

And we have to clean this place up. Make it safe for her. Make it a home.

Elsa is heartened by his new-found concern for their creation.

ELSA

Yeah. Absolutely. We will.

INT. HALLWAY, LAB -- DAY

Clive is carting boxes of supplies through the hall.

DEXTER

Hello, stranger.

Dexter is behind him, holding a bundle of files. Clive looks like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

We're sneaking up on that press conference deadline.

CLIVE

Oh, yeah. I read the report.

DEXTER

Yeah, my report. ...You know, I haven't seen that girl in a long time. You must know the one, used to hang out here. Long hair.

CLIVE

She sends her love.

DEXTER

Me and Ginger and Fred. I mean we're having a great time. We're just a tiny bit curious about this secret project.

CLIVE

Building you an Elsa of your own, Dex. Wanted it to be a surprise.

DEXTER

Wow... that's great. I'll pretend I didn't hear.

Clive pats Dexter on the shoulder and then continues on his way.

INT. STORAGE ROOM -- DAY

The room has been transformed:

The boxes are gone, replaced with child-sized furniture and toys of every description. In one corner is a small bed and reading light with a mobile of stars and planets suspended over it.

Elsa shakes a package of Nerds immediately attracting her attention.

The hybrid is now the size of a seven year old child. Arms have sprouted. She's almost cute.

Elsa hands her several candies and the hybrid greedily consumes them.

ELSA

Wonder what else we have in common?

Elsa slides a large cardboard box next to her. It is filled with toys. Old toys. Toys from Elsa's childhood.

She sets several on the floor in a row: A PLASTIC GIRAFFE, A "MY LITTLE PONY" AND A BARBIE.

The hybrid approaches the doll. Looks at it closely. She rubs against it, nudges it as if trying to coax it into animation.

ELSA (CONT'D)

She was my favorite too.
(sexy, breathy, Barbie
voice)

Yes, that's right... come closer...
I can teach you to hate your own
body.

INT. STORAGE ROOM -- NIGHT

Elsa has refrigerator magnets laid on the floor, spelling out the name of each toy. Elsa points to the "Barbie".

ELSA

Barbie.

The hybrid looks at her quizzically. Then takes the magnets and begins to chew on them.

ELSA (CONT'D)

No, no.

Elsa reaches in, plucks out the letters.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Look. I'm Elsa.

She writes "Elsa" in front of herself.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Elsa.

(to herself)

Elsa-who-tried-to-teach-a-brick-wall.

The hybrid shows no sign of recognition.

ELSA (CONT'D)

And see, these are "Nerds".

She points at a box of Nerds, also identified with fridge magnets.

ELSA (CONT'D)

And you... What are we going to call
you?

An idea strikes her.

ELSA (CONT'D)
And you. You are...

She takes the letter magnets from the Nerds box and re-arranges them.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Rend, Endr, Dner...

She moves the letters in front of the hybrid so that they now spell: D-R-E-N.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Dren. Yeah. I like it. Pretty and weird. Just like you.

She looks at the hybrid, at "DREN".

ELSA (CONT'D)
Okay, so I'm 'Elsa' and you are...?

The hybrid looks around and suddenly goes berserk kicking and scattering the letters everywhere. She grins at Elsa.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Well, it's a start.

CLIVE (O.S.)
Maybe, there's a limit to what she can learn.

Elsa turns. Clive has entered the room with more supplies.

ELSA
She's only three weeks old. We could hardly expect her to--

CLIVE
(interrupting)
El. Look.

Clive points at the hybrid. She is arranging the refrigerator magnets so that they spell:

K-L-I-F

ELSA
Cliff?

CLIVE
No. I think it's supposed to be "Clive".

ELSA
(hint of jealousy)
I don't think so.

The CAMERA PANS over to a corner of the room.

ELSA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Come on, Dren. Don't be shy.

The CAMERA ZOOMS IN on the shadows, something is stirring within.

ELSA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Come on.

Slowly, cautiously Dren steps into view.

She is now an adolescent. Her features sculpted and intelligent. Her body is supple and lithe. Her movements, elegant almost sensuous.

CLIVE (O.S.)
Okay, anatomy lesson: Dren is the world's first human-animal chimera.

Elsa unzips the hybrid's dress to show us her naked torso.

ELSA
Her physiology is fusion humming bird and salamander with a pinch of rabbit and a dash of toad. Our witch's brew follows the same template as our H-400 hybrids. But the added human element seems to have given us some unexpected results.

Elsa holds up her arms. Strange muscle systems runs under them and ties into her back.

ELSA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The muscle structure extending from the trapezius to the deltoideus and ending at the brachialis is unusual. We don't know what their function is yet. It's possible that she is still evolving.

CLIVE (O.S.)
We do know that she possesses two respiratory systems-- human and amphibian and has a herbivore digestive system. We feed her a protein enriched vegetable paste. No artificial flavor or coloring added!

Elsa dips his finger into it, sticks it in her mouth.

ELSA

Yum.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP of the hybrid's eye.

CLIVE (O.S.)

Visual perception is extremely well developed. Note the nictitating membrane or "third eyelid."

The hybrid blinks SIDEWAYS.

CUT TO:

Dren is lining up scrabble letters to spell words: "Cat", "Dog", "Drum"... "Hybrid"

ELSA

Even though she is only three months old, she is learning to spell and to read. Her brain is developing at a rate far beyond that of a human child.

CUT TO:

Elsa holding open the hybrid's mouth. The camera zooms in. We see a her pointed flicking tongue

ELSA (CONT'D)

While she possesses a fully developed set of teeth, her tongue and larynx resemble those of a bird. She can't speak. But she can sing beautifully.

Dren emits a deafening SHRIEK which forces Elsa to cover her ears.

CUT TO:

Dren is singing along with "*Under My Skin*". She can't pronounce the words, but she evokes them in strange, hypnotic tones.

ELSA (CONT'D)

To put it simply, she may well be a step up the evolutionary ladder. And one is for sure, she is greater than the sum of her parts.

Clive sets down the camera and enters the SHOT. He joins Elsa in singing along.

This is the portrait of an extremely unusual but happy family.

INT. GINGER AND FRED'S ROOM -- MORNING

Clive and Elsa staring at Ginger and Fred in separate cages.

ELSA
How're they doing?

DEXTER
Fit as little Stratvariuses.

CLIVE
Awesome. Thanks, Dex.

DEXTER
You excited about the big day?

ELSA
Sure. You?

DEXTER
I'm breaking out in hives.

EXT. SCIENCE MUSEUM -- DAY

An impressive piece of modern architecture. Banner's featuring the Novaphorm logo adorn the facade and a pronouncement: "*MEET GINGER AND FRED*". This is the first public presentation of Clive and Elsa's work.

INT. SCIENCE MUSEUM -- DAY

Parents shepherd children past tasteful boutiques selling Ginger and Fred swag: tasteful "educational" toys, stuffed animals, chemistry kits and T-shirts.

INT. ATRIUM, SCIENCE MUSEUM -- DAY

A grand space retrofitted with a stage and stadium seating. TV crews and other media are present. VIPS and Novaphorm brass are in the front rows.

The lights dim and a small figure steps up to a podium: Joan Klein.

JOAN
Hello, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. I'm Joan Klein, Novaphorm CEO. I'd like to thank you for coming to this extraordinary event. Today I have the distinct honor of presenting to you a for the first time a glimpse of the future. A revolution in genetic manipulation. The birth of a new species.

Applause.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Let us begin by meeting a new vanguard
of scientists whose brilliance has
made all of this possible.

She gestures grandly. A spotlight lands on Clive and Elsa,
standing off to the side. Applause. Elsa whispers to Clive:

ELSA

I hate leaving her alone.

CLIVE

This'll be over soon.

Applause dies down.

JOAN

And now, the moment you have all
been waiting for...

The crowd falls into an expectant hush.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I give you.... Ginger.

A glass cage rises from the floor of the stage containing
Ginger.

The audience gasps. Ginger coos back, seeming to enjoy the
attention.

JOAN (CONT'D)

And her brother... Fred.

A second cage rises adjacent to the first.

FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! The hybrids blink and chatter under
the tungsten glare.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Observe the exquisite plumage, the
translucency of the skin, the delicate
musculature. These designer animals
are as beautiful as any work of art,
and as gentle and loving as any pet.

The barrier between cages begins to drop.

JOAN (CONT'D)

And now let's have them say a hello
to each other, shall we.

The hybrids are now in the same confined space. They sniff
each other, get reacquainted.

But something is wrong. Fred HISSES at Ginger, raises his
hackles. In return, Ginger bares her teeth and GROWLS.

Clive and Elsa share concerned glances.

The audience is visibly disturbed by the hybrids' aggression. Small children begin to cry.

JOAN (CONT'D)

No need to be alarmed, they're just---

All at once, Ginger and Fred leap on one another, clawing and biting.

ELSA

Put the barrier back up!

Too late. The hybrids are locked in a battle to the death. They tear at each other like rabid animals.

The audience reacts in horror as blood, viscera and cobalt-blue CD356 splatter against the walls of the cage.

Clive and Elsa and SEVERAL STAGEHANDS rush to help but are powerless to stop the carnage. Television crews jockey for the best coverage. The savage fight continues until the hybrids are hidden from view behind red and blue painted glass.

A breathless moment of quiet.

And the sounds resume full force as a portion of the cage buckles and then shatters. The frenzied and mangled forms of Ginger and Fred tumble off the stage and into the audience.

Panic as the hybrids upturn chairs and equipment, leaving a bloody trail of flesh and feathers in their wake.

Within seconds, they are reduced to pulpy carcasses strewn across the marble floor.

Clive and Elsa are intercepted by SECURITY and dragged into the wings.

EXT. SCIENCE MUSEUM -- DAY

Security hustles Clive and Elsa through pandemonium. The steps of the museum are clogged with PROTESTERS. They chant slogans and wave placards, "ONLY GOD CAN PLAY GOD", "NO SCIENCE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE", "THE DEVIL IS A HYBRID" and so on.

ON CLIVE AND ELSA reacting to this uproar. Shaken.

INT. GINGER AND FRED'S ROOM -- NIGHT

THUMP! A metal box drops on a table. The lid is pulled back revealing the remains of Ginger and Fred. There isn't much left.

Clive and Elsa look to Dexter. He's tearing up.

CLIVE
What the fuck happened?

DEXTER
Your guess is as good as mine. They
seemed fine...

ELSA
You missed something, Dex.

DEXTER
Maybe... I don't know. If you had
been around... I mean, you were busy
with the "other" project. So...

CLIVE
It's not your fault. This shit
happens. Now we gotta figure out
how to deal with it.

Clive looks pointedly at Elsa.

INT. STORAGE ROOM -- NIGHT

Elsa and Clive sit in the room with Dren. She innocently
plays with a Barbie.

ELSA
I'm worried. What if... Could the
same thing happens to her?

Clive looks at Elsa blankly. He has no idea.

INT. BOARD ROOM -- MORNING

Clive and Elsa sit at the end of a large table surrounded by
stern NOVAPHORM BUREAUCRATS. Barlow is next to them, stern.

NOVAPHORM SUIT
Did the H-400's display any kind of
aggressive behavior before this
incident.

Clive shakes his head.

ELSA
They were completely docile.

NOVAPHORM SUIT
Any physical changes?

CLIVE
No.

ELSA

It could have been anything. Exposure to a new environment. Conflict between inter-species components.

JOAN (O.S.)

Does it really matter why the H-400 Series Hybrids destroyed each other?

All eyes snap to Joan as she strides into the room.

JOAN (CONT'D)

The public accept what we tell them. We needn't waste energy making it truthful.

She finds her chair at the head of the table.

JOAN (CONT'D)

What they will not accept is that we've fostered a potentially dangerous species. We need to give them a justification for why this program exists. An excellent one.

She leans over the table.

JOAN (CONT'D)

We need your wonder drug.

Clive and Elsa share a concerned look.

ELSA

Before we can manufacture the drug synthetically, we need to isolate the gene that produces it. And that will be hard to do without Ginger and Fred.

CLIVE

If we could manufacture another hybrid--

JOAN

Time prohibits.

Joan leans back in her seat.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Which is why I've asked Dr. Barlow to assist you immediately.

Barlow casts a concerned look at Clive and Elsa. There's nothing they can do.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I rely on your cooperation.

INT. LAB -- DAY

Barlow and a small army of NOVAPHORM SCIENTISTS invade the lab. They sift through everything, collecting files, computer disks and so on. Dexter stands in the midst of it, helpless.

Clive and Elsa burst into the room. Everyone freezes. Barlow turns to them, gestures to some of his team.

BARLOW

Sorry for the entourage, but I'm working under a deadline.

He flashes a thin smile. Activity resumes.

INT. CORRIDOR, LAB -- DAY

Barlow reaches the door to the storage room. Clive and Elsa catch up.

BARLOW

Would you unlock this door please?

CLIVE

That's a restricted area.

BARLOW

Nothing's restricted from me.

He puts a reassuring hand on Clive's shoulder.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

We're on the same side. I should have run my eyes over this material months ago and you know it. Now, open it. Please.

Clive unlocks the door.

INT. STORAGE ROOM -- DAY

Barlow and his party enter, react.

The room is filled with metal cages which hold hundreds of squeaking mice. All evidence of Dren and her belongings are gone.

Barlow picks up one of the cages.

BARLOW

You restrict access to mice?

CLIVE

Implanted viral contagions. Toxins. Radioactive elements. I'd wear gloves if I were you.

Barlow quickly sets the cage down.

BARLOW

All right. We've wasted enough time.
Let's get to work.

The crew file back out into the hall. As Barlow leaves, he eyes Clive. He knows something is up but he can't quite put his finger on it.

EXT. ALLEY, OUTSIDE LAB -- DAY

Clive climbs into the passenger side of a rented moving van. Elsa is at the wheel.

ELSA

Well?

CLIVE

He's gonna be working in our lab for as long as it takes. We're just going to have to do this in shifts.

ELSA

Great.

She puts the truck into gear and they peel out onto the street.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT -- DAY

Industrial wasteland. Train tracks cut past a small deserted warehouse, distinguished from its surroundings by a dilapidated sign, "*Candyland Candies*".

Clive and Elsa drive up.

EXT. LOADING BAY -- DAY

The van backs into the loading bay, stops a short distance from the cargo door.

Clive and Elsa jump out, scan the area. Coast is clear. They open the back.

Inside, cowering among her possessions is Dren. She stares fearfully out at the unknown.

ELSA

It's okay, Dren.

Elsa shakes a box of Nerds.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

The lure of the Nerds perks her up. She gets to her feet, but stays put.

Meanwhile, Clive unlocks the loading bay doors, struggles with a rusted deadbolt, glances around nervously.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Hurry.

CLIVE

I'm trying!

Elsa pops a few Nerds.

ELSA

Yummmmmmmmm.

This has the desired effect. Dren cautiously approaches the threshold. Elsa steps out, coaxing her.

Ever-so-slowly, the hybrid stretches her head out of the van. She looks around, skittishly. Sniffs the air.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Come on.

Next, a porcelain white foot steps onto the concrete.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Just a bit further--

At last, Dren clears the van. She cringes, exposed to the outside world for the first time.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Good girl. Brave girl.

She rewards Dren with the candy. But the hybrid freezes, reacts to a strange sensation.

SUNLIGHT

Dren gawks at the glowing patches of light on her body. Looks around. Then sees, breaking from the clouds, the glaring red orb of the late afternoon sun.

She's instantly bedazzled. Cautious, she reaches out, as if to touch it. Cries with excitement as the warming rays meet her arms. Her fascination is profound.

CREAK! The deadbolt gives. Clive rolls up the metal gate.

The noise startles Dren. She looks over to the warehouse, the gloomy interior.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's it?

CLIVE

Hey, I spent an entire eight hours
looking for this place.

A high pitched whistle cuts through the air. All turn. In
the distance, an approaching train.

ELSA

Shit.

Elsa gently nudges Dren inside. But Dren doesn't want to
go. Clive joins in forcibly pulling her into the warehouse.
She resists, kicking and wriggling.

They just manage to drag her inside and slam the door shut
as the train, stuffed with rush hour commuters, roars by.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- DAY

It's as if night had suddenly fallen. The only illumination
comes from a skylight in the ceiling.

Dren presses her ear to the metal door, listening to the
diminishing sound of the train.

Elsa looks to Clive, discouraged.

CLIVE

Okay, it's not the Taj Mahal, but
hey...

He bounds over to a big metal vat in the center of the room,
plays a drum roll on the side.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

We've got a toffee maker.

Elsa shakes her head. Looks to Dren who digs into her pocket
and pulls out letters, arranges them on the floor.

N-E-R-D.

Elsa nods gives her a few. Dren chews them furiously, then
abruptly takes off.

ELSA

Hey!

Dren runs over to a series of exposed pipes and deftly
shimmies up to the ceiling.

ELSA (CONT'D)

(worried)

Dren, no. Come down.

She watches, half in awe, half in fear, as Dren swings to an
over-hanging beam and finds a perch under the skylight.

Clive moves close to Elsa, attempts to console her.

CLIVE
I paid extra for that skylight. She
might as well enjoy it.

SMASH! Dren kicks at the glass. Clive and Elsa step back
as fragments rain down.

ELSA
Dren! No!

Dren ignores her, continues kicking, even though her feet
are bleeding. She clears most of the glass, starts to climb
through.

All Clive and Elsa can do is watch.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Dren!!!

CLIVE
Don't worry. She won't get past the
grate.

EXT. ROOFTOP, CANDY FACTORY -- TWILIGHT

Dren pokes her head through the opening. A metal grate
prevents her from going any further. She looks around at
the darkening sky and the illuminated cityscape in amazement.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- TWILIGHT

KRACK! Clive and Elsa react to what sounds like a
chiropractor adjusting bones.

Dren is contorting her body. She folds and bends herself
unnaturally, just managing to squeeze her way through the
tiny space between bars.

ELSA
I think she's past the grate.

Clive rushes to a door.

CLIVE
This way!

INT. HALLWAY, CANDY FACTORY -- TWILIGHT

Clive and Elsa race for the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL, CANDY FACTORY -- TWILIGHT

Clive and Elsa bound up three flights of stairs, finally
reaching a service shed and a door marked, "Roof Access".
It's locked. Clive fumbles through a key ring.

EXT. ROOF, CANDY FACTORY -- TWILIGHT

Dren pulls herself free, steps onto the roof with a mixture of awe and fear. She takes in the full panorama: sparkling city lights, dock yards, ships, ocean, and over it all, the purple and orange canopy of twilight.

INT. STAIRWELL, CANDY FACTORY -- TWILIGHT

Clive can't find the right key. Elsa picks up a brick from the floor and throws it through a frosted window. It shatters.

EXT. ROOF, CANDY FACTORY -- TWILIGHT

Elsa clamors through the broken window.

ELSA

Dren!

Frightened, Dren retreats to the edge of the building, hops on a cornice. She looks down at the ground below, doesn't seem intimidated.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren, please. Careful.

Clive climbs on the roof also, sees Elsa inching towards Dren.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Take my hand, sweetie.

Elsa reaches out. Dren retreats onto a protruding drain pipe, shaking with fear. Still she balances perfectly.

Elsa crawls onto the lip of the roof. Shouts like an angry and concerned parent.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren, come her this instant!

Elsa swipes out with one hand. Dren stumbles back. Loses her balance.

ELSA (CONT'D)

No!

For an instant, it seems that Dren will fall but then an amazing transformation occurs:

A cascade of feathers bursts through her skin. Magnificent wings. Unique, like everything else about her. The shimmering feathers are translucent, crystalline.

Dren involuntarily flaps her new wings, lifting her body and regaining her equilibrium.

She releases a triumphant SHRIEK and lets the wings fold delicately to her sides.

These are the missing components to her body. The last element required to make her form stream-lined, elegant and complete.

Clive and Elsa are dumbstruck. Their ugly duckling has become a swan.

Even Dren seems to be aware of this. She unfurls the wings proudly, turns to the city beyond. A new world beckoning. For a moment, it looks like she may fly away.

CLIVE

No!

Dren pauses, turns.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You're... not ready yet.

The hybrid keeps her eyes trained on Clive. He seems to be having an effect.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

We're not mad at you, Dren. We need you.

Elsa is impressed by the effect he has on her.

ELSA

(quietly)

Say you love her.

CLIVE

I... love you, Dren.

Clive holds out his hand. Dren feels the pull of freedom. But another force, stronger, wins her over.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

That's right. Come home.

Dren's wings retract and she leaps into his arms.

Clive holds her, unsure how to respond to this new connection. Elsa looks at him with relief... and just a hint of longing.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- MORNING

Dren's belongings are unpacked and the skylight is now boarded shut.

Clive is examining Dren's wings with fascination. She unfurls and retracts them proudly.

He puts his fingers on one of the feathers.

CLIVE

Do you mind?

And gives a little tug. Dren gasps. It hurts. But it's a good hurt. She coos at him. Clive can't help but stare at her; with these new appendages, Dren is more sensuous than ever. This exchange is not lost on Elsa.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Isn't this unbelievable. Do you think she could... fly?

ELSA

Doubt it. She'd need twice the wingspan and muscles like WWF wrestler.

(re: the wings)

Like most beautiful things, they're impractical.

Elsa says this with a hint of disdain, almost as if she were jealous. Clive lets it slide. He puts the feather under a microscope.

CLIVE

I don't know what kind of material this is. It's not fibrous. But not skin either.

Elsa looks at her watch.

ELSA

We better go.

Dren watches, forlorn as Clive unlocks and opens the door. She starts to move towards them.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Stay.

Dren halts.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Mommy and daddy have to go to work. We'll be back soon.

They leave, locking her inside. Dren takes in the dark, lonely room.

INT. LAB -- MORNING

Clive and Elsa come in. Barlow's men are hard at work.

BARLOW
Glad you decided to join us. Do you normally start your day at ten?

ELSA
Sometimes.

BARLOW
Well, not anymore. That gene isn't going to find itself.

Barlow gestures to a couple of work stations.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
Please.

Clive and Elsa sit.

INT. LAB -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa are hunched over microscopes. Elsa looks up bleary-eyed. Whispers to Clive.

ELSA
I can't stand her being all alone.

CLIVE
Try not to think about it.

BARLOW (O.S.)
How's it coming?

Elsa turns, Barlow's behind them. She smiles, nervous, not sure if he picked up on any of their conversation.

ELSA
Fine. Just fine, William.

She goes back to her microscope.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa's GTO pulls up.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Very dark.

Clive and Elsa enter. He shuts and locks the door, while Elsa turns on the lights.

The place is in total disarray. It looks like a hurricane hit it.

ELSA
Dren?

WHAM! A shelf collapses close to Elsa. She jumps back. Dren is there. Wild eyed. She lets out a SCREECH and leaps over to her bed, begins to pull out the stuffing.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Stop that!

But Dren is on a rampage, destroying everything she can get her hands on.

ELSA (CONT'D)

No, Dren! Stop that right now!

CLIVE

El, let her work it out. She's upset.

Powered by rage, Elsa grabs Dren by the nape of her neck, pushes her to her knees. Scolds her like an animal.

ELSA

Bad! B-A-D! Bad!

Dren has never been disciplined like this before. She submits. Cowers.

CLIVE

El, go easy.

ELSA

She was tearing the place apart.

CLIVE

I know but... big deal. It's mess anyway.

ELSA

She's changing.

CLIVE

She's a prisoner here.

A long painful silence. Elsa comes to her senses. Now she's filled with remorse. She moves to Dren, apologetic.

ELSA

Oh, god. I'm sorry.

But Dren retreats from her, afraid.

ELSA (CONT'D)

How can we help, Dren?

Dren drops plastic letters on the ground.

O-U-T-S-I-D-E.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's the one thing we can't do.

Dren rearranges the letters, an anagram:

T-E-D-I-O-U-S

Elsa stares at her astonished.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Where'd you learn that?

Dren becomes very agitated. She clammers up the wall and along the ceiling beams.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

The cavernous space has been neatened and made as livable as possible. One area is for Dren, another designated for cooking and eating. Most objects have been labeled with identity cards: "Desk", "Lamp", "Book" and so on.

Elsa and Dren sit at a table together. Clive plays a gameboy in the background.

ELSA

Come on. "Ooooo". Now you try.

Elsa places her fingers on Dren's throat. Dren opens her mouth but no sound comes out. She looks to Elsa, thwarted.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's okay. Try again.

This time, she takes the end of Dren's arm and places it on her own vocal chords.

ELSA (CONT'D)

"Ooooo". Okay? Now try.

Dren purses her lips, pushes the air out of her lungs, making an eardrum-bursting SCREECH.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren, no.

But Dren keeps it up, fueled by frustration. Her voice rises to a near subsonic pitch.

SMASH! A glass, labelled "Water", shatters from the vibration. Dren jumps back, frightened into silence.

Elsa drops her hands laughing.

ELSA (CONT'D)

It's okay. Come back.

Elsa grabs a broom and sweeps up the glass.

ELSA (CONT'D)
That was close, really. Let's try again.

Dren refuses to sit. She juggles letters in her pocket. Arranges them on the floor.

P-O-O-L.

ELSA (CONT'D)
After your lesson. Sit down.

Clive looks up from his gameboy.

CLIVE
Why don't you let her relax. You've been going at it for hours.

ELSA
You're a fine one to talk.

CLIVE
Hey, we all need some R & R. You especially.

Elsa doesn't deign to respond to this. She turns to Dren.

ELSA
Come back here, Dren.

Dren disobeys. She darts to the toffee vat, now converted into a swimming pool, climbs up the rim, tears off her dress and dives into the water.

Elsa watches her, annoyed and upset. She turns back to Clive. He hides behind his gameboy.

INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S ROOM, CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

A private space. Monitors stacked against the wall. ON SCREEN: views of Dren's room. Clive and Elsa are tucked into a small rollaway bed.

ELSA
Clive, I wish you wouldn't contradict me in front of her.

CLIVE
What?

ELSA
I think we should present a unified front. Otherwise, who's she going to listen to?

CLIVE

Can we discuss this another time?
It's really late.

ELSA

She's not listening to me. And I
think it's because you are always
disagreeing with me.

CLIVE

I don't always disagree.

ELSA

You're disagreeing right now.

CLIVE

Okay, I won't do it again. Can we go
to sleep now?

ELSA

Yes.

They both turn away from each other. Shut their eyes.

INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S ROOM, CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Clive wakes. He looks over to Elsa, snoring, her back to
him. Something is on his mind. He can't go back to sleep.

He sits up, bringing him face to face with one of the
monitors. Dren ON SCREEN, in a full close up, the black
orbs of her eyes just inches away from his. He starts. It
almost seems that she is gazing at him.

The next instant, she's gone.

Clive stands, disoriented, and begins to move from monitor
to monitor. Spots her by the toffee vat, her naked body
silhouetted in the dimness. She turns and again, impossibly,
seems to look at him, just before sliding into the pool.

Clive rushes to a dead monitor and turns it on. A view from
an underwater camera fills the screen.

Dren, breathing effortlessly beneath the surface, begins to
sensually roll her body against the wall of the pool.

Instinctively, Clive reaches out to the monitor and runs his
fingers along her image. As he does this, Dren mimics his
action. Her hand follows his along the width of the screen.

Clive draws back, unnerved. The hybrid continues to stare
out beyond the electronic haze.

CLOSE ON ELSA. Unseen by Clive, she is awake, watching.

INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S ROOM, CANDY FACTORY -- MORNING

Clive is woken by his cell. He picks it up, groggy. Dexter's on the other end.

DEXTER
(on phone)
Where the heck are you?

Clive looks at his watch.

CLIVE
Shit. Slept in.

DEXTER
(on phone)
Well, get here fast. Barlow's blowing a gasket.

He hangs up. Clive look around for Elsa. She's gone.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- MORNING

Clive stumbles in half-dressed.

CLIVE
Do you know what time it is?

ELSA
Yeah.

CLIVE
Why didn't you wake me?

Elsa shrugs.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
We have to get going.

ELSA
You go.

CLIVE
What are you talking about? We have to make an appearance. Barlow isn't that stupid.

ELSA
Tell him I'm on the rag, whatever. I'm not leaving. Every time I do, it makes things worse.

CLIVE
Fine. Okay. Sure.

He stumbles out the door. Dren watches him intently.

INT. LAB -- DAY

Clive is getting grilled by Barlow.

BARLOW

What do you mean she's not coming in? Do you know how that looks.

CLIVE

She's just feeling bummed out about this whole thing.

BARLOW

I'm on the front lines, fighting for you guys everyday. This kind of moribund self-pity does not exactly inspire confidence. In fact, I'm inches away from shutting you down.

CLIVE

I know. Please, just give us one more chance.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- DAY

Elsa can hear Dren singing. The odd, exquisite tones reverberate through the room.

Curious, Elsa moves stealthily through the clutter, finds Dren in the corner, drawing.

ELSA

What are you doing?

Dren instantly drops her pen. Covers the papers. She skulks away, guilty. Elsa picks up the tablet.

Sketches of a face. Some are quite crude, but there is an evolution to them. In the advanced ones, it becomes clear that they are portraits of Clive.

ELSA (CONT'D)

These are good.

She sets them down.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Are there any of me?

Dren just stares back at her, afraid. Evidently not.

Elsa's lips curl up into a grin. She shakes her head.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I am a hard ass, aren't I?

She approaches Dren.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Hi there.

The hybrid ignores her.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren? Do you want something to eat?

Dren shakes her head.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I know this is hard for you to imagine, but things will get better. We'll leave here soon.

Dren stays turned away.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren, I don't want to be a prison guard. Come on, let's play together.

Dren doesn't move.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I guess you're not a little girl anymore. It's hard for me to understand that.

(Elsa gets an idea)

...Hold on. Don't move.

She goes to her room. Dren can hear shuffling and banging. After a few moments, Elsa emerges with beauty kit and a dress, a flowery number. Not what we expect from Elsa.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I guess you are about my size now. This should fit you with some adjustments.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- DAY

Elsa has fitted the dress over Dren. She is making minor adjustments to suit Dren's unusual anatomy.

ELSA

My mother gave me this dress. It was the last present I ever got from her. She was pretty bonkers by then. And it wasn't exactly my style. But I take it with me wherever I go. Kind of a good luck charm.

Elsa steps back, regards Dren.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Very nice. Looks much better on you than on me.

Dren feels the fabric -- it's silky. She revels in the sensation. Elsa takes her hand. Leads her to a standing mirror.

ELSA (CONT'D)

See. Look how pretty you are.

Elsa runs her fingers through Dren's hair.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Your hair is becoming really thick.

Elsa takes a brush from her make up kit. She lightly grooms Dren as she speaks.

ELSA (CONT'D)

It's funny, when I look at you, I see myself. But then at the same time, I see something totally different.

Elsa puts down the brush and starts applying makeup.

ELSA (CONT'D)

And that something is magical. I noticed it when you were first born.

Dren is hypnotized by the effect the makeup is having on her appearance.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I think I finally understood why my mom kept me locked away for all those years.

Elsa steps away from Dren and we get our first peek at her made-up face. She looks adult and seductive .

ELSA (CONT'D)

She was afraid that somehow she would lose me.

Dren giggles, clearly pleased by her new look.

ELSA (CONT'D)

But Dren, I'm not going to make that mistake with you.

Dren stares at her intensely. It would seem that perhaps she is looking inside Elsa.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I love you, Dren.

WHAP! Out of the blue, Dren strikes out at Elsa, pushes her into the mirror, cracking the glass. She snatches Elsa's keys and makes a break for the door.

INT. HALLWAY, CANDY FACTORY -- DAY

CLICK. The door unlocks and explodes open. Dren races down the hall, fluttering her wings and squawking as she goes. Elsa follows close behind.

INT. ANOTHER PASSAGE, CANDY FACTORY -- DAY

Dren rounds a corner, finds the exit. She tries to open it, but it's locked. She bangs the door, uselessly.

ELSA
Looking for this?

Elsa waves a swipe card between two fingers. Dren turns and hisses.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Don't you hiss at me.

Dren looks in all directions for some way out, but she is trapped. Elsa inches towards her.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Come on. You had your fun. Now
it's time to go back.

Dren launches herself forward but Elsa catches her tackling her to the floor. The hybrid writhes and kicks wildly. Her foot connects with Elsa's throat. Elsa releases her grip, choking.

Dren takes the swipe card from Elsa and bounds for the exit. She runs the card through -- wrong way. She turns it around--

WHAP! Elsa bashes her with a METAL PIPE, retrieved from the dirty floor.

Dren goes down, whimpering.

Elsa picks up her clone, shakes her violently, pushing her up against the cement wall.

ELSA (CONT'D)
You're coming with me.

She hauls Dren back to her room.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Dren slouches groggy in the corner, while Elsa gathers her drawings of Clive. She drops them on the floor, strikes a match and sets them alight. Dren mews in protest. The colorful images of Clive's face warp and burn.

ELSA

I'm inside you. ...I know what's going on in your head. And you better erase those thoughts, right now. Or else.

Elsa takes Dren by the chin, looks her right in the eye.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Do not fuck with your maker. Understand?

CLIVE (O.S.)

What's going on here?

Elsa turns, suddenly ashamed. Clive has entered the room. Dren quickly retreats behind him.

ELSA

She tried to escape again.

CLIVE

That's no reason to burn her stuff.

ELSA

She hurt me.

Clive looks at the two, an insurmountable barrier rising between them.

CLIVE

We have to get her out of here.

ELSA

No, not yet.

CLIVE

Think of her for once.

ELSA

I am. What do you think they'll do to her if anyone finds out.

CLIVE

We could leave. Go somewhere safe. I've done some research. There are some countries that are non-signatory to the ban on cloning. Costa Rica, for instance.

ELSA

And do what? Live off bananas and coconut milk?

CLIVE

I didn't say it would be easy.

ELSA
And how would we get Dren there?

CLIVE
It's just an idea. All I know is
that she can't stay in this shit
hole for long. It'll kill her.
It's gonna kill us.

Elsa softens. She moves up to Clive.

ELSA
Okay. But let's be realistic about
this. We can't just go marching off
into the sunset without money. Let's
get Joan her drug. Get paid. Get
the heat off us. Then we can consider
other options.

CLIVE
We're never going to find it, El.
It's just not possible using dead
tissue.

ELSA
We will.

Elsa turns to Dren. Regards her.

ELSA (CONT'D)
I've got an idea.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Dren is lying on a table. Elsa finishes the task of securing
Dren's limbs with padded restraints. Clive stands to the
side.

CLIVE
This is a bad idea. A very bad idea.

ELSA
She's the best shot we have.

CLIVE
There's high a probability that she
doesn't have the protein.

ELSA
But she could. And working from
living tissue is going to be about
one thousand times easier.

CLIVE
You're just trying to punish her.

ELSA
I'm not even going to respond to that.

CLIVE
At least give her a local.

Elsa nods and grimly pulls a vial from her bag, administers a local anesthetic.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
She'll never forgive you.

ELSA
(to Clive)
Don't make this harder than it already is.

From a surgical tray, Elsa takes out terrifying-looking biopsy needle. Dren sees it. Struggles against her restraints.

ELSA (CONT'D)
(to Dren)
It'll be over soon, honey.

Clive looks away as Elsa pushes the needle into Dren's abdomen. She HOWLS in agony, spasms.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Don't move.... almost there.

And Elsa pulls out a sizable chunk of muscle tissue. She snaps it into a cold box while Clive quickly sterilizes and bandages the site of extraction.

CLIVE
Let's get these things off her.

ELSA
We had to do it.

CLIVE
You had to.

A bitter stand off.

And Elsa leaves with the cold box.

Clive watches her go, then quickly removes the restraints. Dren fetals up in pain.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Dren, still hurting but on the mends, winds through broken toys, scattered books. She looks around to be sure she's not being observed, then pushes back several boxes aside to reveal a tiny alcove.

This is Dren's private space. A hidden refuge from her creators. In one corner is a shrine composed of drawings, toys and books. Placed in the center of the tableau, like a goddess, is Barbie.

Dren finds a hand mirror, looks at her reflection. At first, seems pleased but then she lets the mirror drift over her very inhuman arms and exotic feet. She looks back at Barbie, blond, smiling, beyond perfection.

Dren's face fills with self-loathing. She smashes the mirror on the floor.

In the cracked glass a figure is reflected: Clive. He's witnessed this very private moment. His face is full of pity.

Dren jumps back, hurriedly pushes a box over the entrance to her hiding place, sealing it shut. Clive smiles.

CLIVE

It's okay. We all need secrets.

He backs away. Dren relaxes. Then Clive spots something at the entrance to the alcove.

A CD.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Elsa's been looking for this everywhere, you know.

Clive sticks the CD into a boombox. The sweet chords of "Under My Skin" ring out.

Dren sways to the music. Clive raises an eyebrow.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You like it, huh?

He laughs, but his eyes are sympathetic, understanding. He holds out his hand. Smiles.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

The lab is empty. Elsa works alone, hunched over a microscope. The cold box next to her. She looks like she hasn't slept in a couple of days. A stack of paper coffee cups leans precariously beside her.

She meticulously manipulates Dren's blood culture with a pipette. Finally satisfied, she looks up, types code into the computer. Within seconds, a complex formula scrolls down the monitor. Elsa studies it excitedly. She picks up a print out on the desk and anxiously compares them.

ELSA

Yes.

She jumps from her seat, toppling over the tower of cups.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- DAY

As music plays in the background Clive takes Dren's wing in his hand, gently moves it away from her body.

Dren watches intently, as he eases her other wing onto his left shoulder. Then he places his hand on the small of her back.

The geometry of their bodies is charmingly awkward.

CLIVE

We'll make it work. Ready?

Dren looks at him puzzled.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Just follow.

And Clive starts to dance with her. At first she stumbles, falters, as she tries to keep pace.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Lift your foot... no, the other..
That's it...

Dren is beginning to understand. She mimics everything he does perfectly.

Abruptly, Clive stops. Dren is confused.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Wait...

Clive gently rearranges their limbs, exchanges positions with her.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You lead.

And they begin to move again. This time everything clicks. Their dance is at once sensuous and totally bizarre.

Dren shuts her eyes, allows the music to carry her, her wings spontaneously expand, momentarily lifting her off the ground. She lets out a gawky SHRIEK, obviously enjoying this.

Clive examines her. She is Elsa seen through a filter. Her most attractive features heightened, made exotic.

A realization strikes him: he's not dancing with Dren out of sympathy but out of desire.

All at once, he breaks away from her. Dren opens her eyes. Clive just shakes his head.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I--

He turns and leaves the room. Dren watches him go despondent.

INT. MEETING AREA, LAB -- MORNING

Malaise permeates the air. Elsa enters, sees Barlow with a small audience of scientists. Dexter is among them. He casts her a grim look.

ELSA

What's going on?

BARLOW

You were always moving too fast. So, you walked into a punch. Maybe it's for the best.

ELSA

What are you saying?

BARLOW

I've concluded that searching for the gene that produced CD356 in the remains of these hybrids is impossible. I'm recommending we shut down the program.

ELSA

Just a minute--

BARLOW

(interrupting)

You can't go over my head this time. Patience has run out upstairs. I'm very sorry, it pains me to do this.

ELSA

Well, then don't.

She hands him print outs.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I isolated the gene. Now you can manufacture the synthetic.

BARLOW

That's impossible.

ELSA

I've run tests. You can too, if you like.

Barlow, leafs through the data.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me. I'm very tired. Call me on my cell if you have any questions.

Elsa, smug, winks at Dexter and heads for the door.

INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S ROOM CANDY FACTORY -- MORNING

Clive pacing. Mind feverish. He looks at the monitors. Dren is slumped over. Looks lifeless.

He can't take it anymore.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- MORNING

Clive comes back into Dren's room. He approaches her. Puts a hand on her shoulder. She turns. Startled. Their eyes connect. Maker and creation. He takes her face in his hands, hesitates then draws her close. Kisses her.

Dren's feather's quiver, her wings spread out and then fall, enshrouding both of them in the shawl of translucent plumage. Clive draws back from her. Dren just looks at him, innocently. Not judging.

He starts to move away, but she pulls him back into the shelter of her wings.

This time when they make contact, they explode into a frenzy of desire.

Clive presses her against the toffee vat, runs his mouth along her lips, her neck and shoulders. Her wings flap excitedly.

She brings him close to her breasts as her tail slides between his legs and runs up his back, roughly caresses his neck.

They lower themselves to the floor. Clive places his hands under her dress, lifts it to expose her marble white torso while she tears at his shirt, pulling it over his head with her feet.

He tugs at his belt, unzips his pants.

ANOTHER ANGLE: Elsa stands in the doorway, watching. She is frozen, unable to take her eyes away from their naked, entwined bodies.

Clive catches her reflection in the glass of the toffee vat. He turns. Their eyes lock.

Elsa's face contorts in pain and betrayal.

Clive pulls himself away from Dren, stands up. He wipes a hand across his mouth. It's bleeding from the roughness of their kisses. He looks down at his chest and shoulders. There are welts from Dren's wings and tail.

CLIVE

El....

Elsa runs out of the room.

Clive hurriedly puts on his pants and heads for the door.

He takes one last look back at Dren. She stares at him with an expression of pain and betrayal identical to the one that Elsa just gave him.

He leaves, spooked.

EXT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Clive runs out just in time to see Elsa peel away in their car.

He looks around, lost. Trying to process what has happened. The tatters that he has made of their lives.

INT. HYPERSPACE CLUB -- NIGHT

A late night crowd.

Clive stands at the bar, lost in his own world. He pulls back on his drink, then startles as something catches his eye.

FEATHERY WINGS-- moving on the dance floor. He shakes his head, disoriented. He must have imagined it. But there they are again.

Only now he sees they are a strange fashion accessory clipped on to the back of one of the more outrageously attired women grooving to the music.

CLIVE'S POV: For an instant he sees Dren, dancing in her place.

Clive relishes this fantasy staring at the winged dancer. She notices his lecherous gaze mouths the words, "fuck off."

Clive startles out of his reverie, and quickly drains his drink, clearly disturbed by his thoughts.

INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Elsa sits in a darkened apartment. She's absolutely still, but her mind is racing.

CLICK. Lights come on. Clive is in the doorway.

CLIVE

El.

She turns. He approaches.

ELSA

Get away from me.

CLIVE

I'm sorry you had to... I'm sorry.

ELSA

Sorry? Sorry? Look at you.

CLIVE

It just happened. I'm ashamed.

ELSA

You're sick. How could you... even consider...?

CLIVE

Hey, you're no saint either. I saw what you did to her.

ELSA

I love her.

CLIVE

You've got a funny way of showing it. You don't care about her. You just want control.

ELSA

I guess I know what you want.

CLIVE

I want you back. I can't lose you. I made a mistake.

ELSA

You were fucking a mistake.

A long beat.

CLIVE

Well, what are we supposed to do?

She just stares at him. Clive regards her, a silent understanding passing between them. Clive whispers:

CLIVE (CONT'D)

We can't do that.

ELSA

Clive, it's her or us.

(MORE)

ELSA (CONT'D)

I isolated the protein. Gave it to Barlow. We're in the clear. Let's get out of this while we still can.

CLIVE

We can't... We have a responsibility to her.

ELSA

Look at that place. Look at us. Everything's falling apart. We did what we set out to do. We made her. She grew up. The experiment is over.

There is a long silence.

CLIVE

How would we do it?

ELSA

I don't know. The most humane way possible.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa make their way to Dren's room with grim determination. They stop outside the door.

Elsa opens a black medical bag, takes out a needle, sticks it in a vial and pulls back on the plunger.

ELSA

Okay.

Clive gathers his courage and unlocks the door.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa enter. The stench of rot hits them immediately. The room is in abysmal condition. They scan their surroundings. No sign of Dren.

ELSA

Dren?

Clive moves through the room. He looks up to the hybrid's usual hiding place among the rafters. He can't find her.

Elsa, syringe in hand, pulls back overturned furniture and garbage.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Where are you, pet?

Clive climbs up the toffee vat, slowly, cautiously peers beyond the rim. He leans over the murky water.

Green algae coats the surface.

He brushes it away with his hand and reacts to what is underneath.

CLIVE

EI!

Elsa rushes over. She looks in the vat.

Dren floats beneath the surface, seemingly lifeless

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Help me.

Clive reaches in and takes hold of Dren's hands.

Elsa is frozen on the spot. The syringe falls out of her limp hand. Clive struggles, grunts under the dead weight.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Come on!

Elsa snaps out of her stupor and reaches in, taking hold of one hand. Together, they manage to pull her part way out.

Clive puts his head to the Dren's chest. He listens breathlessly. Then...

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Her heart's still beating.

They hoist her limp body out of the vat and lower her gingerly to the floor.

ELSA

What happened?

CLIVE

I-- I don't know.

Clive feels her forehead.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Fever. She's burning up. She must have been using the tank to cool herself.

Dren's body convulses. She's choking.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Oh god.

Elsa and Clive watch their creation slowly dying. Tears well up in Elsa's eyes.

ELSA

No!

She throws herself on the hybrid and begins performing CPR.

CLIVE

What are you doing?

ELSA

Come on. Come on.

She hammers the hybrid's rib cage with her fist, breathes into her mouth.

At last, Dren lets out a choking cough and then hauls in a deep breath of oxygen. Elsa doesn't stop working on her.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's it... keep going.

Pretty soon, she has the hybrid breathing normally. Elsa pulls back, drenched in sweat. Clive comes over to her, he has found a blanket. They cover Dren.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's it, sweetie.

Elsa strokes Dren's face. She opens her eyes, ever so slightly.

CLIVE

(to Elsa)

You're insane. You know that.

INT. CANDY FACTORY -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa have Dren hooked up to monitors.

CLIVE

She's getting worse.

ELSA

I know.

Feathers are molting off of Dren's wings. Her face is swollen, her breathing weak and intermittent.

Elsa takes in their decrepit surroundings, the private hell they have constructed for themselves.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Why did we do this?

Elsa spies something on the floor. A drawing of the sun. She picks it up, examines it: violent streaks of color define its form, almost like a Van Gogh.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Let's get her the fuck out of here.

CLIVE

What about--

ELSA

She's dying. She shouldn't die here.

Clive nods his agreement.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

The GTO tears across the asphalt headed for the countryside.

INT. CAR - TRAVELING -- NIGHT

Clive drives. Elsa's in the back with Dren, unconscious and hidden under a blanket.

Elsa looks up.

ELSA

Here's the turn off.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

Clive makes a sharp turn up the road to the cottage.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

The car comes to a stop outside the cottage. Clive and Elsa get out.

EXT. COTTAGE -- DAWN

Clive and Elsa pull Dren out of the car, carry her up the path to the cottage, now illuminated in predawn half-light.

Dren moans, looks around this alien environment through slitted eyes -- the land, the trees, the sky. Suddenly, her face is covered in an orange glow. She reacts.

In the distance, the sun breaks over the horizon. A crimson ball of fire-- just like her drawing.

Clive and Elsa stop in their tracks and watch their creation marvel at the sight. They seem equally amazed, as though they were seeing the world for the first time too.

As the light washes over them, Dren fades back into unconsciousness.

CLIVE

Let's get her inside.

INT. BEDROOM, COTTAGE - DAWN

Clive and Elsa carry Dren into Elsa's childhood bedroom and set her on a tiny bed.

Elsa takes a comforter out of a closet.

ELSA

This used to be my favorite blanket.

She covers Dren while Clive shuts the curtains, darkening the room. He takes a seat next to Elsa who has positioned herself on the floor across from the bed.

They sit in silence, listening to Dren's shallow breathing.

INT. BEDROOM, COTTAGE -- DAY

Clive and Elsa have fallen asleep next to Dren.

Clive stirs and then starts awake, disoriented. After a moment, he looks to Dren. Her arm dangles to the side of the bed. Its milky white translucence now dull. He takes hold of her wrist, checks her pulse, and then places her hand under the blanket.

He touches Elsa's shoulder gently.

CLIVE

El...

She opens her eyes.

ELSA

What?

Clive just looks at her, takes her in his arms.

INT. LIVING ROOM, COTTAGE -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa sitting at opposite ends of the room. Clive breaks the silence.

CLIVE

We did everything we could.

ELSA

No, we didn't. We're a couple of chicken shits. I should have listened to you. We didn't have to keep her locked up in there.

Clive doesn't know what to say. He reaches over to touch her. But she turns away.

CLIVE

Do you think we can ever go back?

ELSA
I don't know.

They remain like this, frozen, apart.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

They start.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Someone is knocking on the front door.

DEXTER (O.S.)
Guys, you in there?

CLIVE
(quietly)
Did you...?

ELSA
Of course not.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

DEXTER (O.S.)
We need to talk.

Elsa opens the door just a little. Dexter's anxious face greets her on the other side.

ELSA
Dex, what the hell are you doing here?

Suddenly, the door bursts open as Barlow barrels in, knocking Elsa backwards.

DEXTER
I'm sorry. I had no choice.

She looks to Dexter, betrayed. He can't meet her gaze.

BARLOW
Where is it?

ELSA
Where's what?

BARLOW
How stupid do you think I am?

CLIVE
What're you talking about, William?

BARLOW
You know. You know exactly.
(MORE)

BARLOW (CONT'D)

(to Elsa)

I went over your results. The samples you were working with didn't come from Ginger and Fred. They came from something else. Something with human DNA content.

Clive and Elsa share a look.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

I knew you two were up to no good. But I didn't think you would be capable of something so abhorrent.

Barlow begins to open doors, searching.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

I'm taking you down and then I'm wiping my hands clean of this mess.

ELSA

You're crazy.

BARLOW

Am I?

Barlow comes to the door to the bedroom where Dren is.

ELSA

Don't go in there.

He casts them a triumphant look. Swings open the door. Reacts to what he sees...

INT. BEDROOM, COTTAGE -- NIGHT

The room is empty.

Elsa looks in.

The hybrid is gone.

Clive joins them.

BARLOW

Where is it? I'm sick of these games. For the last time. Tell me where it---

SCREEEEECH!

Something drops on Barlow from above.

DREN.

Alive.

EXT. COTTAGE -- NIGHT

They burst through the door, race for the car, Elsa stuffs Clive into the passenger seat and goes around to the other side, stops as she realizes...

ELSA
I don't have the keys.

From above, the sound of powerful, flapping wings. Elsa casts the beam of the flashlight into the air. There's nothing but blackness. She grabs Clive's hand, yanks him out of the car.

ELSA (CONT'D)
COME ON!

Elsa drags Clive into the murky woods.

EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT

Elsa leads Clive, running wildly. He's half-blind. Trips.

She gets down on her knees, rips off a piece of her t-shirt and dabs it over his wounds. There are deep lacerations on his cheek and forehead.

ELSA
There. Can you see anything?

CLIVE
Very blurry.

ELSA
Blurry's good.

CLIVE
What's happening?

ELSA
I don't know.

CLIVE
She's a fucking man. What made her change?

ELSA
I don't--

She stops, a realization slowly sinking in.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Ginger and Fred.

CLIVE
What?

She quickly raises Clive to his feet.

ELSA
Keep moving.

EXT. WOODS, ELSEWHERE -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa race through the bramble, branches and twigs tearing at them. Elsa rattles through her words breathlessly.

ELSA
Ginger mutated into a male. They killed each other because they were two males in a confined space.

They have reached a SWAMPY BOG.

CLIVE
But she-- he's not confined. Not anymore.

ELSA
I don't know. Maybe... Dren's just pissed off.

Clive struggles through the sucking mud, gets stuck.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Come on.

CLIVE
I can't.

Cursing, Elsa tries to pull him up on a rock, but she slips, knocking the flashlight into the water. She watches helplessly as it sinks, the beam illuminating its descent.

ELSA
No!

Grabbing a stick, she lies on her belly and prods the muddy bottom.

CLIVE
Let it go.

ELSA
We need it.

Clive inches ahead of her, laying himself prone on ground.

CLIVE
I'll do it.

ELSA
You can't see.

CLIVE

Neither can you without the light.

Clive grasps the stick and prods deeper for the flashlight.

The stick dances around the light, finally managing to hook around the handle.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Got it.

He pulls the light back, illuminating the ghostly face of Dren who swims amphibian-like under the surface.

Elsa screams, jumps back. Dren grabs the stick and yanks Clive into the water.

ELSA

No. Clive.

Elsa can make out the dim figure of Clive as he is pulled under. Air bubbles to the surface. She watches helplessly as the water churns. And then, all becomes still.

Elsa bends over the embankment, trying to penetrate the murky liquid.

Suddenly, Clive's face buoys into view.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive!

She grabs him by the shirt, drags him onto the rock. He is still breathing.

And then she sees...

Dren rising up, water draining from HIS muscular form, wings spread above, ready to pounce.

Elsa is momentarily immobilized with fear, not wanting to leave Clive. Dren stares at her with piercing eyes. It's Elsa that he wants. He leaps forward in a blur of motion.

She turns, bolts into the woods.

EXT. WOODS -- NIGHT

Elsa forces her way through the thick brush, falls to her knees and scrambles between a gnarl of matted bushes.

Ahead is an outcropping of rock. She squeezes inside.

The sound of flapping wings passes overhead. Something lands on the rock above, debris showers over the opening. A HOLLOW CRY.

Elsa stifles her breath, stares helplessly at out, waiting.

Then more flapping wings... and quiet.

As carefully as she can, Elsa worms her way out and looks around. Nothing.

She bolts through the forest.

EXT. THICKET -- NIGHT

Elsa tumbles into a sea of shoulder high grass. She weaves through it, directionless, panicked.

Again, the sound of flapping wings overhead.

She throws herself to the ground, lies under the cover of foliage, choking back her breath.

SILENCE.

She waits. Finally, rises, cautiously pokes her head above the horizon of green, looks around -- nothing in any direction.

And then...

From behind, two enormous multicolored wings silently spread outward as the form of the hybrid rises into view.

Elsa whirls around. The wings envelope her, stifling her scream.

EXT. BOG -- CONTINUOUS

Clive's regains consciousness. He drags himself out of the muck and rises unsteadily to his feet.

CLIVE

Elsa!

He sees her tracks in the mud, follows them into the bush.

EXT. THICKET -- NIGHT

Elsa's prone to the ground. Her creation hangs over her. She stares into his face, so similar to her own.

ELSA

What... do you want?

And then Dren speaks. Distorted, inhuman but unmistakable.

DREN

Inside you.

EXT. FOREST, VARIOUS -- CONTINUOUS

Clive stumbles through the woods, calling Elsa's name.

EXT. THICKET -- CONTINUOUS

Clive staggers into the thicket, breathless. He pushes his way through the grass. He is about to give up, when he sees something sticking out of the undergrowth.

ELSA'S SHOE.

Ahead there is a sound, SCRATCHING, SCRAPING.

He creeps forward, as quietly as he can. The sounds growing louder, increasing in rhythm and intensity.

Clive is nearly at their source. He pulls back on the grass, it gives like a curtain to reveal, trample reeds.

And in the clearing: Dren

On top of Elsa

Thrusting between her legs.

Elsa's eyes are glazed over. Her mouth hanging open, twisted and mute, her arms and legs akimbo, jerking with the hybrid's movements.

Clive is frozen by the sight.

Dren thrusts harder and faster, racing towards climax.

Clive overcomes his paralysis, his face hardening. He reaches down, picks up a rock at his feet.

He edges towards the hybrid with slow determined steps.

Elsa sees him, is pulled back into awareness, looks up, into the face that hangs over hers, stiffening in the grip of sexual ecstasy as it releases inside her, then falls still.

Elsa looks to Clive.

He raises the rock over his head.

Dren looks to Elsa, seems to sense Clive's presence.

Seems to know what is about to happen.

Elsa turns away as...

WHAP! Clive brings the rock down on the Dren's skull. The hybrid falls forward onto Elsa. She screams, pulls herself out from beneath.

WHAP! Clive brings the rock down again, blood and viscera spraying in all directions.

Dren manages pull away, wings fluttering spastically, tail whipping outward

WHAP! Dren is struck again. This time by Elsa.

Dren drops into the dirt as the geneticists pummel their creation with blows, striking it with primal, savage intensity, again, again and again, until Dren is completely still.

Clive and Elsa gaze down at Dren, blood-drenched, half-naked, shaking.

All is quiet except for their labored breathing

And then...

In the distance, A BUZZING.

A breeze blows across the grass.

They look up. There's a light in the sky.

The BREEZE becomes a WIND which sends dust and debris swirling around them.

The wind is accompanied a mechanical thumping.

The sound of a helicopter rotor blade.

Clive and Elsa huddle together as a blinding beam is cast in their direction.

Above:

A helicopter hovers.

They try to hide from it, but it follows them through the grass, the light growing in intensity as the chopper descends, the Novaphorm seal emblazoned on the side.

TRUCKS and FOUR BY FOURS pull up, disgorge teams of MEN IN HAZ-MAT SUITS.

They surround Clive and Elsa. Drag them away from the scene.

Dren's body is removed and zipped into a plastic sack. The earth around her/him/it is torched.

Clive and Elsa are watch as the forest burns. A miniature hell on earth.

FADE OUT.

BLACKNESS

INT. BOARD ROOM, NOVAPHORM -- DAY

Clive and Elsa are seated at the board room table. They are shadows of their former selves. Gaunt, pale, drained.

Joan Klein stands opposite. Barlow and Dexter, bandaged, sit at an ambiguous distance.

BARLOW

These are non-disclosure agreements. You'll never speak to anyone of this... incident. You'll surrender records, documents, everything, for shredding.

Clive and Elsa leaf through phonebook-thick legal documents.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

As well, you'll refrain from seeking employment with any other bio-tech firm. I have prepared a dossier of your activities for release to the authorities at the first lapse. Consider it a restraining order. You and research should be like a stalker and his victim. Go within one hundred yards of a lab and you'll see we mean business.

Clive and Elsa dutifully sign the agreements.

JOAN

Is that everything, William?

BARLOW

I suppose that covers it.

JOAN

Good. You can go now.

Barlow does a double take.

BARLOW

I'm sorry?

JOAN

Thank you.

Barlow shifts awkwardly in his chair, stands stiffly, heads for the exit, eyes Clive and Elsa one last time before departing from the room.

The door shuts. After a moment's pause, Joan turns back to the young geneticists.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(to Dexter)

Tell them what you discovered.

DEXTER

I did some additional research.
CD356 doesn't just have a
regenerative effect on cells, it's
mutational agent. That's how Ginger
changed her sex. Same thing with...

ELSA

Dren.

Dexter nods. Despite the ordeal, he's still infatuated with them.

The faint trace of a smile creases Joan's lips. She takes a remote and activates a row of monitors inlaid in the wall.

A video image of Dren appears, one which Clive and Elsa made in happier days.

JOAN

She was lovely.

Clive and Elsa share a puzzled glance.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Pity she didn't survive.

Joan crosses over to the monitors, stares into the electronic haze.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I only wish I had known before it
was too late.

She turns back to Clive and Elsa.

CLIVE

But the agreements?

JOAN

Are a bureaucratic formality. The
only constant in life is change. To
ignore that basic tenant is the first
step towards extinction.

ELSA

Then you want us to... continue?

JOAN

I want you to... evolve.

EXT. LIMON OUTSKIRTS, COSTA RICA -- DAY

Golden light rains down on a tropical paradise. A beat up Volkswagon bus tears along a highway, headed for an isolated stretch of dirt road.

EXT. DIRT ROAD -- DAY

The VW van comes to a dusty stop outside a clay tiled bungalow.

Dexter gets out, pulls groceries out of the trunk.

INT. BUNGALOW -- DAY

The inside is a reversal from the primitive exterior. Rough clay walls are lined with shelves of high-tech medical equipment, monitors, sensors, microscopes and assorted lab fixtures.

Dexter enters, sets down the groceries next to a quaint kitchen area.

DEXTER

Hey, guys. I'm back.

Clive is making breakfast. Elsa is seated behind a kitchen table, dreamily playing with colored fridge magnets. She rearranges the letters in various nonsense configurations.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Hard at work I see.

Dexter takes a seat next to Elsa.

CLIVE

Hey, cooking is just another form of chemistry.

Clive plops a freshly cooked plate of pancakes in front of them.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(to Elsa)

How're you feeling?

He comes up behind Elsa and wraps his arms around her, runs his hand over her very pregnant belly.

ELSA

Ready for anything.

On the table she arranges the letters...

INSIDE YOU becomes NUDE SOY becomes ID SUE becomes YES DO becomes SINDY O.

CLIVE

(to Elsa)

Sindy? Hmm.

The strains of "Under My Skin" rise on the SOUNDTRACK and we...

FADE TO BLACK.

The End.