

CLIVE IS FULFILLING AN INTELLECTUAL NEED.

C
CLIVE DOES IT FOR THE SCIENCE

+ E
ELSA DOES IT FOR THE GLORY.

→ SHE IS FULFILLING AN EMOTIONAL NEED

HAVE EACH MOTIVATION RUN THROUGH THE STORY

THIS COULD EVEN BE STATED.

SPLICE

by
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Q = IS THERE VALUE OF SETTING
- THIS IS MIN. IN FUTURE?

~~WEIRD IDEA:~~

~~WHAT IF WE MERGED
BARROW + BOSTER
INTO ONE CHARACTER?~~

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1 BLACKNESS

A MUFFLED HEARTBEAT. Faster than normal, and quickening.

A SLIVER OF BLINDING LIGHT cuts through the darkness, revealing the constricting walls of a fleshy liquid-filled chamber. The walls close in, squeezing us towards the light.

Our heartbeat becomes LOUDER and FASTER. The walls spasm again, with an oddly mechanical THROB.

THRRRRUMP - THRRRRUMP - THRRRRUMP

We are experiencing the POV of an infant's birth. The LIGHT expands until we are completely engulfed in WHITENESS. With a WET FLUSHING SOUND, we are abruptly spit from the womb.

As our vision adjusts, the WHITE LIGHT DIMINISHES until we can make out colors, and shapes, and...

2 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- DAY

MAINTAIN POV: The faces of TWO MASKED DOCTORS lean in, serious and intent. OUR HEARTBEAT bangs rapidly. The male doctor, CLIVE SPILLAR, leans forward with pliers and wire cutters.

CLIVE
Vitals?

The female doctor, ELSA KAST, glances at a bank of monitors.

ELSA
Stable.

CLIVE
Severing support.

Clive leans in, squeezing hard on his instruments, as though cutting through an especially resilient umbilical cord. OUR HEARTBEAT slows. Subsiding. The room grows dim.

ELSA
Dropping. Dropping fast!

A HIGH-PITCHED WHINE sounds from the panel. Clive jerks his head to the monitors, annoyed. Elsa's eyes flit above her mask to the vital signs, to us, back to Clive. Clive leans in, slapping with a rubber-gloved hand.

CLIVE
C'mon... spark!
(desperate)
BREATHE, DAMN IT!

A SUDDEN CHOKING SOUND. GURGLING. And a GASPING FOR AIR. The sharp whine goes silent. We are SUCKING IN our first breaths. Our vision BRIGHTENS again.

The Doctors relax. Clive shakes his head, delighted. He presses a stethoscope BENEATH OUR LINE OF VISION.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Respiration stable.

Elsa gathers us up in a white towel.

ELSA
No obvious physical discrepancies.

As Elsa swings us around the lab towards a dome-covered incubator, we see that we have been birthed not from a mother, but from the latex mouth of some ARTIFICIAL BIRTHING MACHINE.

CLIVE
Perfect formation. Identical.

Elsa places us gently into the crib-like incubator and closes the dome over our head.

3 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - CORRIDOR -- DAY

Clive and Elsa have removed their masks and surgical headdress as they wheel the pod-like incubator down a long corridor of blandly-colored walls and stultifying florescent lighting.

They are in their late twenties, much younger than we might have guessed.

Clive is tall with spiky hair and a hunched, wiry grace. He's the kind of high school nerd who managed to morph into college cool, without ever realizing he was once a nerd.

Elsa, sports a tangled brunette mane accented by a single streak of white hair. She's a firecracker, brimming with the self-confidence that comes from a lifetime of being the smartest girl in the room.

CLIVE
Maybe we should wait.

ELSA
They need to imprint.

4 INT. STERILIZED CHAMBER -- DAY

The door opens and Clive and Elsa roll in the incubator. The room is small, but clean, containing a single caged animal.

Clive opens the cage door, releasing a BIZARRELY UNIDENTIFIABLE CREATURE. Elsa captures the moment with a SMALL CAMCORDER.

CLIVE

Ginger... Come meet your little brother.

GINGER crawls tentatively to the threshold of her cage. She has the stance of a small primate, though her face is almost pig-like. A long, lizard tail extends from the base of her spine. Her skin is pale and pink, a collection of bizarre orifices decorate her back.

Despite her predominantly monstrous appearance, there is something sweet, almost Buddha-like about her countenance.

Clive breaks the seal on the dome and reaches to gather up the NEWBORN HYBRID. This is our first view of FRED, a smaller version of Ginger. Eyes blinking and bewildered.

Ginger cranes her neck, sniffing the air, watching the incubator with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation.

ELSA

Go ahead.

Clive places Fred gently down on the floor near Ginger, and steps back. Ginger's eyes narrow, nostrils flare.

She ABRUPTLY JOLTS FORWARD, lunging at the newborn with a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREECH. Elsa GASPS. Clive prepares to step in...

But Ginger does nothing. Merely sniffs at the newborn, nudging it with her nose. Fred emits a PURRING GURGLE.

Clive relaxes.

Excited, Ginger lets out a SHORT SQUAWK, then continues her gentle smelling inspection. A probing tongue cleans the area around Fred's eyes. Elsa sighs with relief, crouching in for a close-up.

CLIVE

Suppose we'd been wrong?

Elsa looks startled, as though confused by the question.

ELSA

We'd find out why. Then we'd fix it.

5 INT. HYPERSPACE LOUNGE -- DAY

Pulsing music, a trendy dance club.

A CORK POPS, sending a jet of champagne above Clive's head. Elsa rushes to catch as much as she can in a glass.

This is our first glimpse of Clive and Elsa in hip, civilian clothes. Surrounding them are THEIR POSSE OF A DOZEN ADMIRING COLLEAGUES, all dressed to party.

Elsa pours the champagne into a row of glasses and distributes them among the staff. She holds her own aloft in a toast.

ELSA

To us! The enzyme-cleaving, helix-fusing, protein-yielding hormone jockeys of frontier project 239-C.

CHEERS. CLINKING glasses. A burly techie, RODNEY, gives Clive a bone-crushing hug.

RODNEY

You did it. Again! No one can call you one-hit wonders now!

Clive, blushing with humility, slides his arm around Elsa.

CLIVE

We all did it. All of us.

6 INT. HYPERSPACE LOUNGE - BOOTH -- SOON AFTER

Elsa pulls Clive into a booth away from the action.

ELSA

Ready to bust loose?

She draws a liquid-filled dropper from a vial.

CLIVE

That some of your home brew?

ELSA

(a challenge)
Afraid?

CLIVE

After last time. Yeah. I am.

ELSA

I decreased the c-AMP formations.
It'll be a smooth ride. Promise.

She squeezes a few pearls of liquid onto her tongue. She looks at him daring. Clive relents. Plants his mouth over hers, sharing in the dose.

CLIVE

Things are going to get weird now,
aren't they?

Elsa nods enthusiastically.

7 INT. HYPERSPACE LOUNGE -- LATER

The drug has kicked in. The night explodes with NOISE and COLORS as the dance floor surges. Clive and Elsa weave through the crowd. At every step, co-workers, friends, and acquaintances shake their hands, pat their backs, kiss cheeks, showering them with nonstop affirmation.

Elsa pulls Clive onto the dance floor. They bounce in time with the wave of other bodies but somehow see only each other. This is a portrait of two young people deeply in love.

Clive leans in for another kiss...

But is stopped short by a SLICKLY DRESSED MAN.

SLICK MAN

Excuse me. I'm sorry.

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

SLICK MAN (CONT'D)

We have to talk. I'm sure you have lots of people approaching you, but please, please consider me.

CLIVE

Who are you?

SLICK MAN

I'm an agent.

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

SLICK MAN (CONT'D)

I'm talking major publishing deals... movies... Internet... Total convergence. Call me!

Clive and Elsa turn to each other. Burst out laughing. They quickly spin out of his orbit. Strobe lights give way to the jabbing precision of colored lasers.

Clive's attention is drawn to a BALD MAN on the edge of the dance floor, conspicuously still among the gyrating mob.

BALD MAN

Clive? Elsa?

Elsa frowns. This is starting to get annoying. Still smiling, the Bald Man fumbles with something under his coat...

He pulls out a short-muzzled shot gun.

BALD MAN (CONT'D)
Stop playing God!

He calmly BLASTS A SHOT into Clive's chest. Clive flies backwards, collapsing onto the dance floor. Before Elsa can react, he unloads a round into her as well.

SCREAMS. The music cuts out as the crowd scatters.

The Bald Man turns quickly and runs for the fire escape. Rodney, the burly techie, tackles him before he can get away. He slams the man's head on the dance floor repeatedly.

RODNEY
What the fuck! What the fuck!

LAUGHTER stops him. Heads crane to see Elsa and Clive struggling up on their elbows. Clive, laughing, holds up one hand, dripping with blood.

CLIVE
Hey Rodney...

Clive dabs his tongue with his bloody forefinger.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
God plays paintball!

Rodney lets the Bald Man's head drop to the floor with a THUD.

8 EXT. NOVAPHORM LABS - PARKING LOT -- DAY

A satellite lab for parent company Novaphorm BioResearch, the building is a smallish, nondescript edifice in a banal industrial park.

A vintage muscle car ROARS into a private parking space. It stands out glaringly against the modern compacts and sedans.

Clive and Elsa pour out and hustle up to the entrance. Clive swipes a key card. CLICK. It unlocks. He pulls on the door with a pained grimace.

ELSA
(teasing)
Still tender?

Clive rubs his rib cage where he'd been shot at the party.

CLIVE
Give it another week. You?

ELSA

Fabulous.

She laughs, gallantly holds the door open for him.

9 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - MAIN LAB -- DAY

An industrial lab. Nothing fancy, just bare-bones tech.

Elsa hovers over a workstation. Popping candy into her mouth from a box of NERDS, she scrolls down an on-screen spreadsheet of tabulated stats. She addresses a LAB TECHNICIAN.

ELSA

See if you can correlate byproduct
emission against temperature.

The Technician nods and rifles through a stack of print-outs.

Elsa trots past a shelf of large specimen jars. Like a disturbing carnival exhibition, they are an inventory of past splicing attempts. Each appears to represent a successive wrung up the evolutionary ladder. And each is labelled with the name of a glamorous movie star: Cary Grant, Liz Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, Gregory Peck... *TECHNICALS*

...Ending at two cages: Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire.

Clive has their newest hybrid, Fred, running on a treadmill, his body covered with wired sensors. Ginger watches from her cage.

ELSA (CONT'D)

How's handsome?

CLIVE

The perfect nine-day-old. Stronger
than Ginger. A little less skittish.

ELSA

He's been socialized. Ginger never
had that.

CLIVE

What?

ELSA

A parent figure.

The door opens with a DING of security clearance. Heads turn to the entrance of WILLIAM BARLOW, 45, Senior Project Manager. His demeanor begs for a measure of respect that nobody cares to deliver.

BARLOW

Hello people.

He cocks his head at Fred who excretes a green, stringy substance from one of six puckering orifices on his back.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

He's looking...
(swallowing revulsion)
...Beautiful.

CLIVE

What can we do for you, Bill?

BARLOW

Well, for one thing. You can stop getting yourselves shot at.

CLIVE

That sounds like a plan.

ELSA

Abolish world ignorance. Got it.
I'll put that on my action-item list.

BARLOW

It would help if you'd stop waving red flags at the religious right.

Barlow holds up a copy of Nature. Inside is an article on Clive and Elsa, photos of young Ginger.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

(reading)
"If God didn't want us to explore His domain, why'd He give us the map?"

ELSA

Bumper-sticker wisdom.

BARLOW

Yes, very clever. But not smart.

CLIVE

Distinction noted. That it?

BARLOW

Don't forget about that meeting with Joan next week. She has some big ideas she wants to run by us.

(beat)

Until then. Please. Stay out of the spot light.

Clive and Elsa share a glance. A silent agreement.

ELSA

All right. We'll try.

BARLOW

Great. I'll set it up for Tuesday.
Email you.

Barlow nods, mission accomplished, and turns to leave.

ELSA

Take it easy.

BARLOW

Nothing's easy. I'll settle for
painless.

After he's gone, Elsa smirks.

ELSA

(joking)
He just doesn't get it. We're goddamn
celebrities.

CLIVE

According to who?

Elsa's cell phone rings. She checks the caller ID, face
beaming.

ELSA

According to *Vanity Fair*!

10 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - MAIN LAB -- DAY

A BRIGHT FLASH!

The lab is swamped with photographic equipment, lights,
reflectors.

CLIVE

Are you sure about this?

CLOSE ON Clive and Elsa, looking a little nervous. But they
are excited too, as an OFF SCREEN PHOTOGRAPHER FLASHES away
and we hear the voice of MELINDA FINCH.

MELINDA (O.S.)

You don't want to be wearing lab
coats, do you?

ELSA

We'd like to be wearing *something*.

REVEAL: Clive and Elsa are posed against a shelf of machinery,
completely naked, but for fig leaves covering their genitals.
Adam and Eve of the new frontier.

Clive holds the youngest hybrid, Fred, in his arms. Elsa cradles Ginger, carefully positioned to shield her bare breasts from the camera.

FLASH. Startled by the light, Fred burrows his face into Clive's armpit. Ginger squirms out of Elsa's grip. She has to struggle to keep her breasts covered. The absurd chaos has both of them laughing.

11 INT. STERILIZED CHAMBER -- LATER - ACTUAL INTERVIEW

The photo shoot completed, Elsa and Clive sit more comfortably on lab stools, wrapped in thick, white bathrobes. Ginger and Fred are back in their cages.

MELINDA FINCH, 34, a stylish, smart-looking reporter from *Vanity Fair* magazine, continues the interview.

MELINDA

Your critics say you're violating the natural order of things.

ELSA

There was a time when it was considered "unnatural" to perform surgery. It was a sin to cut into the sacred vessel of the soul. I don't think many people would defend that position today.

CLIVE

We're working on new drugs to help people. Fact is, it's impossible to manufacture a more complex chemical incubator than a living organism.

MELINDA

But why combine such a disparate variety of animals? It's almost like you're playing mix and match, just to see what happens.

CLIVE

We've combined animals with chemical proclivities which we hope will benefit human beings.

MELINDA

Of course you would never be able to work directly with human genetic material.

Elsa hazards a glance at Clive.

ELSA
 We're waiting for the next
 Enlightenment.

12 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

A huge studio-style apartment. A fusion of DVD's, comics, movie posters and science paraphernalia, bacteria shakers, books and microscopes. This is what happens when bio-geeks get an income.

Clive noodles on a gleaming Fender Stratocaster while Elsa, planted on a giant bean bag, simultaneously sketches on a computer tablet and listens to a Dutch language tape on headphones.

ELSA
 (reciting)
 Waar is het ziekenhuis?... Where is
 the hospital?
 (beat)
 Mijn hals is verwond. ... My neck
 is injured.

Suddenly, Clive breaks into a BRAIN-BOILING SPEED METAL SOLO at top volume. And yet his face remains expressionless, his body still, as though the music were little more than auditory math.

Elsa puts the finishing touches on her sketch - Clive spliced with his guitar - and pulls off her headphones.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 Clive?

Clive doesn't hear her, lost in his sound trance.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 CLIVE!

The guitar stops, feedback buzzing. Clive looks up, like waking from a dream.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 Something bothering you?

CLIVE
 No. Why?

ELSA
 'Cause that's your, "pissed-off-at-authority-while-lost-in-an-existential-quandary-of-your-own-making" riff.

CLIVE
 Close.

Clive puts down the guitar. Grows serious.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

I was thinking, when we got shot. There was a second there when it really seemed like... this is the end.

(beat)

And all I could think about was one thing...

ELSA

How much you love me?

CLIVE

Well. That's always playing in the background...

ELSA

(mildly insulted)

Background?

CLIVE

But then I thought...

ELSA

(finishing)

...now we'll never know.

He takes this in.

CLIVE

We could die and never know.

She nods.

ELSA

But we do know. We know we can.

CLIVE

Not positively.

ELSA

Of course we do. Why can't we combine one more species?

CLIVE

Because humans are complicated.

Elsa stares at Clive, his despondency eating at her. She climbs on to him, straddling his lap, her face inches from his.

ELSA

If humans are so complicated, how come I always know what you're thinking?

CLIVE

I'm not thinking anything.

ELSA

You're thinking we can do this thing.
Not maybe. Not someday. Now.

CLIVE

They'd never let us find out.

ELSA

Nobody has to know. If we're just
splicing molecules.

CLIVE

(catching her train)
You're saying, *splice* it, but don't
grow it?

ELSA

Just for us.

Elsa kisses him sensuously on the mouth.

CLIVE

Just for us.

13 INT. SPLICING LAB -- NIGHT

It's after-hours on a Friday night. The staff have left for the weekend.

An empty sterile room is suddenly filled with pounding HYPER-BEAT MUSIC. Clive slides into view on a wheeled chair. Powers up a wall of hard-drives. They sound like jet engines winding up.

At a nearby table, with her back to him, Elsa prepares tiny vials with liquid samples.

CLIVE

What's the donor profile?

ELSA

Healthy female. Clean medical and
heredity. The usual.

Clive, his mind still in the microscope, is barely listening.

CLIVE

Dime a dozen.

ELSA

One in a million.

14 INT. MOLECULAR SPACE

The MUSIC continues under a microscopic view of Clive and Elsa's DNA splicing experiment. We watch small clusters of proteins and spiraling double-helices that constitute DNA molecules.

CLIVE (O.S.)

It's not working. They won't fuse.

We see breaks forming between the base pairs that link the coils, but as other open pairs slide into place, interfering helices bounce into the mix, preventing successful coupling.

ELSA (O.S.)

What enzyme are you using?

CLIVE (O.S.)

It's not the breakage. They're breaking fine.

ELSA (O.S.)

So?

Identically colored helices, through random bouncing chaos, actively resist bonding with other multicolored molecules. Instead, they merge again with their own kind.

CLIVE (O.S.)

They keep coupling with themselves.

15 INT. SPLICING LAB -- MORNING

Saturday morning light pours through the window. Clive raises a bloodshot eye from the microscope.

CLIVE

It's like they refuse.

ELSA

That's crazy. We'll make them.

CLIVE

What makes you so sure we can?

ELSA

Because Vanity Fair doesn't interview losers.

Clive takes a deep gulp of black coffee.

CLIVE

Sometimes I forget those basic scientific principals.

Clive fills a syringe with yet another enzyme, hunkering back into the work.

DISSOLVE TO:

It's night again. Clive studies the microscope's video-tap with a look of anticipation that quickly turns to disgust.

Elsa loads another CD into the boombox to keep them awake. The pounding techno music is replaced by A BIG BAND ERA SONG.

Clive looks up at Elsa. Something about the music is making her brain switch gears.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

We've been dancing to the wrong beat.

Elsa lights up, seeing the glow of inspiration in his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

Morning again. Elsa hands Clive a dropper of fluid.

ELSA

Try this.

Clive squeezes a few drops into the solution under the microscope. In a moment his head springs from the eyepiece.

CLIVE

It's happening.

Elsa stares into the eyepiece. Her mouth breaks into a startled grin.

ELSA

Why now?

Elsa is dancing on her toes.

CLIVE

We blocked the uricil.

ELSA

So... the feed is cut.

CLIVE

There's confusion.

ELSA

(understanding)

We blew the whistle!

CLIVE

Reintroduce! Restart the music!

Elsa quickly introduces two new fluids to the mix. They take quick turns looking into the eyepiece.

ELSA
(excited)
They're changing partners!

CLIVE
Everyone dances with everyone.

ELSA
(joyous)
You're Bob fucking Fosse!

Elsa slings her arms around Clive, spraying him with kisses.

16 INT. COLD ROOM -- DAY

Elsa and Clive wheel a Dewar tank labeled "H-50" into a walk-in freezer.

ELSA
All right. We put it on ice.

They linger by the door. A hint of temptation passes between them. It would be so easy to go the final step.

CLIVE
Until the next Enlightenment.

With a sigh, Elsa gently shuts the door.

DARKNESS.

17 EXT. NOVAPHORM - DOWNTOWN HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

We stare up at the downtown headquarters of Novaphorm Bio-Research Inc. It's a TOWERING STEEL MONUMENT to corporate anonymity.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Frankly, I think it's time to take
the project to the next stage.

18 INT. NOVAPHORM HEADQUARTERS - JOAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Clive, Elsa, and Barlow are seated in the spacious office of JOAN KLEIN, Novaphorm's new Chief of Operations. In her 50s, Joan is a well-starved bundle of cold candor.

JOAN
I've reviewed an analysis of the CD-
356 you extracted from Ginger and
(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

Fred. This could be a major breakthrough in cellular regeneration. The possibilities are staggering.

Clive and Elsa smile, flattered. Elsa pops candy into her mouth from a box of Nerds. Barlow casts her a disapproving glance which she happily ignores.

JOAN (CONT'D)

So... are we ready to push this thing to the next level?

Clive and Elsa can't believe what they're hearing. Visions of grand mutations dance in their heads.

CLIVE

Absolutely!

ELSA

We're really stoked about this new method of interrupting pair braids.

CLIVE

(bursting)

We think we can combine as many as six discreet species within...

Joan cuts them off with a subtle modulation of tone.

JOAN

Actually. No. You can't.

Elsa bites into a Nerd with a surprised CRUNCH. Joan leans back in her chair, suspending a chilly smile.

JOAN (CONT'D)

That's over now. That was Phase I. The H-40's... Ginger and Fred... were a phenomenal achievement. But early enzyme parsing suggests that we can plunge into Phase II well ahead of schedule. We couldn't be more thrilled.

CLIVE

(wary)

Phase II?

Joan leans forward, palms on her desk.

JOAN

We're shutting down the splicing facilities. Liquidating the hardware by the end of next quarter.

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

We're retooling the labs for intensive chemical analysis. If we can isolate the gene which produces the CD-356 protein, we can manufacture it synthetically.

(genuinely excited)

This is a potential goldmine.

Barlow nods his head, sharing in Joan's excitement.

ELSA

(shocked disbelief)

You're shutting us down?

BARLOW

We're not "shutting down" anyone. We're pushing forward to product stage.

JOAN

I know this probably feels like we're derailing what you're trying to achieve. But it's quite the opposite. This is a critical step forward.

(beat)

And you two will be leading the push.

ELSA

But... what we've done. Nobody's ever gone this far with recombinant DNA. We have the edge!

JOAN

Novaphorm saw incredible promise in your work. And they stepped up. We've been behind you all the way. But now it's time to deliver on that promise.

(beat)

We're in business to create drugs that will help people. Not zoological wonders.

19 INT. NOVAPHORM HEADQUARTERS - UNDERGROUND PARKING -- DAY

Elsa and Clive are pissed, their shoes CLATTERING LOUDLY through Novaphorm's underground parking facility.

ELSA

They're selling us out for the short money! Fuckers.

CLIVE

We should quit. There's always Hamilton-Splinter.

ELSA

Novaphorm owns the patent for Ginger and Fred. We'd lose everything. We can't start from scratch.

CLIVE

So, what? We just roll over and take it?

They arrive at their car. Elsa swings open the passenger-side door, enraged.

ELSA

I am not spending the next ten years of my life cracking cures for teen acne.

Elsa ducks into the car, slamming the door loudly.

20 INT. FREEZER -- DAY

WHOOSH! The freezer door opens, revealing the silhouetted form of Elsa.

21 INT. CORRIDOR -- DAY

Elsa wheels the Dewar tank containing the spliced human DNA down the corridor.

22 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- DAY

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

Clive watches from the sidelines.

CLIVE

El, cool the jets. You're not thinking straight.

Using a pair of tongs, she removes a plastic cartridge containing the spliced genetic material and snaps it into a servo-guided injection needle at the base of the artificial womb.

Elsa powers the machine up. ON A MONITOR: a hazy black and white view of the needle as it is guided with microscopic precision towards the capsule containing a single-cell egg.

Clive powers it down again.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You realize we could go to jail?

ELSA

Darwin sat on his theory of evolution for nearly 20 years. He nearly lost his place in history because he was scared of what people would think.

Color drains from Clive's face. He swallows hard.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Are we going to lose our place in history, Clive?

Elsa raises her eyebrows. She glances at the glowing red button. Clive follows her gaze to the crimson-lit plastic. His mouth tightens.

Clive stares at her for a long moment. Then slowly, his hand reaches out, takes Elsa's and together they press the button.

With a soft MECHANICAL WHIRL, the syringe plunges its point into the egg.

She puts her arms around him and together they watch entranced as the capsule dissolves in the fluid environment.

23 INT. MOLECULAR SPACE - EGG -- ACCELERATED TIME

At the MOLECULAR LEVEL we see an extremely accelerated view of the beginnings of life. DNA is infused into the cell. Cells multiply, spawning new cells and morphogens, which in turn, beget variants of specialized cell-types.

It is a dazzling FIREWORKS DISPLAY of chemical processes -- creating the early framework of a living organism.

24 INT. MAIN LAB -- DAY

Fred and Ginger's cages rest on a table. Fred has grown almost to Ginger's size, suggesting a passage of time.

Clive checks the readings on clipboards hooked to the bars while Rodney, the burley lab technician, changes their water.

RODNEY

Um... Clive. Is everything okay?

Clive looks up, surprised.

CLIVE

What? Yeah. Why?

RODNEY

Nothing. I just. All this Phase II talk.

(MORE)

RODNEY (CONT'D)

(beat)

And you and Elsa have been so...
busy with something.

Clive hangs a clipboard back on the cage and shrugs dismissively.

CLIVE

Things are under control here. So
we're looking ahead.

(smiling)

Always looking ahead.

25 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- DAY

Elsa orbits the gestation chamber, recording stats.

She calls up an ultrasound feed. The murky image of a shape that in no way approximates a normal fetus appears. It pulses rhythmically in its liquid environment: THROB-THROB, THROB-THROB, THROB-THROB... THROB... THR...OB... TH....

It grows unexpectedly still.

Elsa's brow creases with worry. Is it all right? She chews nervously on her pen.

ELSA

Come on.

THROB ...THROB-THROB, THROB-THROB, THROB-THROB, the pulse resumes.

Elsa sighs with relief. Her creation is safe. For now. She turns to a calendar and marks off one more day. Still several weeks to go before the scheduled delivery date, circled in red marker.

26 INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa dine in an upscale restaurant with deliberately down-scale affectations. Elsa, still edgy, taps her fingers on the table with deliberate impatience.

CLIVE

You okay?

ELSA

Starving.

He hands her a gilded menu.

CLIVE

Order away.

ELSA
 (reviewing menu)
 Great. Twenty choices, two without
 meat.

CLIVE
 There's fish.

ELSA
 How long have you known me?

CLIVE
 I'm just saying. Lots of vegetarians
 eat fish.

ELSA
 I'm not vegetarian. I just hate
 meat.

CLIVE
 Your mother force you to eat liver
 or something?

Elsa's menu flops down hard on the table. She glares at
 Clive until he feels the burn of her upset.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
 (sheepish)
 I guess I kinda don't know... what
 the sore spots are.

ELSA
 With her it's all one big sore spot.

CLIVE
 Sorry. Really.

Elsa props her menu back up, hiding her face.

27 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM-- EVENING

Elsa pulls off her shirt, still distant and troubled.

Clive, already stripped to his boxers and t-shirt, sidles up
 behind her. He gently kisses her neck.

CLIVE
 Hey.

ELSA
 Hey.

He wraps his arms around her waist. Elsa's tension melts
 slightly.

CLIVE
Remember us?

ELSA
Uh-huh.

CLIVE
We love us.

Elsa smiles as he continues to kiss her neck, hands exploring. She's coming around.

ELSA
Yes. We're very fond of us.

Elsa turns and kisses him on the mouth. She suddenly takes charge, pushing him until he falls back on the bed.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Get naked. I'm gonna show you some magic tricks.

Elsa gives him a mischievous smile, brimming with hungry sexuality. She tip-toes out of the room. Clive peels off his shirt and calls after her.

CLIVE
Forget it this time! Take a chance.

28 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Elsa opens the medicine cabinet where an entire shelf is dedicated to a variety of prophylactics: condoms, diaphragm, spermicidal jelly. She takes one of each.

ELSA
(calling back)
Don't you think we're taking enough chances these days?

The sound of a STACCATO BEEPING. Elsa turns to the door. Clive stands there in his boxers, holding a blinking pager.

ELSA (CONT'D)
What's that?

The look on Clive's face is excited beyond sex. She knows instantly what this means.

ELSA (CONT'D)
But it's too soon.

29 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa are poised over the artificial womb, dressed for the occasion: surgical smocks, rubber gloves, face masks.

The machine BELCHES and GROANS. Fluid spurts from its cavity of chrome and rubber. Clive glances at the message on the LED: "PURGING".

FLOOSH! The machine spews more fluid. Louder GROANING. But nothing emerges.

ELSA
Something's wrong!

The machine contracts again, a wave of fluid flushes out. Nothing else.

CLIVE
The pressure will kill it.

Elsa hits a button on the side of the machine. The PULSING GROAN winds down to a soft hum. The flushing of fluid subsides and the machine's orifice dilates. Elsa wedges her arm inside. Clive watches, apprehensive.

ELSA
Come on... come on!
(up to her elbow)
Slippery. I can't...

Elsa finally seems to get a grip when her arm is abruptly yanked deeper into the machine. Her chin bangs against the hull.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Owww!!! WOW!

CLIVE
What is it?!

Tears well in Elsa's terrified eyes.

ELSA
It's biting me!

CLIVE
Hold on!

ELSA
AAAAaa! MAKE IT STOP!

Clive snaps into action. He fumbles with a series of hand-bolts along the hull. With the last clasp released, he's able to open the entire chassis, releasing a torrent of viscous fluid and revealing...

A DARK BLOB OF FLESH with a long serpentine tail wrapped around Elsa's wrist.

Responding to the sudden light, the FLESHY BULK releases Elsa's hand and rolls to the floor with a wet SLAP.

It spasms and writhes on the spot like a horrid featureless abortion. The stinger-tipped tail whips about frantically.

Clive rips the dome off the incubator and drops it over the creature, effectively trapping it.

Meanwhile, Elsa's hand is SWELLING and BLEEDING inside the torn rubber glove. She pulls it away to reveal horrible lacerations where she has been stung repeatedly.

CLIVE

Hold still.

But Elsa is losing control of her motor functions. Her mouth contorts strangely, her eyes roll. She falls to her knees, then onto her back, convulsing on the hard tile floor.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Elsa?!

Clive ties the rubber glove around her arm, cutting circulation, then bolts to a FIRST-AID CABINET. With surprisingly steady hands, he jams an epi-pen between his teeth, then fills a huge syringe from a bottle of clear fluid.

Clive drops to his knees at Elsa's side. By now she is completely immobile, eyes rolled back in her head, barely perceptible shaking in one leg. She's stopped breathing.

Though his hands and movements are steady, Clive's face is awash with terror. He jabs the epi-pen into her shoulder.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Hang in there! I've got you!

Clive feels for a spot between two ribs, takes a deep breath, then plunges the large syringe into her chest. He watches desperately as nothing happens.

Then, abruptly, Elsa's lungs burst to life. She is GASPING for breath. Her irises roll back where they belong. She grabs his arm, chest heaving.

ELSA

What. What...was that?

Clive looks to the creature trapped under the overturned incubator.

CLIVE

A mistake.

30 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER/OBSERVATION ROOM -- NIGHT

The creature has been placed in a small hermetically sealed room. IT IS UTTERLY INHUMAN - resembling nothing that can be considered a functional animal form. It spasms on the naked floor.

Clive and Elsa study it through glass in an adjacent room crammed with medical monitoring equipment. Elsa's arm hangs in an improvised sling, hand bandaged.

CLIVE
We should get you to a hospital.

ELSA
I'm fine.

CLIVE
It could have... we don't know...

ELSA
We should know. We made it.

Clive and Elsa just stare at this botched effort, the burden of failure weighing heavily on them.

31 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- DAWN

The pale light of dawn creeps into the room. Elsa is sound asleep while Clive tosses and turns. Finally, Clive shakes Elsa's leg, startling her out of sleep.

CLIVE
Do you think it's in pain?

ELSA
Huh? What?

CLIVE
Do you think it's in pain?

ELSA
Why would it be in pain?

CLIVE
Because it's not formed right.

ELSA
That doesn't mean it's in pain.

CLIVE
Yeah. It probably does. Of course it does.

Clive stares at the ceiling. Elsa isn't sure how to respond.

MAKE THIS
THE POINT
OF THE
SC.

WHAT
WENT
WRONG.
WHY IS IT
GOT A
STINGERS
?

THIS IS
GREAT
+ HIGHLIGHTS
THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN C + E

ELSA
 Alright. Maybe.

CLIVE
 I'm going to kill it.

Elsa is more fully awake. She props herself up on an elbow.

ELSA
 There's still a lot we can learn.
 (beat)
 Find out how close we came. To
 something sustainable.

Clive whips back the sheets, sitting up. He's clearly upset.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 It's okay... Clive, it's all right.

CLIVE
 It's not all right. It's wrong.

32 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER/OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

Clive and Elsa enter the containment room. They have taken the precaution of wearing full-body hermetic suits with helmets, but the Hybrid lays motionless and black.

ELSA
 Is it dead?

Clive takes a pair of tongs and gently prods the carcass. Nothing. Dead as dirt.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 Well... it's not in pain now.

CLIVE
 I'll bag it.

Clive passes through to the OBSERVATION ROOM, the door shutting behind him.

Elsa bends down for a closer look at the creature. It's glued to the spot by a sticky secretion. With gloved hands, she peels it from the ground and rolls it over. She sees that there is a gaping hole in its underbelly. It's just a hollow exoskeleton.

ELSA
 (to herself)
 Empty...

The realization dawns on her that whatever shed this skin might still be alive.

Something skitters noiselessly across the floor behind her.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive?

OBSERVATION ROOM

Clive pulls a haz-mat bag from a drawer.

CONTAINMENT CHAMBER

Now seriously afraid, Elsa looks around the room. The limited view afforded by her helmet forces her to clock her entire body. The room appears empty.

She slowly rises to her feet, and turns...

RIGHT INTO THE FACE OF THE CREATURE, which hangs suspended upside down from the molding in the ceiling.

Elsa SCREAMS and jumps back.

The creature drops from its perch, landing awkwardly on the ground. It rights itself on unsteady feet.

Elsa reacts, getting her first good look at the thing:

The Hybrid has morphed into a small, bald, female child. A profoundly malformed child. Its eyes are set on the sides of its head. Arms are absent. Legs are triple-jointed ending with prehensile feet. The long tail with a barbed tip is the only feature it has retained from its previous incarnation.

The overall package seems incomplete; even the skin has not fully formed, leaving an irregular lesion which vertically bisects its entire body from head to crotch.

The creature hisses and whips its venom-tipped tail.

ELSA (CONT'D)

CLIVE!

OBSERVATION ROOM

Clive turns to the window. From his angle he can only see the abject terror in Elsa's face.

CLIVE

What's the matter?

ELSA

It's alive!

Clive cranes his neck, sees the creature finally, between Elsa and the door, her only way out.

CLIVE

Jesus...

He is about to move to enter but Elsa warns:

ELSA (O.S.)

Don't! It's right there!

She's right. There's no telling what it might do if he were to burst in suddenly.

CONTAINMENT CHAMBER

The creature becomes increasingly agitated by Elsa's presence.

She shuffles a careful step sideways.

The Hybrid bolts at her. Elsa reflexively covers herself.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Clive watches, helpless as the Hybrid tears clumsily over Elsa's body, literally bouncing off the wall before sprawling into a corner of the room.

CLIVE

Get out! I'm going to ~~Go~~^{GAS} the room!

CONTAINMENT CHAMBER

Elsa gathers herself. She has a clear path to the door now. She sees the Hybrid cowering in the corner, senses its fear.

ELSA

Wait... Don't kill it!

CLIVE

(over the intercom)

Elsa, get out! I'm hitting the gas!
In three...

Elsa brings herself down to the Hybrid's level. The Hybrid opens its child-like mouth, revealing tiny, sharp teeth and releasing a HORRIFIC SCREECH.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(over the intercom)

Two...

Elsa is clearly disturbed by the force of this outburst. The Screech HOLDS ITS NOTE for a long moment, before changing in timbre, slowly fading into a MOURNFUL WAIL - like the cry of a bawling baby.

ELSA

(near whisper)

It's okay. I won't hurt you.

GUMMERS. — TEETH!
GROWING
IN. SOMETHING
TO FANG (W).
CATCH.

CLIVE
 (over intercom)
 One...

ELSA
 Clive! I said don't!

Elsa quickly rips off her helmet.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Clive can't believe that Elsa's taken off her helmet. His hand is on a valve, ready to terminate the creature. He leans into the intercom.

CLIVE
 Elsa. Put on your helmet, damn it!

CONTAINMENT CHAMBER

An extraordinary thing happens: At the sight of Elsa's exposed face, the hybrid calms. It's as if the creature recognizes something familiar in her.

ELSA
 It's imprinting.

CLIVE
 (over intercom)
 It's dangerous

But Elsa is too caught up in the magic of this moment to listen to common sense.

ELSA
 (to hybrid)
 I'm not going to hurt you.

Elsa waddle/walks closer to the creature. It cocks its head to one side in nervous, flitting bird-like movements. But it no longer seems as frightened.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 You're really something, aren't you.

Elsa removes the glove from her unharmed hand and gingerly extends it for the hybrid.

The creature gives it a few cautionary sniffs. Elsa's scent seems to meet its approval. It blinks sideways with nictitating eyelids and takes a cautious hop forward.

Elsa smiles.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 That's it.

Suddenly, the creature's face curls into a snarl. It hisses and its tail flares out defensively. Elsa reacts, waddling backwards, confused until she realizes the creature is actually reacting to...

CLIVE

...Behind her, masked and wielding a metal prod like a weapon. He grabs her and forcibly pulls her from the room, quickly shutting and locking the door behind them.

The creature stares after them frightened and confused.

33 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Clive is furious.

CLIVE

Are you crazy?! Are you trying to get yourself killed?!

ELSA

I had the situation under control.

CLIVE

You're forgetting why we came here.

ELSA

We can't do that now. Look at it!

Clive can't believe what he's hearing.

CLIVE

So what!

Elsa virtually hip-checks him away from the panel, and gets her hands on a series of valves.

ELSA

Why kill it if we can just knock it out. Find out what we've got.

Elsa turns on a combination of gas valves.

34 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- MORNING

Vents open in the walls. The HISS of gas. The creature sniffs the air, cowers from the encroaching gas.

35 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

Clive observes Elsa watching coolly as the creature flutters around the room like a butterfly in a killing jar, until it finally succumbs to the fumes.

36 INT. MRI CHAMBER -- LATER

The Hybrid breathes with a deep, sharp wheezing as it lies in forced slumber in a cylinder-shaped MRI MACHINE.

A LOUD HUM AND FLASHING LIGHTS as the machine scans her anatomy.

37 INT. ANALYSIS LAB -- CONTINUOUS

Images from the MRI play out on a computer screen.

The Hybrid lays strapped to a table while Elsa prods at its tail. Clive can't suppress his amazement.

CLIVE

This is absolutely unbelievable! I don't know what half of this is.

ELSA

Must have been some rogue elements. Junk genes pushing through.

Elsa presses a gloved-thumb beneath its tip and a SHARP SPIKE protrudes from a hood of skin. It drips with a sticky goo that Elsa smears onto a slide.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Some kind of self-defense mechanism.

CLIVE

Or attack venom.

ELSA

None of her animal components have predatory characteristics.

CLIVE

Well... there's the human element.

Elsa gives him a wry smirk. Clive shifts his attention to the computer output from the MRI. A series of cross-section X-rays flicker on the screen.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

What are these dark splotches?

Elsa looks up from examining blood samples. On the screen, Clive points out two jet-black masses in the chest cavity.

ELSA

Lungs?

CLIVE

No...

(MORE)

CLIVE (CONT'D)
 (indicating lighter
 patches)
 These are the lungs.

ELSA
 Tumors?

CLIVE
 Guess we'll find out in the autopsy.

Elsa stares at the Hybrid, not at all happy about the idea of killing it.

ELSA
 It's not in pain anymore.

Clive's eyes narrow.

CLIVE
 We proved we can do it. That was
 the point right?

Elsa pulls him over to the table where her microscope sits. She points to the video tap: a microscopic view of rapidly dividing cells.

ELSA
 See that? It must have developed
 the Ambysotma growth gene.

CLIVE
 It's aging fast. Really fast.

ELSA
 Days within a matter of minutes.

CLIVE
 At least.

ELSA
 This thing is going to die soon,
 anyway. But in the meantime, we'll
 be able to witness its complete life
 cycle. In compressed time.
 (beat)
 We'll never have an opportunity like
 this again.

Clive bites his lip. She's playing him perfectly. He glances at the Hybrid.

CLIVE
 So it's dying?

ELSA
 She's dying. All by herself.

NEW CLIVE IS
 NOT ACTING
 LIKE A
 HUMANITARIAN.
 HIS MOTIVATIONS
 SEEM MIXED
 HE MUST BE
 FEELING THE
 IMPACT OF
 WHAT THEY
 HAVE
 DONE.

The phrase strikes Clive. This is the first time Elsa has referred to the Hybrid as "she".

38 INT. MAIN LAB -- DAY

New equipment is being installed for the breakdown and analysis of chemicals. ELSA watches absently, munching on Nerds.

SANDRA, a lab tech, swabs samples of Ginger's dorsal excretions, while Clive pulls a blood sample. The little creature shakes under the needle.

SANDRA
Serotonin level's been up these days.

CLIVE
What do you mean "these days"? How long?

Sandra is taken aback by Clive's irritation.

SANDRA
Since last week. Maybe longer.

CLIVE
Jesus. Why hasn't anyone told us?

SANDRA
(confused)
I e-mailed the reports. Here.

Sandra hands Clive a file.

CLIVE
Sorry. I guess I missed them.

He leafs through stats, then hands them to Elsa who's attention seems to be elsewhere.

ELSA
Looks fine. Can you finish up here?

Clive is annoyed by her lack of focus, but doesn't want to make anything of it in front of his crew.

CLIVE
Sure.

Elsa leaves Clive to attend to Fred and Ginger.

39 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- DAY

The Hybrid is now the size of a toddler and harnessed by a three foot lead to the leg of a floor-bolted workbench.

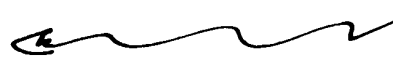
THE VOICE OF MORALITY.

Dexter...
WE DON'T
CARE ABOUT
THESE PEOPLE.

Need the
threat of
EXPOSURE.

Set up
some kind
of dramatic
conflict
Dex,
that gets
played out.

Does Dex set
up an
escape
route &
then



A plastic container has been taped on as a protective cover for her tail. She scratches at it absently while Clive attempts to feed her a bowl of wet green mush with a turkey-baster.

Elsa watches, talking into a hand-held voice recorder.

ELSA
(into recorder)
We've got H-50 on a diet of
chlorophyll, roughage, bean curd,
and enriched starch.

As quickly as Clive tries to jam the baster into the Hybrid's mouth, she either turns her head or spits the food out.

ELSA (CONT'D)
(into recorder)
She seems resistant to feeding, though
her rapid growth should generate a
proportionate appetite.

Clive tries to squeeze a little more goo into the Hybrid's stubborn mouth. He receives a green blob to the forehead for his efforts.

CLIVE
We're going to have to do this with
a drip feed.

ELSA
She'll just rip it out.

The hybrid sniffs the air, sensing something. Suddenly, her left leg lashes out at Elsa with a SHOCKINGLY FAST KICK. Both she and Clive recoil. Then they see it: The Hybrid's tiny, hand-like foot has snatched the box of Nerds from Elsa's lab coat. She is gobbling the candy like a starved animal.

Elsa watches amazed, an idea forming.

40 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- SOON AFTER

Elsa crumbles several nerds between two spoons, then mixes them into the Hybrid's mush.

She holds the spoon up to the Hybrid's mouth. This time nostrils flair and she happily wolfs the food down. She bites down hard on the spoon.

Clive now commandeers the voice recorder.

CLIVE
Tracking her feeding habits, we've
determined that the H-50 craves high-
sucrose foodstuffs.

Elsa wipes a little goo from the side of the Hybrid's mouth. A long tongue darts out, quite precisely cleaning Elsa's finger. She gives Elsa what might be considered a smile. Elsa stifles her own smile and continues the feeding.

41 INT. NOVAPHORM HEADQUARTERS - BARLOW'S OFFICE -- DAY

Clive sits with Barlow in his downtown office. Three small armchairs have been jammed into a corner of the room near his desk. One is empty.

BARLOW

And Elsa is...?

CLIVE

At the lab. Holding things together.

BARLOW

Mmm. Well. To be honest, I'm glad to have a word alone with you.

Clive looks uncomfortable.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

I know Elsa's not exactly thrilled about jumping into Phase II.

CLIVE

It was a bit of a shock. To everyone.

Barlow leans in close, as though the walls might be listening.

BARLOW

The truth is. If we don't start projecting profits, big profits, soon... Novaphorm's in serious trouble.

Clive looks genuinely startled.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

Phase II is not an option. It's all we've got.

Barlow grabs Clive's hand, like a terminal patient imploring his doctor for a cure.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

Can you make the delivery dates?

CLIVE

We're doing our best.

BARLOW

I'm counting you. Both of you.

CLIVE'S REACTION.

42 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- DAY

The Hybrid is a little larger than when we last saw her. Elsa gives her a routine physical examination, while speaking into her voice recorder.

ELSA
 (into recorder)
 H-50's physiological anomalies
 continue to emerge. Swelling in the
 Latissimus Dorsi and Teris Major and
 Minor muscles.

Elsa notices pronounced bruising and swelling from the rib cage along to the back. Her expression betrays sympathy but her voice remains clinical.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 (into recorder)
 It's possible that aspects of her
 anatomy may be ill-suited to emerging
 mutations...

Elsa winces at the painfully tender look of the flesh. When she prods the bruises, the Hybrid writhes from her touch.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 (into recorder)
 The overall structure could become
 unstable leading to malignancies
 and...

Elsa can't finish the sentence.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 It's too soon to make any assumptions.

She clicks off her voice recorder and gathers her papers to leave.

The Hybrid looks alarmed. She hops over Elsa, jerks short when she reaches the end of her lead. Then cries out, her alien tones settling into the all too familiar timber of a human baby.

Elsa regards her, doing her best to maintain cool composure.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 I'll be back tomorrow.

Conflicted, she turns to go. A SICK, TEARING SOUND and a SCREAM.

Elsa spins around in time to see the hybrid's back spasm, muscles twisting, flesh stretching grotesquely as if something inside were trying to break out.

It looks as though her body were spontaneously rebelling against its very existence.

RIIIIP! A slender girlish arm erupts from her side. Bleeding and dripping with shreds of skin, it lashes out and grips Elsa's leg with two bony fingers and an opposing thumb.

Elsa instinctively yanks her leg but it holds on tight.

The Hybrid CRIES OUT LOUDER, possibly as much from emotional heartache as physical pain. And another lanky arm bursts out of the other side of the bruised fleshy part of her back.

Elsa stares down at the Hybrid, freaked-out by the bloody appendages desperately clawing her pant leg.

Her resistance melts and she finds herself bending into the gooey embrace. The creature's cries trail off into hiccupping breaths of relief. Elsa surrenders to an irresistible drive to comfort. She hugs the hybrid.

43 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

THE BEDROOM is dark. We can tell by Clive's deep breathing that he's sound asleep, even as he rolls over, slinging his arm across Elsa's side of the bed. She's not there.

44 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT - HALL -- NIGHT

Elsa is carefully digging musty boxes out of a hallway closet, making a point of not waking Clive.

She pulls out the one she was looking for. It's labeled "Private... Elly's Stuff" in childish scrawl.

She opens it with a mixture of excitement and dread. Inside are an assortment of child's toys. One in particular draws her attention... a BARBIE DOLL circa 1980. Memories flood.

Something else catches her eye. She digs in deeper, finds a dog-eared photo. It's a picture of a five year old Elsa and her Mother standing by the family farm - a stern woman with an arm protectively wrapped around her daughter.

45 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- DAY

Elsa checks the bandages at the extraction points where the Hybrid's new appendages erupted from her back.

The creature seems beguiled by these new aspects of her body. She waves and flexes them with delighted bird-like CHORTLES. She reaches out tentatively, stroking Elsa's curls.

ELSA
You like that? You like hair?
(suddenly remembering)
Oh, hey, I found something for you.

A bunch of teefs.
Hybrid picks Barbie.

Elsa pulls out her Barbie doll and brings it close to the Hybrid's face.

ELSA (CONT'D)
(in a breathy Barbie voice)
Hi there. I'm Barbie. I like cute guys, fast cars and funny little creatures like you.

Elsa passes it to the Hybrid.

ELSA (CONT'D)
She was my secret friend. Just like you.

The Hybrid grips it clumsily in her new hands and stares with rigid concentration. She strokes the hair, completely entranced.

ELSA (CONT'D)
That's right. She has hair too.

Elsa watches wistfully. There's something a little sad about this bald creature so fascinated by hair.

ELSA watches Hybrid in her hands.

46 EXT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Unseen by Elsa, Clive watches the scene through the one-way mirror. He is clearly troubled by the bond developing between Elsa and the Hybrid. He can hear her soothing words play through the intercom.

She cannot know Hybrid creature falls asleep.

ELSA
(tinny)
You can keep her. She's yours now.

47 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - LUNCH ROOM -- DAY

Clive and Elsa sit alone in the lunch room, which is little more than a few pressed-board tables and a coffee machine. Elsa is excited, almost manic.

ELSA
I think it's a form of hypometamorphosis. At this point, there's no telling what she might become. And it's not just her body. Her intelligence is developing fast. She figures things out.

* EMPHASIZE THE LOW TECH LOW BUDGET NATURE OF THE LABS.

CLIVE

We have to be careful not to project too much onto her.

ELSA

It's not like that. She's not just a collection of instincts. She thinks.

CLIVE

Of course she thinks. Dogs think. But they aren't capable of associative reasoning.

A TECHIE enters the lunch room. Elsa lowers her voice.

ELSA

You're wrong. She just needs time.

Clive watches Elsa carefully, measuring her up.

CLIVE

You know what we need to do?

ELSA

What?

CLIVE

We need to act our age.

48 INT. HYPERSPACE -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa share a booth at the same club where they were 'shot'. The air prickles with its usual high-energy throb. Elsa sips from a glass of wine, looking bored and distracted.

Clive taps the breakneck beat with his fingernails on the table, grooving to the psychedelic mayhem.

CLIVE

Hey, come on. Let's dance.

ELSA

No. Thanks. I don't feel like it.

Clive barrels past his disappointment. He reaches into his pocket and produces Elsa's dropper-vial of liquid excitement.

CLIVE

I know what you need. A little drop of fun.

Elsa shakes her head without apology. Clive's smile falls.

ELSA
I'm having fun. But you go ahead.
Go for it.

Clive's determination to have fun is losing steam.

CLIVE
No. I'm okay. I'm fine.
(unconvincing)
This is fun.

49 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

Elsa has let the Hybrid out of containment. She is now about the size of a five year-old child, with fully developed, spindly arms. There are a few stray strands of hair starting, which only emphasize her baldness.

Elsa sits cross-legged on the floor with a Deluxe-Edition Scrabble game between them - the kind with a lazy-Susan base, and raised ridges to line up the letters.

There are several short words spelled out on the board: TABLE, SHOE, HAND. Elsa arranges the letters of her own name, E-L-S-A, then spins the board so the Hybrid can read them upright.

ELSA
That's ELSA. Me.
(tapping her chest)
I'm Elsa. Elsa.

The Hybrid's face is a blank slate of incomprehension. Elsa sighs and quickly lines up a new word: P-E-N... then holds up a ballpoint.

ELSA (CONT'D)
PEN! This is a PEN.
(tapping her chest)
ELSA. I'm Elsa. Pen... Elsa.

Elsa searches the Hybrid's face, desperate to detect the slightest sign of association. Nothing.

Elsa notices the Hybrid's gaze is fixated on the box of Nerds in her breast pocket. She spills a couple into her palm -- incentive. The Hybrid's eyes dart, her mouth opens slightly.

Holding the Nerds hostage in her palm, Elsa points again at the word: PEN.

ELSA (CONT'D)
What's that? PEN.
(beat)
Where's the pen?

*ELSA LEAVES
"ANYTHING COULD
BE HAPPENING
TO HER!"*

*IMAGES
BEFORE
LETTER.*

Still nothing. Not a glimmer. Elsa pops the Nerds into her own mouth with a sigh, then tips the board, spilling the letters to the floor. She sees palpable disappointment in the Hybrid's eyes -- reacting to the lost reward.

Elsa gets another idea. She rifles through the tiles, plucking up five letters to spell the word: N-E-R-D-S.

She rotates the board, then holds up the box of candy where the same letters are clearly marked on the label: NERDS.

The Hybrid's eyes flit quickly from the Nerds to the Scrabble board, then back to the Nerds. Elsa smiles. Something's starting to click.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Nerds... C'mon. You know what Nerds are.

The Hybrid reaches out a spindly hand to touch the tiles, her eyes skipping to the actual package of candy.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's right. They're the same.
NERDS!

The Hybrid abruptly pops the letter S into her mouth, chews and quickly swallows it. Elsa gasps. The Hybrid makes a slightly sour expression, as though she'd been tricked.

Elsa's momentary dismay is replaced by a triumphant grin.

ELSA (CONT'D)

You did it! You made a connection!
Good girl!

Elsa spills some real Nerds onto the game board and the Hybrid quickly gobbles them up. The door opens behind Elsa. She spins quickly to greet Clive. The Hybrid cowers at his arrival.

ELSA (CONT'D)

She did it!

CLIVE

What's going on?

ELSA

She can associate!

CLIVE

(annoyed)

What is she doing in this room? You can't let her out!

ELSA

What's the problem?

CLIVE
Specimens need to be contained.

ELSA
Don't call her that!

CLIVE
What are we supposed to call her?

Elsa quickly scans the room, looking for a name. On the Scrabble board are the remaining four (un-eaten) tiles spelling NERD. Of course, they are upside-down to Elsa.

ELSA
DREN. Her name is Dren.

Dren scuttles into the corner. Clive is suddenly furious.

CLIVE
You're talking like... You're treating her like a pet!

ELSA
I'm running tests. I'm compiling a developmental profile. She needs more stimulation than that room.

CLIVE
Well, we're screwed now. They're renovating this entire wing. Tomorrow! So what the hell are we going to do about that?!

Dren's eyes narrow at his raised voice. Elsa, now angry herself, yanks an equipment cart from the side of the room.

ELSA
Alright, so we'll move her! We'll put her in the storage room downstairs. Nobody goes down there anyway.

CLIVE
Are we really going to risk everything? Our careers? Risk going to prison... just to find out what tricks she can do?

Elsa yanks equipment from the lower shelves of the cart.

ELSA
When the hell did you get so fucking scared of everything!

Something triggers in Clive. He takes three furious steps into Elsa's face. Yelling now. Loudly.

CLIVE
WHEN THE FUCK DID YOU STOP BEING A
SCIENTIST?

Dren flings herself across the room and lands squarely on Clive. He falls backwards, hitting the floor hard. Dren's tail waves wildly, flinging off the protective cover.

The poison spike withdraws from its fleshy sheath, poised to sting!

ELSA
NO! STOP!

Dren freezes, then turns her head to Elsa.

ELSA (CONT'D)
(cool, in command)
Go to your place.

Dren eyes Clive once more before obediently skulking back into her corner. Clive sits up, breathing heavily, still a little afraid.

ELSA (CONT'D)
It's okay. She won't hurt you.

She helps Clive up.

ELSA (CONT'D)
I know we have a situation. But we
just have to deal with it.

Clive and Dren eye each other warily.

50 INT. CORRIDOR -- DAY

Elsa and Clive wheel the cart with equipment on top. A box labelled, 'Sequence Driver'; rests beneath. The top shifts. Dren's eyes peer out. Elsa pushes her gently back down.

ELSA
Stay inside, Dren.

Clive nervously glances around the corner. Coast is clear.

CLIVE
She okay?

ELSA
Scared. It's all right.

They truck the cart around the corner and manage to get to the freight elevator undetected. Elsa hits the down button. The elevator rises up from the basement at a snail's pace.

*The Ambulment
is Not over.
Clive is
Not on
side.
Let it
Spill over
into the
next sc.*

*ELSA
Bolts out
of the
room (w)
Dren*

THE CLACKING OF MEN'S SHOES. Clive sees Barlow striding down the hall.

CLIVE

Shit.

Elsa flicks hair from her face, trying to play it cool. Clive swallows hard.

BARLOW

I've been looking for you two everywhere.

CLIVE

Whazup?

BARLOW

Great news. We're going to present Fred and Ginger at the annual shareholder's meeting.

ELSA

Shareholders?

BARLOW

We impress them with the H-40's, Novaphorm stock will go through the roof...

(enticingly)

Could be an opening to restarting the splicing program.

The elevator bell rings and the doors slide open. Elsa quickly steps in and holds the door-open button.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

I thought you'd be excited.

Clive is anxious to get rid of Barlow.

CLIVE

Listen, that's great! Really great. We'll get right on it.

BARLOW

Alright then. Let's meet. I've got to prepare a budget right away.

CLIVE

Sure. After we move this junk.

Barlow is suddenly curious. He fingers an EEG machine on the top of the cart.

BARLOW

Pretty state-of-the-art junk. We could use...

CLIVE

It's broken. Too expensive to fix.

To Clive and Elsa's horror, Barlow bends down to the bottom of the cart and opens the box containing Dren!

BARLOW

You're missing a drive.

Barlow tips the box to reveal that the box is empty - Dren is gone. Clive scans the hallway. Nothing.

Something drips on Barlow's shoulder. He doesn't notice, but Elsa does. She glances over Barlow's head and sees Dren, clinging to the wall, spider-like.

ELSA

We're not trashing a sequencer.
Just the packaging.

Clive quickly spins Barlow away from the elevator, walking him down the hall.

CLIVE

We're cleaning house. Getting ready
for the big push.

Over Barlow's shoulder, Clive can see Elsa peeling Dren off the wall and carrying her into the elevator. He sighs with relief.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

We want to make that deadline.

BARLOW

That's what I like to hear.

ELSA (O.S.)

Clive.

Clive quickly disengages and rushes to push the cart into the elevator.

CLIVE

Back to work! I'll see you in the
lunch room in fifteen.

Barlow watches the doors close, sensing something is up but unable to pin down exactly what it is. He feels the wetness on his shoulder. Brings his fingers to his nose, sniffs them. He wipes them off and continues down the hall.

51 INT. OUTSIDE STORAGE ROOM -- DAY

Elsa and Clive roll the cart quickly up to the door of the storage room.

*Re-work
this sc.
It was
better
before.*

ELSA
I hate that guy.

CLIVE
Why, because he plays by the rules.

ELSA
Because he loves them.

Clive fumbles with a ring of keys, searching for the one that opens a rather crude padlocked bolt.

52 INT. STORAGE ROOM -- DAY

The inside of the storage room is lined with shelves, cluttered with old boxes, obsolete equipment, and forgotten cleaning products. At the far end there's plumbing and a huge industrial sink.

Just stepping inside propels a cloud of dust into the air.

CLIVE
Not exactly certified daycare facilities.

Elsa draws Dren from below the cart and into her arms. Clive steps back, wary. She looks queasy.

ELSA
But there's space to move. That's what she needs.
(beat)
Isn't that right, pumpkin?

CLIVE
Pumpkin?

ELSA
I was talking to her.

Dren makes a funny face.

CLIVE
I don't think she understands.

ELSA
She does.
(to Dren)
Don't you, honey?

She ~~throws~~ ^{throws} up on Elsa's shoulder, then buries her head miserably in Elsa's chest.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Oh... oh no. Oh Sweetie, you're sick!

*CLIVE IS
STILL
FUNNY*

*OLD DIALOGUE
IS BETTER.*

*"WHAT ARE PEOPLE
GOING TO DO
WHEN THEY SEE
HIS?"*

*"They're love
him"*

Handwritten scribbles

Clive frowns. The whole thing is just getting to be too much. Elsa puts her wrist to Dren's head.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Clive, she's really hot!

CLIVE
(annoyed)
I've got to see Barlow.

He leaves. Elsa hardly notices.

53 INT. STORAGE ROOM -- NIGHT

It's night now, Clive has accomplished a lot with the room, piling all the unwanted boxes to one side. He finishes mopping the floor while Elsa dotes over sick Dren. She pulls a thermometer from Dren's mouth and studies it.

ELSA
One hundred and five! This is serious!

CLIVE
Is it? How do we know with her?

ELSA
I know. We have to do something!

CLIVE
We're bio-chemists, aren't we?

Clive turns to the industrial sink and runs the faucet.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
What do you do with high fever?

ELSA
Cold bath!

CLIVE
Alright. Get her in.

MOMENTS LATER

The sink is almost full.

Dren's condition is considerably worse. Her nose is completely clogged, throat swollen, she can hardly breathe. Clive turns off the faucet.

ELSA
Hurry.

With her legs folded under her, Clive and Elsa manage to squeeze Dren into the sink sideways.

She squirms slightly at the shock of cold water, but hasn't the strength to resist.

ELSA (CONT'D)
It's okay, honey. It's okay.

Dren's breathing is getting even more shallow. Elsa tries to hold her head up to facilitate breathing. It's no good.

ELSA (CONT'D)
She can't breath. Her passages are closing! Do something!

CLIVE
What? What?!

ELSA
I DON'T KNOW!

Dren's thrashes in the water as she fights for air.

CLIVE
We'll have to do a tracheotomy.

ELSA
With what?

CLIVE
In the lab...

ELSA
There's no time.

Clive gives Elsa a lost, defeated look... like this was inevitable. He shakes his head. Frustration rising. Suddenly, he grabs Dren by the head and pushes her face under water. Elsa SCREAMS.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Clive! Stop it!

She pulls at his arms. Smashes at his shoulder. Dren, with the little strength she has left, squirms for her life.

CLIVE
GET OFF ME! Enough!

ELSA
You're killing her! Let her go!
(shrieking)
STOP IT!

She continues to fight and claw at Clive. He hangs on, elbowing her away. He leans into the sink. Murderously determined. Elsa watches like we watch our own nightmares.

This is the culmination of his frustration

BUBBLES break to the surface. First softly. Then building. Bubbles in rhythmic regularity. Elsa's face lights up, astounded. It's Dren. Breathing. Underwater.

Clive's ferocity breaks into relief and astonishment. He laughs. Elsa stares down, holding her hair, awe-struck.

ELSA (CONT'D)
She's breathing!

DREN has by-passed her clogged mouth and nose and is breathing through gills which have emerged under her jaw-line. Clive relaxes his arms. Dren has ceased struggling. He simply holds her gently under the surface.

CLIVE
Now we know what those other "blobs" are. Amphibious lungs!

LATER:

Dren is out of the sink, looking very much revived as Elsa pats her down with a towel. Clive fusses about the area, arranging and straightening items like a manic housekeeper.

ELSA
You saved her. My God!
(ecstatic)
How did you know?

Clive responds with an awkward shrug.

ELSA (CONT'D)
You did know, right?

There's a moment. Just the slightest instant of hesitation. Then Clive faces her, deadly serious.

CLIVE
EL, We can't fuck around anymore. We have to clean this place up. Make it safe.

Elsa's doubt gives way to a smile. She nods, relieved to finally have him on-side.

54 INT. STORAGE ROOM - VIDEO MONTAGE

We watch a montage of video footage of Dren, taking us through her rapid physical development from the body of a SEVEN YEAR-OLD GIRL to that of an adolescent.

She is dressed for the first time in a HOSPITAL GOWN. Little girl's barrettes stuck to her tufts of hair humanize her just enough to really accent her strangeness.

C: of course I know.

** THIS IS A REALLY IMPORTANT SCQ BECAUSE IT SHOWS QUICKLY*

*- TIME LINE
- PHYSICAL + MENTAL DEV'T.*

THIS DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL CONNECTION TO C.T.E. +

ELSA (O.S.)

Dren, the world's first human-animal chimera has far outstripped our expectations.

GIVE US A TIME LINE

We see various incarnations of Dren, playing or taking tests. As a NINE YEAR-OLD she is beginning to respond to FLASH CARDS, matching animal illustrations to written names. Nerds are provided as incentive.

+

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

Though her early physical development was highly accelerated by any human standards, the approach of adolescence has brought on an even more remarkable growth spurt.

MAKE THIS FUN + EMOTIONAL

Now as an 11 YEAR-OLD, Dren is dressed in a larger smock. She sways and whistles in alien tones along with THE BIG BAND ERA SONG that Elsa played for Clive when they were splicing her DNA.

SCS OF DREN ROTATING/ PLACING (W)

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

Her physiology follows the same template as our H-40 hybrids. But the added human element appears to be gradually taking a dominant role.

C + E PLAY IN CONTRAST TO NARRATIVE

Dren now looks to be perhaps THIRTEEN, and increasingly girl-like. Hair is beginning to thicken. The seam-like scar down her face and body is less prominent.

As THE VIDEO CAMERA MOVES AROUND HER BODY, Clive lifts her arms for a closer view. There is a strange muscle system running under them and joining to the skin of her back.

CLIVE (O.S.)

The muscular structures extending from the trapezius to the deltoideus and ending at the brachialis are unusual.

Laying on her stomach, completely underwater in an old-fashioned bathtub, her body is beginning to look more like that of a young woman in puberty. Hips curved. A trace of breasts noticeable.

CLIVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We do know she has developed a secondary amphibian respiratory system, and risks fatal dehydration if out of water too long.

USE IT OR LOSE IT.

Bubbles rise to the surface of the tub though she doesn't come up for air.

Finally, we see what looks like a FULL-GROWN TEENAGE GIRL. Though still alien-looking, her features have become quite sculpted and lovely. Her eyes have migrated closer to the front of her head. Her body is supple and lithe.

ELSA
She sleeps roughly ten hours a night.
REM and alphawaves imply prodigious
dream activity.

Elsa tucks Dren beneath a blanket on an adult-sized cot and tapes sensors to her temples.

ELSA (CONT'D)
But intelligence and cognitive skill
tests reveal little. Her mind is her
greatest mystery.

END MONTAGE

Clive puts down the camcorder as Elsa dims the light near Dren's cot. Instantly asleep, she looks like some kind of fairy-tale nymph.

Elsa draws a curtain suspended from the ceiling and turns to Clive with a whisper.

ELSA (CONT'D)
She's had a big day.

Together they collapse onto the cushions of an old couch at the far end of the storage room, which has now taken on the character of a family living room.

Elsa looks exhausted. With her skirt well up above her knees, Clive finds himself admiring her legs.

CLIVE
It's been a long time.

His hand rides up her leg.

ELSA
Oh, God. I didn't even notice.
(beat)
Is that what happens?

CLIVE
To couples when they...

ELSA
When they work too hard?

That wasn't quite what Clive meant, but he nods anyway.

CLIVE
C'mere.

NEED A SCENE OF PARENTAL/CHILD LOVE.

A FINAL BONDING MOMENT WHICH STAYS! THIS IS A

VERY WEIRD BUT HAPPY FAMILY

A MOMENT WHICH CAN BE SUBSTITUTED.

A SORRY. MAKE C + E FUNNIER

ELSA

What, here?

CLIVE

Just get over here.

He pulls Elsa into his lap and kisses her neck. Elsa slings her legs over Clive, lifting her skirt, straddling him while they kiss deeply, mouths open. They start to grind and groan.

Elsa fumbles under her skirt and we hear the sounds of CLIVE'S ZIPPER and TEARING PANTYHOSE. Surprised but excited, Clive disengages from their kiss to whisper in her ear.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Hey... we don't have any...

Elsa just grabs his hand and mashes it into her breasts. They are already fucking.

ELSA

What's the worst that could happen?

Surprised, Clive nonetheless gives himself over to the moment, craning his back, surrendering to half-forgotten sensations.

Then something catches his eye. A shimmer. He pushes Elsa's hair out of his face.

He sees her. Dren. Crouched on the nearby counter. Her excited breathing gives her away. Elsa continues to ride him, her arousal building.

The moment is surreal. Clive continues to watch Dren watching. He says nothing. Sexual momentum builds. Strangeness.

JOAN (V.O.)

Here is a couple... each so unique...
each so unlike anything we've seen
before... They are inextricably drawn
to each other.

55 EXT. CONVENTION CENTER -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa, formally dressed, holding hands, walk ceremoniously up the stairs to a large CONVENTION CENTER - site of the annual Novaphorm shareholder's meeting.

A large banner sports Novaphorm's logo and the slogan:
"DESIGNING A BETTER TODAY".

On either side of the stairs reporters, photographers, and video crews jostle for position, elbow-to-elbow with protesters from all walks of life - religious and secular.

As the protesters scream their epitaphs and warnings, shake their signs, and bump up against a heavy security presence, Clive and Elsa seem not to notice. This is their proudest night. Arm-in-arm they stride into science's brightest spotlight.

JOAN (V.O.)

They are bound together by the understanding that there is nobody else quite like them in this world.

56 INT. CONVENTION CENTER - AUDITORIUM -- NIGHT

Joan stands at a podium addressing an auditorium packed to the rafters with investors. We realize now that her speech above was not about Elsa and Clive after all... but about Ginger and Fred, who are on stage in clear, plexi-glass cages.

JOAN

That they have come together is more than an act of fate. More than just luck. It is by design!

As Joan's presentation continues, the cages slowly roll towards each other from opposing ends of the stage.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Now, let me present to you the minds behind the design... splice-masters extraordinaire: Clive Spillar and Elsa Kast!

With a LOUD FANFARE, Clive and Elsa take to the stage. Clearly excited, caught up in the energy of the moment, they wave to the cheering crowd. Joan steps aside so they can huddle over the podium microphone.

CLIVE

There's been a lot of talk tonight about advancements in multi-species morphogens. We've talked about our new protein-based compounds. Possible applications in neuron regeneration and cancer-fighting agents.

Behind him, a slide-show rifles through the development of Ginger and Fred at the microscopic level. Barlow watches from the wings, nervous and proud. The Lab Techies are fanned out behind him.

In the audience, front row, sit Melinda and THE PHOTOGRAPHER from *Vanity Fair*. Melinda holds up her dictation device while The Photographer snaps shots.

Ginger and Fred's cages continue to roll towards center-stage. Elsa leans into the mike.

ELSA

And that's all very exciting for everyone at Novaphorm.

(beat)

But let's be honest. What's exciting for you people here tonight, is seeing these two creatures ~~come together~~.

PERFECTLY ON CUE, the cages align. The walls separating them sink away. Ginger and Fred are free to mingle in a single double-sized cage.

As each steps forward, a little disoriented by the bright lights, there is a COMMUNAL GASP from the audience.

ELSA (CONT'D)

They are state of the art designer organisms. Infinitely replicatable.

Ginger and Fred approach each other, sniffing and aroused, like they have a hundred times before. Their mutual excitement is so focused, they become instantly oblivious to their surroundings.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Utterly benign. Man's newest and best friend...

The audience, getting their first clear view of the Hybrids in motion, are awed and silent. A video projector splashes live close-ups on the wall behind the Hybrids.

ELSA (CONT'D)

...Here to point the way to a better...

The Hybrids' approach includes the usual PURRING RUMBLE. Then, an agitated raising of hackles. Ginger's mouth opens, a string of drool dropping to the floor.

ELSA (CONT'D)

...today...

Ginger GROWLS. Clive suddenly looks worried. He glances to Elsa, who shakes her head, confused just as...

GINGER LEAPS ON FRED! The two of them fly into a vicious fight! Joan staggers back from the cage. Barlow runs on-stage from the wings.

The Hybrids are locked in a SNARLING, SCREECHING battle to the death. THEY TEAR AT EACH OTHER WITH TEETH AND CLAWS LIKE RABID DOGS. Blood and bits of flesh splatter the glass.

Clive and Elsa and Rodney and several lab techs rush to help but are powerless to stop the carnage.

The savage fight continues until the hybrids are hidden from view behind bloody glass.

A breathless moment of quiet.

THE SOUNDS RESUME full force as the cages buckle and then shatter. The frenzied and mangled forms of Ginger and Fred tumble out. They roll across the stage, then fall off into the audience!

SCREAMS and PANDEMONIUM. Melinda and The Photographer leap to their feet, just in time to catch a splash of blood across their faces and the camera lens.

Within moments Ginger, then Fred, collapse into puddles of blood and torn flesh.

Clive, Elsa, and Barlow, all stand speechless before the mound of gore that was their scientific triumph. The entire grotesque spectacle is projected in gross detail on a twenty foot screen behind them.

Joan, holding her hands over her mouth, stares hypnotically at the video enlargement of Ginger's oozing innards.

57 INT. NOVAPHORM HEADQUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

There is a deathly silence in the room as Joan, Barlow, Clive and Elsa face-off around an oversized conference table.

What is clear is that the Hybrid has hit the fan. Elsa's white blouse is spattered with blood. Clive has flecks in his hair. Joan has made a point of removing her shoes.

Eventually, Barlow feels compelled to pipe up.

BARLOW

I think we have to agree that this is a setback in terms of...

JOAN

It's a fucking disaster.

CLIVE

I don't know what to say. They've never shown even a trace of aggression.

JOAN

Where are the remains?

BARLOW

We rushed them into deep freeze.

*Set up
the set
change
here.*

ELSA

We can recreate them. There's no reason not to start over.

Joan slams the desk, furious.

JOAN

No more monsters.
(beat)

We don't have time for that. We need the gene that produces CD-356. And we need it immediately.

CLIVE

How are we supposed derive protein generations from dead specimens?

Barlow clears his throat.

BARLOW

We still have a lot of material to work with.

(to Joan)

I can put the Chem-tel team on it.

Clive and Elsa look to Barlow, betrayed. But this is his moment and he's not giving them an inch.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

I think we could still meet the deadline.

JOAN

(to Barlow)

Whatever you need.

(to Clive and Elsa)

Synthesize the protein in two weeks or this will go down as the biggest corporate meltdown in Biotech history.

Clive and Elsa hazard a glance at each other. They can see what's coming.

58 INT. MAIN LAB -- DAY

The gestation cell is dismantled and is carried out of the birthing room in pieces. Barlow leads a SMALL ARMY OF INVADING SCIENTISTS in gutting the lab. They work with aggressive efficiency and little regard for Clive and Elsa's staff, who are left cowering on the sidelines.

59 INT. STORAGE ROOM -- DAY

Clive, on the couch, has his face buried in his hands, thinking. Elsa paces the floor, agitated.

- CAN WE COME UP (W) A REASON (A) THE CHANGE. (W) THE CHANGE IS VOLUNTARY.

This is where the truth comes out they are much farther away from synthesizing the protein than they led every- one to believe.

* ALSO REVEAL THAT GINGER WAS SICK.

RANT REX DIDN'T TELL C + E

RELATES THE WERE TOTALLY INACCESSIBLE

DO THIS AS A PREVIEW OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO BROTHER

AS IT WILL BE (W) LATER ON.

We can hear MOVEMENT, BANGING and HEAVY OBJECTS SHIFTING above their heads. Sensing their nervousness, Dren seems skittish.

CLIVE
We need to get her out of here.

ELSA
Fine. Great. But where?

Too FUCKING EASY!

60 INT./EXT VAN -- TRAVELING -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa drive past the city limits. In the back, seen between their bucket seats, is Dren, peering out nervously from under a blanket.

ELSA
I swore I'd never go back.

CLIVE
It's just a harmless, defunct dairy farm. There's no one there to hurt you now.

Frightened, Dren presses herself against the side of Elsa's car seat. Elsa rubs Dren's hand where it grips the upholstery.

ELSA
One time I made my mother a birthday card. I forgot to write, "I love you." For that, she locked me in my room for a month.
(beat)
To teach me to love her better.

A better story...

Clive glances over, horrified. This is as specific as Elsa's ever been about her mother's abuses. She stares out the windshield bitterly.

USE THE WIND CREDIT FOR CONSTANT LINE?

ELSA (CONT'D)
It didn't work.

61 EXT. ABANDONED FARM -- NIGHT

A clapboard farmhouse rests some twenty yards from stables and a Quonset hut of corrugated iron -- A PASTEURIZATION BARN. They are isolated and ominous against the night sky.

The van backs up to the Barn casting it in the amber glow of the tail lights. Clive gets out and unlocks a large sliding door on the barn. Its mouth gapes open, the interior too dark to see inside.

Elsa comes around to the rear of the van and opens the back.

Dren cowers within. Elsa holds out her arms but Dren scuttles deeper into the van.

ELSA

It's okay, honey. Nothing to be afraid of.

Elsa climbs into the van and takes Dren by the hand.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Come on. This is your new home.

Elsa is able to lead Dren by the wrist despite her frightened resistance. Elsa drops to the ground and pulls Dren out, hands under her armpits.

Dren's eyes widen with surprise at the moist cushy sensation of grass and earth.

Clive and Elsa each take a firm grip of her arms and walk her towards the barn.

Dren's behavior begins to change. Her eyes squint to pluck a million sights from the moonlit night: tree, grass, stars. She arches her back so that her nostrils can sort through a dazzling array of smells. Her ears tune into exotic sounds. Curiosity and excitement are rapidly eclipsing her fear.

Abruptly, Dren wrenches herself from Clive and Elsa's clutches. Spinning out of their grip, she takes off into the night.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren!

Within moments, she has disappeared across the field and into the abutting forest.

Clive and Elsa just stare after her, shocked at the force of her escape.

62 EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Cries of "Dren" fill the night air as Clive and Elsa wade through undergrowth and thick brush with flashlights.

CLIVE

This is the disaster everyone warns about. A new species set loose in the world.

ELSA

Don't panic. She wouldn't leave us.

CLIVE

She just did!

ELSA

She wouldn't go far. We'll find her.

They hear a RUSTLING up ahead. Elsa gestures for Clive to hush as she pushes through to a small clearing.

*but Clive's
NOT
TALKING*

And there is Dren, clearly recognizable from behind, lit by hazy moonlight. Her hunched body is shuddering, perhaps crying. Elsa aims her flashlight at her.

ELSA (CONT'D)

There... Dren. Dren, honey?

Dren spins her whole body around. She hasn't been crying -- she's been eating. The carcass of a dead raccoon is torn open in her hands. Her mouth and chin are covered in blood.

Elsa gasps. Dren's eyes are alight, her crimson mouth crooked into a satisfied grin. A "look-what-I-found" childish innocence.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Oh... Dren.

63 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- NIGHT

Elsa locks the door from the inside and loops the keychain over her head like a necklace. She turns to Dren, who is hyper, panting and flitting her attention around her new surroundings.

ELSA

Dren... listen to me. You must never, never run off like that again!

Dren locks eyes with Elsa, her panting suddenly stopping.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That was bad. You understand? Bad Dren.

Dren reacts to Elsa's harsh tone. Her brow furrows, lip curls into a hurt expression. Elsa draws Dren close to her, holds her tight.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, honey. I'm not mad at you. I was just worried.

Meanwhile, Clive is on a small step ladder with a garden hose, filling a large stainless steel tank with water. The tank, formerly for pasteurizing milk, is a perfect vessel for Dren's water time.

In fact, the sterile requirements of milk processing are surprisingly close to those of a laboratory.

CLIVE

This place is going to clean up great.

ELSA

I'll start with her.

Elsa wets a cloth at the sink and gently washes the dried raccoon blood off from Dren's mouth. But Dren resists.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Honey, please.

Dren tears away from Elsa.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren!

She skitters across the floor and up Clive's step ladder. Almost knocking him down. She propels herself - bloody hospital gown and all - into the half-filled tank of water. She curls up in a submerged sulking. The little hair she has floats like sea-grass.

Clive steps down from the ladder and pulls Elsa close.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Why is she acting like this?

CLIVE

She's just upset. Everything's new. Give her time. She'll be fine.

*How she
is mean
like: FEELS
like she
should
str
be a
chris.*

64 EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa shut the door, locking Dren inside the Barn.

65 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

It has the dark, foreboding quality of any building that hasn't been entered in years. They reach the front porch. Clive unlocks the door. Elsa braces herself.

CLIVE

You okay?

Elsa bucks herself up and steps forward.

ELSA

Yeah. Of course. It's just a house.

She shoves open the door with a LOUD CREAK - like a mother's scream.

*DREN
Asleep*

66 INT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Clive snaps on the lights, some of whose bulbs are dead. The place is cobwebbed and dusty, but otherwise surprisingly tidy and spare. There's a potbellied stove in the middle of the common room, an open kitchen and a series of bedroom doors along the back.

67 INT. FARMHOUSE -- ELSA'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The door to Elsa's old bedroom swings open. Clive peers in at a room devoid of any furnishings or decor. A single twin mattress sits alone in the middle of the floor.

Elsa hides a shudder.

CLIVE

I thought you said your mother kept your room exactly like it was.

Elsa's mouth tightens as she turns away.

ELSA

She did.

WHT?

68 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

A view of the farm seen from a distance: van, barn, farmhouse. The single light in the house turns off.

69 INT. LAB -- DAY

Clive and Elsa, exhausted from the previous night's ordeal, lean wearily over microscopes. They man one of the many work stations that now line the main floor of the lab.

ELSA

Think she's alright?

CLIVE

She's fine. She has lots of space.

Elsa casts Clive a warning glance. Barlow's doing rounds like a factory foreman. Clive hunkers over his microscope as Barlow approaches with something tucked under his arm.

BARLOW

How's it going?

CLIVE

All right, Bill. We're getting there.

WHAT'S THEIR PLAN?

SOMEBODY HAS TO SAY 'WE CAN TAKE HER AWAY

K DOX PART OF THIS SC.

?
=

le. we'll smuggle her out once we work up this mess.

DO they MAKE A promise to him which they BREAK later.

BARLOW

We're getting there... quickly?

ELSA

You know, we're wasting our time working with dead tissue.

Barlow's face drops. His eyes go metal-cold.

BARLOW

Look. We all need to be pulling together. If Phase II is a success, well... It's to all our advantage.

(beat)

You can go back to whatever it is you'd rather be doing. You'll be heroes again.

ELSA

When exactly did we stop being heroes?

Barlow pulls a magazine from under his arm, slaps it down in front of them. It's a copy of Vanity Fair. The cover features Clive and Elsa, naked, holding Fred and Ginger. The selected shot is of the panicked chaos when Ginger was scrambling away from Elsa.

Beside them in bold text: "WONDER KIDS PLAY GOD - AND FUMBLE!"

BARLOW

When you ignored my advice.

All at once, Elsa gets up and storms noisily out of the lab. Heads turn. Barlow's voice oozes with the insidious threat of recent power.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

(to Clive)

I'm doing as much damage control as I can. But if you're going to work against me...

CLIVE

I'll talk to her.

70 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- DAY

The interior has been enhanced with furniture from the farmhouse as well as some makeshift lab equipment. Left alone, Dren roams the perimeter clutching her Barbie. She feels restless. Deserted.

Dren stops abruptly at a VANITY MIRROR set up at a small table. She strokes the doll's hair. Runs a finger along its neck and pulls off the dress,

*She knows
emergency.*

She compares it to her own reflection. Her thin, patchy hair. The strange protrusions along her back and arms. The alien-looking legs and undeveloped chest. The deep vertical seam down her face and body.

The contrast to Barbie enrages her. She SMASHES THE DOLL INTO THE MIRROR. Shards TINKLE away.

Dren lines up the Barbie so that its face and body are bisected by a long vertical crack. Barbie still looks impossibly beautiful. Dren throws the doll across the room. Then kicks the chair into the base of the water tank.

A MEWING SOUND from behind the tank.

Curious, Dren creeps around and discovers a small cat has somehow managed to sneak into the barn. It meows at her, looking lost, hungry and afraid.

Dren cocks her head, then with frightening speed snatches it up. We are instantly reminded of the raccoon's fate. But Dren does not attack. Instead she strokes the animal with one hand, fascinated by the texture of its fur.

Dren carries it with her to a workbench at the furthest corner of the barn. She pulls aside a plastic sheet and hides herself and the cat in the vacant storage space beneath.

INSIDE DREN'S SPACE

She curls up, petting the cat with a kind of tender gratitude. Something uglier than her.

71 EXT. FARM -- NIGHT

Two vehicles pull up in front of the farmhouse. Clive slides down from the driver's side of the van. Elsa issues from their vintage hotrod.

Together they unload boxes of equipment and supplies from the back of the van.

72 INT. BARN -- EVENING

Elsa, Clive and Dren sit at a small folding table. Elsa has trouble getting Dren to eat. Impatiently, she pushes a bowl of green muck towards Dren. Dren shoves it back.

ELSA

Honey, please. Not today. Eat your dinner.

Elsa scoops a spoonful of gruel to Dren's mouth, but she turns her head. Clive looks up from some notes.

ANOTHER SC. ELSA TRYING TO TEACH DREN TO SPEAK. IT'S NOT WORKING. A TRANSITION SC. FIRST TIME WE SENSE TENSION.

CLIVE
She knows how to eat.

ELSA
But she won't.

CLIVE
She doesn't like it. Maybe she wants
meat.

ELSA
(snapping)
She doesn't eat meat!

CLIVE
Is raccoon considered a vegetable?

ELSA
That was just... an accident.
(to Dren)
C'mon honey. Eat your food, you
know you're hungry.

In a sudden fit of anger, Dren shoves herself backwards,
knocking over the table, food and all.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Dren. Come back here!

Dren tears across the room.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Come back here, right now!

Elsa rushes over, grabs Dren by the neck and arm.

ELSA (CONT'D)
I said COME HERE!

Physically, Dren is now Elsa's equal, but the Hybrid succumbs
as Elsa pulls her back to the table. Clive rights the
furniture and Elsa shoves Dren back into her chair.

CLIVE
Elsa, cool it.

Elsa spins on him.

ELSA
You saw what she did!

Clive takes Elsa by the shoulders, trying to calm her down.

CLIVE
All right. It's over.

Elsa is suddenly wracked with guilt and hurt.

ELSA

I just... She's getting so hard to control.

CLIVE

But she's okay now.

Clive glances over Elsa's shoulder and finds that Dren has, in fact, left her seat. He hears a noise overhead. He and Elsa look up and are startled to see Dren clamoring up a network of pipes leading to the ceiling.

ELSA

Dren. Stop that!

You're going to hurt yourself!

Dren swings along pipes and support beams and deliberately kicks out panes of glass from the skylight. SMASH! Shards rain down. Clive and Elsa stumble back to avoid them.

Dren catapults herself through the ~~skylight~~ and disappears onto the roof.

CLIVE

Shit!

→ Rotten wood.

They run for the door.

73 EXT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- EVENING

Clive scrambles up a slender ladder along the back of the arched building. Elsa follows, a few rungs behind.

74 EXT. PASTEURIZATION BARN - ROOF -- EVENING

The roof has a narrow path along the center of its arch. One wrong step and it's a slippery ride down to a thirty-foot drop. Clive and Elsa climb breathlessly up to see Dren at the far side of the skylight, back arched, eyes wide, once again bedazzled by the breadth of open space.

Elsa and Clive slowly shuffle across the roof.

ELSA

Dren. Sweetie. Come inside, okay?

Dren snaps her attention to the approaching couple. She takes a corresponding number of backward steps.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Be careful, honey. We just want you to stay with us. Where you're safe.

They ease past the broken windows of the skylight. Dren continues to back away, determined not to be contained.

CLIVE

C'mon Dren. We're not angry.

Dren is getting dangerously close to the edge of the roof. Elsa looks terrified.

ELSA

DREN! COME HERE THIS INSTANT!

Her raised voice startles Dren back another step. Her feet pivot on the edge of the roof. Her torso swings back and forth, desperate to regain her balance.

CLIVE

God! No!

Dren overcompensates and is about to fall backwards when...

A cascade of feathers bursts through the skin under her arms. Magnificent wings with shimmering translucent plumage.

UNDERLINE

The wings instinctively flap, lifting her body just enough to regain her balance. She releases a triumphant SHRIEK and lets the wings relax and settle at her sides. Shreds of dry, leathery skin flake away in the breeze.

With the emergence of the wings, the lumpen, misshapen mass of her back has transformed itself. Her body is now lean, streamlined, elegant and complete.

Clive and Elsa observe her speechlessly. Their ugly duckling has become a swan.

Dren unfurls her wings proudly, turns to face the forest with its world of sensation and mystery. She crouches as though prepared to launch into flight.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

No! Dren stop.

Dren pauses, looks back over her shoulder.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Please don't.

Dren keeps her eyes trained on Clive. Something in his pleading tone is having an effect. He takes a few cautious steps forward. Elsa watches, too frightened to interfere.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Dren. Don't go. We need you.
(gauging her reaction)
We love you, Dren.

Clive holds out his hand. Dren feels the pull of freedom. But the pull of Clive seems stronger. Dren's wings abruptly retract. She plunges forward, into his arms.

All at once, she is shaking and scared. A terrified child.

Clive holds her tight, stroking her back, a little stunned at suddenly making such a connection. Elsa allows herself to breathe, relieved. And just a tad jealous.

75 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- NIGHT

The skylight has been boarded shut. The last bit of natural light is cut off.

Two sizable steaks are dropped onto an electric grill. They explode with a LOUD SIZZLE. Clive is cooking. Elsa is examining the latest miracle of Dren physiology.

CLIVE
(to Dren)
Smells pretty good, huh?

Dren watches hungrily from her chair.

ELSA
You shouldn't be rewarding her for escaping.

CLIVE
I'm rewarding her for coming back.
(to Dren)
Good girl.

Dren seems to preen at his encouraging tone. Clive can't resist a quick glance down her newly feminized body, the slender trace of an hour-glass figure.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
You're not a little girl anymore.
Are you?
(to Elsa)
Do you think she'll ever fly?

ELSA
She'd need chest muscles like a quarterback.
(indicating the wings)
I think they're more... decorative than anything else.

Elsa regards Dren wistfully. Like she's lost her baby girl to this new species of young woman.

76 INT. FARMHOUSE - COMMON ROOM -- MORNING

Next morning. Elsa types notes into her laptop. While eating cereal, Clive studies one of Dren's new feathers, utterly fascinated.

SOME KIND OF PLAY STUN C + DREN

END SC. ON A STRONGER NOTE OF TENSION TO SET UP TO NEXT SC

* SOME KIND OF EXAMINATION SC. (W) C. STRANGE SEXUAL INTERACTIONS WHICH ELSA CATCHES.

He rubs the feather in one direction against the cereal box.
Its translucent hair-like threads gently give way.

CLIVE
It's incredibly delicate.

Elsa stops typing and takes the feather and runs it the other way, slicing through the box like a razor.

ELSA
And incredibly sharp.
(a beat to let her
point sink in)
You have to stop contradicting me.

CLIVE
What?

ELSA
In front of her. If I say one thing,
you can't always be saying, "no,
it's okay", or "she doesn't like
that". It's making her impossible
to control.

CLIVE
I don't do that. Do I do that?

ELSA
Just don't make me the bitch, okay.
(back to her work)
I'm not the bad guy.

CLIVE
Alright. I'm sorry.

Clive gets up, dumping his bowl into the kitchen sink.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
We should get going.

Elsa doesn't move.

ELSA
Go ahead.

CLIVE
You're not coming?

ELSA
I'm not wasting my time on Barlow's
lost cause.
(beat)
I'm staying here with Dren.

Clive scoops up his duffel bag and heads for the door.

CLIVE

Great.

He slams the door, pissed.

77 INT. LAB -- DAY

Barlow finds Clive hunched over a microscope. The lab is populated with a host of NEW FACES - Barlow's CHEM-TEL analysis team. Elsa is conspicuously absent.

BARLOW

Where's Elsa?

CLIVE

Not feeling well.

BARLOW

She's not coming in?

CLIVE

She's sick.

Barlow's lips tighten, obviously irritated.

BARLOW

You know, sometimes people just suck it up and rise to the occasion.

(beat)

Why are you guys being so casual about this?

CLIVE

We're working ourselves sick. Isn't that enough?

Barlow eyes Clive for sincerity, then marches off to his office without another word.

78 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- DAY

Elsa gently brushes Dren's hair which has recently grown quite long and full. Dren, seeing herself in the cracked mirror, looks pleased.

ELSA

See how pretty you've become. Look how long it is now.

(beat)

You're going to have to learn how to be a grownup.

Elsa puts down the brush and opens the small drawer in the table to retrieve an elastic band.

This is becoming repetitive. This woman has a good point to have stick monitor show up

See a beat where ELSA comes to a resistant moment... (w) dress-

She notices several mottled sheets of paper under a stack of blank sheets, as though deliberately stashed away.

ELSA (CONT'D)

What are these?

Dren goes rigid. Elsa pulls out a series of slightly crumpled drawings made with colored pencils. They are crude, rudimentary attempts at a face, but as she flips through them, they exhibit a clear progression of ability.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Did you do these? These are wonderful!

As she gets towards the bottom of the stack and the sketches become increasingly complex, it is obvious that all of them are of Clive.

ELSA (CONT'D)

(hiding disappointment)

They're really good, Dren. Are there any of me?

Dren remains frozen, her eyes locked on her own reflection. If her odd hybrid features could express embarrassment, this might be it.

Elsa's hand scrambles into the drawer, pulling out some fresh paper and a handful of colored pencils.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Show me? Show me how you draw.

Elsa tilts one of the mirrors so that Dren can get a good look at her face.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Will you do one of me?

(beat)

Please?

Dren unfreezes in a millisecond and abruptly grabs up all the pictures of Clive. She bolts with them to her hiding place.

Elsa sighs, then strides sternly across the room.

ELSA (CONT'D)

It's just the two of us, young lady.
You're going to have to learn who's boss.

Elsa pulls aside the plastic sheet and discovers Dren crouched inside, cradling the cat in her arms, stroking it obsessively.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren. What's that? Where did you get that?

Dren shimmies deeper into her hiding spot.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Give it to me.

Elsa's hand snatches out and grabs the cat by the scruff of the neck, yanking it away. Dren YELPS.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Dren. We can't keep it.

(beat)

We can't take a chance. It could make you sick.

Dren is horrified. She reaches out for her beloved cat, but Elsa coldly stands up and steps back, suddenly the stern matron.

ELSA (CONT'D)

You can't always have what you want.
That's part of growing up. too.

Elsa heads for the door. Dren's knees curl up under her arms. Her eyes squint with rage.

79 INT. FARMHOUSE - COMMON ROOM -- DAY

Elsa enters the farmhouse with the cat, places it on the floor. It MEOWS needily. She goes to the fridge, pours some milk into a saucer and lays it next to the cat, which hungrily laps it up.

Something like regret plays across her face.

80 EXT. FARM -- EVENING

Clive's car pulls up the drive.

81 INT. FARMHOUSE -- EVENING

Clive comes into the darkened farmhouse.

CLIVE

E1?

No sign of her. He explores deeper into the house.

*Put the # name
you ... I'm
INSIDE of
BUSINESS
HERE.*

*MOM'S EVIDENCE
OF HER MOM.*

82 INT. FARMHOUSE - ELSA'S OLD BEDROOM -- EVENING

The door opens a crack. Clive pokes his head inside. Elsa is fast asleep, curled up child-like on the tiny mattress.

Clive quietly shuts the door.

83 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- NIGHT

Clive enters the barn. He hears a rustle and sees Dren curled by her private space.

Clive walks over and kneels next to her. Dren stares at the floor, her jaw is set and angry.

CLIVE

What's the matter girl?

Dren melts into sorrow the way a child responds to pity. She launches herself into Clive's sympathetic arms, shuddering.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Bad day?

Clive pulls her gently onto her feet.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Let's lighten things up around here.

Clive moves to another part of the room, slides a CD into a boom-box on the counter. It's the BIG BAND number that Dren likes.

The music perks her up. She sways in time with it, chortling and whistling.

Clive does a comical two-step that brings a hint of a smile to Dren's face. Emulating him, she sways from foot to foot in time with the music.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Atta-girl. I knew we got the dance gene in there.

Clive comes up to her, positions Dren's arms on his shoulders, putting one hand above her hip, the other gently on her back. He leads her in a clumsy rocking slow dance, slightly ridiculous at first -- like the ill-matched couples in an elementary school gymnasium.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Let me lead you.

They slowly find a measure of synch, despite their differing anatomy. Clive's lead sets an elegant rhythm.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

I'll show you how the pros do it.

Clive throws a couple of variations into the foot work. Dren, now in the groove of letting Clive lead, follows perfectly. They become graceful and lightfooted.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

My first girlfriend made me take dance lessons.

(beat)

Don't tell Elsa.

As though triggered by the hint of conspiracy, Dren tightens her grip on Clive, drawing him in close. The move is subtle, adjusting her balance, but they now dance body-to-body.

Dren's eyes close, her head rolls back, getting lost in the music and the intimacy. Despite himself, Clive is becoming aroused. He notes the sensuous length of her neck, the arch of her back, her hair...

He freezes. Drops his arms. Dren's eyes open, bewildered. Wondering what she's done wrong.

Clive gently brushes back Dren's hair where he finds a SINGLE SHOCK OF WHITE.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Elsa...

Dren is annoyed that Elsa's name should interrupt the dance. Clive steps back from her, shaken.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Okay. That's enough.

(beat)

That's enough dancing. Dren.

Clive strides over to the boom box and smacks the STOP button, then strides off towards the door.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Good night.

He makes a hasty exit, leaving Dren slumped in the middle of the barn like a jilted date.

84 INT. FARMHOUSE - COMMON ROOM -- MORNING

Elsa emerges from her childhood bedroom, rubbing her eyes. Clive is already dressed for work, sipping coffee at the table, looking angry.

ELSA

I thought I was taking a quick nap.
I must have... I slept like a rock.

CLIVE

It's your DNA.

ELSA

What?

CLIVE

In Dren.

Elsa doesn't have a response, he's got her dead to rights.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You lied to me. You put yourself
into the experiment. No wonder you're
so... fucking attached.

ELSA

I didn't lie. I didn't say who's
DNA, did I?

CLIVE

Yeah, you were very careful. What
was it? "Healthy female. Clean
heredity"?

ELSA

Exactly.

Clive bolts out of his chair, heading for the door.

CLIVE

Maybe you should take another glance
at your family history.

Clive makes a slamming exit, leaving Elsa alone with his parting jab.

CLIVE CALLS
HER ON
MOTHER
STUFF.

YOU'VE USING
HER TO FIX
YOUR OWN
FUCKED UP
CHILDHOOD

85 INT. FARMHOUSE - COMMON ROOM -- DAY

Elsa sits depressed at the table, her face tight with frustration and anger. She feels like complete wreckage. Dren is mad at her. Clive's mad at her. She hasn't been to work in days. Everything's falling apart.

Something brushes past her leg and she looks down. It's the cat, rubbing affectionately against her. Elsa's face suddenly softens. She picks the cat up and strokes it, relieved that someone, anyone, isn't hating her.

86 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- DAY

Elsa enters the barn, locking the door behind her with the key she wears around her neck. She carries a cardboard box under one arm.

ELSA

Dren, c'mere honey. I have something for you.

Dren emerges from her private hiding space, cautious but curious. Elsa sits cross-legged on the floor, patting a spot in front of her for Dren to sit. Dren sullenly complies.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Can't you smile for me?

Dren lifts her head, expressionless eyes on Elsa, eager to demonstrate that she doesn't merit a smile. Elsa leans forward and pecks her on the cheek.

ELSA (CONT'D)

You know I love you, don't you?

Elsa gives her a warm, loving smile. Dren maintains her cold stare, not giving an inch. Elsa gives her words extra emphasis - determined that Dren understand:

ELSA (CONT'D)

No matter what happens, just remember. I will always be here for you.

Elsa opens the box and presents the cat. Dren's face grows instantly alert. She glances at Elsa slightly mistrusting. Elsa gently places the cat on the floor. It approaches Dren, rubbing against her leg.

ELSA (CONT'D)

There you go. You can keep her. Why not? It's nice to have a pet.

Dren cocks her head.

Her tail suddenly lashes out -- its deadly stinger jabbing the cat in the skull. It drops dead instantly.

ELSA (CONT'D)

(horrified)

My God! Oh, my God? Dren!!!

*THK is
with me.
THK "INSIDE
you"
like
Gods.*

Dren finally gives her the smile she wanted. Elsa lashes out, slapping her hard across the face.

Elsa brings both hands up to her own mouth, shocked at what Dren has provoked. In the same instant, Dren lunges forward, pouncing on her, knocking her down. A clawed foot grabs the key from around Elsa's neck and rips it off. The spiked tail hovers close to her face. A moment between them where it seems that Dren might actually sting her. Elsa's eyes register real fear. The power balance has tipped.

Dren pushes Elsa backwards, sending her sprawling across the floor, then makes a break for the front door. She awkwardly works the key into the lock. CLICK. It opens.

With a SQUAWK, Dren pulls off the lock and opens the door. Inviting sunlight washes over her as...

WHAP! Something strikes the back of Dren's head. She drops.

Elsa stands, panting over her, a rusted milk can in her hands.

87 INT. BARN -- LATER

Dren wakes to find her arms, legs and tail secured to an examination table.

Elsa stands over her, a scalpel in hand, her face utterly devoid of emotion. She speaks in a detached, clinical manner into a tape recorder.

ELSA

(into tape recorder)

Physically H-50 has developed well.
Inter-species components have married
in unexpected but successful ways.
However, recent violent behavior suggest
dangerous psychological developments.

She brings the knife up to Dren's scalp. Dren CRIES OUT, fights against her restraints. For a moment, we might think that Elsa is about to perform brain surgery.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Erratic behavior may be caused by a
disproportionate species identification.
Cosmetically "human" affectations should
be eliminated wherever possible.

Elsa clicks off the recorder and takes a handful of Dren's hair. She painfully hacks it off with the scalpel. In this way, Elsa shears Dren's beautiful mane until she is left with a patchy shorn mess. Dren MEWS in anguish at this humiliation.

Then, with growing terror, Dren watches as Elsa moves to the opposite end of the table, where a small tray of surgical instruments waits. Elsa CLICKS the recorder back on.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Due to her unstable condition, it has become necessary to remove her zootoxin glands and stinger.

Elsa snaps off the recorder, sets it down by the tray. Elsa hazards a glance at Dren. Her creation watches her, wide-eyed with terror.

Elsa brakes the gaze, slips on a surgical mask and jabs a hypodermic needle into Dren's tail. With frigid disregard, she selects a slender bone-saw from the tray and begins her work: sawing away at Dren's tail, eight inches from the tip.

Dren lets out a SAVAGELY SHRILL SCREAM.

88 EXT. ABANDONED DAIRY FARM -- EVENING

Clive drives up to the barn. He thinks he hears a HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM under the SOUND OF THE RADIO. He snaps off the music, but there's nothing.

89 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- EVENING

Clive lets himself in and is confronted with the horrific aftermath of an improvised surgery. Dren is strapped semi-conscious to the table. Elsa is bandaging the stump of her tail. Long locks of hair litter the floor near a puddle of congealing blood.

Dren cranes her neck and cries out to Clive, her fingers flexing and clawing under the straps.

CLIVE

What the fuck are you doing?!

ELSA

What I had to.

Clive sees an eight-inch segment of tail laying in the sink.

CLIVE

Jesus Christ! Elsa!

Clive rushes to the table to unstrap Dren, but Elsa grabs his wrist.

ELSA

She's becoming unstable. She killed a cat. She almost killed me.

CLIVE

And so you... cut off her hair?

Elsa doesn't respond. She simply takes the chunk of Dren's tail in her rubber-gloved hand and places it carefully in a small picnic cooler filled with ice cubes.

ELSA

Are you any closer to finding the protein?

CLIVE

What does that have to do with anything?

ELSA

You haven't because you're working with tissue that's been dead too long.

Clive catches her meaning.

CLIVE

We don't know that she has it.

ELSA

Of course she does. She has everything Ginger and Fred had. And more.

Elsa moves for the door.

CLIVE

Where are you going?

ELSA

I'm going to solve this thing! I'm going to put things right.

She makes her exit. Within moments, Clive can hear the engine of their car start.

He rushes over to Dren, unties her.

CLIVE

Dren?

But Dren looks to him with wounded, frightened eyes, as if he were an accomplice in her torture. She weakly retreats to the corner.

Clive takes in the shambles of this private hell, the deteriorating condition of the barn. At his feet is the carcass of the dead cat.

90 EXT. FAMILY PLOT -- TWILIGHT

Clive shovels dirt out of a hole about the size of a large shoe box. A few feet away is the tombstone of Elsa's mother with the simple inscription: HENDRIKA KAST 1948 - 2005.

He gently lowers a small package wrapped in paper towel into the hole. A breeze blows aside the paper and we see that it's the cat.

91 INT. MAIN LAB -- NIGHT

Dark and empty but for a light on at a single work station.

Elsa is working hard through the night. The cooler is at her feet. A pot of coffee smolders near the microscope.

There's a desperate urgency to her work, but an unstoppable determination in her eyes. She's going to do it.

92 INT. FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Clive is agitated, pacing the floor of the bedroom with a tumbler of ice-cubes in one hand. He fumbles on the dresser with a bottle of scotch. He pours himself a healthy hit of liquor, tosses it down his throat.

His laptop is open. On-screen is a webcam feed from the barn: several cameras trained on various angles encompassing the room. No sign of Dren.

All at once, her face pops up. Clive catches this. Comes close. Then as if sensing his presence, she abruptly disappears.

He flips through several windows, picking her up again from another angle: She climbs the step ladder, removes her hospital gown and slides into her water tank.

He calls up an underwater camera. Dren sensuously rolls her naked body against the wall of the pool, the water acting like a healing salve for her damaged tail. He can't get over how lithe and womanly she has become.

Instinctively, he reaches out and runs his fingers along her image. As he does this, Dren's own hand reaches out, and impossibly, brushes past the camera, mirroring his gesture.

Clive jumps back, jolted from his trance. He slams the laptop shut. He grabs the bottle of scotch and slides to the floor, pouring a large gulp down his throat.

EMULIB?
 OR
 ANOTHER
 SC.
 EXACTLY
 WHICH
 SORTS OF
 HIS
 DESIRE
 BETTER

93 INT. MAIN LAB -- MORNING

Elsa gathers her things into her knapsack, in higher spirits than we've seen her in a while.

As she moves to the door, it swings open. She lets out a startled gasp. It's Barlow.

ELSA

Bill, you're early.

BARLOW

So, let me get this straight. You stay home because your sick. But now I find you sneaking around when no one's here. What are you up to?

ELSA

Putting in overtime.

BARLOW

It's too late for that. They won't extend the deadline. We're all screwed now.

(beat)

While you're here, you might as well clear out Clive's desk.

ELSA

I don't think so.

Barlow explodes.

BARLOW

No one cares about what you think anymore! You're a joke. An embarrassment this company will spend a very long time trying to--

ELSA

The protein's been synthesized.

Barlow is rendered speechless. She pushes past him and heads for the door.

ELSA (CONT'D)

(on the way out)

It's in the fridge. When some real scientists get here, have them take a look.

94 INT. FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM -- MORNING

A beam of sunlight smacks Clive across the eyes. He hauls himself upright with a pained groan.

Whisky and guilt are twin swords slicing his brain.

CLIVE

Elsa? EL?!

95 INT. FARMHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Clive trudges though the common room, still a little drunk and clearly in pain.

CLIVE

Elsa!

He shuffles out the front door.

96 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- MOMENTS LATER

Clive finds the barn empty. Elsa is not there, nor is Dren.

CLIVE

Elsa?! Dren?!

He zeroes-in on Dren's special hiding place, but she's not there.

He bounds up the step ladder only to find the murky water Dren-less. He's beginning to panic, rushing around the tank. As he turns past a corner of the base, WHAM, Dren is on him.

She's planted him with a full-on, open-mouthed kiss. Clive pulls himself out of it, perhaps a little reluctantly.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Dren, you can't... what are you doing?

Dren stares at him hungrily. Her parted lips have a fullness he'd never noticed. Her eyes shine with unabashed, pure lust. The knowledge that some part of her is Elsa somehow heightens the moment.

When her mouth finds its way back to his, he plunges into a passionate kiss. Her hospital gown falls off one shoulder. Dren wraps her legs around Clive's torso, driving her breasts up to his face, her wings unfurl, flapping excitedly.

Clive presses her up against the water tank. They writhe to the floor, gown riding up over her waist. Clive quickly fumbles open his pants, tears open his shirt.

His mouth is all over her marble white torso. Dren's tail rides up between his legs, exploring. She arches her back, allowing entry. Clive's body surrenders to the moment.

In the growing excitement, the bandage on Dren's tail begins to tear.

The severed stinger grows back, dripping with fresh venom! It curls around Clive, a hair's breadth from his naked skin. But Clive is oblivious, building to climax.

A STARTLED GASP pulls him out of it.

Clive and Dren freeze as one. Clive quickly turns and sees...

Elsa, paralyzed near the door. Her mouth hangs open in an expression of shocked repulsion. Clive scuttles off Dren, clumsily reassembling his pants.

ELSA
(hysterical)
Get away! Stay away from me!

CLIVE
Elsa... I'm sorry... I don't...

Clive stands midway between Elsa and Dren. His lips mumble, looking for the right words. They don't exist.

He turns from Elsa's grimace of disbelief to Dren's horrified face as she sits there half-naked, abandoned in mid-coitus. Their looks are IDENTICAL. Mother and daughter. The resemblance hammers into Clive's brain.

Elsa finally unfreezes. She backs toward the door, gets a hand on the doorknob and tears out of there. Clive takes off after her, clutching his open shirt, slamming the door behind him.

Dren is left on the floor by the tank, her face still wearing Elsa's horror.

97 EXT. DAIRY FARM -- MORNING

Elsa is already in her car, backing around to make a forward exit. Clive pounds on the driver's-side window.

CLIVE
Elsa, don't go. Talk to me.

Clive watches helplessly as Elsa burns away with SCREECHING TIRES. He grips his hair. Looks to the pasteurization barn, then at the dusty trail of the receding vehicle.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
(softly)
Fuck.

He clamors into the van and drives off after her.

CLIVE GOES TO THE BAR?

98 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Clive enters the apartment. Sees a stack of mail has collected on the floor. Sees a light on in the kitchen.

99 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- KITCHEN -- EVENING

Clive finds Elsa at the kitchen table staring into space. He approaches, sheepish, not sure what to expect.

CLIVE

E1.

ELSA

(low)

Get away from me.

CLIVE

I guess "I'm sorry" isn't worth much.

Elsa explodes.

ELSA

"I'M SORRY?" I'm sorry means nothing!
It doesn't take ANYTHING away!

CLIVE

It just happened. I barely knew...
I'm ashamed.

ELSA

I don't even know who you are anymore!
To do something so... sick. You've
become something sick!

(beat)

Forget about what it means to me!
There are some things you DO NOT DO!

Clive lets her rage wash over him. But something she said catches in his mind. It takes a moment for words to emerge. Finally:

CLIVE

(quietly)

We changed the rules.

ELSA

You're not talking your way out of
this!

CLIVE

We crossed a line. After that... we
got confused...

ELSA
Confused about what?

CLIVE
Right and wrong.

Elsa turns her head dismissively. But he's getting to her.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
El... we chained her up. We locked
her away from the world.
(beat)
We sawed off her fucking tail.
(nearing tears)
I even...

Elsa holds her head in her hands. It's dizzying to
contemplate.

ELSA
I cut off her tail.

CLIVE
I ~~wouldn't~~ have stopped you. It
seemed like a good idea.
(beat)
Fuck. Everything seemed like a good
idea.

Elsa's rage gives way to remorse.

ELSA
What did we do?

Clive glances around the apartment, taking in their old life.
Elsa's sketchbook. His Stratocaster and amplifier. Their
wall of books and toys.

CLIVE
I just wish... things could go back
to the way they were.

Elsa raises her head, wiping tears from her eyes. She's
bucking up. She's getting her head straight.

ELSA
Maybe they still can.

CLIVE
What do you mean?

ELSA
I synthesized the protein last night.

CLIVE
(stunned)
You're kidding.

A little more intellectual.

*Right + wrong?
What are you*

Am Not Sure I would have

ELSA

The CD-356 level in her blood's ten times higher than what Ginger and Fred ever had. She's boiling over with it.

CLIVE

Then... we could save things.

ELSA

We could start to. Except for...
(she trails off)

CLIVE

Except. For. Her.

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

ELSA

We can't do that.

Clive's silence says everything.

ELSA (CONT'D)

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

CLIVE

She grew up. The experiment is over.
Now our responsibility is to end it.

Elsa begins to concede to his chilling logic.

ELSA

...How?

CLIVE

The most humane way possible.

100 EXT. ABANDONED FARM -- DAY

Clive and Elsa have returned. They slam the doors to the van and head towards the barn without a word. Clive has a large hypodermic needle in his hand, already uncapped.

101 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- DAY

The RATTLE of the lock. The SQUEAK of the door opening. Clive and Elsa enter the barn and quickly bolt the door behind them.

Elsa calls out, careful not to let even a hint of emotion enter her voice.

ELSA

Dren! Come out Dren.

There is no sign of her. The room is quiet. Too quiet.

Clive goes to her hiding place. Nothing. They scan the rafters. Could Dren be camouflaged?

Elsa climbs up the step ladder to peer into the tank. The water is murky, a slight film on the surface. With trepidation, she brushes the water with her hand. Elsa leans in closer...

Dren's face bobs to the surface. Elsa jumps back, nearly losing her balance, but Dren is completely inert. Eyes stare sightlessly at her.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive! Help me!

Clive joins her by the rim, sees Elsa struggling under Dren's dead weight, isn't sure what to do.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Come on!

Clive drops the syringe and reaches into the tank. Together, with difficulty, they manage to hoist Dren out of the water and lower her to the floor. She feels Dren's forehead.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Fever. She was probably trying to cool herself in the water.

Dren convulses. Her head shaking, body buckling. Elsa drops to her knees, checking Dren's vital signs, puts her head to the creature's chest.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Shit. Heart stopped!

The sight of Dren dying like a fish on dry land is too much for Elsa. She throws herself on the hybrid, hammers her chest.

CLIVE

What are you doing?

ELSA

Come on. Come on.

Elsa rhythmically pummels Dren's chest, checks her pulse, then breathes into her mouth. Clive is stunned by this reversal. He can only marvel at Elsa's determination as...

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... breathe!

Pretty soon, she has the Hybrid breathing normally. Elsa pulls back, drenched in sweat.

ELSA (CONT'D)

That's it, sweetie.

(to Clive)

Help me.

Elsa takes Dren under the arms. Clive goes around to the feet. Together they move Dren away from the tank.

They gently set Dren down on a cot. Elsa fills the sink with water.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Open the door.

CLIVE

What?

ELSA

Get some fresh air in here.

Elsa comes back to Dren, wiping her brow with a cool, damp cloth.

Clive opens the doors to the barn. Fresh air and daylight wash over Dren, pulling her back into consciousness. Her eyes drift to the opening. A gateway to trees, sky, a whole universe that she was never allowed to experience.

Elsa sees this, feels the regret of a failed parent. One that could never allow her child to prosper in the world.

Slowly, Dren's eyes grow weary. She drifts back into unconsciousness.

Clive comes up to them.

CLIVE

What do we do?

Elsa shakes her head. No answers.

102 INT. BARN -- NIGHT

The light has grown dim. Clive is asleep in an old arm chair.

The sound of SOBBING wakes him. He opens his eyes, sees Elsa from behind, hunched, crying.

Dren lies on the cot deathly still.

He reaches for Elsa. Then draws his hand back, knowing his touch can only make things worse.

103 EXT. FAMILY PLOT -- NIGHT

Clive climbs out of a freshly dug shallow grave in the family plot, next to where the cat had been buried, Elsa's mother nearby.

A single lantern lights their farewell.

Elsa gently drops the Barbie doll into the grave. Dren's body is already down there, wrapped in Elsa's old blanket.

CLIVE

Do you, uh... want to say anything?

Elsa shakes her head.

There are no more tears, no more words. Just the dreadful weight of remorse.

Clive shovels earth into the grave.

104 EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

A bonfire crackles in a garbage can near the entrance to the barn. Clive throws clothes, molted feathers, garbage... any remaining evidence of Dren into the flames.

105 INT. BARN -- NIGHT

The barn is nearly cleaned out, the vat drained, equipment boxed and prepped for moving.

Elsa sweeps the last of the garbage off the floor. She jams the broom into Dren's old hiding place and draws back a pile of papers. She is suddenly stuck with emotion.

These are drawings that Dren had made of Elsa. Not one, not two, but many sketches. All of them hidden away. All of them speaking of a secret love that a daughter had for a mother.

Tears well in Elsa's eyes. Clive steps into the barn with a wheeled dolly.

CLIVE

Almost done?

Elsa swallows her emotion, speaks without turning to him.

ELSA

Almost.

Clive, nods. Feels her anguish. But can say nothing more. He hoists a box onto the cart and wheels it to the door... Stops, sets it down as he hears THE SOUND OF AN APPROACHING VEHICLE.

106 EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa come out of the barn as a SEDAN roars up the drive. The door flies open and Barlow steps out. He marches up to them.

ELSA
What the fuck, Bill?

BARLOW
No more bullshit. I want answers.

CLIVE
To what?

BARLOW
What do you think? I'm not stupid. Those samples you gave me had human DNA content. They didn't come from Ginger and Fred. They came from something else.

Clive and Elsa share a look.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
Where is it?

They say nothing.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
TELL ME!
(still no response)
Fine.

Barlow pulls out his cell phone, starts to dial.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
I'm calling in a forensic team.

CLIVE
Wait. You haven't told anyone yet?

BARLOW
Not yet.

Barlow hangs up.

BARLOW (CONT'D)
I can make this call or I can turn in the synthetic without a word.
(MORE)

*Box +
Barlow.
THAT'S HOW
B. FINDS
THEM.*

*Too complicated
Barlow is
simply
has to
make
them.*

BARLOW (CONT'D)

But on two conditions: You keep your mouths shut. And we get rid of... the evidence.

ELSA

That would be convenient.

BARLOW

That's right. Convenient for everyone. You get to be biotech superstars again, I get a promotion, and we all get to stay out of jail. You miserable fuck-ups.

He gives them a final piercing look.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

But first we destroy the thing. There can't be a trace.

Elsa pushes past Barlow towards the van.

ELSA

She's already dead.

He trails after Elsa. Clive follows, numbly.

BARLOW

I don't believe you.

Elsa picks up a shovel off the ground. Tosses it to Barlow.

ELSA

See for yourself.

Barlow catches the shovel, looks at it with distaste.

ELSA (CONT'D)

She's buried on the hill.

BARLOW

How do I know there's only one?

CLIVE

Christ Bill. One was enough.

SHHHRK!

A blur of movement, barely perceptible, followed by a violent backwash of air. Barlow's face is frozen in an odd state of consternation...

...As his head slides off his neck. And drops on the lawn, followed by the rest of his body.

Elsa SCREAMS, stumbles backwards. Clive reacts, stunned as...

Something lands on the ground between them. Something big.

DREN.

Covered in grave dirt.

Resurrected.

Transformed.

MALE.

The difference in physiology is unmistakable. The eyes are now set in the front of the skull, defining him as a predator. The arms more developed, hips narrowed, pectorals pure rippling muscle. And the wings are massive, one still coated with a streak of Barlow blood.

The only detail that clearly marks this as the Dren that we once know is the blazing shock of white hair on the left side of his head.

Male-Dren turns to Elsa, takes a threatening step forward.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

El, run!

But she's frozen to the spot, transfixed by this macabre transformation.

Dren takes another step as...

Clive runs over, picks up the shovel off the ground and swings. In a blur of movement, Male-Dren deftly dodges the shovel, and with one sweep of his wings, propels forward, dragging Clive into the blackness with taloned feet.

The blast of air fans the bonfire. The burning can falls over, rolling to the entrance of the barn, setting it alight.

Elsa, aglow in the growing fire, watches helpless as sounds of violence fill the air.

ELSA

Clive?!

No response.

ELSA (CONT'D)

CLIVE!!!

A deadening calm descends. Nothing but the CRACKLING FIRE. Flames lap at the barn door.

ELSA (CONT'D)

CLIVE!!!!

Something passes overhead. Very low. From out of nowhere, Clive literally falls from the sky and lands at her feet. Elsa cries out. Drops to one knee, rolls him over so that he is facing her. His clothes are torn. Blood flows freely from lacerations across his chest and face. But he is alive.

CLIVE

My eyes.

She takes him, hefts him onto his feet. He winces.

ELSA

Oh, God. ...Can you stand?

Clive gives a pained cry.

CLIVE

Trying...

She pulls his left arm over her shoulder. Forces herself to calm down.

ELSA

Try to walk.

He nods. With Elsa's help he manages to limp down an ill defined path to the van.

107 INT. VAN -- NIGHT

The passenger door opens and Elsa eases Clive inside. A moment later, the driver's side opens and she jumps in.

But she just sits there, paralyzed.

CLIVE

What?

ELSA

Keys! You have the keys.

Clive reaches for his pocket but it's gone. Ripped away, revealing a bloody patch of leg.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Fuck!

108 EXT. FARM -- NIGHT

Elsa gets out of the van.

From above, the sound of powerful, flapping wings. Elsa runs around the passenger side, yanks Clive out.

ELSA
COME ON!

Together, they make a hobbling sprint for the farmhouse.

109 INT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Elsa and Clive burst inside, freaking out. Half-blind Clive tumbles onto the floor. Elsa locks the door behind them.

110 INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Elsa props Clive against one wall. She wets a rag in the sink and dabs it over his wounds.

ELSA
There. Can you see anything?

CLIVE
Blurry.

ELSA
Blurry's good.

CLIVE
She's a fucking male! What happened?!

Elsa is struck with a realization.

ELSA
Ginger and Fred.

CLIVE
What?

ELSA
Ginger turned male. They were two males in a confined space. That's why they fought!

CLIVE
She... Dren's not confined.

ELSA
Maybe he's just pissed off.

CRASH! Something heavy has landed on the roof. SCRATCHING, CLAWING FOOTSTEPS track over their heads.

Elsa draws a butcher knife from the kitchen counter.

CRASH! Glass shatters somewhere inside the house.

*Old Sc. as
FROM BEHINDING.
CLIVE PULLS
INTO
WATER.*

Elsa stands frozen, staring at the door to her old bedroom. From beyond the door, she hears a LOUD ROAR, and the TINKLING OF GLASS. She's drawn to it, despite herself.

Clive sniffs the air. Elsa thrusts open the door.

CLIVE

Don't...

WHOOSH! Flames belch from the room in an explosive backdraft. Elsa is propelled to the floor. She watches, mesmerized, as a chunk of barn lays burning on the mattress. Apparently, Male-Dren thrust it through the window. The entire room in flames. He's smoking them out.

Elsa wrenches her eyes from the sight. She gets up off the floor and pulls Clive to his feet.

ELSA

Come on!

Elsa drags Clive to the door. Clive seems to be regaining his sight. As Elsa stumbles out through the door, Clive pauses. He sees the VAN KEYS, resting on the table. He takes three steps back into the smoke to retrieve them.

Through the door, we see Elsa collapsed on the lawn, hacking. She looks back for Clive.

As Clive is about to step out, keys in hand, Male-Dren's tail whips out smacking him in the gut, knocking him back inside. His head hits the kitchen counter and he drops to the floor unconscious.

The tail SLAMS the door shut.

111 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Elsa, still prone on the ground, sees Male-Dren silhouetted against the inferno, Clive trapped inside.

Elsa stands, uncertain.

ELSA

Dren?

Male-Dren pauses, conjuring memories from a previous life.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Dren, it's me honey.

He flexes his wings, towering to his full eight-foot-height. His face shows no evidence of compassion or comprehension. Old Dren's capacity for human emotion has been replaced by pure animal impulse.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 You're scaring me. I don't...
 (beat)
 I don't know what you want? What is
 it you want?

LATER
 ANS: INSIDE
 you.

Male-Dren pounces. Elsa bolts for the forest.

112 EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Elsa runs blindly into thick forest. She stumbles over rough terrain. Branches whip her face and arms. Thick bushes tear at her legs.

Above: FLAPPING WINGS followed by the RUSTLE OF BRANCHES. FLAP, RUSTLE. FLAP, RUSTLE. It's getting closer.

It sounds like Male-Dren is flinging himself from tree to tree, tracking her from above.

Ahead is an outcropping of rock. She squeezes inside.

Something lands on the rock above, debris showers over the opening. A HOLLOW CRY.

Elsa stifles her breath, stares helplessly, waiting.

Then more FLAPPING WINGS... and quiet.

As carefully as she can, Elsa worms her way out and takes off.

113 INT. FARMHOUSE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Clive wakes up in an inferno. Flames are licking up the kitchen walls. He stumbles to his feet, makes for the back door, draws his hand back from extreme heat. The door is on fire from the outside.

Clive covers his mouth with a kitchen towel, climbs onto the counter and throws himself through the window.

114 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Clive hits the ground hard, singed and choking but safe. Behind him, the house really goes up, the heat forcing him to his feet.

115 EXT. FARMHOUSE, TOOLSHED -- NIGHT

Clive limps through the yard. Finds what he's looking for, a toolshed.

116 INT. TOOLSHED -- NIGHT

A cobwebbed door opens. Rusted farm implements everywhere. Clive searches for a weapon.

117 EXT. FIELD -- NIGHT

Elsa breaks through the tree-line and tumbles into a sea of waist-high wheat. She weaves through it, directionless, panicked.

Again, the sound of flapping wings overhead.

She throws herself to the ground, lies under the cover of wheat, choking back her breath.

SILENCE.

She waits. Finally, rises, cautiously pokes her head above the horizon of green.

BEHIND HER, two enormous multicolored wings silently spread outward as the form of Male-Dren rises into view.

Elsa whirls around. The wings envelope her.

118 EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

A distant SCREAM echoes through the night. Clive stumbles to a stop. Listens. Another CRY. He hefts an ax that he took from the toolshed and takes off with all the speed he can muster.

119 EXT. FIELD -- NIGHT

Clive enters the field breathless and in pain. Nothing is visible beyond the rolling horizon of wheat. He is about to turn back, when he sees something sticking out of the mud:

ELSA'S SHOE.

Then he hears it. STRANGE PURRING and SCRAPING SOUNDS.

He pushes into a small clearing of trampled wheat in time to see Male-Dren on top of Elsa, her arms pinned over her head, his pelvis thrusting.

Clive is frozen by the sight.

Elsa is in shock, her mouth hanging open, eyes rolling, her legs thrust out on either side of Male-Dren, one twisted at a brutal angle.

Male-Dren thrusts harder and faster, racing towards climax.

Clive overcomes his paralysis, his face hardening. He raises the ax.

Elsa sees this, is pulled back into awareness, looks up, into the face that hangs over hers, Male-Dren stiffening in the grip of sexual ecstasy as it releases inside her, then falls still just as...

Clive lunges forward, plunging the ax head into the Hybrid's shoulder. Male-Dren lets out a HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK, before flexing his wings. He launches himself up with the force of his wings, simultaneously spinning to face Clive.

Clive takes another swing, cleaving into a wing. MORE SCREAMING, but this time Male-Dren attacks. His wings swipe and flutter at Clive, blowing him backwards with their wind-force.

Clive lands hard, the ax a few feet away. Male-Dren leaps at him. With his last remaining strength, Clive reaches for the ax, grabs the handle and swings it in a blind upward arc, catching Male-Dren the chest. The creature lands on top of him. With a guttural GROAN, the Hybrid rolls off of Clive, the ax head firmly lodged in its clavicle.

Clive looks to Elsa. A moment of contact. He reaches for her...

As Dren's BARBED TAIL rises behind...

ELSA

Clive!

He turns a moment too late as the tip plunges deep into his chest, piercing his heart. Clive stiffens, chokes, then falls away. Instantly dead.

Male-Dren arches to the sky, lets out a final VICTORIOUS SCREAM. He wrenches the ax out of his chest with a horrid sucking sound.

He turns to Elsa just in time to catch a rock on the side of his head. Male-Dren drops backwards, blood gushing from the impact point.

Elsa, with remarkable strength, hoists up an even larger boulder above her head and hulks over the felled Hybrid.

Male-Dren's face changes. The menacing animal violence fades away. The eyes go soft, almost pleading. The mouth trembles, taking on recognizably human facets of fear, hurt... even betrayal. Elsa's eyes register compassion, but retain a steely determination.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

No AX

DREN
KILLS
CLIVE
BECAUSE
ELSA DOESN'T
HAVE HEART
TO FINKH
KOR-OFF

She lets the boulder down - crushing his skull into a SICKENING PULP. Male-Dren's body spasms once or twice before resting.

Elsa stands, numb and drained. Tears roll down her cheeks at the sight of Clive's body, and the muddled mess that was once Dren.

She lets herself cry, a convulsing weeping. In the distance the farm burns to the ground.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

120 INT. NOVAPHORM HEADQUARTERS - JOAN'S OFFICE -- DAY

Elsa sits at the end of a large desk. Her hair is cropped short, the streak of white, once an emblem of her uniqueness, has been dyed to match the rest. We can assume that a fair amount of time has passed since her ordeal.

At the other side of the desk is Joan. Her usual scolding demeanor is replaced by a generous warmth -- anxious to make Elsa feel comfortable.

JOAN

Who would have thought it possible?

ELSA

Well... I guess, we might've. But we... never would have considered it.

JOAN

Your Dren turned out to be a cauldron of the most unimaginable chemical mysteries. We've determined that her protogenic ability was sparked by the concentration of CD-356 in her system. Along with about a dozen other completely unique compounds.

(grinning)

We'll be filing patents for years.

Elsa remains mute, feeling a little awkward.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Naturally, we're extremely excited that you're willing to take us to the next stage.

(beat)

Especially in light of the personal risk.

Elsa shifts nervously in her chair. Joan pushes a sheet of paper across the desk for Elsa to examine.

*MAKE
ELSA
MORE
AFFIRMATIVE
ABOUT
THE
RISK.*

JOAN (CONT'D)

We think the figure we've come up
with is very generous.

Elsa studies the sheet. Her eyebrows lift with surprise.
It's a huge sum. Joan slides a phonebook-sized contract
across the desk.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Of course, it's contingent on signing
this lifetime confidentiality
agreement.

(beat)

You can never speak of this. To
anyone. Ever.

Elsa thumbs through the pages, listlessly. After a long
moment of hesitation, she finally signs. Joan's face breaks
into a huge, relieved grin. She walks around the desk.

JOAN (CONT'D)

This is going to be so exciting. An
adventure.

Elsa also stands, and we see now that her stomach is
protruding noticeably. She is QUITE PREGNANT. Joan puts an
arm around Elsa's shoulder, and a gentle hand on Elsa's
swollen belly.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You're not scared, are you?

ELSA

Maybe. Yes, I guess. A little.

Joan pulls her into a hug, stroking her hair.

JOAN

Don't be. No matter what happens,
just remember. We will always be
here for you.

Joan holds Elsa close, rocking her with reassurance. Elsa's
awkwardness melts. She gives herself to Joan's motherly
embrace.

THE END.