

SPLICE

by

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4.10.07

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

A SUDDEN CHOKING SOUND. GURGLING. And a GASPING FOR AIR. The HIGH-PITCHED WHINE turns 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 she 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 an ARTIFICIAL BIRTHING MACHINE.

CLIVE
 (excited)
 He's perfect. He's just fucking perfect!

Elsa places us gently into A CRIB-LIKE bubble. They pull off their masks revealing beaming, youthful faces.

ELSA
 (as a compliment to
 Clive)
 Of course. He was brilliantly conceived.

CLIVE
 (as a compliment to
 Elsa)
 And fabulously executed.

He leans over and gives her a congratulatory kiss.

3 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - CORRIDOR -- DAY

The lab is naked, functional and illuminated under stultifying florescent light. This is the gritty reality of contemporary genetic engineering.

Clive and Elsa, sans medical smocks, wheel the pod-like incubator down the corridor. We get our first good look at them:

Clive, early thirties, 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, about the same age, sports a tangled brunette mane accented by a single streak of white hair. She's a firecracker, brimming with happy self-assurance that comes from a lifetime of being the smartest girl in the room.

As they reach the end of the corridor, Clive betrays a hint of concern.

CLIVE

Maybe we should wait.

ELSA

They need to imprint.

4 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- DAY

The door opens and Clive and Elsa roll in the incubator. The room is small and sterile.

Clive crosses to a cage on the floor and releases a BIZARRELY UNIDENTIFIABLE CREATURE. 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, a collection of bizarre orifices decorate her back.

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

Elsa captures the moment with a SMALL CAMCORDER.

CLIVE

C'mon, Ginger... Come meet your little brother.

GINGER crawls tentatively to the threshold of her cage.

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

5 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

Clive and Elsa's team observe this historic event from behind a one-way mirror. They watch enraptured as...

6 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- DAY

Clive places Fred gently down on the floor near Ginger, and steps back. Ginger cranes her neck, sniffing the air, watching Fred with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation.

ELSA
It's okay, Ginger. He's family.

GINGER ABRUPTLY JOLTS FORWARD, lunging at the newborn with a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREECH.

Elsa GASPS. Clive lurches to rescue...

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

7 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- DAY

The team release a collective sigh of relief.

8 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- DAY

Clive relaxes, watches with fascination as...

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

ELSA
See? Love at first sight.

9 INT. HYPERSPACE LOUNGE -- NIGHT

An ultra-hip club.

Clive hands THE BARTENDER some bills and departs from the bar with an enormous tray of multi-colored shooters. As he pushes through the crowd, we recognize several of his colleagues from the lab, each helping themselves to a shot, lightening his load.

Among them is DEXTER, forties, Clive's right hand man and older, less-impressive brother. He nonetheless exudes unadulterated fraternal pride, giving Clive a crushing hug which nearly sends the tray flying.

DEXTER
You did it, Maestro.

CLIVE
(sweetly)
We did it. And stop calling me 'that'. I'm your brother for fuck's sake.

DEXTER
I'll only stop saying it when you stop being brilliant... *Maestro*.

Dexter releases him and Clive continues through the group, distributing shots and getting congratulatory slaps on the back. He finally arrives at the corner booth where Elsa is deep in discussion with MELINDA FINCH, a smartly dressed reporter from "WIRED" magazine. FLASH! A PHOTOGRAPHER snaps photos while they talk.

He watches admiring from a short distance away, preferring Elsa to take the spotlight.

MELINDA

Your critics say, by combining such disparate animals, you're violating the natural order of things.

ELSA

There was a time when it was considered "*unnatural*" to perform surgery.

MELINDA

Still, it's quite a leap to go from mending bodies to redesigning them. Do you really think the world's ready for Ginger and Fred?

ELSA

Why not? Chimeras have been with us for thousands of years. Since the earliest myths. I see them as signposts for the future. For our evolution.

MELINDA

That sounds almost... spiritual.

ELSA

You could say it's our religion.

She casts a glance at Clive who watches admiring from the shadows.

FLASH!

10 INT. HYPERSPACE CLUB - MEN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa burst into a cubicle, hands and lips all over each other... They look as though they're on the verge of having sex right there.

CLIVE

Fuck, you're hot in an interview.

ELSA

You think?

While Clive nibbles at her ear, Elsa brandishes a liquid dropper.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Ready to bust loose?

Clive pulls back, eyes the dropper warily.

CLIVE
(hesitant)
That more of your home brew?

ELSA
Afraid?

CLIVE
After last time? Very.

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

She squeezes a few pearls of liquid onto her tongue, looks at him daring. The temptation is too great. Clive plants his mouth over hers, sharing in the dose.

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

Elsa nods enthusiastically.

11 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 people deeply in love.

Clive leans in for another kiss but his attention is drawn to a BALD MAN on the edge of the dance floor, conspicuously immobile among the gyrating mob.

BALD MAN
Clive? Elsa?

Elsa smiles, expecting some kind of fan banter. Still smiling, the Bald Man fumbles with something under his coat...

And pulls out a short-muzzled shot gun.

BALD MAN (CONT'D)

(calm)
Stop playing God.

He calmly BLASTS A SHOT into Clive's chest. Clive flies backwards, collapsing onto the dance floor. Elsa SCREAMS.

The music stops. A chilling HUSH descends on the room.

The bald man drops his gun and makes for the exit, but he's immediately tackled by BOUNCERS and Clive and Elsa's team. Dexter looks to Elsa, frozen over Clive's bloodied body.

He fumbles with his cell pounding 911 into the keypad.

Elsa stares at Clive uncomprehending, her world suddenly turned upside down. She leans down to touch him when...

Clive's eyes snap open!

Elsa lets out a YELP, falls to her knees as Clive struggles up on one elbow.

CLIVE
Hey, babe... Guess what?

He holds up one hand, dabs his tongue with a bloody finger.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
God plays paintball.

Elsa's face explodes with joy and relief. She tackles him in a crushing embrace.

FLASH! Melinda and her photographer are there, taking photos of the whole unbelievable scene.

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

The modest apartment is overflowing with electronics, DVDs, comic books, movie posters, toys and other expensive pop junk. This is what happens when geeks get an income.

Clive and Elsa tumble in, snapping on the lights, still riding the combined high of alcohol, drugs and adrenaline. Clive's shirt sports an explosion of red paint across the chest.

ELSA
What I don't understand is why he didn't want to shoot me? I mean, of course a Right-Wing nutbar like that is incapable of believing a woman could be the head of an important scientific breakthrough, but still...

CLIVE

You're jealous.

ELSA

No, I'm not.

CLIVE

You are. You have 'assassination
envy'.

ELSA

Shut up.

They stumble towards...

THE BEDROOM

Where Elsa drunkenly pulls at Clive's bloody shirt buttons.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Let's get this thing off of you.

CLIVE

(wincing)

Careful...

She pulls back the fabric revealing a broad red welt across his left-side pectoral. Or possibly it's the stain of red paint on his skin. She leans in and kisses his chest.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You know it's interesting. For that moment, when I thought I was shot, all the cliches were true. Time seemed to slow down, I think I even saw a heavenly light.

ELSA

(between kisses)

Endorphins, hormone secretions to the central nervous system... Increases awareness and reaction time in moments of crisis... part of the survival mechanism....

Clive is becoming aroused, perhaps as much from Elsa's clinical banter as her touch.

CLIVE

I wonder if that applies to all species... not just ones with higher brain functions...?

He deftly unsnaps Elsa's bra and lifts it, shirt and all, over her head.

ELSA
Probably not. Visual perception's
contained within the occipital lobe...

Clive drops Elsa onto the bed and starts peeling off her
jeans.

CLIVE
Some subspecies of salamander have
something that approximates an
occipital lobe...

Stripped to her panties, she pulls Clive down onto the bed
with her.

ELSA
Enough.

She plants her lips over his, effectively shutting him up,
then reaches for the drawer of the bed table.

CLIVE
Hey... wait a sec....

Elsa pulls out a string of condoms.

ELSA
What?

CLIVE
Why don't we forget it? Just this
once.

ELSA
I don't think so.

CLIVE
What's the worst that could happen?

ELSA
You're a genetic engineer, figure it
out.

CLIVE
Would that be the end of the world?

ELSA
We're on a mission, remember? It's
not a good time.

CLIVE
There's never going to be a good
time.

ELSA
How about after we crack male
pregnancy?

CLIVE
And ruin this perfect figure?

ELSA
Hypocrite.

Clive laughs, relenting. Then for a moment, grows serious.

CLIVE
You know what I was really thinking
of when I was shot? That I'd never
see you again.

Elsa contemplates this. It's unimaginable.

ELSA
Don't even say that. I'd never let
it happen.

Elsa leans over to turn the light off. The room snaps into
DARKNESS. The sound of a TEARING CONDOM PACKAGE.

13 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.

BARLOW (O.S.)
I wish you guys would fill me in on
this presentation.

14 INT. NOVAPHORM - DOWNTOWN HEADQUARTERS - CORRIDOR -- DAY

Clive and Elsa are led hastily down a long, pristine corridor
by their project manager, WILLIAM BARLOW, fifties. A natural-
born bureaucrat, Barlow can barely suppress his feckless
panic.

BARLOW
I mean, not that I don't have absolute
faith, but as your project manager,
I like to think that I can be a
sounding-board.

CLIVE
Relax. It's just another dog and
pony show.

ELSA
Hey, we could splice a dog and a
pony.

CLIVE

Then it could do the presentation
for us.

Barlow offers a hollow chuckle.

ELSA

It'll be mind-blowing, Bill. Trust
us.

BARLOW

As mind-blowing as last month's party?

CLIVE

Something like that.

BARLOW

Now that was a joke.

(to Elsa)

He is joking, right?

(to Clive)

I had to do a lot of damage control
after that... incident.

ELSA

It was just a party.

Elsa pops NERD candies into her mouth, crunching them loudly.

BARLOW

A party that "Wired" was invited to.

Barlow shakes a copy of the new issue of "Wired" magazine,
turns to an earmarked page featuring a photo of Clive and
Elsa -- blood-splattered on the dance floor.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

*"If God didn't want us to explore
his domain, why'd he give us the
map?"*

ELSA

Bumper-sticker wisdom.

Elsa bites down loudly on a Nerd. Barlow grimaces as though
she were biting down on his nerves.

BARLOW

I'm just asking. Please. You've
got Joan Klein and the entire
management team of this division
upstairs. Be sensitive to their
concerns. ...You know, "the hand
that feeds" and all that?

Clive gives Barlow a reassuring pat on his shoulder.

CLIVE

We're gonna feed the hand until it's
blue in the face. They'll love it.

They step into a waiting elevator. Barlow looks not the least
bit assured.

15 INT. NOVAPHORM CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

A large conference room located in the stratosphere of
Novaphorm headquarters. A gathering of EXECUTIVES.

Barlow stands off to the side, eyeing the Novaphorm team
nervously. In particular, he monitors the reaction of JOAN
KLEIN, Novaphorm's new Chief of Operations. In her 50s,
Joan is a well-starched bundle of cold candor.

CLIVE

The H-40 chimeras exceeded all
expectations in their ability to
produce medicinal proteins for
livestock.

A power point presentation flashes images of Ginger and Fred,
graphs, stats, etc. in the background.

ELSA

And now, with the birth of Fred, we
have a proven technique for braid-
pairing, which can be applied to the
most sophisticated of organisms.
Namely...

The color drains from Barlow's face. He looks to Elsa
pleading with his eyes. She catches this look and continues
with gleeful abandon.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Human beings.

The screen behind transitions from Ginger and Fred to an
image of Da Vinci's VITRUVIAN MAN. A murmur among the
assembled.

CLIVE

By incorporating human DNA into the
hybrid template, we might have the
key to curing any number of human
diseases.

ELSA

Parkinson's. Liver damage. Epilepsy.
And the grail...Cancer cure.

A terrible moment of suspended silence as Clive and Elsa
wait for the reaction.

Joan clears her throat. All eyes snap to her.

JOAN

Extraordinary. Simply extraordinary.
(to the assembled)

I don't think I exaggerate when I say that Clive and Elsa represent the future. Not just for this corporation, but for the entire field of bio-engineering.

Clive and Elsa share an excited, hopeful glance

JOAN (CONT'D)

(to Clive and Elsa)

And that is why it is time to move on to Phase 2.

ELSA

Phase 2?

JOAN

Yes. The product stage. We need to isolate the gene in Ginger and Fred which produces your magic protein, CD-356. We're shutting down the splicing facilities. Retooling your labs for intensive chemical analysis.

For the first time, Clive and Elsa look caught off-guard.

CLIVE

Shutting down...?

ELSA

But what about our proposal?

JOAN

Very impressive. But it sounds like a longterm goal. That is not what Novaphorm needs at this time.

ELSA

Proceeding to human splicing was always part of our plan. It's what we signed on for.

BARLOW

Elsa, we all know that can't happen right now. Moral outrage will have politicians and regulators tearing us to pieces.

(beat)

Christ, you mixed a few animals and it practically got you shot.

CLIVE
But you're lobbying for an exploratory
license. Right?

Barlow's silence gives Clive his answer.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
You promised. When we signed our
contracts. You said...

BARLOW
What I said was I would do everything
I possibly could.
(beat)
This is not the time. There's nothing
to be done on that front right now.

Elsa's face tightens. Joan leans forward in her seat.

JOAN
Look. We'd love to cure all those
things. Of course we would. Nothing
would make us prouder as a company.
As human beings.
(beat)
You put a viable livestock product
on the shelves... Then we can talk
about a twenty year plan to save the
world.
(beat)
Right now, we need to start Phase 2.
And you're the only ones who can do
it.

Clive and Elsa stare despondently at the room of stony faces.

16 INT. NOVAPHORM HEADQUARTERS - UNDERGROUND PARKING -- DAY

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

CLIVE
We could quit. Go to Hamilton-
Splinter.

ELSA
Novaphorm owns our patents. We'd
lose everything.

Elsa ducks into a bright red GTO, their car, slamming the
door loudly.

17 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S CAR -- DAY

Clive turns the key in the ignition. Eight cylinders jump
to life. Elsa stares through the windshield at the cement
wall before them... seeing through it, beyond their limits.

CLIVE

So... What?

ELSA

I am not spending the next five years
pulling pap smears from swine.

Elsa turns to Clive, her eyes burning with ambition, her mouth betraying a trace of smile.

There's a moment. Elsa's determination pulverizes any reluctance Clive might possess. Not a word is spoken, but we can see it in their faces. They are going to do this thing.

Abruptly, Clive throws the car into reverse and they SCREECH out of the lot.

18 EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK -- DAY

Clive and Elsa's muscle car blazes through an anonymous set of buildings. Passes quickly through a security gate, parks in a private spot.

19 INT. SECURITY ENTRANCE, LAB -- DAY

Clive and Elsa approach the desk of YUJI, a dreadlocked Japanese security guard reading a Hentai (porn) comic book.

YUJI

Dr. C and E, wassup?

Elsa leans over his desk, hits the door release button, buzzing them through...

YUJI (CONT'D)

Yo, that's my whole job description.

ELSA

Sorry. In a hurry.

...then follows Clive down the hall to...

20 INT. GRUNT ROOM -- DAY

Home to a motley horde of BIO-SPECIALISTS and TECHIES, many glimpsed at the party, now prisoner to cramped work stations.

The staff greet Clive and Elsa like geek royalty as they hustle through the room, dodging an obstacle course of biohazard garbage containers, pipette bins and bacteria shakers as they head for...

21 INT. SPLICING LAB -- DAY

An empty sterile room is suddenly filled with pounding funky hip-hop, hyper-beat trance fusion 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.

22 INT. MOLECULAR SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

The MUSIC continues under A MICROSCOPIC VIEW of Clive and Elsa's DNA splicing experiment.

We watch free-falling 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.

23 INT. SPLICING LAB -- MORNING

Early 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 "Wired" 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.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
It's fucked.

He drops back in his chair, defeated.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Maybe Bill's right. Maybe it's not the right time.

This fires up Elsa.

ELSA
That's why it's the right time.

She paces the room. The techno music hammering into her brain.

ELSA (CONT'D)
This retarded fascist uber-musik is the problem! It's got us thinking in circles.

She rips out the CD, leafs briskly through the collection. Finds just the right thing. Hits play.

The room warms up under the gentle strains of FRANK SINATRA crooning COLE PORTER'S, "UNDER MY SKIN".

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

CLIVE

You're right. 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.

CLIVE

It's not work-- ...Wait. .. It's happening.

His head springs from the eyepiece.

ELSA

Why now?

Elsa's 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 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!

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

24 INT. NUCLEAR TRANSFER ROOM -- DAY

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

Elsa kisses the displayed graphic on the screen.

The screen flashes: "H-50 GENOME COMPLETE".

25 INT. COLD ROOM -- DAY

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

CLIVE
All right. Bio-technology's most
startling breakthrough in decades...
on ice.

Clive and Elsa share a grim, anti-climactic sigh. Then Elsa gives him a mischievous look. She does a U-turn and wheels the tank out of the room.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
El, where are you going?

26 INT. CORRIDOR, LAB -- DAY

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

CLIVE
Yo, white-stripe. Quit screwing
around.

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

27 INT. BIRTHING ROOM -- DAY

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

CLIVE
(through door)
What are you doing?... Hello? ...El?
(MORE)

CLIVE (CONT'D)
 (no response)
 This is what's known in couple therapy
 as 'emotional high-jacking'.

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

CLIVE (CONT'D)
 (through door)
 You're being a bad 'responder' to my
 'inquisition statement'.

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

CLIVE (CONT'D)
 (through door, becoming
 serious)
 El, human cloning's illegal.

ELSA
 This won't be human. Not entirely.

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

28 INT. CORRIDOR -- DAY

Clive fumbles through his pockets.

CLIVE
 Seriously. Stop it!

He finds a swipe card.

29 INT. BIRTHING ROOM -- DAY

The door unlocks, Clive enters and quickly shuts it behind him. He gets between her and the controls.

CLIVE
 We could go to jail.

ELSA
 Relax. We won't take it to term.
 We just need to find out if we can
 generate a sustainable organism.
 Then we destroy it. Nobody will
 ever know.

CLIVE
 What's the point if we can't publish?

ELSA

To be sure we really did it. To know for sure.

(beat)

Are you telling me you don't need to know?

Clive shifts on his feet. She's hitting all the right buttons. Still... he remains in the grip of reason.

CLIVE

It's not that simple.

(beat)

There are... moral considerations.

Elsa raises her eyebrows. She glances at the glowing red button.

ELSA

Millions of people are suffering and dying with no hope. We might be sitting on the key to save them. What are the moral considerations of that?

Clive swallows hard. Her reasoning has trumped his. He follows her gaze to the crimson lit plastic. His mouth tightens.

ELSA (CONT'D)

I know you want to.

Clive's hand reaches out...

CLICK.

He's hit the button.

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

Conception.

CLIVE

Fuck.

ELSA

Exactly.

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

A view of the egg appears ON SCREEN.

ELSA (CONT'D)

It's not too late to abort.

Clive watches, enraptured as the petri dish dissolves in the murky fluid environment, cells replicating at an unnaturally high rate, gene markers radiating like twinkling stars.

The process is almost mystical.

CLIVE

No. Not yet.

He puts a reassuring arm around her.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

I want to know.

30 INT. GESTATION CHAMBER -- DAY

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

31 INT. MAIN LAB -- DAY

Clive walks 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 names of famous celebrity couples: "*Brad and Angelina*", "*Sonny and Cher*", "*Ashton and Demi*", "*Bogart and Bacall*"...

...Ending at two cages: *Ginger and Fred*.

We see that Fred has grown almost to Ginger's size. They bob and coo as Clive checks the readings on clipboards hooked to the bars. Dexter hovers nearby.

DEXTER

Hey, Maestro, everything okay?

CLIVE

Yeah, great. You?

DEXTER

Sure. I guess. Whaddya gonna do? Orders is orders. We'll nail that gene.

(beat)

But, uh... I can't help but notice you and Elsa have been busy with something.

Clive looks up from his chart. A tense beat... he smiles.

CLIVE

Building you an Elsa all for yourself.

DEXTER

Nice. I'll be sure not to tell the wife.

CLIVE

Our secret.

Clive gives Dexter a conspiratorial wink and moves on to inspecting the rest of the lab.

32 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 STOPS.

Elsa's brow creases with worry. She chews nervously on her pen.

ELSA

Come on.

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

Elsa sighs with relief. She turns to a calendar and marks off a square: DAY 26.

33 INT. OPEN HOUSE -- DAY

A well-appointed REAL ESTATE AGENT walks Clive and Elsa through a very chic and very expensive loft-style apartment.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

It's a fusion of art nouveau and sixties futurism. Six figures, but the owner will negotiate.

LATER:

Clive and Elsa confer in one corner while the Real Estate Agent waits to the side.

ELSA

I fucking love it.

CLIVE

Yeah. It's cool.

ELSA

You don't sound so enthusiastic. Is it too expensive?

CLIVE

No...

ELSA

Then what?

CLIVE

It's just... I don't want to have to move again any time soon.

ELSA

Why would we have to move again?

CLIVE

It might not be... big enough.

ELSA

It's twice the size of our apartment. There's more than enough room for all our stuff.

CLIVE

Yeah but... But you know. For down the road.

Elsa can see that Clive is hedging around her questions.

ELSA

You're talking about a kid, aren't you?

CLIVE

Is that so unreasonable?

ELSA

Uh, yeah. Cause I'm the one who has to have it. Jeeze. What's wrong with you? Guys aren't even supposed to want kids.

CLIVE

That's not true. And I don't see what's wrong with it.

ELSA

This is what's wrong. I like this place. I don't want to bend my life to suit a third party that doesn't even exist yet. I want control over my life. You know how important that is for me.

Clive is about to respond when his Blackberry begins to chime.

ELSA (CONT'D)

What?

CLIVE

(looking at the
Blackberry)

It's an alarm... From the lab...
Something's wrong. With the gestation
cell.

OFF Elsa's concerned look...

34 EXT. CITY STREET -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa's GTO races to their lab.

35 INT. CAR -- TRAVELING -- NIGHT

Clive drives like a madman, Elsa riding shotgun.

ELSA

(worried)

Do you think someone found it?

CLIVE

You mean shut it down?

(to reassure her but
not believing it)

Nah, probably a power surge or a
glitch. I'm sure everything's fine.

Nevertheless, Clive floors it.

36 EXT. LAB -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa reach the entrance but the door is locked.
The security desk is empty, there's no Yuji, just a sign
that reads, "Gone for Ramen".

YUJI (O.S.)

Yo, Dr. C and E.

Through the glass door, Yuji can be seen shambling down the
hall with Rastafarian cool and a steaming cup of noodles.

ELSA

Open the fucking door, please.

37 INT. BIRTHING ROOM, LAB -- NIGHT

The door opens and Clive and Elsa rush in. At the end of
the room, the artificial womb is belching and groaning, fluid
freely gushing from its chrome hull.

Clive glances at the monitor: "*PREPARING BREACH OF FETAL
MEMBRANE.*"

ELSA
Something's wrong.

FLOOSH! The machine spews more fluid. Louder GROANING.

CLIVE
It's trying to come out.

ELSA
It's too soon. Way too soon!

Clive and Elsa quickly throw on medical gowns, masks, and gloves. The machine contracts again, a wave of fluid flushes out. Nothing else. Elsa checks the ultrasound.

ELSA (CONT'D)
It's... grown. It's too big.

The machine emits a METALLIC CREAK.

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. She lets out a startled yelp.

CLIVE
What is it?!

Tears well in Elsa's terrified eyes.

ELSA
It's... Biting!

CLIVE
Hold on!

Clive snaps into action. He fumbles with a series of handbolts along the hull. With the last clasp unlocked, 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 inside the torn rubber glove. She pulls it away to reveal horrible lacerations where she has been stung repeatedly.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

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 rushes 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 incubator lid.

CLIVE

A mistake.

38 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- NIGHT

Elsa, arm in a sling, watches as Clive wheels the incubator containing the creature into the containment chamber and seals the door shut.

Elsa stands, unsteady. Clive approaches, holds her close.

39 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 awake.

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.

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

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.

40 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

The Hybrid is trapped inside the incubator, which in turn is sealed within the containment chamber. Clive and Elsa stand by the door. They have taken the added precaution of wearing full-body hermetic suits with helmets.

IN THE CONTAINMENT ROOM:

The door opens and Clive and Elsa enter. The Hybrid lies utterly still in its glass prison.

ELSA
Is it dead?

Clive reaches a hand into one of the thick rubber gloves built into the side of the pod...

ELSA (CONT'D)
Careful.

...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 opens the lid of the incubator for a closer look at the creature. She's puzzled to find the locking clasp coated in a sticky secretion and rattling loosely off the lid. With her gloved hands, she rolls the Hybrid over. 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. And broken out of the pod.

Something skitters noiselessly across the floor behind her.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Clive?

OBSERVATION ROOM

Out of earshot, 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 turns...

RIGHT INTO THE FACE OF THE CREATURE, hanging 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 vertically bisecting it from head to crotch.

The creature hisses and whips its venomous 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 enter but Elsa warns:

ELSA (O.S.)

Don't! It'll get out!

CONTAINMENT CHAMBER

The creature becomes increasingly agitated by Elsa's presence. She shuffles a careful step sideways.

And 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 window before scurrying into a corner of the room.

CLIVE

Get out! I'm going to gas it!

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 a toothless gummy maw, and releases 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.

CLIVE

(over intercom)

ONE...

ELSA

Clive! I said DON'T!

Elsa rips off her helmet.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Clive can't believe it. 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. Get out.

Elsa is too caught up in the magic of this moment.

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 flails out defensively. Elsa reacts, waddling backwards, confused until she realizes the creature is actually reacting to...

CLIVE

...Behind her, helmeted 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.

41 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

Let's just knock it out -- Find out
what we've got.

Elsa turns on a combination of gas valves.

42 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- MORNING

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

43 INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- MORNING

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

44 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.

45 INT. ANALYSIS LAB -- CONTINUOUS

Images from the MRI play out on a computer screen.

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

CLIVE

This is 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...
(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.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Elsa, this was never supposed to go this far. It wasn't even supposed to go full term.

ELSA

But it did.

CLIVE

We were just going to prove we could do it. That was all.

ELSA

So what are you saying? Are you really going to kill it?

Clive glances over to the sleeping hybrid, eerily human-like.

ELSA (CONT'D)

You think you can do that?

Clive's mouth tightens without comment.

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 (CONT'D)

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

CLIVE

It's aging fast.

ELSA

Days within a matter of minutes.

(beat)

This thing is going to die soon, anyway. We'll be able to observe its entire 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.

Clive looks apprehensive, but staring at the creature, he can't quite suppress a powerful fascination.

46 INT. MAIN LAB -- DAY

New equipment is being installed for the breakdown and analysis of chemicals, disturbing the work of several of the LAB STAFF.

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

DEXTER
Estrogen level's been low these days.

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

DEXTER
It's in the logs. Every test, every stat.

Dexter hands Clive a thick file.

CLIVE
Sorry. I... I'm a little worn out.

He leafs absently through stats.

DEXTER
I, um... guess that thing, that experiment you've got going on... Still not ready to talk about it?

Clive closes the file and regards his brother's aching curiosity.

CLIVE
I can tell you it's big. Pretty big. And we need your help.

Dexter quickly perks up at the pleasing prospect of involvement.

DEXTER
Sure... anything.

Clive puts his hand on Dexter's shoulder, squeezing it inclusively.

CLIVE
This experiment... it's really important that it doesn't get disturbed.

(MORE)

CLIVE (CONT'D)

We need you to make sure that nobody... I mean *nobody* gets inside the containment room.

DEXTER

Sure. Absolutely. Nobody gets in.
(hopefully)
Not even...?
(pointing to himself)

Clive smiles, and shakes his head. Dexter shrugs off his disappointment with a grin.

CLIVE

Sorry. Nobody.

47 INT. CONTAINMENT 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.

A plastic container has been taped on as a protective cover for her tail stinger. She scratches at it with some irritation.

Clive eyes the tail nervously as he 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, a 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.

48 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.

Clive now commandeers the voice recorder.

CLIVE

(into recorder)

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, precisely cleaning Elsa's finger. She gives Elsa what might be considered a smile. Elsa smiles back and continues the feeding.

49 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. Clive looks a little ruffled by stress and bad sleep.

BARLOW

Where's Elsa?

CLIVE

At the lab. Holding things together.

BARLOW

She isn't too happy about the new directive, is she?

CLIVE

It was a bit of a shock.

BARLOW

I understand.

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

BARLOW (CONT'D)
 Truth is, if we don't start projecting
 profits, big profits, soon...
 Novaphorm's in serious trouble.

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

BARLOW (CONT'D)
 Phase 2 is not an option. It's all
 we've got. You'll impress that on
 her, Clive, won't you?

CLIVE
 We're on side, Bill. Trust me.

Barlow, relieved, abruptly changes tone to one of chummy
 encouragement.

BARLOW
 Look at it this way. We're sparing
 you a lot of grief. The world's not
 ready to mess with the human animal.
 (beat)
 You know Kwan over at Geneteck?

CLIVE
 Tim Kwan?

BARLOW
 (nods)
 He stepped over the line... Right
 into a ten year prison term.

Clive takes this in...

BARLOW (CONT'D)
 Genius is punished when it's ahead
 of the times.
 (beat)
 All through history.

...And swallows hard.

50 INT. CONTAINMENT 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.

Clive sits quietly in the corner, flipping through the log
 books on Fred and Ginger, trying to get up to date.

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.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 (to Clive)
 You'll be alright, then?

Clive looks up from his work.

CLIVE
 El, you haven't taken a break in
 days.

Elsa kisses Clive on the cheek...

ELSA
 Call if there's a problem.

... and heads for the door. The Hybrid looks alarmed. She hops after 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.

Clive jumps up as Elsa spins around in time to see...

The Hybrid's back spasms, muscles twist, flesh stretches grotesquely as if something inside were trying to break out.

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.

CLIVE

Holy fuck!

Elsa instinctively yanks her leg but the Hybrid holds on tight.

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

Clive takes out their cam-corder, capturing the whole incredible event on video.

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

CLIVE (CONT'D)

El, careful...

But Elsa surrenders to the irresistible need to comfort. She bends into the gooey embrace, drawing the hybrid close. The creature's cries trail off into hiccupping breaths of relief.

Clive's brow furrows from behind the viewfinder, reacting to this blatantly emotional display.

51 INT. MUSCLE CAR - PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Elsa gets behind the wheel and inserts her key into the ignition. But she hesitates before turning it, staring back at the entrance to the lab.

She bites a nail, nervously. Then quickly composes herself and starts the car, mumbling reassurances to herself.

ELSA

She'll be alright. It's fine. She'll be fine.

Elsa swings out of the parking space.

52 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- NIGHT

The Hybrid is WAILING at the top of her lungs. She is apparently NOT fine.

The torn skin on her back has been carefully bandaged with gauze and tape, but she seems emotionally stricken by Elsa's absence.

Clive tries to approach, imploring her to calm down.

CLIVE

Hey, it's okay. She'll be back.

The Hybrid continues to wail at full volume.

Clive steps forward. The Hybrid quickly skitters towards the corner, as far as her rope will let her. Her tail flails back and forth menacingly, its plastic bottle clattering on the floor.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Take it easy! C'mon. I'm here.

She cranks up her crying another notch.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Think of all the new things we can do now.

(smiling)

We can arm wrestle!

The Hybrid's cry sputters and stalls a moment. Clive looks relieved - he's getting through. But she is just filling her lungs for another, even louder EMOTIONAL BLAST.

Hands on his ears, Clive can't take it. He staggers out of the room.

53 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - LUNCH ROOM -- EVENING

Clive inserts coins into a vending machine, relieved to be momentarily away from the cacophony. His coffee comes down the chute and as he reaches to retrieve it, he hears...

THE HYBRID'S WAILING... faint and distant, but unmistakable.

Clive shakes his head, thinking he's hearing things until his eyes land on the air duct next to the fridge. Her voice is coming up through the ventilation system.

Panicking, he scans the room. There are a few LAB TECHNICIANS snacking at the far end, who haven't yet heard.

The Hybrid's voice seems to be getting louder still. Thinking quickly, Clive fumbles with a radio on top of the fridge.

He turns it on to a talk show. The creature's voice still cuts through.

Clive spins the dial until he tunes into a LOUD HEAVY METAL STATION - mid-guitar solo. He cranks the volume. Her voice is finally drowned out.

He looks back to the Technicians. One LONG-HAIRED TECHIE holds up his fore-finger and pinky (devil's horns) as a sign of appreciation to Clive.

Clive forces a smile and returns the gesture.

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

Elsa digs musty boxes out of a hallway closet.

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: a ratty STUFFED DOG, a MINIATURE BICYCLE, a WOODEN HORSE. One toy 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, her long dark hair sports Elsa's single streak of white.

Elsa regards it for a long moment. But rather than triggering fond memories, the photo only seems to inspire melancholy.

55 INT. CONTAINMENT CHAMBER -- DAY

A NEW DAY: Elsa checks the bandages at the extraction points where the Hybrid's arms 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 some things for
you.

Elsa pulls out her box of toys and sets it down between the Hybrid's legs.

ELSA (CONT'D)

See anything else you like?

The Hybrid pushes around awkwardly in the box, intrigued by the shapes, but is instantly drawn to the Barbie doll. She has some trouble gripping with her new hands, so Elsa helps her, wrapping her own hand around the Hybrid's fingers. Together they hold Barbie in the air between them.

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 slowly lets go of the Hybrid's hand, pleased to see her grip the doll on her own.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 She was my secret friend. I wasn't
 allowed to have her, so I had to
 keep her hidden.
 (beat)
 Just like you.

The Hybrid turns it around clumsily, studying it from all angles. 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. The Hybrid's head begins to bob with fatigue, eyes drooping. She leans her forehead on Elsa's shoulder.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 You're tired. That's all right.
 We'll play later.

The hybrid nuzzles deeper into Elsa's shoulder. At first a little nervous, Elsa gathers the creature into her lap and cradles her. The Hybrid instantly begins to relax. And Elsa finds herself rocking her and humming, softly. If we listen closely the we might recognize the melody as "Under My Skin".

The creature's eyelids droop, her neck relaxes. Within moments, she is breathing deeply -- asleep.

56 EXT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Unseen by Elsa, Clive watches through the one-way mirror, her HUMMING broadcast over the intercom. He is clearly troubled by this tableau.

57 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - CORRIDOR -- DAY

In a private corner, Elsa wolfs down NERDS and talks rapidly, riding a sugar-fueled high. Clive listens. His face betrays concern.

ELSA

I think it's a form of hypometamorphosis. Her tissue liquefies and reforms. That's why we can't track it with MRI or x-rays. 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.

CLIVE

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

ELSA

She's not just a collection of instincts. She thinks.

CLIVE

Of course she thinks. Dogs think. But...

A TECHIE passes. They nod greetings, pausing their conversation until he's out of earshot.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(quiet)

...But dogs aren't capable of complex associative reasoning.

ELSA

You're wrong. She just needs time.

Clive watches Elsa carefully, measuring her up.

CLIVE

You know what we need?

ELSA

What?

CLIVE

We need to act our age.

58 INT. HYPERSPACE -- NIGHT

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

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 is losing steam. He pockets the vial.

CLIVE

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

The noise of the club floods into their vacuum of conversation. Eventually, Elsa gathers up her purse and shuffles out of the booth.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You all right?

ELSA

I want to go. I want to go back.
(beat)
She shouldn't be left alone.

59 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 emerging stands of hair, which only emphasize her baldness.

Sitting cross-legged on the floor, Elsa watches with delight as the Hybrid successfully places A SPOON onto a piece of paper with a drawn outline of a spoon.

ELSA

That's right. Spoon.
(beat)
Now "Dog". Do the dog!

The Hybrid quickly picks up the tiny STUFFED DOG and places it onto a sheet of paper with a crudely drawn dog.

Elsa claps her hands delighted.

ELSA (CONT'D)
That's it! Dog! It's getting too
easy for you, isn't it?

The Hybrid cocks her head expectantly. Elsa spills several Nerds into the creature's hand, which she quickly scarfs.

ELSA (CONT'D)
You could do this all day.

Elsa scuffles over to the table and pulls down a large box.

ELSA (CONT'D)
Let's try something different.

She pulls a Deluxe-Edition Scrabble game from its box and places the board between them. It's the kind with a lazy-Susan base, and raised ridges to line up the letters.

Elsa spills the bag of letters onto the floor and quickly rummages for the tiles she wants. She arranges the letters P-E-N onto the board then pivots it so the word appears upright to the Hybrid.

She holds up a PEN, then points to the letters.

ELSA (CONT'D)
P-E-N! That says PEN. PEN!

She puts down the pen and points to the word.

ELSA (CONT'D)
What's that? Show me. Show me the
pen.

The Hybrid just stares at her blankly. Elsa arranges the letters of her own name, E-L-S-A.

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

The Hybrid's face is a blank slate of incomprehension. Elsa points back to the first word, and holds up the 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?

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 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, the Hybrid, scuttles into the corner. Clive is suddenly furious.

CLIVE

You're talking like... You're treating her like she's a...

(catching himself)

A pet!

ELSA

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.

CLIVE

What are we doing? Why are we taking all these risks?

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

(struggling to contain himself)

A situation? She could have killed me!

Clive and Dren eye each other warily. Elsa loads a cardboard box into the lower portion of the cart.

ELSA

Don't be melodramatic. Let's just solve this.

CLIVE

Jesus fucking Christ!

60 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.

Finally the doors open, revealing... Dexter, who looks startled to see them.

DEXTER

Wow. I don't think I've seen the two of you together in weeks.

ELSA

Hey, Dex.

Dexter's eyes land on the EEG machine on top of the cart with a variety of other devices.

DEXTER

Where are you going with that?

CLIVE

Storage. It's not working. We need to order a new...

DEXTER

(confused)

What do you mean, not working? I had it hooked up to Fred yesterday.

Clive isn't sure what to say. Dexter searches their faces.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

What's going on?

THE CLACKING OF MEN'S SHOES. Clive looks over his shoulder and 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 glances at the cart of equipment.

BARLOW

What's all this?

CLIVE

Just some junk we're trashing.

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

BARLOW

Pretty state-of-the-art junk. What else are you...?

To Clive and Elsa's horror, Barlow quickly bends down to the bottom of the cart and opens the box containing Dren! Barlow tips the box to reveal that the it's empty - Dren is gone. Clive scans the hallway. Nothing.

They catch each other's eye, bewildered. Elsa bucks up...

ELSA

What can we do for you, Bill?

Barlow quickly loses interest in the equipment.

BARLOW

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

Clive and Elsa are completely distracted, scanning for some sign of missing Dren.

ELSA

Shareholders?

BARLOW

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

CLIVE

I dunno Bill, we're pretty busy...

The elevator doors slide closed. Elsa quickly slaps the down button again, they slide back open. She enters the elevator half expecting to find Dren in there. The elevator's empty. She remains inside, holding the door with her hand.

BARLOW

I thought you'd be excited. Don't
you wanna show them off?

Clive is anxious to get rid of Barlow.

CLIVE

Yeah, I guess.

He looks nervously to Elsa, who is staring oddly at Dexter.

BARLOW

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

Something drips on Barlow's shoulder. He doesn't notice.

Clive follows Elsa's eyes to Dexter. His mortified gaze is fixated on the ceiling, where Dren is wedged like a tree toad in the corner above Barlow. Her tail swings back and forth, ready to pounce. Clive stifles his shock.

Barlow takes one last look at the EEG machine.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

You sure we can't fix it? Sometimes
you guys act like there's money coming
out of...

Suddenly Dexter speaks up, a hair too loudly.

DEXTER

It's fried! Totally fucked! We
need a new one. Right away.

Barlow's eyebrows raise at Dexter's outburst. Over his shoulder, Elsa peels Dren off the wall, and swings her into the elevator.

Dexter takes Barlow by the arm and gently guides him away from the elevator.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Listen, Bill... I've got some requisition forms, on my desk. If you can push the purchase through...

Dexter hazards a glimpse back at Clive, who tosses back a quick look of appreciation, and then shoves the cart into the elevator. Barlow calls after them as the doors close.

BARLOW

Call me!

Barlow feels the wetness on his shoulder. Brings his fingers to his nose, sniffs them, sensing something is up but unable to pin down exactly what it is.

61 INT. DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR -- DAY

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

ELSA

God, I hate that guy.

CLIVE

Why, because he plays by the rules?

ELSA

Because he loves them.

Elsa quickly keys open the door and pushes the cart inside.

62 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.

Stepping inside propels a cloud of dust into the air.

CLIVE

(furious)

You know, sticking to a few fucking rules isn't always such a bad idea.

Elsa draws Dren from below the cart and into her arms, looking a little queasy. Clive steps back, wary.

ELSA

Nobody's going to care about a few rules. After they see what we've made...

CLIVE

See what we've made! Nobody can see
what we've made!

ELSA

Once they see Ginger and Fred, don't
you think the world's going to want
to know what's next?

She holds Dren's face next to her own, as though this were
all she needed to make her case to the world.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Do you think they can look at this
face... And see anything less than
a miracle?

Clive's jaw hangs open, stunned at Elsa's naivete.

And as if on cue, Dren pukes 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 shakes his head, astounded. The whole thing is getting
to be too much. Elsa puts her wrist to Dren's forehead.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive, she's really hot.

CLIVE

I've got to talk to Dexter.

He leaves, disgusted. Elsa hardly notices.

63 INT. NOVAPHORM LABS - LUNCH ROOM -- DAY

Clive sits with Dexter by the window. The silence between
them is so intense, the hum of the Coke machine sounds like
a plane landing.

Finally Clive can't take it any longer.

CLIVE

Go ahead. Say what you're thinking.

DEXTER

What I'm thinking? What were you
thinking?

CLIVE

It was kind of an accident.

DEXTER
 (incredulous)
 That kind of an accident takes a
 hundred million years! Unless...
 somebody very smart does it on
 purpose.

CLIVE
 Look. I know it's crazy...
 (beat)
 But I need your support on this. I
 need your help.

Dexter looks at Clive with a mixture of reluctant loyalty,
 and profound disappointment.

DEXTER
 I've got a wife and three kids.
 What happens to them if I go to
 prison? For what *you two* have done.

Clive squirms in his chair.

DEXTER (CONT'D)
 Did you ever think about that?
 (beat)
 Did you think at all? Or did you
 just do what *she* wanted?

CLIVE
 (face reddening)
 It wasn't like that.

DEXTER
 You could have stopped it. At any
 time, you could have said no to her.

Clive can't quite muster a retort.

DEXTER (CONT'D)
 Try it some time.

With that, Dexter bustles out of the room, leaving his brother
 to quietly simmer alone.

64 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
How do we know with her?

ELSA
(frantic)
I know. We have to do something!

CLIVE
What? What are we supposed to do?

Dren lets out a TRILLING GROAN that ends with a choke and more vomit. Elsa rushes over to wipe her mouth.

ELSA
We have to take her somewhere.

CLIVE
That's crazy!

ELSA
(almost crying)
THEN DO SOMETHING!

Clive stares down at Dren, who is quickly fading. He scans the storage room desperately.

CLIVE
We're bio-chemists. We can handle this!

ELSA
How? Fuck! HOW?!

Clive turns to the industrial sink and runs the faucet.

CLIVE
What do you do with high fever?

ELSA
Cold bath!

CLIVE
All right. Let's do it!

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 the flow of oxygen. 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
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, determined. Elsa watches like we watch our own nightmares.

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.

LATER:

Dren is out of the sink, looking very much revived as Elsa pats her down with a towel.

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

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.

CLIVE
Yeah. Of course.

Elsa relaxes, her doubt easily evaporating. Then Clive faces her, deadly serious.

CLIVE (CONT'D)
We can't fuck around anymore. We
have to clean this place up. Make
it safe.

Elsa smiles and nods, relieved to finally have him on-side.

65 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.

The storage room has now taken on the character of a family living room.

Dren 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 emphasize her strangeness.

ELSA (O.S.)

In the first three months since her birth, Dren, the world's first human-animal chimera, has far outstripped our expectations.

Clive enters the FRAME with a cake. At first, Dren shrinks from the three flickering birthday candles. But with Clive's instruction, she quickly learns to blow them out. She flashes a gap-toothed smile.

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

While genetically she follows the same template as our H-40 hybrids, the added human element appears to be taking a dominant role.

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

Elsa conducts Dren, who sways and whistles in odd tones along to a Big Band rendition of "Under My Skin" while 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, their function unclear.

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

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

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

Elsa instructs as Dren arranges scrabble tiles which float on the surface of the water to spell simple words. Nerds continue to be an incentive.

ELSA (O.S.)
 Intelligence and communication skills
 continue to improve. Still, her
 mind remains her greatest mystery.

Dren sinks below the surface disappearing from the CAMERA'S
 VIEW.

END MONTAGE

66 INT. STORAGE ROOM -- NIGHT

Clive puts down the camcorder as Elsa dims the light near
 Dren, who is tucking under the covers, post-bath.

Elsa begins to step away, when Dren bolts upright, her arms
 reaching out, clearly agitated.

ELSA
 What's wrong? What is it, honey?

Dren quickly shuffles through her collection of scrabble
 tiles on the night table. She begins to arrange letters:
 K - I - S... Elsa nearly melts.

ELSA (CONT'D)
 Oh! I'm sorry, Dren. I forgot.

She leans over and gives Dren a kiss on each cheek and one
 on the forehead. The Hybrid's tension instantly vaporizes.
 In another instant, she's asleep, her face at peace.

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.

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.

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?

Clive is about to put a stop to their passion when something catches his eye. A shimmer. He pushes Elsa's hair out of his face.

He sees her. Dren. Peering through the curtains. Her excited breathing gives her away. Oblivious, 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 unlike anything we've seen before...

Clive's face contorts into orgasm -- a release of raw physical pleasure.

67 EXT. CONVENTION CENTER -- NIGHT

Clive is GRINNING WIDELY, his eyes alight with the excitement of the evening.

He and Elsa, formally dressed, hold hands, walking 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".

JOAN (V.O.)

...They are drawn together by the simple fact that there is nobody else quite like them.

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.

68 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 is not about Elsa and Clive after all... but about Ginger and Fred, who are on stage in clear, plexi-glass cages.

JOAN

That they are completely unique in this world 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 Nicoli 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. Disease-fighting agents for livestock.

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

In the audience, front row, sit Melinda and THE PHOTOGRAPHER from "Wired" magazine.

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

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. Alive! In the flesh!

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!

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

ELSA (CONT'D)

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 them.

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.

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

Joan stares hypnotically at the video enlargement of Ginger's oozing innards.

69 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. Joan has made a point of removing her shoes. Clive's dress pants are stained from the cuffs to the knees.

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!

ELSA

They've never exhibited aggression in the past...

JOAN
Well, they did tonight. Why?

Clive and Elsa exchange glances, each hoping the other will do the explaining.

JOAN (CONT'D)
(furious)
What HAPPENED?

CLIVE
Well... we haven't had much time to examine the remains but... It seems that Ginger has somehow undergone certain... um...

ELSA
Hormonal changes.

JOAN
Hormonal changes?

ELSA
She turned into a male.

Joan and Barlow looks stunned.

BARLOW
Just like that? Changed sex? How could this happen?

CLIVE
(swallowing hard)
We... really don't know. But, clearly two males, caged together and stressed...

Joan carefully reads Clive and Elsa, as though they might be putting her on.

JOAN
So your first surviving, living hybrid changes sex...
(beat)
And you didn't notice? How is that possible?

No answer. Clive and Elsa look rightly chastised.

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

Joan slams the desk, furious.

JOAN
No more monsters!
(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

(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?

JOAN

Surely you're farther along than that?!

ELSA

Synthesizing the protein hasn't been as easy as we'd hoped.

JOAN

(angry)

Then you're not allocating your resources effectively.

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. At their lowest moment, he's clearly seizing the day.

ELSA

(outraged)

This is our project. We can handle it.

JOAN

Apparently you cannot.

BARLOW

Let me do this. We can still make the deadline.

JOAN

(to Barlow)

Done. Whatever you need. I'm making you hands-on in charge of this.

(to Clive and Elsa)

I want that protein synthesized in two weeks. Do you understand?

Clive and Elsa respond with mute compliance.

70 INT. MAIN LAB -- DAY

The gestation cell is being dismantled and 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.

71 INT. STORAGE ROOM -- DAY

Clive, Elsa, and Dexter confer in the storage room. Clive nervously paces back and forth, while Elsa sits in the corner with Dren, keeping her calm in the presence of this newcomer.

Dexter can't help staring at Dren's strangeness.

DEXTER

You have to get it out of here.

CLIVE

And take her where?

DEXTER

Anywhere! Barlow's taking over every inch of this place. He'll find it.

CLIVE

What are we gonna do? We need someplace... away from everything.

DEXTER

(genuinely confused)

What am I not getting here? What'd you expect when you made it?

(beat)

Didn't you have a plan?

Clive suddenly turns on his brother.

CLIVE

We wouldn't be in this mess if you'd been paying enough attention to observe a fucking gender change!

DEXTER

(incredulous)

Where were you, *Maestro*? I was playing catch up with of all the work you weren't doing.

Tempers are really rising. Elsa suddenly speaks up in a barely audible voice.

ELSA

I know a place.

CLIVE

What?

Elsa looks up, dredging the words from a place of dread.

ELSA

(numb)

I know a place we can take her.

72 INT. LOADING DOCK -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa stand on the platform of the loading dock as Dexter slowly backs a VAN towards them, leaning out the driver-side window. We can see from beyond the garage door that it's late night outside.

Elsa holds a protective arm around Dren. Clive steadies the rolling cart, loaded with equipment and supplies, at the edge of the platform,

CLIVE

All these years, you've owned this farm. And you never mentioned it?

Elsa looks troubled and remote.

ELSA

You knew I grew up on a farm.

CLIVE

I didn't know you still had it!

ELSA

It's not my farm. It was hers.

CLIVE

But she's dead.

ELSA

So's the farm.

73 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 glances over at Elsa, slowly putting the pieces together.

CLIVE

So.. it wasn't all Norman Rockwell?

ELSA

My mother had... problems. After my father died, I became her everything.

CLIVE

Sounds like a lot of mothers.

ELSA

One time I made her a birthday card. I forgot to write, "*I love you.*" For that, she locked me in my room for a week. Without food or water.

Clive glances over, horrified, seeing Elsa in a new light. Her quirks suddenly taking on new significance.

CLIVE

(sympathetic)

I can't believe you never told me this before.

ELSA

I just wanted to forget about it.

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

ELSA (CONT'D)

When I finally left, she refused to touch my room. She said I'd come back one day.

(beat)

I guess she was right.

74 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 tail lights. Clive gets out and unlocks a large sliding door. 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 inside.

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. She 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 on Dren's 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: trees, 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 rapidly eclipse her fear.

Suddenly, 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.

75 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 won't leave us.

CLIVE

She just did!

ELSA

She won'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.

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

ELSA (CONT'D)

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.

76 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- NIGHT

Elsa locks the door from the inside and loops the key chain 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 notices Clive watching her, a little surprised at her severity.

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.

CLIVE

(trying to lighten
the mood)

Well, it ain't the Taj Mahal, but this place is going to clean up great.

Clive climbs up a small step ladder and pulls out a garden hose from a large stainless steel tank filled 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 (CONT'D)

You like it, Dren?

Dren seems less enthusiastic. Elsa wets a cloth with the hose and gently washes the dried raccoon blood off from her mouth. But Dren resists.

ELSA
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 sulk. 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.

77 EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa tip-toe away from Dren, sleeping soundly under a blanket on an inflated mattress.

They carefully shut the door, locking Dren inside the Barn.

78 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

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

CLIVE
You okay?

Elsa bucks 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.

79 INT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Clive snaps on the lights, though many light 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.

80 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.

81 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

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

82 INT. SECURITY ENTRANCE, LAB -- MORNING

Clive approaches the security entrance. Dreadlocked-Yuji has been replaced by an anonymous, spit-polished SECURITY GUARD.

83 INT. LAB -- MORNING

Clive enters the remodeled lab, walking down a long line of identical, evenly spaced work cubicles. As he passes, the faces of his co-workers stare out mournfully from their boxes. Like prisoners of war, observing their conquered leader in chains.

With a sigh, Clive settles into his own cubical. Just another employee.

The first thing he sees is Barlow's head, over the partition.

BARLOW

Where's Elsa?

CLIVE

Not feeling well.

BARLOW

She's not in?

CLIVE

She's sick.

Barlow's lips tighten.

BARLOW

You've got to be fucking kidding me!

CLIVE

People get sick. It happens.

BARLOW

You know, a lot of people would just suck it in. Rise to the occasion.

(beat)

You guys are not some special case.
Not any more.

Barlow storms off. Clive is left to stare at the carpet-like containment of his workstation.

84 EXT. ABANDONED DAIRY FARM - GRAVEYARD -- DAY

A small family graveyard behind the farmhouse. Elsa stands over a HEADSTONE engraved with: **HENDRIKA KAST 1948 - 1996.**

We can read nothing in her face. Not hate nor love, remorse nor resentment. She just stares at the grave, as if to verify beyond any doubt that the woman remains dead.

85 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. Her head cocks towards the rafters, letting out an oddly beautiful, but MOURNFUL SONG.

Dren stops by 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 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 a chair into the base of the water tank.

A MEWING SOUND from behind the tank.

Curious, Dren creeps around and discovers a mottled, 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.

86 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.

87 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.

CLIVE

She doesn't like it. Maybe she'd prefer 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.

Dren refuses.

ELSA (CONT'D)

What is it? What's the matter?

Dren snatches the bag of scrabble tiles from the bench beside her. She frantically sifts through the letters, tossing the ones she needs onto the table randomly: a T, then a D, and an I.

Having identified the letters she wants, Dren quickly arranges them into a word. T-E-D-I-O-U-S.

ELSA (CONT'D)

TEDIOUS!

(to Clive)

She spelled TEDIOUS!

CLIVE

(skeptical)

Where would she get a word like that?

ELSA

She's telling us she's bored.

(to Dren)

Why are you bored, honey? Do you want to play a game or something?

Frustrated, without bothering to seek out more tiles, she rearranges the letters to spell a new word: O-U-T-S-I-D-E. Elsa stares down at the anagram with amazement.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Oh, Dren.

(sadly apologetic)

No, I know. But you can't go outside.

I'm sorry. You just can't.

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

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!

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!

They run for the door.

88 EXT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- EVENING

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

89 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 slide 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 towards her.

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 far end 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.

ELSA (CONT'D)

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.

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

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 is stronger. Her 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. Elsa allows herself to breathe, relieved. And just a tad jealous.

90 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's 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

Don't be ridiculous, she'd need chest muscles like a quarterback.

(MORE)

ELSA (CONT'D)
 (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.

91 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN -- MORNING

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

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 dangerous.
 (beat)
 You have to stop contradicting me in front of Dren.

CLIVE
 What?

ELSA
 If I say one thing, you can't always be saying, "no, it's okay", or "she doesn't like that".

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

Elsa, we talked about this. You have to show your face. We have to keep up appearances.

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. I guess that just leaves me to handle the real world.

He slams the door, pissed.

92 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- DAY

Clive marches to his car, slows as he passes the barn. From inside he can hear Dren's beautiful birdsong.

Clive presses close to the wall of the barn, peering through the cracks in the clapboard exterior.

CLIVE'S POV: Barely visible through the slats, Dren sits perched elegantly on an overhanging beam. She looks like a statue, the only thing betraying life are the exquisitely alien tones that tumble from her puckered lips.

Clive can't bring himself to take his eyes off her until, unexpectedly and with shocking speed, she stares right back at him.

Instinctively, he presses himself flat against the wall. Like he's been caught doing something terribly wrong. He hustles over to his car and tears down the dusty drive.

93 INT. BIRTHING CHAMBER -- DAY

Dexter works with glum fortitude at his work station. Clive is seated next to him. In his hand is Dren's feather. Dexter won't even look at it.

CLIVE

It's incredible, Dex. The way she's changing. She... she's like this impossible symphony of biological processes that just keeps--

DEXTER

(interrupting)

Stop it. Will you listen to yourself?

(MORE)

DEXTER (CONT'D)

(beat)

She's a mistake. A mistake we're all going to regret. For a very long time.

CLIVE

She's a living being.

DEXTER

Who was never meant to exist. We could lose everything. Everything.

CLIVE

You don't know that. Maybe this is what we're supposed to be doing. Maybe it's a natural part of evolution. Did you ever think of that?

Dexter gives his brother a hard, long look.

DEXTER

You know, you can still get out of this. It's not too late.

CLIVE

What are you talking about?

DEXTER

Turn her in.

CLIVE

Are you fucking nuts?

DEXTER

If you come clean... They might cut you some slack. You made a mistake. You got caught up in Elsa's craziness. I know she coerced you into it.

CLIVE

Whoa, whoa. Wait a second. That's not true. And even if it was, why would anyone believe it?

DEXTER

Because that's what I'd tell them.

Clive stares at his brother in stunned disbelief. Then...

CLIVE

You're jealous. You're jealous because we've done something unbelievable!

DEXTER

Shh. Jesus... Lower your voice...

CLIVE

...Because one of us got to be a genius. And it wasn't you!

Dexter just blinks, speechless in the face of Clive's bizarre emotional assault.

DEXTER

(hushed)

I'm just trying to help you.

CLIVE

(between his teeth)

Dexter. I haven't needed your help since we were twelve.

Clive storms from the room. Heads turn. Barlow notes his exit.

94 INT. PASTEURIZATION BARN -- DAY

Elsa enters the barn and gently approaches Dren, holding up a hair-brush as though it were a new toy. Dren looks at it, curious, but remains distant and cool.

ELSA

Guess what we're going to do?

Elsa gently brushes Dren's hair which has recently grown quite long and full. Dren, watches herself in the cracked mirror, fascinated, but reluctant to exhibit pleasure.

ELSA (CONT'D)

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. 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 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 a part of growing up too.

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

95 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, who hungrily laps it up.

Elsa sees a portrait of her mother on the wall. Her face stern and joyless, the trademark swatch of white hair trailing down her left cheek.

Something like regret plays across Elsa's face.

96 EXT. FARM -- EVENING

Clive's car pulls up the drive.

97 INT. FARMHOUSE -- EVENING

Clive comes into the darkened farmhouse.

CLIVE

El?

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

98 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 gently pulls a blanket over her, then quietly leaves the room, shutting the door behind him.

99 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 to 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 rendition of "*Under My Skin*" 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)
Follow my lead.

They slowly find a measure of sych, 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, 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 walks 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.

100 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, there's no denying it.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

You put yourself into the experiment.
 (furious, grasping
 for the right words)
 How could... What were you...? I
 mean, was this ever about the science?

ELSA

Of course it was. It still is.

CLIVE

If you really believe that then you're
 even more fucked up than I thought.

ELSA

What's that supposed to mean?

CLIVE

I'm sick of it. I'm tired of being
 your crutch. I'm tired of your
 secrets... And your lies.

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. Why not me?

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.

101 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. 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 up the cat and strokes it, relieved
 that someone, anyone, isn't hating her.

102 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 (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)

You're a part of me. And I'm a part of you... I'm inside you.

(beat)

I'll always be here for you. Always.

Elsa opens the box and presents the cat. Dren's face grows instantly alert. She glances at Elsa slightly mistrusting.

ELSA (CONT'D)

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

Elsa gently places the cat on the floor. It approaches Dren, rubbing against her leg.

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!!!

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.

There's a moment between them where it seems that Dren might actually sting her. Elsa's eyes register real fear. The power balance has tipped.

Then Dren pushes Elsa backwards, sending her sprawling across the floor and 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 has struck the back of Dren's head. She drops.

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

103 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 evolved well. 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. She hazards a glance at Dren. Her creation watches her, wide-eyed with terror.

Elsa brakes the gaze, pulls up 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.

Dren lets out a SAVAGELY SHRILL SCREAM.

104 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.

105 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 become 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?

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.

106 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.

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.

107 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.

108 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.

109 INT. MAIN LAB -- MORNING

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

Let me get this straight.

(MORE)

BARLOW (CONT'D)

You stay home because you're sick.
But now I find you sneaking around
when no one's here?

ELSA

Making up for lost time.

BARLOW

It's too late for that. They won't
extend the deadline. It's over.
You've screwed us all.

(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 an embarrassment to
this company. It's going to take
years 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.

110 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?!

111 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.

112 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, 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 in with abandon. 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 off. The stump has already healed over -- And the severed stinger has grown back, protruding from the new sheath of skin and 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 disbelieving grimace 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 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.

113 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.

Clive quickly locks the barn, then clamors into the van and drives off after her.

114 INT. CLIVE AND ELSA'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Clive enters the apartment. Sees a stack of mail has collected on the floor. There's a light on in the kitchen.

115 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
 El.

ELSA

(low)
Don't.

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...

ELSA

I don't even know who you are anymore!
You've become something sick!

(beat)

Forget about what it means to me!
There are some things you just 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...
things got confused...

ELSA

Confused about what?

CLIVE

Right and wrong.

ELSA

I don't think you're in a position
to talk to me about right and wrong.

Now Clive is finding his anger.

CLIVE

Oh... And you are? Why did you want
to make her in the first place? For
the betterment of mankind?

(MORE)

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(no response)

You didn't want an normal child because you were afraid of losing control. But an experiment... that's something else.

ELSA

I love her.

CLIVE

So, do I. But we fucked up, El. Jesus Christ. We chained her up. Locked her away from the world. Sawed off her fucking tail.

Elsa holds her head in her hands. Regret is beginning eclipse rage.

ELSA

I cut off her tail.

(beat)

It seemed like a good idea at the time.

CLIVE

Fuck. Everything seemed like a good idea.

Clive glances around the apartment, taking in their old life. Their wide-screen tv, surround-sound stereo, games, gadgets, luxuries. Their wall of books and toys.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

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

I synthesized the protein.

CLIVE

(stunned)

What?

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. Put our lives back together.

ELSA
We could start to. Except for...

CLIVE
Except. For. Her.

Clive just stares at Elsa. An unspoken understanding. Elsa whispers:

ELSA
We can't do that.

Clive's silence says everything.

ELSA (CONT'D)
We can't... We have a responsibility.

CLIVE
The experiment is over. Our
responsibility is to end it.

Elsa begins to concede to his chilling logic.

ELSA
...How?

CLIVE
The most humane way possible.

116 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.

117 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.

Elsa climbs up the step ladder to peer into the tank. The water is murky, a slight film on the surface. 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)
 (suddenly panicked)
 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 needle. 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.

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)
 Faint. Barely there.

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

What do we do?

Elsa shakes her head. No answers.

118 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.

119 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.

120 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.

121 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.

122 EXT. BARN -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa come out of the barn as a SEDAN roars up the drive. The door flies open and Dexter steps out. His expression is a combination of stern resolve and guilt.

DEXTER

I'm sorry. I had to. It's the only way.

The passenger-side door opens and out steps Barlow, furious.

BARLOW

Alright. Let's see it.

ELSA

What the fuck, Bill?
(beat, then to Dexter)
What did you tell him?

Dexter glares at her, long buried resentment rising to the surface.

DEXTER

I didn't have to tell him much.

BARLOW

Do you think I'm stupid? Those samples you gave me had human DNA content.

(beat)

They didn't come from Ginger and Fred. They came from something else. Something that's still alive.

Clive and Elsa can't deny it. He's got them dead to rights.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

(seething)

And to think you did it under my watch.

(beat)

Now. Let me see this thing. It doesn't belong to you.

CLIVE

"It" doesn't belong to anyone.

BARLOW

You made it at a Novaphorm lab. It's company property. And I want to see it. Right now!

Clive and Elsa share a look.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

Where is it?!

They say nothing.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

Fine.

Barlow pulls out his cell phone, starts to dial.

BARLOW (CONT'D)

I'm calling in a forensic team.

ELSA

She's already dead.

Barlow hangs up the phone.

Dexter reacts to this news, relieved but perhaps a little saddened also.

ELSA (CONT'D)

It's over, Bill.

Elsa pushes past Barlow and heads towards the van. 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 behind the house.

BARLOW

And how do I know there's only one?

CLIVE

One was enough.

SHHHRK!

A violent backwash of air. Barlow's face is frozen in an odd state of consternation until...

...his head slides off his neck. And drops on the lawn. The rest of his body crumbles after it.

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 knew 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 menacing step forward.

Clive leaps between them. Male-Dren instantly attacks, effortlessly flinging Clive into the burning trash can, spilling its contents and setting the ground alight.

Dexter lunges to retrieve the shovel. He picks it up and swings. In a blur of movement, Male-Dren deftly dodges it, and with one sweep of his wings, leaps off Clive, dragging Dexter into the darkness.

Elsa rushes over to Clive, bloodied but not badly injured, and pulls him to his feet. They watch helpless as sounds of violence fill the air.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Dexter?!

No response.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Dexter!

A deadening calm descends. Nothing but the CRACKLING FIRE. Flames lap at the barn door.

Elsa tries to pull Clive away.

ELSA

Come on...

Clive shakes her off.

CLIVE

DEXTER!!!

Elsa abandon's him, bolts for the van.

123 INT. VAN -- NIGHT

Elsa jumps into the driver's seat, hands shaking, she pats her pockets, searching for the keys.

Clive wrenches open the driver's-side door.

CLIVE

We can't leave!

ELSA

Where's the keys?

CLIVE

I am not leaving my brother!

ELSA

He's gone.

CLIVE

No, he's--

WHAM! SOMETHING DROPS FROM THE SKY AND LANDS ON THE WINDSHIELD:

Dexter. Savagely mauled and very dead.

Elsa cries out. Clive stares, mute.

From above, THE SOUND OF POWERFUL FLAPPING WINGS.

Elsa swallows her horror, leaps out of the van and grabs Clive.

ELSA

COME ON!

He's in shock. She half-pushes, half-drags him in the direction of the farmhouse.

124 INT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

Elsa and Clive burst inside, freaking out. Elsa locks the door behind them.

125 INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Elsa and Clive stumble into the kitchen. She wets a rag in the sink and dabs his wounds.

ELSA

You okay?

CLIVE

What... happened?!

Elsa is struck with a realization.

ELSA

Ginger. The same thing that happened to Ginger.

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 in one of the closed rooms.

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.

Clive grabs Elsa, wrenching her from the sight.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Come on!

Clive drags Elsa to the door. He grabs a flashlight from the counter. Together, they stumble out into the night.

126 EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

They burst out of the house, Clive clutching the flashlight, Elsa the butcher knife. She yanks on his arm.

ELSA
(terrified)
Clive...

He turns, sees...

Male-Dren perched on the roof, silhouetted by flames.

They are frozen by the sight.

Slowly, with frightening grace, Male-Dren rises, flexes his wings, towering to his full eight-foot-height. His face shows no evidence of compassion. Old Dren's capacity for human emotion has been replaced by pure animal impulse.

He SCREECHES A DEAFENING SCREAM, then crouches to pounce.

Clive and Elsa bolt for the forest.

127 EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Clive and Elsa stumble over rough terrain. Branches whip their face and arms. Thick bushes tear at their 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 them from above. And then nothing. Silence. They resume their run.

128 EXT. BOG -- NIGHT

They stumble into a waist-deep SWAMPY BOG. Elsa scrambles out onto a rocky embankment. Clive struggles through the sucking mud, gets stuck.

ELSA
Come on.

CLIVE
I... can't.

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

ELSA
No!

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

CLIVE

Let it go.

ELSA

We need it.

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

CLIVE

I'll get it.

Clive grasps the stick and prods deeper for the flashlight.

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

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Got it.

He pulls the light up, illuminating the ghostly face of Male-Dren who swims amphibian-like under the surface.

Elsa screams, jumps back. Male-Dren grabs the stick and yanks Clive into the water.

ELSA

Clive!

Elsa can make out the dim figure of Clive as he is pulled under. Air bubbles to the surface. She watches helplessly as the water churns and the light quickly fades to darkness. And then, all becomes still.

Elsa bends over the embankment, trying to penetrate the murky liquid.

Suddenly, Clive's face buoys into view.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Clive!

She grabs him by the shirt, drags him onto the rock. He is still breathing.

And then she sees...

Male-Dren rising up, water draining from his raptor form, wings spread above, ready to pounce.

Elsa is immobilized, not wanting to leave Clive. Male-Dren stares at her with piercing eyes. It's Elsa that he wants. He leaps forward in a blur of motion.

She turns, bolts through a narrow opening between dense trees.

129 EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Elsa runs blindly.

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.

130 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 amber, her knuckles white around the handle of the butcher knife.

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, whipping the knife from her hand, flinging it into the wheat field.

ELSA

(screeching)

What do you want? WHAT DO YOU WANT!!

Male-Dren's mouth opens, contorts, lips struggling as he SPEAKS, the words are distorted, guttural, distinctly inhuman but unmistakable:

MALE-DREN

Inside... You....

131 EXT. SWAMPY BOG -- NIGHT

Clive stirs, regaining consciousness. At the sound of ELSA'S SCREAM, he launches himself into a run for the edge of the forest.

132 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 soil:

THE BUTCHER KNIFE. He picks it up.

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.

He overcomes his paralysis, his face hardening. He raises the knife...

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 he releases inside her...

Clive lunges forward, driving the knife into the Hybrid's shoulder. Male-Dren lets out a HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK. He launches himself up with the force of his wings, spinning to face Clive.

Clive swings the knife downward again, 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 creature pounces on top of him. In that moment, it would seem that Clive is done for. Then, a rock bounces off Male-Dren's head with a brutal CRUNCH.

Male-Dren staggers back, clearly stunned. He turns to face Elsa, a bloody rock in her hands.

Weeping, Elsa hesitates. There's a moment when she can't quite do it. Can't quite murder...

Male-Dren's BARBED TAIL flashes out and plunges deep into Clive's 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 knife out of his chest with a horrid sucking sound.

He turns to Elsa just in time to catch another blow to the head. Male-Dren drops backwards, blood gushing from the impact point.

Elsa hoists the rock 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.

And she lets the rock drop, crushing his skull into a SICKENING PULP. Male-Dren's body spasms once or twice before resting.

Elsa falls to her knees, numb and drained. Tears roll down her cheeks at the sight of Clive's body, and the crumpled mess that was once Dren.

She lets herself cry, a convulsing weeping, while in the distance the farm burns to the ground.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

133 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

Your Dren turned out to be a cauldron of the most unimaginable chemical mysteries. Aside from the intense concentration of CD-356 in her system, she was riddled with a variety of completely unique compounds.

(pleased)

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... um... personal risk.

Joan pushes a sheet of paper across the desk for Elsa to examine.

JOAN (CONT'D)

We think the figure we've come up with is very generous.

Next, she slides a phonebook-sized contract across the desk.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You can never speak of this. To anyone. Ever.

Elsa thumbs through the pages. Joan walks around the desk, a pen her hand. She hesitates before handing it to Elsa...

JOAN (CONT'D)

Nobody would blame you if you didn't do this. You could just put an end to it and walk away.

Elsa takes the pen from Joan's hand and signs with a single determined stroke.

Elsa stands, and we see now that her stomach is protruding noticeably. She is QUITE PREGNANT.

ELSA

This is what I want.

Joan nods, impressed by Elsa's courage. She pulls Elsa close, rocking her with reassurance, stroking her hair. Gradually, Elsa's resistance melts. She gives herself to Joan's motherly embrace.

THE END.