

THE CANCERIAN

by

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**FADE IN:**

A MICROSCOPIC VIEW of cellular mitosis. The division of a single cell gives way to a vast, kaleidoscopic field of biological growth.

This symphony of vibrant warmth is bisected by the veined appearance of a single ABNORMAL CELL. Its sinewy reach expands as it divides into more bulbous and deformed aberrations.

The process accelerates. The warm sea of healthy cells is consumed by the encroaching darkness of the fully-formed CANCER CELLS.

TIME SLOWS as they further congeal into the venomous heap of a TUMOR.

A shining BLADE descends like the Hand of God, meeting the tumor at the top of its grasp on the healthy tissue. With incredible precision, the scalpel begins to carve off the clinging abnormality.

Slowly the detail of this micro-reality fades into the pixelated minimalism of a digital representation ...

PULL BACK to reveal:

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

The digital tumor fills a translucent glass-screen monitor.

The image is intermittently obscured by two GLOVED HANDS with complex tracking mechanisms attached to each digit. Their movements remotely guide the scalpel represented on the screen with a practiced precision.

**MICROSCOPIC VIEW**

The scalpel continues to slice, making its way down the length of the tumor. It slows to a stop.

Past the steadied blade, the scalpel is attached to a CLAWED ROBOT. An arsenal of miniature medical instruments adorn its crab-like appendages.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

The gloved hands freeze. Their guiding arms are tensed through the steady shoulders of their owner:

A bead of sweat drips down the face of DR. ALEXANDRA "LEX" GALEN, 30s. Expression resolute, her breath sprays the drops collected around her mouth.

A NURSE's hand swoops in and taps her face dry with a towel.

She continues ...

#### **MICROSCOPIC VIEW**

The scalpel makes it about halfway down the tumor before JARRING on a dramatic tangent into healthy tissue.

#### **INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

Panic overtakes the room. From the white curtains that encircle the entire operating stage, TECHNICIANS rush to check equipment towers, and NURSES huddle around Lex.

She repels them with an outward flex of her elbows.

A Tech inspects the wired connection between the equipment towers and her gloves. He gives her a "thumbs up," and she continues ...

#### **MICROSCOPIC VIEW**

As the scalpel resets its position to continue cutting, the already severed section of the tumor flops over enough to reveal a glistening SHARD of hardened, crystalline tissue.

It sits right where the blade veered off course.

#### **INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

On the screen, the shard is represented by an empty spot of unrendered data. A black cluster of unidentifiable mystery.

Confused, Lex's brow furrows.

The BEEP of a heart monitor quickens. Behind her, in the center of the room, a coffin-sized capsule sits on the operating table. Lightly frosted glass obscures the face of her patient.

Lex closes her eyes, toning out the rest of the room. She takes a few breaths to focus. Opening her eyes into a stare more resolute than before, she continues ...

**MICROSCOPIC VIEW**

The scalpel attempts to cut around the shard.

Just as it begins to pick up speed, the blade VEERS off again. The tissue of the tumor pulls back further, revealing DOZENS MORE SHARDS.

Scraping down the length of the shards, the scalpel embeds itself deep into the healthy tissue.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

The heart monitor's beep FLATLINES.

---

Its deathly tone cuts through the silence of the room.

LEX (V.O.)

Welcome.

My name is Doctor Alexandra Galen.

Tossing off her gloves, Lex walks over to the capsule.

LEX (V.O.)

My patient needs little introduction.

Her patient exhales a final breath, melting the window's frost enough to reveal the dignified face of MR. GATES, 40s.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. SUSPENDED ANIMATION CHAMBER - DAY (PAST)**

Mr. Gate's face is warm with the glow of life. Behind him, the capsule is propped up in a cavernous medical chamber.

LEX (V.O.)

Forty years ago, Mr. Gates famously participated in an early suspended animation trial.

Mr. Gates embraces his wife, MRS. GATES, 30s, before stepping into the open capsule. Contemporary DOCTORS and NURSES surround them.

LEX (V.O.)

His hope: to be revived in a future when a tumor as rapidly developing as his didn't spell death.

Mrs. Gates gives Mr. Gates a final kiss and joins the Doctors behind a control panel.

LEX (V.O.)  
The ensuing decades of research in traditional treatments have not fulfilled that hope.

The doors of the capsule slide shut.

LEX (V.O.)  
Today, we take a radical step forward.

Mr. Gates smiles to his wife through the glass. He mouths something to her. She cries.

LEX (V.O.)  
Today, we return Mr. Gates to his wife.

#### **INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)**

The white curtains part around Lex, revealing the full scope of the entire OPERATING THEATER. It is a multi-tiered arena, filled with onlooking PHYSICIANS, STUDENTS, and PRESS.

Lex's face is projected onto giant screens around the circular room. Procedure recaps play as picture-in-picture.

Her eyes shoot straight to the front row of seats: staring at her with tearful eyes is ELDER MRS. GATES, 70s.

The piercing tone of the flatline fills the room.

Mrs. Gates shakily pushes herself up from the chair. She crosses the stage and COLLAPSES onto the capsule, weeping.

The entire room watches in stunned silence.

Lex opens her mouth to say something to Mrs. Gates, but is cut off as the crowd ROARS to life. Blinding FLASHES from the cameras of the Press make her shield her eyes as hoards begin to rush the stage.

Frustrated and disoriented, Lex turns away from the crowd and slips out through stacks of equipment.

The remaining Techs and Nurses attempt to blockade the capsule and Mrs. Gates from the crowd.

**INT. OPERATING THEATER GREEN ROOM - DAY**

Lex BURSTS through the door of the windowless green room.

LEX

Dammit!

She passes TEDDY CAINE, 30s, seated on the floor in a perfect lotus meditation pose. All the more impressive considering he's still wearing his shoes and business suit.

LEX

I don't know how you can do that now.

TEDDY

(smirking)

You're the one on trial here.

LEX

This is just as much your baby as it is mine.

TEDDY

"Baby." Hm. Interesting. I guess a Nanobot's the only baby you and I are likely to have.

LEX

Teddy, please. Don't start with that. Not now.

He uncrosses his legs and stands.

TEDDY

Fine. Mock me if you will, but you won't make it past the Press like this. You're going to need something to calm you down.

She stops pacing. Raises an eyebrow at him.

LEX

You offering?

He takes his finger and physically pushes her eyebrow down.

TEDDY

Decidedly not. You know: cow, milk, all that jazz.

LEX  
 (sighs)  
 Once this project is done. I promise.  
 We'll figure this out.

TEDDY  
 It's not this project I'm worried  
 about --

LEX  
 You should be.

TEDDY  
 It's the next one. And the next. And  
 the next. You never stop, Lex. Look  
 at you.

He steadies her shaking hands, clasping them with his own.

LEX  
 I can't just put everything on hold  
 for --

TEDDY  
 For what? For me? How I can be so  
 easy to ignore if I'm always around?

LEX  
 You know how close I am -- how close  
we are. What do you want me to do?  
 Just stop?

TEDDY  
 Well, if not for me, how about to  
 smell the flowers?

He lets go of her hands and gestures with his eyes toward a  
 bouquet of flowers on a nearby desk.

LEX  
 Teddy, you --

TEDDY  
 Your mom dropped them off, actually.

Lex pulls an envelope out from the bouquet. Opens it. Her  
 entire posture changes. She stands tall. Breathes deep.

TEDDY  
 What is it?

LEX

A note I wrote as a kid. Something I used to say to myself after I decided to do this.

TEDDY

Little Alexandra's mantra?

She shoots him the only smile she can muster, sets down the note, and moves toward the door. He picks up the note.

The scrawl of a child reads:

**I am going to cure cancer.**

He looks up just in time to see her slip out the door.

**EXT. OPERATING THEATER GREEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Lex faces a wall of Press, microphones and camera lenses jutting into her face. Teddy joins her as she attempts to answer a REPORTER.

LEX

While the final investigation will take several weeks, I believe complications from the early suspended animation process were --

The Reporter shoves a phone screen in her face with a rapidly refreshing social media feed.

REPORTER

Critics of your predetection nanotech are already calling today's procedure its death knell. Any comment?

Lex rubs her forehead, searching for the words.

LEX

Until we can proceed with trials on ... naturally developing patients, uh, we can't make any --

Teddy swings his hand in front of her, carving a path through the crowd for them.

TEDDY

Any comments will be held until Doctor Galen has had a chance to recover from a very trying procedure.



The cacophony of questions ROARS even louder in response.

TEDDY

Thank you all for coming out today.

He grabs Lex and leads her down the hallway, past the chaos. A shady REPRESENTATIVE, 40s, waits for them at the end of the hall. She has short, black hair with streaks of gray and wears a trench coat.

They try to move quickly past her, but she reaches out and grabs Lex's arm, stopping them.

TEDDY

I'm sorry, we can't take --

REP

This is the end. When the dust has settled, come find us.

She shoves a business card into Teddy's hand and scurries off around a corner. They turn to see the mob of Press hustling their way.

Shoes squeaking on the linoleum, they book it out of there.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - LATER**

Techs cart out Mr. Gate's empty capsule on casters, leaving Lex alone with a bare operating table. Teddy stands off to the side, giving her space.

TEDDY

Should I meet you back at the office?

LEX

I just need a minute.

TEDDY

Lex.

She looks over her shoulder to him.

TEDDY

You still can.

He tosses a PAPER AIRPLANE toward her. He exits as it sails across the empty room. She catches it and unfolds, confused.

It's her childhood note:

**I am going to cure cancer.**

She smiles as the lights of the arena begin to cycle off around her, one by one.

A glow catches her attention, from the booth directly opposite her at the far end of the vaulted room.

Through its ineffective two-way mirror, she can just make out the hulking silhouette of a MAN puffing a cigar, engulfed in its haze.

She squints, suspicious.

Through the haze, a second, considerably thinner figure stands and exits the booth, making his way down the steps. Obscured by shadow, this is MR. WEAVER.

He steps onto the stage and into the dim light. The harsh lines of his face spell years of intimidating expressions.

MR. WEAVER

Should I offer my congratulations, or my condolences, Ms. Galen?

LEX

It's DOCTOR Galen. And you could start with your name.

MR. WEAVER

Weaver.

She gestures up to the booth with a glance.

LEX

And your mountain of a friend?

He isn't amused. He takes out a stick of gum and meticulously unfolds its foil wrapper. He puts the piece in his mouth and begins to chew at an unsettlingly slow pace.

MR. WEAVER

My employer has a ... vested interest in your research.

LEX

And was he pleased or displeased with what he saw today?

MR. WEAVER

That remains to be seen. Needless to say, you should choose your next course of action very carefully.

LEX

Thank you for the advice, Mr. Weaver.  
Do you have any any less thinly-  
veiled threats for me today, or will  
that be all?

Between chews, he cracks something like a smile.

MR. WEAVER

Only to wish you good luck, on behalf  
of my employer.

He passes her to leave. She looks back up to the booth.  
Empty.

**INT. RESEARCH OFFICE - NIGHT**

The office is a mess, half research facility and half  
machine shop. An array of equipment fills every corner.  
Note paper covers desks and cork boards.

Teddy sits in a swivel chair with his legs crossed.

Lex bursts in, passes him and heads straight for a  
whiteboard. She uncaps a marker and starts scribbling.

LEX

Other than the SA complications, the  
bot's response time didn't match our  
Pre-Op trials. Unless the capsule  
barrier caused an additional delay --

TEDDY

Lex ...

No response. She's got a bullet-train focus.

LEX

If we can't beef up the receiver,  
we'll need a signal boost, or --

He kicks off a desk and glides the chair over to her.

TEDDY

Either *I* need a signal boost, or  
you're not a very good receiver.

She doesn't turn to him, focus on the board.

LEX

You're right, the microscale won't --

He stands up and physically turns her away from the board.

TEDDY

You just lived through a three-hour procedure ... that's never been attempted ... on a celebrated patient ... in front of an audience.

She looks sullen.

LEX

And the world. I'm trending.

TEDDY

Downward. Take a load off.

She sighs and slouches into his chair.

LEX

What'd you have in mind?

He smiles.

Amber liquid fills two clear plastic cups. Teddy sips his. Lex downs hers in a single chug. Another.

LEX

You're the perfect drinking buddy.

TEDDY

I've been called worse. By you.

LEX

Never a fight for the last shot.

TEDDY

Only for everything else, right?

LEX

You're also the perfect buzz kill, Mr. Caine.

He pours her another.

TEDDY

Don't let me get in the way.

He stands to go. She frowns.

LEX

Tired of me already? We just got started.

He turns to her. Serious when she has no interest.

TEDDY

That's just it, Lex. We haven't.

(beat)

And I'm tired of you cherry-picking the parts of me you find useful.

LEX

Cherry Pick? What does that --

TEDDY

Today was ultimately a failure, but we weren't. Can't deny we work well together. Hell, we even play pretty good sometimes. Anything other than that, well, it's been lady's choice.

(beat)

And you never do.

She opens her mouth to say something as --

A phone RINGS. Teddy walks across to his desk to answer.

TEDDY

This is Teddy Caine.

(gulps)

Yes. Alright.

He sets the phone down and breathes.

LEX

Who was that?

TEDDY

Yeager. Wants us in his office.

LEX

How early? I need to sleep this --

TEDDY

Five minutes ago.

#### **INT. YEAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

The office is immaculate. Perfectly alphabetized bookshelves flank a wall of framed achievements. Behind a hardwood executive desk sits DEAN YEAGER, 50s.

He is lit from beneath by his green-shaded desk lamp.

Lex and Teddy enter through a lettered glass door left ajar.

TEDDY  
Do you mind if we ...

He indicates the light switch.

                                  LEX  
Lighten the room. And the mood.

Yeager waves an affirmative gesture. Lights on. He looks haggard, tie wrenched loose.

                                  YEAGER  
For the best. Sit down.

Teddy sits. Lex remains standing.

                                  LEX  
If it's all the same to you, I'd rather not suffer the daytime bullshit at a late-night call. What's the word, Dean?

Yeager swallows hard.

                                  YEAGER  
The board called an emergency session earlier this evening. In light of ... prominent reactions to the results of your trial today --

Lex KICKS his desk.

                                  LEX  
God DAMMIT. We never should've --

                                  TEDDY  
Lex, let the man --

She slams both hands on the table. Stares Yeager down.

                                  LEX  
Save it. How long have we got?

                                  YEAGER  
The board has requested you vacate the facilities immediately.

                                  LEX  
And who requested that the board request that, I wonder?

                                  YEAGER  
I'm sure I don't know what you mean.

She shakes her head in disbelief.

LEX  
Then own it. Look me in the eye and  
tell me we haven't put this  
department on the map.

She leans in close to him. He's uncomfortable.

YEAGER  
A map to ... uncharted territory,  
Doctor Galen.

LEX  
Isn't that the whole point of  
*research*?

YEAGER  
Dangerous territory, then.

She squints. Confused.

LEX  
Dangerous? Tell me, Dean ... did they  
want Gates to flatline?

YEAGER  
Are you inebriated?

Lex slams her fists on the table. Teddy pulls her back.  
Yeager jumps back in his chair.

LEX  
Wouldn't you be?!

**INT. RESEARCH OFFICE - NIGHT**

Lex tears notes off of the cork board and shoves them into a  
cardboard box. Teddy looks out a window. Shadows of the  
blinds cut across his face from a streetlamp outside.

LEX  
Aren't you going to pack up anything?

TEDDY  
None of it belongs to me.

Lex lowers a computer monitor into her box, chords trailing.

LEX  
You think that's stopping me?

TEDDY  
Nothing's going to stop you, Lex.

She stops. Sits on her empty desk.

                  LEX  
A vote of confidence never sounded so  
judgmental.

He turns to her.

                  TEDDY  
Where we going?

                  LEX  
Us, or us?

                  TEDDY  
I'm only rattling the knob on one of  
those doors.

Lex looks down. Runs her hands through her hair. Teddy puts  
his hands in his pockets.

                  LEX  
There's always the private sector.

He nods.

                  TEDDY  
Big Med does pay big. Lot bigger than  
where we've been.

                  LEX  
Somethings tells me we're already  
under their thumb.

He walks over to her, eyebrow arched.

                  TEDDY  
How's that? You think Yeager --

                  LEX  
Something someone said to me earlier  
tonight. After the procedure. Guy  
called himself "Weaver." That name  
mean anything to you?

Teddy shakes his head.

                  LEX  
Said I should make my next choice  
"carefully." Nobody says that kindly.



Teddy fishes something out of his pocket.

TEDDY

Well, you've got one offer.

He hands it to her. The business card.

LEX

What is it?

TEDDY

From the woman that grabbed you in the hall. I didn't even look at it.

Teddy picks up Lex's box for her, heads to the door.

LEX

What's D.M.?

It's clearly familiar to him. He sets down the box.

TEDDY

I think ... let me see that.

She hands him the card: just "D.M." in big, ornate letters. He turns it over. Blank.

LEX

Don't tell me that cat lady was actually somebody.

TEDDY

Maybe. You ready?

She nods. He picks up her box. She puts her hand on the light switch. Gives the room one last look.

LEX

We've done a lot here.

He hovers over her shoulder.

TEDDY

All over here, in fact.

She blushes. Points to the corner of the room.

LEX

Remember that time on the lathe?

TEDDY

Probably best we close this door.

**EXT. RESEARCH CAMPUS - SUNRISE**

Lex and Teddy cross the manicured lawn of the quad. The rising sun casts them in marching silhouette.

The facility's brownstone facade shrinks behind them.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - SUNRISE**

Two cars parked on opposite ends of an otherwise empty lot. Lex and Teddy walk to a red, hardtop convertible.

She pops the trunk with her keys. He loads in her box.

LEX

You want to come over? I still have a bunch of your stuff.

TEDDY

No. Not right now.

LEX

Then let's go out. Something's bound to still be open.

TEDDY

Better not.

His smirk is unconvincing. She nods, looking uncomfortably at the ground.

LEX

Okay.

He turns away and starts walking to his car. A hatchback.

LEX

Congrats, by the way.

He looks back at her, puzzled.

LEX

Your half of today worked.

(beat)

Your half always does.

TEDDY

Thank you. Doctor Galen.

He shifts on his heels and makes the long walk across the parking lot to his car. Gets in. Drives off. Lex watches.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE - MORNING**

Lex heaves her cardboard box back-first through the front door, twisting into the entryway.

She kicks the door closed and drops the box on the door mat. Dust poofs beneath its weight. Dead flowers wilt over their vase on a wall table. Neglect caked as thickly as the dust.

She clutches a banister and plunks her way up the staircase, slouching more with each step.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - AFTERNOON**

Lex is sprawled out on her bed, asleep. Sheets and blankets are twisted around her limbs. Her hand dangles off the edge, an empty ice cream pint on the floor beneath.

She wakes with a toss. Untangles herself from the sheets and sits up. Eyes clenched, she pinches the bridge of her nose.

Opening her eyes, she sees across the room: sun spills onto a meditation cushion next to the window.

She lets out a wistful sigh.

Feeling around her pockets, she pulls out her cell. Scrolling through her contacts, she stops and her thumb hovers over Teddy's entry ...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. The front door.

**EXT. LEX'S HOUSE - DAY**

Lex opens the door. It's Teddy. She's surprised.

LEX

You look worse than me for once.

The rings under his eyes say he hasn't slept. She beckons him in with a twist of her head.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Lex reclines on a couch. Teddy sits up in a side chair. Blows on a steaming mug of tea.

LEX

You went out without me, didn't you?

He swallows a gulp of tea. Sets it down.

TEDDY

Not exactly ...

He fishes the "D.M." business card out of his pocket. Holds it up to her. She sits up.

TEDDY

I thought I'd heard of this before.  
Asked around. I was right.

LEX

So, what is it?

He leans in.

TEDDY

Dead Med.

She shakes her head. Doesn't mean anything to her.

TEDDY

First I heard of it was in school.  
Supposed to be a group misfit doctors  
and researches that were flushed out  
of the system.

LEX

Like us.

TEDDY

Exactly. They found each other, and  
now they continue their work,  
together. Totally unregulated.

LEX

And who, exactly, is funding their  
little secret club?

TEDDY

That's what nobody could tell me.  
It's possible they pooled their  
funds, but I'd be willing to bet  
someone's bankrolling it. If it  
exists.

LEX

If they exist, how would we find  
them?

TEDDY

They gave us their card.

He tosses her the card.

LEX  
That's great, but there's nothing on  
this, Teddy.

TEDDY  
Look again. See the fancy lettering?  
Look *inside* it.

She squints. The "D.M." Letters are made up of a series of  
dashes of varying width.

LEX  
I didn't know you were a  
cryptographer.

TEDDY  
Living with you for as long as I did,  
wouldn't I have to be?

She shoots him a glare.

LEX  
So what does it mean?

TEDDY  
An old friend of mine spotted it.  
It's Morse Code.

LEX  
And what does it spell?

TEDDY  
An address.

She takes a deep breath. Looks down at the card.

LEX  
The woman that gave us this ... do  
you think she knew we were going to  
get canned?

TEDDY  
I think we're going to find out.

He scoops up her keys off the side table and tosses them to  
her. She catches them with one hand.

She turns over the business card. Teddy has hand-written:

**17056 Pine Ave.**

**EXT. 17056 PINE AVE - DAY**

The fenced-off plot is the site of an ABANDONED HOSPITAL.

It teems with decades of neglect. Vines and cracks interlace throughout the structure. The mirrored windows that are still intact are peeling and murky.

Lex's car pulls up to the locked chain-link fence.

**INT. LEX'S CAR - DAY**

Lex leans over Teddy in the passengers seat to get a closer look at the hospital. She slides her sunglasses up onto her forehead and squints.

LEX

Either they're out, or we don't want to be in.

She shifts the car into drive, Teddy grabs her hand to stop.

TEDDY

We do. Unless you've got a better offer?

LEX

I do, in fact.

TEDDY

What's that?

She gives the building another look.

LEX

Unemployment. Are you sure your Morse decoder decoded this right?

TEDDY

It's not as if they can put up a flashing neon sign. The point is for people ignore it, and drive past.

LEX

They succeeded.

Teddy points out the window.

TEDDY

How long since you've hopped a fence?

**EXT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

Teddy gives Lex a boost over the fence. She loses her grip and falls on her ass on the other side.

LEX

Shit!

Cautious, Teddy looks over his shoulder. He grabs onto the fence and HOISTS himself over the top, landing gracefully on his feet in front of Lex. He extends his hand to her.

She waves him off, pushing herself up and dusting off her pants. They approach the building's front sliding doors.

TEDDY

Could it be as easy as knocking the front door?

LEX

With what it took to find this place, there's at least a password, right?

They walk up the front cement steps to face the door.

TEDDY

Open.

Nothing.

LEX

Open, please.

Nothing. Lex shrugs.

TEDDY

Alright, you take one side, I'll take the other. We can pry it --

As he steps forward to illustrate, the doors SWOOSH open automatically. Their motion is smooth in spite of the vines splayed across them.

They look at each other. Lex gives a surprised nod.

An overhead air blower kicks scattered leaves into the foyer, beckoning them to proceed.

TEDDY

Ladies first.

She inches forward. Teddy follows, keeping his distance. Once inside, doors SLAM shut behind them.

**INT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS / FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

The decrepit state of the foyer is in keeping with the facility's exterior.

An empty check-in desk and waiting area have all the hallmarks of having been abandoned in a bygone era. Dust particles give the air a weight, illuminated like fireflies by the light shining through the glass entry doors.

The Representative's voice crackles from an unknown source.

REPRESENTATIVE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Welcome Doctor Galen.

LEX  
Mr. Caine is with me.

REPRESENTATIVE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Welcome, Teddy.

LEX  
As much as we enjoy talking to a disembodied voice in a creepy lobby, maybe you could show yourself?

An office door past the check-in desk opens. They jump. The Representative -- CYPRESS -- walks out to face them.

CYPRESS  
Apologies. When I found out the intercom system still functioned, I simply could not resist. You see, so much of this is new to me, as well. I am Cypress.

TEDDY  
We'd introduce ourselves, but that doesn't seem necessary at this point.

LEX  
Who are you?

CYPRESS  
I represent Dead Med. You found us. I trust you have some idea what we do. The partners agreed that in order to grow, they must expand their numbers. You are our first such offer.

She gestures for them to follow her.



**INT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS / HALLS - CONTINUOUS**

As they continue through the halls, the decrepitude begins to fade away. Though still the product of another era, their surroundings are brighter and well kept.

CYPRESS

Our facilities may not be state of the art, but the minds within are light-years ahead.

LEX

Why were they outcast?

Cypress gives Lex a critical look.

CYPRESS

Why were you?

Lex looks to Teddy before answering.

LEX

We suspect not for the reason we were given.

CYPRESS

You'll find the same uncertainty among the partners. Each with their own reason and matching suspicions. Not my place to say.

TEDDY

You said this was also new to you. How long have you be their Rep?

CYPRESS

Not long. The partners attained this building years before it looked as it does now. They only recently came to the decision to expand. I was brought on to facilitate that expansion.

LEX

Hideaways not comfortable coming out to do their own recruiting?

Cypress stops at a closed office door.

CYPRESS

Quite. Shall we meet the team?

She pushes the door open to reveal:

**INT. JORGE'S OFFICE - DAY**

A curious haze soaks the office. Lex and Teddy's eyes pop in reaction to the smell when they enter. Cypress holds a handkerchief to her nose. She waves to get the attention of:

JORGE, mid-30s, sits reclined in a contraption that looks like a 60s salon hairdryer. A transparent bowl encloses his entire head. His face is obscured by the dense fog in the bowl, spilling out into rest of the room.

Cypress gives up trying to catch his attention, walks across the room and unplugs his device from the socket with a tug.

The fog dissipates and the bowl raises off his head.

Smiling like a buffoon, he stands to greet them. He's not nearly as obese as his ill-fitting clothes make him out to be, and his frazzled hair isn't doing him any favors either.

CYPRESS

Allow me to introduce ... Jorge.

Lex and Teddy extend their hands to shake. Jorge doesn't seem to see them, smile plastered onto his face.

JORGE

(screaming)

I REPELLED OFF A JACKALOPE  
ENCAMPMENT.

Lex and Teddy look at each other. Then to Cypress.

CYPRESS

Jorge is our psychopharmaceutical  
specialist.

LEX

Is he ...

Lex wiggles her fingers next to her head.

CYPRESS

Oh, no. This device is his most  
recent experiment.

TEDDY

So, he isn't always ...

Teddy waves his hands in front of Jorge's face. Nothing.

CYPRESS

This should wear off momentarily.

Cypress pats Jorge on the back. He coughs and shakes his head. His pupils expand as his focus becomes more present.

JORGE

Ho, whoa! Gotta adjust that.

(beat)

Who are these people?

CYPRESS

This is Doctor Alexandra Galen and her associate Teddy Caine.

Jorge smacks himself in the head.

JORGE

Of course, Doctor Galen!

He smashes his meaty hand into Lex's, shaking her entire body. Cypress rears him back.

CYPRESS

Would you tell them, briefly, about your work at Dead Med?

Jorge hobbles over to his device.

JORGE

Of course! I've been, uh, studying psychotropics my entire career. After advances in lucid dreamscape research, I began to apply their methods of posthypnotic suggestion to a new system of controlled psychotropic release. The result: Programmable Hallucinations.

TEDDY

So you're controlling your trip.

LEX

What medical value could that possibly have?

JORGE

Testing for practical applications is ... ongoing.

Lex and Teddy look at each other.

CYPRESS

Perhaps this is not where I should have started the tour.

**INT. HERMANN'S OFFICE - DAY**

Cypress ushers Lex and Teddy into the office. It is a shining, sophisticated assembly of brushed steel and rich woods. Spotless. The ideal research space.

CYPRESS

Do forgive Jorge. He means well.  
On the opposite end of the spectrum,  
meet the greatest mind among us ...

Behind a perfectly knolled desk sits HERMANN MOSENER, 60s. A sharp gray beard frames his wizened face.

HERMANN

Doctor Galen, welcome. My name is  
Hermann Moseneder. We're delighted to  
have you join our little team.

He speaks with an expressive German accent.

LEX

We're just having a look, today.  
(beat)  
No promises.

Lex shoots a look at Cypress, to make sure she understands. Hermann giggles.

HERMANN

I'm confident you will be impressed  
with what you see here.

TEDDY

Is your work also drug-fueled?

HERMANN

Ha! No. I specialize in Displacement  
Field Projection. Allow me to explain  
by demonstration.

With an outstretched hand, Hermann indicates for them to join him at an adjacent workstation. On the tabletop a demonstration has been prepared:

An APPLE sits next to an ORANGE.

Herman takes the apple and places it inside of a circular metal CAGE. Wires run from the cage to a small platform on which he places the orange. He takes SENSOR PADS from the platform and places them onto the orange.

Herman distributes protective goggles before proceeding.

Lex and Teddy give the goggles a questioning look before putting them on.

LEX  
Had a lot of fruit juice in your eye?

HERMANN  
If only. Please step back.

Hermann readies his hand on a control lever.

TEDDY  
What should we be watching for?

HERMANN  
Please, it would be faster for me to show you. Three ... two ... one ...

He throws the lever and a BLINDING LIGHT fills the room for a split second and then ... nothing.

LEX  
Nothing happened.

Hermann smiles. He walks around the table to the orange and picks it up ever so slightly off the platform. He begins to rotate it from side to side. In the cage, the apple moves along exactly with the orange's movement.

Lex and Teddy move in to get a closer look.

TEDDY  
Motion tracking?

Hermann shakes his head, then picks up a kitchen knife from the table. He slices the orange carefully in half to reveal:

A miniature apple, embedded into the core of the orange.

LEX  
You duplicated it?

HERMANN  
No. Different space ...

He opens the metal cage holding the apple. He tips the cut orange, letting the small apple fall. It disappears as the full-size apple SPRINGS out of the cage into his hand.

HERMANN  
Same apple.

He takes a bite. The juices run into his beard as he smiles.

**INT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS / HALLS - DAY**

Lex and Teddy walk with Cypress. They are slack-jawed.

TEDDY  
That was incredible.

LEX  
But, again, to what point?

Cypress stops and turns to Lex.

CYPRESS  
You must understand, each member of our team has been cursed with an excess of focus. The big picture is often lost in the detail.  
(beat)  
That is why you are here.

LEX  
You really think I fit in here?

CYPRESS  
You had a vision. You inspired the expertise of those around you ...

She indicates Teddy.

CYPRESS  
... and you took it further than anyone has ever gone. Am I wrong in believing you still have that vision?

Lex and Cypress find themselves in a deep stare.

LEX  
You might be.

CYPRESS  
Only you can determine that.

She turns away from Lex, leading them further down the hall.

TEDDY  
How many work here?

CYPRESS  
Several others at satellite locations, only one more I would like to introduce you to today.

**INT. LIGHTNING'S SHOP - DAY**

At the end of a hall, Cypress leads Lex and Teddy beneath an archway and into a gutted operating room.

The space has been converted into a massive garage and machine shop. Grease streaks rows of equipment and raw materials are strewn everywhere. Steel. Brass. Copper.

Light spills through an open loading gate on the opposite side of the room. Emerging from it is a parked a massive ALUMINUM BUS.

CYPRESS

Lightning!

Lex and Teddy look around, unsure what she is referring to.

Where the bus's door should be is bolted a screen door that would be more appropriate on a trailer home. It swings open and out steps:

LIGHTNING, 40s, muscular in his lankiness, with round glasses and a shiny bald head that matches his bus.

CYPRESS

Lightning, come over here.

Lightning walks over to them, slower than you'd think, considering his name.

LIGHTNING

My. Name. Is. Lightning.

TEDDY

We gathered that.

Lex gives Cypress and "are you serious?" look.

CYPRESS

Your Mister Caine can engineer anything. Our Mister Lightning can *build* anything.

TEDDY

That's handy.

LEX

What was the last thing you built?

LIGHTNING

My bus.

**EXT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

Lex storms out of the front sliding doors. Teddy follows.

TEDDY

Lex, stop! This is something to consider.

She stops in the middle of the lot.

LEX

C'mon, Teddy, this is just ... it's too weird.

TEDDY

Someone might say the same of us.

She puts her hands on her temples.

LEX

I really don't get you, Teddy. You wanted me to slow down, to focus on us, and now --

TEDDY

I wanted you running to me, not away from something else.

LEX

Do you really believe these guys are anything but a bunch of failures?

He takes a moment before answering. Walks in closer to her.

TEDDY

I believe you already took one failure further than he had any hope of going on his own.

LEX

Just because you needed me doesn't mean they do.

TEDDY

Is this really about what *they* need?

LEX

I certainly don't need this.

She turns away from him and heads to her car.

From the front sliding doors, Cypress watches her leave.



**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Lex sits on her bed. She tries to cross her legs, but her knee cracks, so she pushes them to the side.

The cardboard box sits in front of her. She sorts through note pages. Sets some aside in a stack, crumbles others and tosses them into a trashcan next to the bed.

One of the crumbled notes misses the bin, bounces off the rim and skips across the floor.

It lands next to Teddy's meditation cushion.

The sight of it angers her. She jumps off the bed and crawls over to it. Growling in frustration, she WAILS PUNCHES into the cushion.

Having had her fill, she picks up the cushion and tosses it into the trashcan with the discarded notes.

She plops back into the bed. Pulls out her cell phone. Scrolls through her contacts and, again, hovers over Teddy's entry as ...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. The front door.

LEX

How the hell does he do that?

**EXT. LEX'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The door opens.

LEX

How the hell do you --

It's not Teddy. It's Weaver. Lex's face grows stern.

LEX

So, you make threatening house calls?

MR. WEAVER

Not tonight.

He produces a parcel. Hands it to her. She opens it.

MR. WEAVER

Your revolutionary procedure believed in a personal touch ... and so do we.

Inside the parcel: a wad of cash. She looks up at him.

Weaver smiles. Lex doesn't.

MR. WEAVER  
You made the right choice, Miss  
Galen. Goodnight.

He steps out of the porch light into the darkness.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Lex sits on the couch. Teddy on the armchair opposite. He fans through the cash.

TEDDY  
"A personal touch?" He said that?

LEX  
And that I made the right choice.

TEDDY  
Who the hell is this guy?

LEX  
Someone that doesn't want me at Dead  
Med.

He stops fanning the cash. Hands it back to her.

TEDDY  
Almost enough to make you, isn't it?

LEX  
Damn right. Doesn't change the fact  
that I've got nothing to offer them.  
My "personal touch" doesn't mean shit  
without an idea to back it up.

TEDDY  
What do you think he meant by that?

LEX  
Probably just what made us different  
from all the other treatments. Rather  
than attacking the good tissue with  
the bad, it was about getting your  
hands dirty and diving in there.  
"Personal Touch."

Inspiration washes over her face.

LEX  
Oh my God. That's it.

**INT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

Lex and Teddy stroll through the sliding doors.

Cypress faces them from the hallway.

LEX  
That offer still stand?

CYPRESS  
Of course. What changed your mind?

LEX  
Someone donated my initiation fee.

Cypress smiles.

CYPRESS  
If that was all that was standing in  
your way, we could have arranged some  
sort of payment plan.

Lex and Teddy cross the foyer to join her in the hallway.

LEX  
No need. We're paying in full.

TEDDY  
Is there any kind of blood pact? Rite  
of passage?

LEX  
Or will a handshake suffice?

Cypress shakes Lex's hand. Then Teddy's.

CYPRESS  
The partners will be ecstatic.

LEX  
When I ran out of here, I thought I'd  
never be able to work with any one of  
them. Now, that could be true, but I  
just might be able to work with *all*  
of them.

CYPRESS  
Music to my ears. How shall we begin?

TEDDY  
Any chance this place still has a  
conference room?

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Flickering overhead, florescent lights illuminate a room that has been forgotten.

Lex, Teddy, and Cypress sit at one end of an oblong conference table. At the opposite end, Jorge, Hermann, and Lightning sit facing them. Dozens of empty seats round the table between them.

LEX

Some of you may not be familiar with our work. Teddy and I pioneered a virtual process for differentiation of cancer cells from healthy cells.

TEDDY

Our hope was to develop this process to the point of predetection. Making surgery on developed tumors obsolete.

LEX

As a surgical oncologist, my goal was to put myself out of a job.

Chuckles around the table.

TEDDY

Realistically, that goal was decades beyond us. Instead, we created the world's first micro-surgeon.

LEX

We paired what we had with nanotech Teddy had developed. This time, we're going to pair it with you.

TEDDY

Our unconventional treatment is about to fall deeper down the rabbit hole.

JORGE

Doesn't get much more unconventional than us!

LEX

Exactly. And I have an idea crazy enough to earn my spot among you.

TEDDY

But it's going to take all of you ...

**INT. JORGE'S OFFICE - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
Jorge, we need your device prepped to go mobile.

Jorge stands behind his device. He points to individual pieces as he explains to Lightning, who is bent over with his face shoved right into the works.

Lex and Teddy stand off to the side.

**INT. HERMANN'S OFFICE - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
Hermann, your displacement field projection is about to get scaled up.

Teddy, Lightning, and Hermann huddle around his demonstration. Teddy sketches in a notebook, conferring with Lightning as Hermann explains expressively.

**INT. LIGHTNING'S SHOP - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
Lightning, once Teddy fits all the pieces, you assemble the puzzle.

Protective goggles over his glasses, Lightning shapes a piece of metal on a cutting wheel. Amber sparks spout like a blazing geyser, singeing his exposed arms.

He pulls the piece away from the wheel, blows off shavings, and holds it at eye level for a spot check.

Back to the wheel. SPARKS.

**INT. GYM - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
My assignment is ... me.

Well-worn exercise equipment fills an abandoned rehab wing.

Lex is a ball of focused energy. Sweat flings from her body with every crunch, lift, and push-up.

She uses each machine within an inch of it's life. KNOCKS a punching bag off its chain. FORCES the screeching joints of a rusted weight press.

**INT. JORGE'S OFFICE - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
We're sailing deep into uncharted  
territory.

Lightning presents Jorge with a condensed version of his device. The bowl has been attached to a backpack-sized case, which he opens and indicates the complex components.

Jorge nods. He shoots Lightning a "thumbs up."

**INT. HERMANN'S OFFICE - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
What we're doing, no one has ever  
attempted ...

Hermann projects a diagram of his apple cage onto the wall, which has been covered in paper. Teddy traces the lines of the diagram onto the paper with broad, sketchy strokes.

Ducking out from behind the projector, Hermann steps into the light to indicate specific aspects of the mechanism.

Teddy nods, revising his sketch.

**INT. LIGHTNING'S SHOP - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
... and if we fail, no one is ever  
likely to again.

With repeated swings of a hammer, Lightning shapes a plate of metal into a curved, tubular piece. He adds it to a pile of similarly organic shapes.

The FLASH of a welding torch illuminates Lightning's strong features. He begins to join the pieces.

**INT. GYM - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
But if we succeed, we won't just  
change the course of medicine ...

Lex wraps her hands. Time has passed. Her muscles are more defined. Her movements more precise as she lays into the punching bag, does her reps, and jumps rope.

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

LEX  
... we'll make history.

The entire team's attention is rapt. Lex stares them down, allowing her words to sink into the room.

**INT. HALLS - DAY**

Lex walks down the center of the hall with Teddy. The entire place is a flurry of activity:

Hermann pops out of his office and flags down Cypress at the far end. Jorge crosses the hall, back and forth from room to room. Lightning runs up behind Lex and takes some quick measurements of her head with a tape measure.

TEDDY  
You sure you're ready?

LEX  
We're as ready as we'll ever be.

Teddy stops her.

TEDDY  
I know *it's* ready. Are you?

LEX  
Even more than I thought I'd be.

From her lab coat pocket, Lex pulls out a little cup with a bow on top. She hands it to Teddy.

TEDDY  
What's this?

Teddy unties the bow and pops the lid: a bundle of Cherries.

LEX  
I'm picking my cherries.

He smiles. She looks nervous. He takes her hand.

TEDDY  
This is going to work.

LEX  
There's more at stake than this project, Teddy.

TEDDY  
Yes, but this project could mean  
everything.

                  LEX  
Not *everything*.

Teddy pops one of the cherries in his mouth.

                  TEDDY  
Don't worry.

He spits the cherry pit into the cup.

                  TEDDY  
I won't let this go to my head.

                  LEX  
Like hell you won't.

He laughs.

                  TEDDY  
Can't blame a guy for hoping.

He offers her a cherry.

                  LEX  
It must be infectious.

She accepts. Takes a bite around the pit.

                  TEDDY  
Feeling hopeful, Doctor?

                  LEX  
Let's say "cautiously optimistic."

                  TEDDY  
We're down to the wire. Any thoughts  
on the candidates?

                  LEX  
We can't run our first trial on a  
human. Too risky. We need something  
we can sedate and not feel guilty.

                  TEDDY  
I think I've got just the thing.

                  LEX  
Alright. See you in Pre-op.



**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

Lex zips up her white lab coveralls. Removed from the rest of the operating room by a privacy curtain, she takes a moment for herself.

She unfolds her childhood note. Takes a breath.

LEX  
I'm going to cure cancer.

She folds it back up, gives it a kiss, and tucks it into her front zipper pocket.

She pulls the curtain back and emerges into the main operating room to face:

A massive, ten-foot-tall version of Hermann's cage device.

The room has been cleared, now a sterilized chamber housing the scaled-up gyroscopic cage and connected platform.

Lex approaches the massive cage. She places her hand against one of the metal rings. Though inert, it moves freely on its axis with her touch. She gazes at the apparent mechanical might of the construct.

She follows the connective wires from the cage to the adjacent sensor platform. She pricks the injector on one of the sensor pads. Far more intimidating at this scale.

CYPRESS  
Getting a last look?

Lex turns to see Cypress behind her.

LEX  
I certainly hope not.

CYPRESS  
Best of luck to you, and your patient.

Teddy and Jorge enter carrying a gurney between them. They set it down on the platform. Teddy pulls back a white sheet to reveal a bloated CAT, sedated, laying on its side.

JORGE  
This little guy is dead to the world!

TEDDY  
Not literally, I hope. Also, *her* name is Dinah.

Lex joins them. She pets the passed out cat.

LEX  
What is Dinah's diagnosis?

TEDDY  
She developed an abdominal tumor.  
Fairly common for a kitty of her age.

Hermann joins them at the table.

LEX  
Hermann. Where, exactly, will the  
procedure begin?

HERMANN  
The inception site should be at the  
centerpoint of the patient's mass.

TEDDY  
Should be?

HERMANN  
Also, if a natural, eh, *exit tract*  
cannot be accessed, one will need to  
be manually incised.

Hermann snaps rubber gloves onto his hands.

LEX  
Couldn't we just pull the plug?

HERMANN  
No. The scope of the projection pads  
must be breached to ensure stasis.

Hermann injects the wired sensor pads into the cat.

TEDDY  
Why is that?

HERMANN  
The binary process doesn't prioritize  
one state over another. There's no  
telling on which side it would end  
up. We'd risk losing our equipment  
on the microscopic scale *inside* the  
target. Permanently.

He points to the cat.

LEX  
Comforting.

Lightning rolls a wooden crate into the room that can barely fit through the doors.

LIGHTNING

It. Is. Done.

He stands at attention next to the crate. Everyone in the room turns toward it.

TEDDY

Yes, Lightning, we gathered that from the very large crate.

CYPRESS

You come from the world of robotics, Mister Cain, but this is, without question, the most complex piece of machinery he has ever constructed.

HERMANN

I've never seen him so excited.

Lightning's expression is unchanged. Total deadpan.

LEX

Can't wait to see him after we actually have something to celebrate.

JORGE

Champagne is on ice!

TEDDY

Alright, Mister Lightning, let's have a look.

Lightning unlocks the front panel of the crate, lowering it from a bottom hinge into a ramp. Everyone steps in for a closer look inside:

It's no robot. It's a complex suit of mechanical armor.

Ridged panels and overlapping plates scoop into an undeniably feminine shape.

Everyone looks to Lex.

LEX

Time to suit up.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - LATER**

A helmet with a wide glass faceplate lowers over Lex's head. It locks into a ring on the casing around her neck.

She winces at the sound of a loud static crackle.

TEDDY (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
--esting. Testing. Can you hear me?

Her metallic gloved hand gives a "thumbs up."

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

In an adjacent room, Teddy, Cypress, Hermann, and Jorge observe the operating chamber through a long window.

Teddy mans a console, which appears to have been a relic from the hospital's past. It's been retrofitted with a handful of new, mission-specific pieces of technology.

Hermann slides in front of Teddy to speak into the mic.

HERMANN  
Forgive the audio quality, Doctor Galen. While displacement field projection is totally compatible with organic matter, we've simplified your on-board technology to ensure a smooth shift. Just as a precaution.

Teddy pushes him out of his way, reclaiming the mic.

TEDDY  
Lex, don't worry about any of that. You need to focus. We're going to initiate system powerup --

Jorge sidles in front of the mic. Teddy scoffs.

JORGE  
Doc, it's Jorge. Once you're in, the respirator in your suit will cycle the compound. It's fed by your virtual detection system, so don't be alarmed if there's a slight delay. It should only be a few seconds before you achieve enhanced vision.

Using his full body weight, Teddy forces Jorge away from the console. He begins to press a series of lit buttons.

**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

The gyroscopic rings of the cage creek to life. They slowly begin to SPIN around the armored Lex.

As they pick up speed, a low HUM emanates from the cage. Faster and faster the rings spin, blurring into a frenzy of orbital movement.

Lex's plated boots LIFT UP from the platform beneath her. Her entire suit is SUSPENDED, allowing for a full range of motion. She fully extends her arms and legs into a pose not unlike da Vinci's outstretched *Vitruvian Man*.

On the adjacent platform, the sensor pads connected to Dinah begin to GLOW.

TEDDY (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
We are at full power.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

Jorge slaps Hermann's back in excitement.

TEDDY  
We are "go" on your command. Count us  
down, Lex.

Cypress's eyes flit back and forth from Lex to Teddy.

LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Three ...

Nobody moves. As if the air has been sucked out of the room.

LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Two ...

**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

Lex closes her eyes.

She takes one final breath.

LEX  
One.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

TEDDY

(sotto)

See you on the other side, baby.

Teddy SLAMS the blinking ignition button.

The humming tone grows to a deafening ROAR. The walls around them TREMBLE, shaking violently before ...

A FLASH of blinding light fills the room.

**INT. LEX'S SUIT - DAY**

The electric surge violently illuminates Lex's face.

The tensed muscles around her eyes relax as the bright shocks fade. She GASPS as her field of vision through the visor is filled with indiscernible organic sludge.

Panicked, her breathing is erratic. A green indicator light flashes in her display as an affirmative beep sounds.

With a HISS, a thick VAPOR is released into her helmet.

She closes her eyes and breathes in deep. Her breathing steadies. She slowly opens her eyes.

**LEX'S POV:**

Bending with a dream-like distortion, the organic landscape outside her visor gives way to a clearer image ...

A navigable pathway unfolds before her, arcing gradually into focus. The cylindrical walls are ridged. It shifts and convulses like a living cave.

The fully formed hallucinatory landscape conforms exactly to what one might imagine the inside of a body looks like.

**INT. DINAH - DAY**

Lex stands in awe.

TEDDY (O.S.)

(filtered)

-- Lex. Come in Lex. Please respond.

She shakes out of her shock, shifting back and forth in the suit to get her bearings.

She clears her throat.

LEX

I made it.

Crackling SCREAMS from her radio.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

Everyone goes NUTS. Teddy pumps his fist over his head. Jorge bear-hugs Hermann, nearly forcing him off his chair.

TEDDY

Woo! We did it! How do you feel?

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

Funky. Where am I?

They can see Lex talking to them through the observation window, still suspended in the rotating cage.

TEDDY

Check your screen. Not far from the abdominal cavity. Somewhere in the interstitial tissue above.

**INT. DINAH - DAY**

Lex uses her gloved hand to press a button on her opposing gauntlet control panel.

A primitive digital display appears projected on her visor.

LEX

Doesn't look like there's a natural pathway. Time to start cuttin'.

She reaches behind her, grabbing something from her pack. It slides out with a sharp SHING:

A sword-length scalpel blade.

She takes her first step forward.

**LEX'S POV:**

With her first step, the projected reality around her shifts, glitching momentarily before returning.

LEX  
Shit.

**INT. DINAH - DAY**

Lex steadies herself.

TEDDY (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
What is it?!

LEX  
Nothing. Jorge's cough syrup just takes a while to kick in.

She lowers the scalpel to the tissue at her feet.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

Teddy breathes a sigh of relief.

TEDDY  
(into the mic)  
Don't scare me like that.

He leans back and whacks Jorge over the head.

JORGE  
Alright, so we know she's not a lightweight.

HERMANN  
You always under-dose everyone, except yourself.

LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I'm going to move in.

TEDDY  
Lex, be careful. Jorge's compound is feeding you these images from your subconscious. There's no telling what it'll drudge up to assign when the suit detects the abnormal cells.



**INT. DINAH - DAY**

Lex lowers into the abdominal cavity. She is surrounded by a field of healthy tissue.

LEX  
No sign of it yet.

She continues, the curve of the abdomen a sprawling horizon ahead.

A foreboding red light beeps in her display.

She slows her pace, raising the blade in both hands. Rounding a hilly patch of healthy tissue, she stops dead in her tracks, face to face with:

THE TUMOR. It appears as a demonic beast, its many limbs integrated into the healthy tissue like tree roots. It has no discernible face, but features undeniably bullish qualities. Black and seething.

LEX  
Oh my god.

TEDDY  
You see it? What's it look like?!

LEX  
Uh, I'd have to sketch it for you.  
Not that you'd see anything like this  
if you were down here.

TEDDY  
No doubt.

Lex inches toward the tumor, leading with her blade. She approaches what could be considered the top ...

LEX  
Procedure commencing.

She THRUSTS the scalpel into the tumor. It RECOILS, resisting her incision. She shifts her body away from the heap, continuing to slice along its edge.

Hacking through a particularly thick clump, she builds up speed, circling around the other side. The tumor's roots splay furiously as she detaches them.

The detached portions begin to peel back. She reaches the end of the the tumor and delivers the final slice.

A deep RUMBLE sounds.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

Dinah's eye OPENS.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

A heart-rate monitor begins to beep.

                          TEDDY  
What the hell?

Teddy stands up at the console.

                          JORGE  
Oh no ...

                          LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
What's happening?

                          TEDDY  
Lex, forget the relocation. Abort.

**INT. DINAH - DAY**

Lex moves away from the Tumor.

                          LEX  
What? Why?

                          TEDDY (O.S.)  
Dinah's up. Get out of there NOW.

Her eyes widen. The walls around her begin to ROTATE.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

Dinah STANDS, tripping over the sensors attached to her.

**INT. DINAH - DAY**

Lex RUNS along the shifting walls. She holds the blade above her head and LEAPS. Boosters BLAST from her feet, sending her ZOOMING through layers of tissue, cleared by the blade.

A cluster of FUR and a blinding LIGHT as ...

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

The LIGHT of the electricity surge fades and the spinning rings of the cage slow to a stop.

Lex SLUMPS in her suit.

The team floods out of the observation room. Teddy rushes the cage as Cypress, Hermann and Teddy stand aside. Lightning unlatches Lex's suit from the rig.

Lex falls into Teddy's arms.

Lightning twists off her helmet. She's passed out.

TEDDY

Lex!

He shakes her.

TEDDY

C'mon, Lex, wake up.

No response. Slaps her face. Nothing.

CYPRESS

Lightning, get that suit off her.

Lightning moves in. Teddy holds out his hand to stop him. Lex blinks. COUGHS out the last bit of vapor.

The room is silent. Looks to her.

LEX

... I think we bought her a few more years of purrin'.

Everyone CLAPS.

Lightning helps Lex out of the armor. Free from its constraint, she stumbles into Teddy's arms.

They kiss.

Hermann removes the sensor pads from Dinah and carries her over to the group.

Jorge pets her. He smiles from ear to ear.

JORGE

The internet is going to love this.

**INT. LEX & TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Jorge POPS the cork of a champagne bottle. Everybody CLAPS. Fizzing bubbles cascade from the spout.

Teddy looks around for flutes. There aren't any.

Jorge takes the first hit straight from the bottle. Passes it to Lex. He grabs a second bottle from the cooler and POPS it open. He passes it to Teddy.

From the cooler, he passes out a full bottle to everyone. Cypress gives hers a castigating look. Lightning slips his into the pocket of his lab coat.

Jorge holds up his bottle.

JORGE

A toast!

Everyone lifts their bottle.

LEX

... to the beginning.

EVERYONE

Cheers!

HERMANN

Prost!

They all CLINK their bottles together and take a sip. With a prissy finger, Cypress wipes dribble from her lower lip. Lightning returns his unopened bottle to his pocket.

Lex continues to CHUG her bottle. Teddy's eyes pop.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT**

A spent bottle of champagne clinks against another in the trash can.

Teddy carries Lex in his arms, placing her on the bed. Her arms around his neck, she refuses to let go. He laughs. She pulls him into the bed.

He opens his mouth to say something, but she SHOVES one of the cherries into his mouth. He smiles as he chews it.

They kiss and roll into each other.

The sheets twist over them like a curtain ...

## INT. LEX'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - MORNING

Teddy and Lex lie next to each other in the bed. Stripes of morning sun wake them through the blinds.

TEDDY

(yawning)

Wow. That was ... wow.

LEX

Yeah.

TEDDY

Maybe we should always wait that long between goes.

LEX

Or always get that plastered.

TEDDY

Not serious about waiting, by the way. Please don't.

(no response)

What is it?

LEX

When was the last you ... checked yourself?

He sits up.

TEDDY

Not as recently as you have ... why?!

LEX

Look, we've been together and apart so many times. We haven't had this conversation, and we probably shouldn't.

TEDDY

I think we should. Look, I haven't --

She stops him.

LEX

I don't want to know.

TEDDY

It's something else, isn't it? Did you see something? *Feel* something?

LEX

That's not my field, Teddy. I'd rather not speculate --

TEDDY

Jesus. Okay. But you're coming with me. You know how I feel about being poked and prodded. If I'm getting poked, so are you. Same team.

LEX

Deal. It's probably nothing, but if it's something ... you can't meditate yourself out of this, Teddy.

He nods.

TEDDY

I know. But no matter what happens, I'm not letting you go into me with that thing.

She smiles.

LEX

Now *there's* a double standard.

**EXT. RESEARCH CAMPUS - DAY**

Lex and Teddy walk toward the research hospital building.

**INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

Lex and Teddy sit at a black-topped soapstone table, both having their blood drawn. Lex is cool, while Teddy winces and avoids looking at the needle in his arm.

They are attended to by one of the Doctors from the opening procedure: JENNY, 30s, blond with her long hair pulled into a pony tail.

JENNY

Alright Lex, all done.

Jenny pulls out Lex's needle and bandages her up.

TEDDY

What about me?!

JENNY

You broke the needle again.

Lex puts her hands on Teddy's shoulders.

LEX  
Relax your arm. You're always telling  
me to breathe.

Jenny readies another needle. Teddy tries to calm himself.

JENNY  
One ... two ... three.

TEDDY  
Oh God.

Teddy watches as she slips the needle in. His eyes roll up  
and he slumps back in the chair. He's out. Lex holds him.

JENNY  
That'll work.

She fills up a vial. Slides out his needle. Cleans up. Lex  
balances him in the chair as she lets go, letting him sleep.

LEX  
Thanks for fitting us in, Jenny.

JENNY  
It's great to see you two again.  
Hell, I'm surprised they let you back  
on campus.

LEX  
We know our way around. Anything new  
going on since we left?

JENNY  
Is there ever anything new going on  
around here? Same old shit. Trying to  
push the next miracle drug.

LEX  
That's Big Med. Always attacking the  
symptoms and not the cause.

JENNY  
What've you been up to?

LEX  
Cutting off a slice of the "cause"  
for myself.

**EXT. RESEARCH CAMPUS - DAY**

Lex and Teddy exit the hospital building. In the reflection of the main door's glass, they cross the quad.

Behind the glass, an indiscernible figure watches them.

Lex and Teddy get in her car and drive off. The door opens, pushing the reflection aside to reveal:

Cypress, watching them leave.

**INT. HIGHRISE - DAY**

On an upper floor of the highrise, a glass wall overlooks the sprawling city.

A high-backed leather chair is turned away from the window. The meaty hand of the hulking figure (from the operating room booth) holds a cigar. Smoke slinks from its end.

Weaver enters. He walks across the polished floor to face the man in the chair.

MR. WEAVER

Shall I sit?

The hand tamps ashes from the end of the cigar into an ashtray. Gestures for him to sit. Weaver sits.

MR. WEAVER

Despite our explicit ... donation,  
Ms. Galen appears to be proceeding.

The hand's grip tightens on the cigar.

MR. WEAVER

Her first test was cut short, but  
undeniably promising.

The figure raises the cigar. Sucks in.

Blows out into Weaver's face. Weaver breathes in the second hand smoke. His jaw clenches and he closes his eyes. He fumbles in his pocket for his gum.

MR. WEAVER

How shall we proceed?

The hand stubs out the half-smoked cigar.



**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Lex and Teddy head the table. Cypress sits a few seats down. Hermann, Jorge, and Lightning are spread throughout the remaining seats. Dinah sits on Lightning's lap.

LEX

We need to push forward with human testing.

Hermann shifts in his seat. Jorge shoots him an uncomfortable look.

HERMANN

We're still parsing data collected from your first trip. We need time.

JORGE

There's a lot of hardware improvements to be made --

LEX

I understand that. We'll implement as many of them as we can in the time it takes to select a test subject.

CYPRESS

How will you be choosing?

TEDDY

Unfortunately, our patient list from the university is off limits.

LEX

We were hoping for suggestions.

Lightning raises his hand.

TEDDY

Yes, Lightning?

Everyone looks to him. He continues to pet Dinah.

LIGHTNING

I volunteer.

LEX

Do you ... have cancer?

He shakes his head "no."

TEDDY

Anyone else?

Silence in the room.

HERMANN  
Due to the inherent risks, the  
patient must be a volunteer.

Everyone nods, murmuring in agreement.

LEX  
Of course.

CYPRESS  
You must consider our currently ...  
questionable status.

Jorge gets an idea. He slaps the table in excitement.

JORGE  
That's it! If we're off the grid,  
shouldn't our patient be, too?

TEDDY  
What'd you have in mind?

**EXT. HEALTH CLINIC - DAY**

The building is a squat box shoved between two neighboring shops. Weeds scatter the cracked pavement.

Lex and Teddy enter the run-down clinic.

**INT. HEALTH CLINIC - DAY**

In a two-chair waiting room, the CLINICIAN, 40s, greets Lex and Teddy.

CLINICIAN  
Doctor Galen! I watched the stream of  
your procedure last month.

LEX  
Maybe you can help us out.

TEDDY  
We're looking for someone ...

The Clinician nods.

**EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY**

Lex and Teddy walk the city streets. Lex refers to a piece of paper in her hand. She checks the street sign. Nods.

They turn down a back alley.

Behind a dumpster, a hobo, ARCHIBALD, 50s, sleeps wrapped in a patchwork blanket. Teddy looks to Lex.

TEDDY

Should I?

She shrugs. They tiptoe up to him. Teddy taps him. Nothing.

LEX

Sir?

Nothing.

TEDDY

Think we're too late?

Lex slaps Teddy on the arm. Teddy hunches over the hobo, grabs hold of his blanket and RIPS it off of him.

ARCHIBALD

Whoa now!

He jolts up at attention. Sees them. Brushes his beard with his fingerless-gloved hand to make himself presentable.

LEX

Mr. Binks?

He smiles.

ARCHIBALD

Archibald, please.

Teddy leans in to him.

TEDDY

We have a proposition for you,  
Archibald.

ARCHIBALD

Sorry. Can't do that stuff anymore.

Lex shivers at the thought.

**INT. LEX & TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Archibald sits on the examination table. Hermann gives him a checkup as Lex and Teddy observe.

HERMANN

Have you seen a physician since your initial diagnosis?

ARCHIBALD

Doc, I'm in peak physical condition.  
(beat)  
'Cept for the cancer, o'course.

Teddy pulls Lex aside.

TEDDY

Are you sure you want him to be the face of your first human trial?

LEX

He'll be sedated. Thoroughly. And who's likely to see him?

TEDDY

We may want to get some eyes on this one. For the sake of bringing this procedure out of the dark.

Jorge passes the office door, turns around and peeks in.

JORGE

That our guy?

TEDDY

Yes. Jorge, come here.

Jorge steps into the office.

LEX

We're thinking of getting some more exposure this time around.

TEDDY

Any idea how we'd get the word out about, say, a press conference?

JORGE

We could put it up on the website.

LEX

Your secret organization has a website?

**CLOSE ON: COMPUTER SCREEN**

A URL is typed out one letter at a time:

**w w w . D e a d M e d . c o m**

The page loads. Its main index is dark and minimal. Designed to look intriguingly subversive.

A link appears:

**Are you ready for the future  
of cancer treatment?**

When clicked, a set of COORDINATES and a DATE / TIME appear. Beneath, a countdown clock ticks down ...

PULL BACK:

**INT. BLOGGER'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The site is on a monitor in the apartment of a BLOGGER, 20s, bespectacled, who sits in front of her computer.

On the screen, she highlights the coordinates, copies and pastes them into a browser tab with a maps app open. She searches, the location indicated on the map with a "pin."

She jots down the street address and time stamp.

She clicks the "street view" option and the map rotates from satellite images to a ground view of:

**EXT. HOTEL CONVENTION CENTER - DAY**

The unassuming convention center is connected to a single-story hotel on the outskirts of town. The parking lot is mostly empty, save for a few REPORTERS leaning against their vehicles. They check their phones and watches.

The Blogger walks past them toward the entrance, satchel slung over her shoulder.

On her phone, the countdown clock hits ZERO.

**INT. HOTEL CONVENTION CENTER - DAY**

A cramped meeting room has been filled with rows of folding chairs. A low stage has been assembled at the head of the room, a table and chairs facing the audience.

The Blogger enters and takes a seat in the back, despite none of the rows ahead being occupied.

Lex peeks out from behind a curtain that acts as a backdrop for the stage. Her eyes narrow, and she slips back behind the curtain again.

Teddy waits for her. The rest of the crew paces. Jorge attends to Archibald, trying to make him look presentable in a borrowed suit.

LEX

Not the crowd I was hoping for.

TEDDY

It'll be enough.

LEX

Maybe it's for the best. These guys aren't used to being out and about.

She looks to Hermann, who is doing vocal warmups. Lightning sits in the corner, wearing a dress shirt and tie under his work coveralls.

Cypress approaches Lex and Teddy.

CYPRESS

It is time.

Lex's cell vibrates in her pocket. She pulls it out. The caller ID flashes "JENNY" on the screen.

LEX

I have to take this.

Lex dashes around the corner to take the call. Teddy smiles apologetically to Cypress and follows.

He stops in the doorway and watches Lex take the call.

She can't be heard, but her posture and expressions make it clear she's responding to news. She hangs up, composes herself, and rejoins Teddy.

TEDDY

Lex, what is it?

Cypress swipes in before Lex can answer and rushes them onto the stage, where the rest of the crew is already sat.

Lex looks out at the crowd as she takes her seat. A dozen reporters sit scattered in rows set for many more. Lex inconspicuously wipes a tear from her eye. Teddy notices.

Weaver enters and stands at the back of the room. He makes eye contact with Lex, who narrows her eyes at him.

She adjusts her microphone and addresses the room.

LEX

You're here because you're interested in the future of cancer treatment.

(beat)

I'm about to take the first step.

Lex clasps her shaking hands.

LEX

I recognize some of you from my last university-sponsored trial. For those of you who don't know me, My name is Alexandra Galen. I'm joined by Teddy Caine, my ... partner.

Murmurs throughout the room.

LEX

Since our dismissal, we've sought more liberating pastures. Let me introduce you to our new team.

She gestures down the table to Jorge.

LEX

Hermann Moseneder, Jorge Smith, and Lightning.

Hermann nods. Jorge smiles and throws a timid wave. Lightning does nothing.

LEX

Together, we have pioneered a new treatment. One that will take us into the human body in ways you'll have to see to believe.

Teddy leans into his microphone.

TEDDY

The entire procedure will be broadcast online. Next Monday, at nine a.m.

(pause)

We have time for a few questions.

The room is silent. After a beat, the Blogger in the back raises her hand.

BLOGGER

Who will play guinea pig for this presumably risky procedure?

Lex takes a deep breath before responding. She turns to Teddy, eyes welling up. She closes her eyes. Shakes it off.

LEX

Our patient is ...

The crew looks to Lex. Her pause confuses them.

Teddy steps in for her:

TEDDY

Mr. Archibald Binks. He's here with us today.

Teddy indicates Archibald at the end of the table. Archibald half-stands and awkwardly bows.

LEX

Thank you all for coming.

Lex abruptly leaves the stage. Teddy follows.

As the reporters pack up their things, Weaver slips out the door, smiling.

**EXT. HOTEL CONVENTION CENTER - DAY**

Lex hurries to her car. She jumps in and starts the engine.

Teddy catches up to her as she begins to pull out of the parking lot. He waves his arms.

TEDDY

Lex, wait!

She peels out, leaving him.



**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

The room is dark. Lex sits alone. She faces her mechanical suit of armor. The limp husk hangs suspended in the cage.

Teddy enters. She doesn't need to look.

LEX

I'm sorry.

He walks toward her. Leans down to her level.

TEDDY

Jenny called, didn't she?

LEX

Yes.

TEDDY

Lex, you can't run away from this.

LEX

Trust me, I'm not.

Teddy stands.

TEDDY

Look, dammit, I deserve to know if I've got --

LEX

You're fine. It was nothing.

TEDDY

Then what is it?

She finally looks up to him. Tears in her eyes.

LEX

It's me.

He realizes. Drops down to hold her.

TEDDY

Oh my God, Lex.

She weeps into his shoulder.

LEX

I spent every day trying to save everyone else. Never thinking ...

TEDDY

You don't have to go through this alone.

LEX

That's just it, Teddy. That's what I'm coming to terms with. After all this time, you and I are together ... and it might have to be alone.

TEDDY

I'm not going anywhere.

LEX

But you deserve to have everything you want. From me ...

He doesn't understand. She can barely say it:

LEX

Teddy ... it's ovarian.

She collapses into his arms.

TEDDY

Lex, we can fight this. But ...

He grabs her shoulders and holds her at eye level.

TEDDY

We have to leave here.

LEX

I can't. Not now.

TEDDY

Lex, you can't keep pushing yourself like this. I know it's personal --

She fires up.

LEX

Yes. I've spent my life fighting a faceless criminal. Now it's got a face, and I'm fighting for *me*.

TEDDY

You've got to choose your battles.

She shakes him off.

LEX

I can't stop. Not when we're this goddamn close. It's in our grasp. It consumes, it destroys. It's not *fair*. It's not fucking *natural*.

(beat)

We go in enough, we get in deep enough, we look it in the face and eventually ... we'll know *why*.

TEDDY

Some questions don't have answers.

LEX

I can't accept that. There's an answer and I'm going to find it.

TEDDY

What if that day never comes?

LEX

Then I guess I'll die trying.

TEDDY

Even if that means dying alone?

LEX

Yes. I'm sorry you want more than I'm willing to give.

TEDDY

Give? Or give up? Yes, I want a family. More than anything. But that starts with *you*.

He walks up to her. Cradles her face in his hand.

LEX

Same team?

She moves in to kiss him. He pulls back, stopping her.

TEDDY

I stuck with you. Even when you ignored me. But if you're going to ignore yourself ... I can't be here. It's not the time to be a pioneer. You're a patient now.

He turns away from her and walks out.

ANNOUNCER (PRE-LAP)

Cancer ...

**CLOSE ON: TELEVISION SCREEN**

A commercial plays. A smooth, male voice speaks.

ANNOUNCER

... odds are, you or someone you love  
has been seriously affected by some  
form of malignant neoplasia.

A FAMILY plays on the beach.

ANNOUNCER

What if you could eliminate their  
pain?

A GRANDMOTHER cradles a newborn BABY.

ANNOUNCER

What if you could give them a few  
more years?

A MOTHER and FATHER sit at their CHILD's hospital bedside.

ANNOUNCER

To such bold claims, you might ask,  
"Who can?" The answer: OCTOCAN.

The commercial pans over a series of slick prescription drug  
packages. They glisten in soft focus.

ANNOUNCER

After years of research and  
development, we are pleased to  
introduce OCTOCAN: a full range of  
pharmaceuticals designed specially to  
address each stage of cancer  
development.

An ACTOR PLAYING A DOCTOR prominently displays one of the  
OCTOCAN boxes to their SMILING PATIENT.

ANNOUNCER

From the first diagnosis to your  
final treatments, nobody needs to  
face cancer alone.

The patient continues smiling as they close their eyes.

Music swells.

**INT. LEX & TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Lex, Hermann, Jorge, and Lightning huddle around the TV set. A shining OCTOCAN logo fills the screen.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Ask your doctor about OCTOCAN  
products today.

A web address appears beneath the logo:

**w w w . o c t o c a n c e r . c o m**

Lex swipes the remote away from Jorge. Clicks off the set.

LEX  
This is going to be the biggest roll-  
out in pharmaceutical history.

HERMANN  
And the most costly. Whoever's  
backing has billions invested.

LEX  
I've got a feeling this has something  
to do with the all heat I've been  
getting lately.

HERMANN  
We should take extra precautions that  
our broadcast be untraceable.

LEX  
The last thing we need right now is  
Big Med -- or worse, the FDA --  
sniffing around here. We're so close.

JORGE  
Don't worry, I'll layer the proxies.

LEX  
Jorge, after you've prepped for  
Monday, would you mind digging into  
this a bit?

JORGE  
Sure. Where should I start?

Lex looks to Hermann

HERMANN  
Follow the money.

**INT. LIGHTNING'S SHOP - DAY**

Cypress watches over Lightning as he sharpens the scalpel blade on a spinning wheel.

The blade has been modified, an injector assembly added along the unsharpened edge. A ribbed metal cable runs from the end of the hilt, attaching it to the suit's pack.

**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

Jorge sets up a video camera on a tripod, pointing it toward the cage and operating table.

He plugs a cable into the back of the camera and runs in into the observation room.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

Jorge plugs the cable into a mixer board.

On the monitor above, a live feed of the operating room appears. It is one box among several feeds, including a view from a camera mounted on Lex's inert suit.

Cypress observes from the corner of the room.

**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

Jorge, Hermann, and Lightning perform final system checks. Lex steps aside to check her phone. No messages.

Cypress slips out of the control room and exits the chamber.

**INT. WEAVER'S TRUCK - MORNING**

Weaver sits in the passenger seat of a parked truck.

On a tablet mounted to the dash, he has the Dead Med site loaded. He taps the "refresh" icon. Page reloads. Nothing.

He checks his watch. Waits for the second hand to pass twelve, then refreshes again. A live feed from the operating chamber appears.

The stream is pixelated with blocky distortion.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - MORNING**

Lex stands in the center of the room facing the camera. She is fully suited up, with her helmet under her arm.

Her chest plate has been emblazoned with an iconographic form of a crab encircling the medical cross symbol.

She speaks directly to the camera.

LEX

You are about to witness medical history. For too long, traditional methods of cancer treatment have approached the disease at a distance. They focus on the symptoms, and not the cause.

She pauses, stepping closer to the camera.

LEX

It is our hope that the process we demonstrate today will represent the first step toward true understanding.

(beat)

For today we take cancer into our own hands, as I -- Doctor Alexandra Galen -- will physically travel into our patient's body to face the disease myself.

Lex walks over to the cage device.

LEX

This voyage will be made possible by displacement field projection technology, allowing me to exist simultaneously on both micro and macro scales.

Lex crosses to the operating table. Archibald lies, sedated.

LEX

We've combined my proprietary virtual detection technology with a programmable hallucinogen, which feeds me a series of recognizable simulacrum in order to navigate my journey on the cellular level.

Hermann enters and approaches the table. He begins to inject the connected sensor pads into Archibald.

LEX

Unlike previous trials, our patient today has developed past metastasis. In addition to surgical removal, I will implant a nano-compound in order to track the spread of any metastatic cells that may reemerge.

Lex nods to Hermann, who returns to the observation booth. She looks back to the camera.

LEX

I know that's a lot to digest, but once the procedure begins, you'll see what I mean. The feed on your screen won't be exactly what I see, but microcams on my suit will be overlaid with a digital map, so you'll know where I am at all times.

She points to the cameras on her chest.

Lex heads toward the cage. Lightning helps load her in. Her helmet lowers over her head and locks into place.

LEX

(filtered)

See you on the other side.

#### **INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Hermann presses the ignition button. The tone begins to HUM. Through the observation window, they can see the gyroscopic rings of the cage begin to spin.

The rings pick up speed, suspending Lex's suit within.

As the energy grows, the stream on Jorge's monitor is disrupted with a wave of digital noise.

The hum grows louder, followed by a sudden SHOCK of light.

#### **INT. LEX'S SUIT - DAY**

Lex keeps her eyes closed.

The haze has already filled her helmet. She takes several breaths before opening her eyes.



**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

Lex stands, feet firmly planted, more assured this time.

The organic landscape flickers into being around her. It's even more vast than her last trip. A dark forest of human tissues, illuminated only by her shoulder-mounted lights.

LEX

I'm in. Are you receiving me?

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

On Jorge's monitor, the feed from Lex's cameras provides a realistic micro-view of her surroundings. More intimate than a landscape, the warm image writhes with cellular activity.

The stream flickers in and out of focus. With a few keystrokes, Jorge superimposes a digital map readout on to the image, a blinking dot indicating Lex's position.

The static of an audio signal shrieks into the room.

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

-- repeat. Do you read me?

Hermann fumbles for the panel-mounted microphone.

HERMANN

Affirmative, Doctor Galen! We read you loud and clear.

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

Should I hold to establish a signal for the broadcast?

Jorge leans over to the microphone.

JORGE

Negative. It's as good as we're going to get.

HERMANN

Proceed at your command, Doctor.

At the mixer, Jorge shifts the view of the online feed to show the suspended Lex in the operating chamber as she responds. He composites a split screen to illustrate how her movements parallel those of her microscopic camera.

**INT. WEAVER'S TRUCK - DAY**

The split screen feed plays live on Weaver's tablet.

He rips off his sunglasses, eyes wide in awe. He digs his phone out of his jacket pocket, slams his thumbs to select a number and starts barking:

MR. WEAVER  
Accelerate the timeline. We need to  
move out NOW.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

Jorge leans over and takes over the microphone again.

JORGE  
Lex, can you describe what you're  
seeing for the folks at home?

LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
It must look so small out there.

JORGE  
Yeah, just a bunch of sludge.

LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I can't even describe. It's so big.  
And I've never felt so ...

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

LEX  
... alone.

Lex stands before a vast, mountainous expanse of biological foliage. Textured with the raw stuff of humanity, at this scale the terrain is frighteningly alien.

She proceeds down a slope, toward a dark cluster of tissue.

JORGE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Happy to be the voices in your head.

Lex switches on the control panel on her gauntlet. A beeping indicator guides her forward. The beep gradually quickens.

**INT. WEAVER'S TRUCK - DAY**

The tracker's beep issues from Weaver's tablet.

He is joined by a burly FEDERAL AGENT, 30s, who slides into the driver's seat and lights a cigarette.

Weaver sniffs the smoke and FLICKS the cig out of The Fed's mouth. This guy doesn't look happy. Weaver stares him down.

MR. WEAVER

Drive.

With a twist of the key, the truck GROWLS to life.

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

Lex PLUNGES her scalpel blade into a slimy black tissue.

As she cuts along the length of the abnormal tissue, its full scale is revealed: the seething heap comprises the entire slope she balances on. A mountain-sized TUMOR.

In the valley beneath her, dozens of smaller metastatic tumors are scattered.

As she cuts, the smaller abnormal cells begin to grow, consuming the healthy tissue between. They form villainous HOUNDS, crawling with the spread of their growth.

LEX

I've started my incision into the primary tumor ...

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

... but there's a ton of smaller Abbies forming around me.

Hermann leans into the microphone, fascinated.

TEDDY

What form have the abnormal cells taken, Doctor?

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

Honestly?

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

LEX  
They look like Hell Hounds.

A particularly vicious Hound barrels toward Lex. The ferocity of its growth reads as snarling. Sunken pockets form the shape of narrow eyes.

Lex's tracker beeps a solid SCREAM.

She ejects the blade from the main tumor, pivoting to face her attacker.

The Hound nearly upon her, she THRUSTS her blade into its chest. The scalpel half submerged, she presses a latch on the hilt which releases a gelatinous nano-compound.

It quells the beast's attack, which she uses as an opportunity to quickly finish him with a fierce swipe.

Lex breathes heavily.

HERMANN (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Doctor?

She looks out at the teeming valley beneath her.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

LEX (V.O.)  
There's more coming.

Weaver's shining black box truck BARRELS down the highway.

The metal panels of the truck's back box warble as it weaves in and out of traffic.

Puffs of smoke spit from the straining tires.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

Hermann and Jorge lean into the monitor, trying to make out any detail they can.

Their gaze is interrupted by a scraping CLANG. They clamber over the control board and look out the observation window to see: Lex in the cage, violently swinging her scalpel against a hoard of unseen attackers.

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

Lex is surrounded.

She cuts down waves of rapidly developing abnormal tissue. Those that aren't circling her are growing into the heap of the mountain behind her.

Spinning to retreat, Lex unleashes the remaining compound, forming a heap of gel between her and the oncoming Hounds.

She turns and breaks into a sprint.

**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

Lex's flailing limbs shake the rotating cage.

At the adjacent operating table, Archibald's heart-rate monitor begins to beep more rapidly.

His heart pounds through his chest.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

Jorge turns his focus from the cage to his monitor. The warm microscopic view is being blotted by cancerous growth.

JORGE

Lex, what's going on in there?

No response.

Hermann takes over the microphone.

HERMANN

Doctor, the patient's heart rate is dangerously accelerating.

Static screeches in response.

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

Lex huffs out between breaths:

LEX

Tell him to join the club.

Her blade is a blur, swinging between its slice of the main tumor and fending off the onrushing hoards.

**EXT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

Weaver's truck PLOWS through the locked fence, screeching to a stop in front of the abandoned hospital.

A cloud of dust envelopes the wobbling truck.

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

One by one, Lex cuts down the individual formations.

As she slices, the severed lumps fly into scattered piles on either side of her. She makes considerable progress, carving her way to the last few rows of Hounds.

LEX  
Jorge, once I've cleared these  
Abbies, I need you to stabilize the  
the patient's heart-rate.

**INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY**

LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I can't safely remove the tumor if  
he's going into shock.

Jorge lumbers out of his chair.

JORGE  
I'll increase his dosage.

He runs into the operating chamber toward Archibald.

**EXT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS - DAY**

The back doors of the truck BURST open.

Five FEDERAL AGENTS pour out, rifles at the ready. Weaver and The Fed hop down from the cab. They turn to the back of the truck. The Fed organizes the Agents with a finger wave.

He leads them through the front sliding doors.

Weaver strolls lazily behind, enjoying himself. He pulls his sunglasses down the ridge of his nose to look up at the decaying building.

**INT. LIGHTNING'S SHOP - DAY**

Lightning watches the feed on an overhead mounted TV set.

Out of the corner of his eye, he sees something move past the window of his shop door. He slides over to get a closer look. The Agents make their way down the hallway.

Not missing a beat, Lightning turns away from the door and begins grabbing items from his workbench.

He throws large metal parts over his shoulder -- spares from the cage and mechanical suit -- and carries them to his bus.

With a CLASH he begins loading anything he can carry.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

One of the Agents hears the ruckus from Lightning's shop. He breaks off from the group and marches past Weaver.

He KICKS open the shop door with a BLAM.

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

Lex finishes off the last few hounds. Standing among a field of remains, she catches her breath.

The joints of her suit creak as she makes her way back to the main tumor. The ground trembles with the beat of Archibald's heart. Like an earthquake at this scale.

**INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

Jorge stands over Archibald. He injects a syringe into his I.V. line. After a moment, his heart rate begins to steady.

Jorge turns to head back to the booth as ...

The Agents BURST through the door.

**INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

Lex raises her blade to continue cutting the tumor.

HERMANN (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Abort, Doctor, ABORT!

LEX  
What? Why?! I just --

A COMMOTION sounds through the radio.

HERMANN (O.S.)  
(whispering, filtered)  
Now, hurry.

Lex lowers her blade.

LEX  
Shit.

She hits the button on her gauntlet to ignite the boosters at her feet. They BLAST her off the ground before ...

The boosters SPUTTER to a stop and send her careening back to the ground. SLAM. She lands on her back. Grunting, she pulls herself up and heads to the nearest wall.

She starts HACKING through the tissue with her blade.

#### **INT. OPERATING CHAMBER - DAY**

Three of the Agents converge around Lex in the cage. One covers Hermann and Jorge, who have their hands in the air.

The HUMMING grows louder from the cage.

#### **INT. ARCHIBALD - DAY**

Lex is surrounded by organic tissue. She BURROWS her way through each layer with incredible speed.

A glow up ahead.

#### **INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

Energetic LIGHT fills the room.

Confused, the Agents look to The Fed and Weaver, who are equally shocked. The hum BLARES and the room goes WHITE.

BOOM. The light fades. Archibald's heart monitor FLATLINES.

The gyroscopic rings of the cage slow to a stop. Lex LEAPS out, tumbling hard onto the floor.



**INT. TEDDY'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Teddy sits up on the edge of his couch watching the feed.

He sees Lex hit the floor. Digital noise overtakes the signal before cutting to black.

**INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY**

The Fed pulls the cord out of the video camera.

An Agent removes her helmet as two others unlatch the suit and pull Lex out. They carry the tech out of the room.

LEX

What the hell is going on here?

The Fed approaches her.

THE FED

I would ask you the same question, Ms. Galen, but you explained very thoroughly. For everyone to see.

Weaver stands off to the side, watching.

HERMANN

Are we under arrest?

THE FED

You certainly could be. Thankfully, we just want to talk.

Lex looks at the Agent's rifles. Then to Weaver.

LEX

You've got a funny way of talking.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

The Agents lead Lex, Hermann, and Jorge down the Hallway. They pass the door to Lightning's shop.

An engine BOOMS from within.

The group stops. Weaver pulls the door open to reveal: Sprawled on the ground, the other Agent, unconscious. Lightning's bus lurches backwards out of the loading gate.

THE FED

Let him go.

**INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY**

Lex sits across from The Fed at a metal table. Weaver stands in the corner, out of the reach of the overhead light.

THE FED

For an underground movement, Dead Med was surprisingly eager to broadcast their activities.

LEX

No reason to hide.

THE FED

Unregulated trials. Circumventing Human Subject Protection and Bioresearch Monitoring Inspections. It seems to me you have plenty of reasons to hide.

LEX

Too many brick walls and red tape.

THE FED

For good reason.

LEX

Yeah, just not the reasons you're hawking.

THE FED

I do not follow your reasoning.

Lex leans in for emphasis.

LEX

Do your regulations protect as many patients as they do other interests?

THE FED

Charming, coming from a woman whose flagrant self-interest sent her fleeing to the only rejects who would take her in after she was shut out.

She smiles.

LEX

You know so much about me.

(wryly)

You must be a fan.

He doesn't indulge her.

THE FED  
Crumbling facilities. Limited  
resources. Even more limited funding.  
What hope could you possibly have  
with these people?

LEX  
Knowledge can't be stopped. Once it's  
out, it's out. What we do, someone  
will build on. Hopefully me.

THE FED  
Unlikely, Ms. Galen.

LEX  
Enough with the vague. What's this  
mean to me?

THE FED  
You will be summoned to a review  
board. If convicted, you face  
potential debarment.

LEX  
And my equipment?

THE FED  
Confiscated until it can be reviewed  
and approved for clinical trials.

Lex looks to Weaver in the corner.

LEX  
I won't be holding my breath.

The Fed stands to leave.

THE FED  
We do have one thing for you. It was  
found in your suit.

He puts Lex's childhood "I am going to cure cancer" note on  
the table and flicks it to her.

She picks it up.

THE FED  
Good luck with that.

He exits. Weaver follows.

**EXT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT**

A black SUV drops Lex at her car in front of the hospital.

She watches, her face red with the glow of tail lights as they they leave. As she turns to the car, her attention is caught by a yellow light spilling from behind the building.

Lex walks past contorted remains of the chain-link fence. Running her hand along aged brick, she turns a corner to the back of the building.

Hermann, Jorge, and Lightning stand waiting for her, backlit by the bus's headlights.

LEX  
Glad to see they let you guys out  
early.

HERMANN  
Thank God.

JORGE  
Did they ... torture you?

LEX  
Not physically.

HERMANN  
How could they have found us?

LEX  
The same way they knew everything.  
Someone told them.

JORGE  
Who?

LEX  
The one of us that wasn't there.

JORGE  
Teddy? That doesn't --

LEX  
No. The *other* one that wasn't there.

It dawns on Hermann.

HERMANN  
Cypress.

Jorge slaps his forehead.

JORGE  
She left, right before!

LEX  
How did you find her?

Hermann and Jorge look at each other.

JORGE  
We didn't.

LEX  
But she said you brought her in to be  
a recruiter for Dead Med ...

HERMANN  
She came to us.

Lex shakes her head.

LEX  
Goddammit.

Frustrated, she paces.

JORGE  
We, uh, took care of ...

HERMANN  
Archibald has been removed.

Lex doesn't hear them. She's on her own train of thought.

LEX  
We need to press on. Lightning, how  
soon can you rebuild?

Lightning holds up four fingers.

HERMANN  
Four weeks.

LEX  
Let's do it in three. We've got to  
strike now.

HERMANN  
Just one problem. They gutted this  
place. Plus, they'll have eyes here.

JORGE  
Yeah, where we going to work?

**INT. LEX'S GARAGE - DAY**

Lex's two-car garage is overflowing with materials, everyone cramped into the same space.

Lighting uses a small spot welder to fuse newly forged pieces with the extras he was able to salvage from his shop. Hermann and Jorge adjust a new helmet apparatus.

The garage door is rolled up, their activities spilling out into the driveway. Lightning's aluminum bus is parked parallel to the garage, obscuring them from the street.

CLOSE ON: Lex's crab/cross chest plate as Lightning locks it into place.

**INT. FDA HOLDING AREA - DAY**

The original chest plate hangs, attached to Lex's confiscated suit of armor.

Cypress runs her manicured fingers along its ridges. Weaver looks over her shoulder.

MR. WEAVER

Why the crab?

CYPRESS

The answer lies in the stars.

He doesn't get it. She looks over her shoulder to him.

CYPRESS

Cancer.

His brow furrows. She looks back to the armor.

CYPRESS

A constellation of the zodiac. Named for one of the twelve labors of Hercules. A great crab sent to distract the hero during battle.

MR. WEAVER

Does our crab see the greater battle she distracts?

She turns to him.

CYPRESS

It remains to be seen ...

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

CYPRESS (V.O.)

... if she will earn her place among  
the stars.

Lex stuffs Teddy's meditation pillow into a cardboard box. She carries it over to a bookshelf. With a spread of her arm, she scoops an entire shelf of trinkets into the box.

Setting the box back down, she sorts through a few of the items, singling one out ...

JENNY

Knock knock.

Lex jumps. Jenny enters through the garage door.

LEX

God, Jenny, you scared me.

JENNY

Seems to be my MO these days. The,  
uh, odd bald gentleman showed me in.

LEX

So you met Lightning.

JENNY

That's really his name, huh?

LEX

It's good to see you, Jenny. I wish I  
had more time to --

JENNY

Actually, Lex, this isn't a social  
call.

Lex pushes the box away.

LEX

Oh.

JENNY

You haven't come in since I called.  
How are you holding up?

LEX

Honestly?

JENNY

You've never given it any other way.

LEX

I haven't let myself think about it.  
Things have been a little ... crazy.

JENNY

A *little*? Don't think I haven't been  
keeping up with you. That's why I'm  
here.

Lex sighs.

LEX

I'm really close, Jen.

JENNY

Close to a lot of things. You can't  
push yourself like this right now.

LEX

You sound like Teddy.

JENNY

The boy might not be able to handle  
needles, but he knows what he's  
talking about.

Lex gives an exasperated throw of her arms.

LEX

And yet, not around to do the  
talking.

JENNY

I'm sorry.

LEX

Me too.

Jenny stands to leave. She takes a peek inside the box.  
Pulls out a Russian nesting doll. Tosses it to Lex.

JENNY

You never did need anyone else.

Jenny leaves.

Lex considers the ornamental doll. Its hand-painted shell  
carries the likeness of a woman with rosy cheeks. She pops  
the first layer of the shell, exposing a second, smaller  
version of the woman nested within.

Lex's eyes widen with epiphany.



**INT. LEX'S GARAGE - NIGHT**

Lex FLINGS open the door and rushes into the garage.

LEX  
Guys ... !

Hermann, Jorge, and Lightning stop what they're doing and look to her.

LEX  
... I've got an idea.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Lex, Hermann, Jorge, and Lightning stand around the island in her kitchen. She pours drinks and passes them around.

Hermann grabs his and downs it in one gulp.

HERMANN  
This is insane.

JORGE  
You're really putting a hat on a hat here, Lex.

Lex pours Hermann another drink. He downs it.

HERMANN  
We've already pushed the boundaries of known science. With this ... you're trying to break nature.

Lex slams her fists on the counter top.

LEX  
Can it be done?!

TEDDY  
Yes.

Everyone spins to see Teddy in the doorway.

LEX  
Teddy ...

He joins them.

TEDDY  
Anything left in that bottle?

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Lex reclines in the bed. Teddy sits on the edge. Both of their glasses are empty.

LEX  
Why'd you come back?

TEDDY  
I've been thinking about it since  
your broadcast cut out.

LEX  
Why tonight?

TEDDY  
Lightning called me.

She laughs.

LEX  
What was that like?

TEDDY  
Surprising.

They both laugh. After a beat, their laughter dies down to an awkward silence.

LEX  
I'm sorry, Teddy. I --

TEDDY  
Stop. I'm not here for an apology.  
I've accepted that you're going to do  
whatever you feel you need to.

LEX  
Then why are you here?

TEDDY  
What you're about to do. You need me.  
Even if you don't *need* me ... you  
can't do this alone.

She sits up. Leans in to him. Kisses him on the forehead.

LEX  
Thank you.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Lex, Hermann, and Jorge sit on the couch. Teddy leans against the wall. Lightning sits in an armchair, Dinah in his lap. The cold flicker of the TV shines on their faces.

On the screen, a press conference begins:

**EXT. OCTOCAN PRESS PAVILION - DAY**

An exuberant display of corporate-branded pomp. The OCTOCAN logo has been slapped on everything: backdrops, carpets, lapel pins, even flower vases.

Weaver and Cypress sit in the front row of white seats. A perfectly coiffed MC takes the stage behind a podium.

MC

Welcome to OCTOCAN! The true future  
of cancer treatment begins NOW!

The audience CLAPS.

MC

Rigorously tested and approved over  
the last decade, the OCTOCAN family  
of products offers you certainty in  
an uncertain world.

Behind him, a screen displays images of the OCTOCAN drugs.

MC

Because, with loved one's lives on  
the line, it is not the time to take  
risks.

The family's faces from the OCTOCAN commercial appear. After they cycle through, the screen fades to black.

The MC takes a calculated pause before continuing:

MC

Some radicals out there would have  
you believe that OCTOCAN'T. But I'm  
here to assure you ... OCTOCAN!

LEX (PRE-LAP)

Shut this shit off.

**INT. LEX'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Teddy switches off the TV.

TEDDY

Well, they couldn't make that any more clear.

LEX

I should be flattered.

HERMANN

They're not going to let anything -- or anyone -- threaten this rollout.

JORGE

We should fight fire with fire.

LEX

We can't sink to their level. Next week, we broadcast. No announcement.

**INT. GARAGE - DAY**

The new suit of armor hangs over a lathe in the corner. Lightning puts the finishing touches on the new cage device.

Lex, Teddy, Hermann and Jorge group by the bus.

HERMANN

Lightning is nearly finished. Ahead of schedule. But hardware is only half of our problem.

JORGE

Your place has worked fine for construction, but if we try to broadcast from here, they'll find us in minutes. No matter how many layers deep I hide us.

TEDDY

Do you have any ideas?

Hermann and Jorge shoot each other a knowing glance.

JORGE

One.

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

A Big Rig PLOWS down the highway.

Through the windshield: Lightning drives. Dinah sits curled up in the passenger seat.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

The main box of the truck has been converted into a mobile operating chamber.

The cage device sits at the far end, near the back gate. Consoles and equipment occupy the corner nearest the cab. Through a small window above the control console, the back of Lightning's head can be seen.

Teddy and Hermann sit at the control console.

Lex is already suited up inside the cage. She faces the video camera, which Jorge stands behind to operate.

Jorge gives Lex a "go ahead" point.

LEX

Good Morning. Doctor Alexandra Galen here. I apologize for my radio silence since our last episode was unfortunately cut short. Please forgive the necessary change of scenery.

(beat)

Today, we take the next leap forward. To prove this approach, you will see I have put everything on the line.

Lex puts on her helmet and locks it into place. The system lights in her suit begin to boot up.

LEX

You may notice the conspicuous absence of a patient this time around.

(beat)

Several months ago, I was diagnosed with early onset ovarian cancer.

(beat)

Today I wear two hats.

She nods to Hermann. He approaches the cage with the wired sensor pads. He reaches his hands past the rings, and injects the sensor pads into Lex.

Hermann feeds the wires through the base of the cage and returns to his seat at the control console.

LEX  
Wish me luck. For both my sakes.

Teddy presses the ignition button. The rings begin to spin, the entire cage wobbling with the movement of the truck.

Lex closes her eyes. The HUM rises. The LIGHT surges.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex's vision GLITCHES more than ever before. The hallucinated terrain flickers in and out of existence in a violent FEEDBACK LOOP.

The glitching waves even out, normalizing into the now familiar style of organic landscape.

TEDDY (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
-- Lex? Lex, come in.

Lex is dazed.

LEX  
I'm here. Got caught in a feedback loop, but I'm here.

She slowly extends her arms to balance as she moves to take her first step ...

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

In the cage, the suspended Lex raises her foot to take her first step ...

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex lowers her foot onto the moist ground. She shifts her weight onto the foot, fully taking the first step.

As she steps, the WALLS AROUND HER SHIFT, in unison with her movement. She stops, steadying herself. Takes another step. The ground beneath wades with each small shift.

LEX  
Oh, this is going to be fun.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

In the cage, the suspended Lex cautiously moves her legs through the air.

Jorge leans back to Teddy.

JORGE  
Our broadcast's cutting in and out.

TEDDY  
Bad signal ... or someone's blocking?

JORGE  
I don't know.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

In the distance, behind the Big Rig, two FEDERAL AGENTS on MOTORCYCLES approach.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex's tracker begins to BEEP as she makes her way down the Fallopian tube. The reproductive tunnel is damp and narrower than anywhere she has yet traveled.

The BEEP of the tracker quickens.

She draws her scalpel blade as she continues.

TEDDY (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Lex, be careful as you approach the first abnormal cell growths. You're inside yourself. Your subconscious knows that. There's no telling what sort of images it could feed you.

LEX  
Bring on the inner demons.

She inches forward in the darkness. The long curve of the tunnel only allows her on-board lights to carry to the area immediately surrounding her.

The tracker beeps rapidly, cutting the silence.

Where the tunnel bends ahead of her, a shapeless form scurries in the darkness.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

The two Motorcycle Agents flank the cab of the Big Rig. Lightning looks into their pitch black visors. They start to wade threateningly into his lane.

Lightning KNOCKS on the back window twice with his elbow to alert the others.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex inches closer to the approaching growth. It finally falls into the beam of her light ...

It's literally a grotesque DEMON, more fully formed than any of the other abnormal growths she has encountered. Its many limbs grow into the tissue it traverses to reach her.

Wasting no time, she SWINGS her blade at the creature.

As the swing brings her closer, the light spills farther to reveal a HOARD of matching beasts behind it.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

The Motorcycle Agents FORCE the Big Rig into the dirt median. The truck TILTS with two tires still on the road.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Teddy, Hermann, and Jorge brace themselves.

In the cage, Lex shifts with the tilting of the truck.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

As Lex makes her way through the swarm, her body involuntarily LURCHES as it did in the truck.

She shifts her body to compensate, continuing to slice the Demons with a fury. They fall beneath her blade, making a path for her to head down the curving tunnel.

The hoard grows more dense as she presses on. The width of the opening begins to widen.



**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Lightning SWINGS the steering wheel back toward the road, SLAMMING into one of the Motorcycle Agents.

The bike wobbles and loses its balance. It falls and TUMBLES over itself down the road. The Agent rolls past the Big Rig, slowing to a stop.

Behind the Big Rig, WEAVER'S TRUCK swerves to avoid the fallen body.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex clears the last of the hoard. She follows the widening path and enters the chamber of the ovarian cavity.

Her tracker SCREAMS. She looks up.

LEX

Oh my God.

Towering above her is the TUMOR: a smoking mountain of a creature, comprised of thousands of the smaller Demons. Its form is disturbingly human, with a swinging gut.

It looks like a living version of a medieval painting of Hell. Lex is paralyzed with fear.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Teddy leans into the microphone on the control panel.

TEDDY

What is it? Have you reached the primary tumor?

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

It's overtaken most of the ovary. I'm not sure I can --

TEDDY

Lex, stop. You can do this.

With a CLASH, the truck JERKS forward.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Weaver's truck dislodges from the back of the Big Rig.

**INT. WEAVER'S TRUCK - DAY**

Weaver watches the effect of the ram on the live feed displayed on his tablet.

MR. WEAVER

Again!

The Fed jams his foot on the accelerator, SLAMMING the truck into the back of the Big Rig again.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex TRIPS with the jerk of the truck. She tumbles over herself and SLAMS into the sinewy feet of the Tumor. Like tree stumps, they are embedded into the wall of the ovary.

The weight of Lex's suit CRUNCHES on top of itself, dislodging the connection between her pack and her suit.

She tries to reach back to reconnect it, but the neck joint of her armor prevents her arm from bending back far enough.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

The control console erupts with warning lights.

TEDDY

Lex, what's going on in there?!

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

My pack is dislodged. The vapor feed is thinning -- can't reach --

The signal is intercut with static.

TEDDY

Hang on, we'll get you through this.

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

-- going to have to take off my helmet. Just for a --

Teddy jumps out of his seat.

TEDDY

No, Lex, you can't -- !

He hears the HISS of Lex's helmet unlatching. Static.

Teddy wastes no time, springing to action.

TEDDY  
Jorge, your compound. Can you transfer the vapor into an intravenous solution?

JORGE  
Uh, yeah, but --

TEDDY  
No time, just do it.

Teddy dashes to a rack of equipment.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

On the floor, looking up at the apocalyptic Tumor, Lex takes a final breath in and holds it.

She twists the helmet, the last spurts of vapor escaping as she pulls it off. She carefully squints to see:

Her hallucinated vision of the landscape collapses on itself. The walls of the ovarian cavity and the abnormal tissue of the tumor blend into a cohesive, indiscernible whole.

As the last remnants of her imagined world fade into the crushing detail of reality, she beholds a sight never seen by human eyes:

The microscopic process of cellular growth.

The abnormal spread of the cancer cells isn't black and malicious as personified in her mind. They are simply cells, gradually expanding beyond their intended grasp.

She pauses to marvel at the ambition.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Teddy rummages through the equipment rack.

TEDDY  
Hermann, slow those rings down to their lowest sustainable speed.

HERMANN  
We couldn't maintain stasis for more than a few seconds.

Teddy produces a pair of GOGGLES and pulls them over his head. He saunters over to stand in front of the cage.

TEDDY

That's all I'll need. On my mark.

Jorge presents Teddy with a syringe. He grabs it, pulling off the protective cap with his teeth. Teddy considers the shining needle. Clenches his eyes shut.

TEDDY

Three ... two ... one.

Herman cranks down a speed dial. The rings of the cage slow their spin.

Teddy JAMS the syringe into his arm, opens his eyes, and RUNS toward the cage. He LEAPS between the spinning rings and GRABS onto Lex's body within.

Hermann and Jorge's jaws drop. A surge of electricity courses around Teddy.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex is still caught in her gaze.

A white light FLASHES and Teddy FLIES through the air, grabbing onto Lex as he did in the truck.

Without hesitation, he forces her helmet back on, reaches around her and begins repairing the rack. She opens her eyes fully and looks deeply into Teddy's.

The vapor enters her helmet. She can breathe again.

LEX

I can't do this.

Teddy nods. Yes you can.

LEX

No. I can't save it. Not like this.  
I've got to abort.

He shakes his head furiously. Not now.

LEX

Yes. We'll try another treatment.  
We've got to. I want to have a baby.  
Your baby.

A tear runs down Teddy's cheek. He lets go, and drifts away from her. The white LIGHT returns, and he's gone.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

The LIGHT spits Teddy out of the cage. His body SLAMS into the floor of the truck, sliding to a stop at the console.

He passes out, his last conscious breath escaping:

TEDDY

... Lex ...

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

Teddy?!

Herman takes control of the microphone.

HERMANN

He's here Doctor Galen.

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

Is he alright?!

Jorge checks Teddy's vitals.

JORGE

He's breathing.

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

Thank God. I need you to guide me to the exit tract. My map's down.

(beat)

We are aborting.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex makes her way out of the narrow tunnel where she began. In the larger opening, she starts to head left.

A BOOMING sounds draws her attention. She stops.

Turning to follow it, she's met with a warm glow ahead. She slides through an opening into a larger cavernous chamber:

THE WOMB.

Towering even taller than the Tumor had, Lex gazes up at the figure of a three-month old FETUS.

Gobsmacked, she places her hand on her own stomach. As she presses in, the walls of the womb around her COMPRESS.

A thundering CRASH shakes Lex out of her awe.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Weaver's truck SIDE SWIPES the Big Rig.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Hermann braces himself on the console. Jorge holds on to Teddy, keeping him in place.

LEX (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I'm going back.

HERMANN  
Doctor Galen, I can't ensure a smooth ride. We have company.

LEX (O.S.)  
So do I. The stakes have changed.  
Give me time.

Hermann hesitates at the microphone.

HERMANN  
Affirmative.

JORGE  
If they're chasing us ... where should we take them?

HERMANN  
I've got it. Lightning!

Hermann knocks on the window to get Lightning's attention.

**EXT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Lightning frantically swerves the Big Rig through traffic to evade his pursuers.

HERMANN (V.O.)  
Let's bring them home!

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex makes her way back down the Fallopian tube. The carcasses of her last battle surround her.

She strides confidently as she enters the chamber of the ovarian cavity. With a proud SHING, she unsheathes her scalpel blade.

She faces the Tumor.

LEX

I can't fight you. Not like this. And  
I can't let you threaten my baby.

(beat)

I can't predict the future ... but I  
can protect the present.

Lex PIERCES her blade into the circular base of the ovary.

Heading away from the Tumor entirely, Lex RUNS, her scalpel slicing along the healthy ovarian tissue.

As she makes her way around the centrifugal path, the good wilts with the bad. The beastly Tumor begins to crumble as the healthy tissue detaches.

The massive Demon writhes in resistance, ferocious SMOKE issuing from the area that would be its throat.

With a final SWIPE, Lex LEAPS back into the Fallopian tube.

The detached mass of the ovary fall into darkness. Lex SCREAMS in pain, echoing into the tissue of the walls.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Hermann panics as the console.

HERMANN

Doctor Galen, are you alright?!

Lex's heavy breathing sounds through the static.

LEX (O.S.)

(filtered)

I'm coming home.

The Big Rig SHAKES.

HERMANN

Hurry.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

The Big Rig enters the city. It blasts through overpasses and onto city streets.

Dead ahead: the OCTOCAN highrise.

**INT. WEAVER'S TRUCK - DAY**

Weaver's eyes narrow.

MR. WEAVER

What the hell are they doing?

**INT. LEX - DAY**

Lex once again exits the tunnel. For a moment, she listens to the beating of her baby's heart.

HERMANN (O.S.)

You'll need to find the nearest natural exit tract.

Lex thinks for a moment, then turns to re-enter the womb.

**EXT. HIGHRISE - DAY**

From the city streets, Lightning SKIDS the Big Rig over the sidewalk. At ramming speed, it PLOWS through the first floor windows of the highrise.

Shattered glass explodes into the building.

Weaver's truck SCREECHES to a stop on the street.

**INT. LEX - DAY**

The ground beneath Lex SHAKES.

She closes her eyes, crosses her arm and DIVES into the cervical iris. The gateway accepts her.

She SLIDES through the birth canal, tissue zipping past her at dizzying speeds. The warm glow of the womb shrinks into the darkness of the canal. Her face is peaceful. Reborn.

A white light up ahead ...



**EXT. OCTOCAN PRESS PAVILION - DAY**

The rows of white chairs are still set up from the press conference. A rumble shakes them.

CRASH. Shards of broken glass fill the pavilion as the Big Rig races through. Waves of seats buckle under the charging vehicle, cascading across the floor.

The Big Rig crosses the pavilion, destruction in its wake. It charges ahead full speed into the highrise lobby ...

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

The LIGHT fills the operating chamber.

**INT. HIGHRISE / LOBBY - DAY**

The Big Rig CRASHES into the lobby. Well-dressed business people scurry to get out of its path.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Electricity surging through her suit, Lex LEAPS out of the cage, scraping to a stop next to Teddy's unconscious body.

**INT. HIGHRISE / LOBBY - DAY**

Through the glass of the front lobby doors, Lighting sees a LITTLE OLD LADY walking down the sidewalk with her dog.

He SLAMS the breaks, oily smoke shooting out of the wheel housings. The Big Rig SQUEALS to a stop.

Lighting slumps back in his seat.

**EXT. HIGHRISE - DAY**

The Federal Agents stumble out of the back of Weaver's truck, dazed.

Weaver jumps out of the passenger seat, leaving The Fed and his men behind. They don't follow.

He RUNS through the destruction and into the building.

**INT. BIG RIG - DAY**

Hermann helps Lex out of her suit. She takes a seat in his chair at the console, in agony. She sips from a bottle.

LEX  
Where are we?

Jorge opens the back door.

JORGE  
OCTOCAN.

Lex puts down her bottle and LIMPS toward the doors.

HERMANN  
Doctor, you need a hospital -- !

LEX  
First, I've got a man to see.

Hand pressed to her pelvis, she hops off the back of the truck and heads for the elevator across the lobby.

**INT. HIGHRISE / LOBBY - CONTINUOUS**

Lex limps across the lobby. Fallen pedestrians look to her.

MR. WEAVER  
GALEN!

Lex turns. Weaver is barreling after her.

She ducks into the elevator.

**INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS**

Lex slams the "door close" button. The door screeches shut just as Weaver reaches it, cutting him off.

Lex presses the button for the top floor.

**INT. STAIRWELL - DAY**

Weaver runs up the spiraling stairwell.

An expanse of steps both below and above him, he doesn't stop to catch his breath.

**INT. HIGHRISE - DAY**

The elevator doors open at the top floor.

A wall of televisions display a replay of Lex's broadcast. She approaches the glass wall opposite. The high-backed leather chair behind the desk faces the window.

Lex crosses the room toward the desk.

MR. WEAVER

Stop!

Out of breath, Weaver huffs out of the stairwell door adjacent to the elevator.

The gravely voice of BIG MED speaks from behind the chair.

BIG MED

No. Let her come.

The chair spins around. The hulking figure is more decrepit than his silhouette would imply.

He raises his signature cigar to a hole in his throat and SUCKS in. The smoke pours from his nostrils as he exhales. His meaty fingers beckon Lex forward.

LEX

Lookin' good, Big Med.

Weaver catches up to her.

MR. WEAVER

I am so sorry, Mister --

Big Med silences him with a glance. No names. Weaver cowers.

BIG MED

You impressed me today, Ms. Galen.

LEX

Doctor.

BIG MED

I am not easily impressed. As you undoubtedly surmised, I challenged your endeavors to safeguard my own.

(beat)

However, it occurs to me now, yours may be worth considerably more than my already sizable investment.

Lex steps closer to the desk.

LEX  
To your company ... or to you?

Big Med smiles. The folds of his face crack with disuse.

BIG MED  
Everything starts with me.

LEX  
Allow me to offer my prescription.

Lex turns to Weaver and shoves her hand into his jacket pocket. He looks incredulous.

She pulls something out and tosses it onto the desk.

Proudly, she heads back to the elevator. The doors slide shut on her smirk. Big Med picks up the item on his desk:

A pack of nicotine gum.

He crushes the package in his fist.

**INT. DEAD MED HEADQUARTERS - SUNRISE**

Teddy and Lex sit in the gutted waiting room of the abandoned hospital.

TEDDY  
It's going to be hard for you to follow this one.

LEX  
I think its time for me to stick to one side of the doctor/patient relationship.

She takes his hand.

TEDDY  
You can always go back.

LEX  
Before, it was so clear. The body, and the cancer. Life, and death. The healthy versus the unnatural. It was just a puzzle. A binary equation that I needed to solve. But sometimes life itself gets ... ambitious.

Teddy smiles.

                          TEDDY  
And some questions don't have  
answers.

                          LEX  
Life is the answer.

Lex hands Teddy a folder.

                          TEDDY  
They said you went back after you  
decided to abort. Why?

She takes a breath, collecting her thoughts.

                          LEX  
I've fought this thing my whole life.  
But when I was down there, for the  
moment I took that helmet off ...  
                          (beat)  
... it was all one.

Teddy opens the folder and looks inside. He clasps his hand  
over his mouth. In a fit of passion, he grabs hold of her.  
They kiss. Their tears run together.

He drops the folder. It falls open on the floor. Inside:

The sonogram of a healthy baby.

**FADE OUT**

**Can·cer·i·an** (kan-ser-ee-uhn)

**n.**

One who is born under the sign of Cancer.