

CHIMERA

LOGLINE:

DR. JEANINE LACROIX'S PLAN TO INFECT THE CITY AND BANK ON HAVING
THE ANTIDOTE TAKES A SICKENING TURN FOR THE WORST.

INT. LACROIX LABORATORIES LAB - MORNING

Inside the sterile lab a subterfuge is running in the corner, with vials of blood. Three plexiglass cages, each with a single lab rat inside, line a table in the center of the room. The first rat eats food pellets. The second moves rapidly around the cage before climbing on the exercise wheel. The third claws at the cage door, its paws ragged and torn, bloody prints smearing the plexiglass.

A scientist stands at the other side of the room at work counter with a microscope pushed to the side, test tubes, droppers and vials lined in perfect order. The scientist, JEANINE LACROIX (middle aged, smart, widowed, authoritative, medium build), is wearing a bio suit. Carefully, she puts two drops of a solution into a vial of pink liquid. The drops slowly transform the liquid from pink to dark orange.

SAYLA (early 20s, excited intern, naive, smart, petite), watches through the observation window in the anti-room. Excited, she hits the SPEAK button on the intercom.

SAYLA
(over intercom; loudly)
That's amazing, Dr. LaCroix!

Caught off guard, Jeanine jumps, her hand bumping into the vial. She quickly catches it with her other hand. Still holding the vial, she glares at Sayla through the glass and carefully sets the dropper down just as a cell phone rings on a table by the door. She tries to answer and the touch screen won't recognize her gloved finger.

Irritated, she sets the phone back down, removes the glove and swipes to answer the call.

JEANINE
(into phone)
Yes, this is Dr. LaCroix.
(pause)
Stop your sniveling, Henry.
(pause)
Yes, yes. It's nearly ready.
(pause)
I'll have it couriered to you
within the hour. You can start
tonight as planned.
(pause)
That's right.

Jeanine smiles devilishly. Before she can answer another question, Shayla's excited voice comes over the comms again.

SAYLA

(praisingly)
This is groundbreaking, Dr.
LaCroix!

Slowly, Jeanine glances at the intern but doesn't respond to her.

JEANINE
(into phone; bored)
Yes. I'm here, Henry.
(pause)
Yes... And when they need a cure
they'll come to us and we'll both
be booking flights to the Caymans.

INT. LECROIX LABORATORIES - LOBBY - LATER

At the receptionist's counter, Jeanine signs an electronic document on a phone before handing it back to the COURIER (late 20s, average build). Before passing him the case, she looks have him dead on.

JEANINE
(serious)
Be careful.

Courier nods and takes the case from her before turning to walk out of the building.

Jeanine turns to the RECEPTIONIST (young, petite, bubbly).

JEANINE
Hold my calls for the rest of the
day, please, Charlotte. I have some
paperwork to finish up.

CHARLOTTE
Yes, Mrs. LeCroix.

Jeanine walks away.

INT. JEANINE LACROIX'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is quiet but for the distant sound of the janitor's vacuuming. Modernly decorated, the office has very little personal items save for a picture of her and her late husband on the desk.

Grueling over paperwork, signing the last document, Jeanine sets aside the stack of papers and pushes back from her desk, slouching in her chair for a moment. Checking the time on her phone she sees it's eleven o'clock. She opens a mini fridge

under her desk, pulls out a bottle of white wine and a chilled glass. She pours the wine.

Grabbing the remote control beside her computer screen, she turns on the 50' television mounted on the wall across the room. A commercial promoting tourism in San Diego is on. After a second or two, the late night news report comes back on. The face of a female NEWS ANCHOR (brunette, slim, pretty, early 30s) appears, along with the words BREAKING NEWS boxed in red at the bottom of the screen.

NEWS ANCHOR

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm Laura Stavish and we have a breaking news report for you that's just come in. There are reports of people being violently attacked at random in the city of San Diego this evening. So far there have been dozens of cases. Thanks to an eye witness, we have footage of one of these attacks. But we have to warn you of how graphic it is, so please be advised.

A video clip comes on, obviously from someone's mobile phone, showing a savage attack of a man on a couple outside a busy nightclub. As bystanders bump into the filmmaker, screams and snarls can be heard. The footage becomes shaky, too blurred to make out much, but just before it cuts out, a view of the attacker's face comes into focus. His mouth is bloody, eyes crazed, with hands and shirt covered in blood as well.

Jeanine pauses as she sits in shock and Laura Stavish goes on to say more.

LAURA STAVISH

The police aren't sure what to make of it, but are assuming it may have to do with a new drug on the streets. Unfortunately, that's all we have at right now on this story but we will keep you updated as we get more information. Thank you. Now back to Carol and Jim with your regular evening news.

Jeanine stops listening after that, voices in the background sound distant. Suddenly, her cell phone rings. Jumping, she nearly sloshes wine on her hand. Setting down the glass, she answers the phone.

JEANINE

Yes? Hello?

(pause)
No, it's not supposed to do that.
(pause)
There's nothing wrong with the
formula. You must have contaminated
it somehow.
(pause)
It doesn't work like that, Henry.
Something altered the formula, now
whatever antidote we had is
unlikely to work.
(pause)
Fine. Get me a sample. Something
from a source and I will see what I
can do.

She hits the end button, pushes up from the desk and quickly
walks out of the office.

INT. LACROIX LABORATORIES HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dimmed lighting lights her way. There isn't a soul in sight
as she goes, heels clicking on the freshly cleaned tile
floor.

As she walks, the sound of a the floor polish machine grows
louder. Rounding a corner, she comes up on LARRY (uniformed,
older, quiet) the janitor.

Larry tips his company ball cap to her.

Jeanine gives him a polite smile.

JEANINE
Hi, Larry.

She rushes past him to the elevator. Using a manicured
finger, she presses the UP button. Immediately, the doors
open and she steps inside.

INT. LACROIX LABORATORIES HALL - MINUTES LATER

Stepping off the elevator she finds herself once again in
quiet halls and she makes the last of her trek in silence.
Until, unexpectedly, a sound, like someone's shoe squeaking
on the floor, echos through the hall. Twisting around, she
looks behind her, finding the hall empty. One more glance
around before she turns back around and keeps walking.

Just as the lab door comes in sight, she hears the sound
again. Jumping around, she checks again for someone behind
her. Nothing.

JEANINE
Is someone there?

Only silence answers her.

Checking the other end of the hall just in case, she cranes her head around to see beyond the corner.

JEANINE
Larry? Is that you?

Nothing.

Then, her phone vibrates, making her squeak. Sighing to herself, she checks the new message.

HENRY (TEXT)
Have something. Will have it to you soon.

Jeanine types a response.

JEANINE (TEXT)
Good. I'm in the lab.

Finished, she tucks her phone into the pocket of her slacks. Reaching the door to the lab, she punches her security code into the keypad on the wall beside it. When the door unlocks, she pulls it open and walks inside, the door closing firmly behind her.

INT. LACROIX LABORATORIES LAB ANTI-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The lights automatically flick on as she enters, illuminating the small room with just a computer on a small desk in the center. On one side, a wall of bio suits and gloves hang, and the observation window on the other. Setting her phone down, she suits up.

INT. LACROIX LABORATORIES LAB - MINUTES LATER

Wearing her bio suit and bent over a microscope, she watches as orange looking cells consume and mutate the blood cells on the sample. She sits back in her stool.

JEANINE
(to herself)
That can't be right.

The sound of the anti-room door opening and closing from the hall brings her head around to the observation window. Unable to see the whole of the room from her position, she stands

and walks over to peer inside. Seeing no one there, she frowns, then notices her phone still sitting on the table inside.

JEANINE

Damn it.

Moving to the lab door, intent on getting her phone, she moves to open it. Just as it cracks open though, a snarling face and hand greets her. Leaping back, she quickly pulls the door to close it. Fighting the hand that still tries to pry the door open wider, she finally manages to close it.

Panicked, she turns the flimsy lock on the door handle. She can still hear the snarling and guttural sounds coming from whatever it was on the other side.

Carefully walking around to look through the window again, a body slams into the glass.

Screeching, Jeanine jumps back. Even with the wild and crazed eyes, she sees it's Charlotte, the receptionist.

JEANINE

Oh my god.

Dropping away from the window, Charlotte moves out of view. The next instant, the door rattles violently.

Turning away, Jeanine quickly looks around the lab, there are no other exits. She looks for a weapon, any weapon. Finally, she grabs an empty beaker. Smashing it into the metal table it leaves sharp jagged teeth at the end.

Taking a fighting stance, with hands shaking, she watches as the door slams open, sending wood splinters flying as an animal-like version of Charlotte leaps into the room.

Charlotte doesn't hesitate and rushes Jeanine. They struggle, Jeanine's weapon hand is pinned as she uses the other to hold Charlotte's bared teeth from making contact with her own skin. At last, she's able to wrestle her arm free, slamming the glass shiv into the younger woman's side, piercing flesh. Stunned, Charlotte stills, the surprise in her eyes a little more human looking now.

Slowly, the grip she has on Jeanine relaxes, her body slumping to the side. Back crawling, Jeanine stumbles to a stand. Looking down, she sees Charlotte's sightless eyes.

Bending at the waist, hands on her knees, Jeanine takes a moment to catch her breath. She turns to the door again. She doesn't make it more than a single step before Larry races around the open door, aimed straight for her, mouth and hands

bloody.

Jeanine screams.

INT. LACROIX LABORATORIES ANTI-ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Standing on the other side of the observation window, the door intact, lights brightly lit, Sayla looks over at the two police officers at her side. OFFICER JIMENEZ (middle aged, Latino, police uniform) looks on at the woman locked inside the lab, screaming hysterically.

OFFICER JIMENEZ

How long did you say she's been in there?

Sayla looks back at her boss.

SAYLA

Since earlier this afternoon.

OFFICER WHITMAN (middle aged, white, police uniform) cringes as he watches LaCroix's widow have a psychotic breakdown. Fighting off something that had her pinned to the ground according to her mind.

OFFICER WHITMAN

What exactly was she working on in there that made her go--

He pauses as Jeanine crawls to huddle in a corner.

OFFICER WHITMAN

To cause her to lose her mind?

SAYLA

(hesitant)

A contagion-- A virus.

OFFICER WHITMAN

A virus? And it can do that?

Sayla didn't answer.

OFFICER WHITMAN

Why exactly was she working on something that dangerous?

SAYLA

Well--

At her hesitation, Officer Jimenez eyes his partner.

OFFICER WHITMAN
 Maybe we should ask good old Henry
 over there?

He gestures towards where HENRY sits, handcuffed in a chair
 just outside the anti-room.

SAYLA
 (reluctantly)

She was going to use it to infect the city.

OFFICER JIMENEZ
 Jaysus--

SAYLA
 We have the antidote, though.

OFFICER JIMENEZ
 Trust me, that doesn't make it any
 better.

That shuts her up.

Officer Whitman pinches the bridge of his nose.

OFFICER WHITMAN
 So, tell me, how exactly did she
 become infected? I mean she's still
 wearing her suit and everything.

Sayla cringes.

SAYLA
 That's actually my fault. I spooked
 her while she was handling the
 virus and the vial broke. We seal
 the doors anytime we have an
 accident with a biological as a
 precaution. She must have had a
 hole in her suit because she tested
 positive for it when we ran our
 tests.

Officer Jimenez chuckles at the dark twist of fate before
 turning to look back at the woman in question.

From inside the lab they hear Jeanine.

JEANINE
 (screaming)
 No! Oh my god!