

CORPSE FLOWER - THE BLOOM

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Original Concept

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FADE IN:

DREAM SEQUENCE - INT. KEYRAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Soft sunlight spills through Venetian blinds, cutting stripes of gold across a serene, ocean-blue palette.

The bedroom is tastefully decorated - framed wedding photo on the nightstand: KEYRAH DAVIS (mid-30s, Black, striking, resilient) beaming beside her husband CAPTAIN MARQUIS DAVIS (late-30s, Black, military, proud).

In bed, they lie tangled in sheets, limbs warm with intimacy.

Marquis kisses Keyrah's neck - she giggles.

MARQUIS

What's the latest obsession?

KEYRAH

Kerala. We tracked a field of corpse flowers. They shared a root system soaked in blood. We think it grew over a grave. We're having a hard time solving that one.

Marquis smiles. Hero worship in his eyes.

MARQUIS

Superhero botanist. Saving the world one weird flower at a time. You know - not everything needs to be solved.

Keyrah relaxes into his chest, safe-

Until his voice hardens.

MARQUIS

Sometimes things happen because its time to happen. I mean- look at me.

His face blisters, skin melting to exposed bone and teeth.

Keyrah GASPS-

ALARM CLOCK BLARES.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. KEYRAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Keyrah bolts upright, drenched in sweat.

She smacks the alarm, panting.

On the nightstand: Marquis' dog tags, cool metal beside that glowing wedding photo.

She slips the tags over her neck, pressing them to her chest.

A long beat.

She forces herself up.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Spacious. Contemporary. A lived-in warmth. Coffee machine hums on the counter beside a small mounted television.

At the island: XAVIER "MUNCH" DAVIS (5, Black, mischievous, bright) works on a stack of pancakes. Next to him a stuffed Venus flytrap toy.

Beside him, MICHAEL RICHMOND (mid-20s, Black, earnest, carrying weight he doesn't speak of) sips from a mug: Best Unc in the World.

MICHAEL

Big day for mom. She's gotta be on time.

Xavier nods seriously, syrup across his cheek.

Keyrah enters in work clothes. Michael hands her coffee automatically.

MICHAEL

You were dreaming again.

KEYRAH

Was I loud?

MICHAEL

I shut your door so little man wouldn't hear.

Keyrah gives him a soft look: thanks.

Xavier bounces off his stool, hugging her waist.

KEYRAH
Careful. You're getting strong.
Almost knocked me over.

XAVIER
Drank all my milk. Uncle says it
makes me tough.

Michael hides a smirk.

XAVIER
Close your eyes, mom.

She obeys.

He reveals a plate of two lopsided pancakes, proud.

XAVIER
I made you breakfast!

She takes a bite. CRUNCH.

KEYRAH
That's - crunchy. What's in it?

XAVIER
Flowers. Like the ones in the
window.

Keyrah glances at the sill - a potted plant stripped bare of
petals.

Her smile falters.

KEYRAH
Mmm. Perfect, Munch.

She swallows hard, hiding unease.

Xavier beams.

XAVIER
See, I told you I could cook.

Keyrah discreetly spits the bite into a napkin. Slips it into
the trash.

Michael pretends not to notice, eyes fixed on the small TV.

ON SCREEN - AMI AGARWAL (30s, Indian, poised but tired)
reports live from Kerala:

AMI (V.O.)
—a rare bloom of Amorphophallus
Titanum, known as the corpse
flower, will soon take place.

Michael turns up the volume.

Keyrah stares. That name pulls her back to something heavier.

Xavier rushes back with a cup of orange juice. In his excitement, he spills it across her pants.

His face crumples.

XAVIER
I ruined it. You'll be late.

Keyrah crouches to his level, gripping his small hands.

KEYRAH
Hey. Sometimes bad things happen.
Doesn't mean it's your fault.

Xavier blinks away tears. She kisses his cheek.

Michael, at the counter, watches quietly. Jaw tight.

INT. BEDROOM CLOSET - LATER

Keyrah changes pants. Phone BUZZES. Caller ID: SAM.

KEYRAH
What's up, Number One?

INTERCUT - KERALA RESEARCH CAMP

SAM (early-30s, white, witty, sharp but anxious) stares at a lab printout.

SAM
Um, I just went over the DNA
analysis and this is crazy. It —
this... isn't just a plant.

KEYRAH
Wait, what?! You're sure?

SAM
Yeah. I triple checked.

KEYRAH

Don't run anymore tests without me.
Promise?

SAM

Promise. Wouldn't dream of it.

He hangs up, eyes glued to the—

LAB PRINT OUT: "Analysis Complete: 70% plant based— 30%
homosapien"—

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Michael ties Xavier's sneakers while Keyrah hunts for her badge.

MICHAEL

You forgot your field notes.

He pulls a notebook from under a cereal box and hands it over. She smirks.

KEYRAH

One day I'll hire an assistant.

MICHAEL

One day you'll admit you already
have one.

Xavier dashes in, a dish towel cape tied around his neck.

XAVIER

Super Munch! Stronger than plants!

Keyrah kneels, eye level with him.

KEYRAH

Plants are stronger than you think,
buddy. They fight back too.

Her smile wavers—grief beneath her playfulness.

She grabs the bare plant from the window and throws it in the metal trash bin.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Keyrah drags metallic luggage to the door.

KEYRAH

My Uber's here!

Michael meets her, trying to keep his face steady.

Xavier darts in, hugs her legs tight, presses a travel mug into her hand.

XAVIER
Bye, mommy! Love you!

Her heart breaks.

Michael steps forward, hugs her longer than usual.

MICHAEL
Remember, I wanted to be here. Love
you sis.

Car horn HONKS outside.

They separate.

KEYRAH
Love you, too.

She forces herself out the door.

Xavier runs up to Michael as he shuts the door.

XAVIER
Uncle?

MICHAEL
Yes, Xavier.

XAVIER
You think my breakfast taught mom a
lesson about making me eat all my
food.

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL
Maybe, buddy.

EXT. KERALA, INDIA - NIGHT

Floodlights blaze across the sprawling research camp covered with white tents.

The place buzzes with anticipation and urgency.

INT. AMI'S TENT - SAME TIME

Ami sits on the edge of her bed, slips off her shoes—
 fatigued. She fingers a necklace with a flower pendant.

Beside her bed, a framed photo of her and Keyrah at a
 festival.

Simpler times.

She stares too long. A shadow moves at the tent flap—

RAMESH (30s, Indian, insecure and awkward) barges in.

RAMESH

Want to run setup for tomorrow?

Ami exhales, covering her fatigue with professionalism.

AMI

Perfect timing. Let's walk.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - LATER

Small fire. The skeletal camp looms in the background.

Ami and Ramesh laugh, sharing stories. Ramesh fidgets with a
 twig.

AMI

Failure was not an option, so I had
 to pick something that I knew I
 would be good at. I was nosy and
 liked to talk — journalism. You?

RAMESH

Umm, my parents wanted me to be a
 psychiatrist, like my father, but I
 was never good at solving things. I
 thought about being a lawyer, but I
 wasn't the best at picking sides.

He throws the twig into the fire.

RAMESH

After I received a camera for my
 eighteenth birthday, I fell in love
 with capturing a moment —
 controlling how a person sees
 something. It's not psychiatry or
 law but, I feel that it kinda helps
 people cope with the world.

AMI

It does.

She smiles.

Ramesh shrugs, dodging her gaze, toe tapping under the firelight.

It's not casual—he's restless, nervous.

She stands and pulls him by his arm.

AMI

Come on. Let me show you something.

EXT. RESEARCH TENT - MINUTES LATER

Ami and Ramesh approach the tent a sign attached to a post:
RESEARCH TENT.

She pulls him inside.

Inside, towering, obscene — a TEN-FOOT CORPSE FLOWER
dominates the space.

Its fleshy spathe seems to twitch, a suggestion of something
alive beneath.

Ramesh recoils.

RAMESH

Is that safe?

AMI

It's just a plant.

Her hand rests on it. The spathe shivers.

INT. INDIAN OCEAN - MILITARY BASE - MESS HALL - DAY

HORTICULTURIST holds a leaf of a potted plant, sprays it with
a fine misting bottle and walks away revealing long tables
packed with fatigued soldiers and trays of food.

Among them: CRYCYNTHIA "CC" JAMES (30s, Black, tough, sharp
humor). She ignores a debate from CRAIG MATTHEWS (mid 20s,
male) and ROSE REYEZ (mid 20s, Latina female), her eyes glued
to the mounted TV.

MOUNTED TV: Ami reporting from Kerala.

CRAIG

It has nothing to do with ones
imagination it's—

ROSE

It has everything to do with
imagination—CC, tell this idiot.

They turn to CC, who's gaze is glued to the T.V.

ROSE

Never mind, she's nerding out.

O.S. FOOTSTEPS APPROACH — Craig stands at attention. Rose looks behind her and stands at attention as well. She nudges CC, who does a double take before standing at attention. The footsteps stop.

DENNIS STANFORD (45, white male), wearing the Sergeant First Class patch on this shoulder.

STANFORD

Private First Class James.

CC

Yes, sir.

STANFORD

Come with me.

CONFERENCE ROOM — MINUTES LATER

Stafford holds the door open — CC enters.

Her father, GENERAL JAMES (60s, weathered authority), awaits on a monitor.

GENERAL JAMES

Private James. Special assignment.
We need someone who knows plants
and dirt.

CC smirks. Assignment accepted.

GENERAL JAMES

(pointed)

Don't forget why you're being sent.
Eyes open. Loyalty first.

CC swallows, nods—something unsaid between them.

EXT. KERALA AIRPORT — NIGHT

Pedestrians hustle to and fro as vehicles pull up and pull off with passengers. Parked in front a luxurious white sedan.

DRIVER (50s, exhausted, determined) opens the back door—
Keyrah enters. He pops the trunk placing her luggage inside.

INT./EXT. LUXURY WHITE SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Draped in white leather and roomy. RADIO BROADCASTS in the
background.

RADIO BROADCASTER (V.O.)
—wilting crops, mutated animals,
hail the size of baseballs in
Texas; and now we got these damn,
“feed me Seymour” plants growing
all over the damn place.

Driver enters - SHUTS DOOR. He murmurs superstitions over the
radio.

Keyrah slides her purse off her shoulder and buckles up.

She grabs her phone and scrolls an article: “IS THE CORPSE
FLOWER THE KEY?”

Driver looks into review mirror, locking eyes with Keyrah.

KEYRAH
The Karala Research Camp, please.

Luxury white sedan pulls away.

EXT. KERALA, INDIA - RESEARCH CAMP - HOUR LATER

Well lit and taped off. A small crowd of people gather with
sleeping bags and water. STRANGE OLD MAN (70s, Indian and
shirtless), stands hauntingly amongst the crowd.

Luxury white sedan pulls up and two assistants jog from a
tent to the sedan. The trunk pops open and the driver opens
Keyrah’s door - she exits.

The crowd claps, Keyrah smiles and gives a faint wave. TRUNK
SHUTS and SEDAN PULLS AWAY.

Keyrah follows the two assistants, carrying her luggage,
through the crowd—

KEYRAH’S ARM - seized by Strange Old Man’s hand.

STRANGE OLD MAN
They drank their souls.

O.S GUN COCKS - the CROWD GASPS.

CC

Let her arm go. Now!

Strange Old Man releases his grip and is dragged away by LOCAL POLICE.

STRANGE OLD MAN

Fools! Fools!

Keyrah exhales and rubs her arm – shaken.

CC holsters her weapons.

KEYRAH

Who do I thank for the save?

CC

Private First Class James. Botany master's. Rifle qualified. Ma'am.

KEYRAH

Fierce and smart.

CC

Being a general's daughter, you don't get a choice.

They shake hands.

Crowds press against tape lines. Lanterns sway. The STRANGE OLD MAN is dragged off, still screaming.

INT. KEYRAH'S TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Keyrah unpacks. The walls shake faintly with the bass of the crowd's drum rhythm.

She fingers Marquis' dog tags, the metallic clink cutting through the chant.

RESEARCH TENT - MINUTES LATER

Keyrah enters with CC close behind to see Sam scurrying around the lab. Sam looks over and approaches with a tray of tools and a lab print out.

SAM

Boss Lady! Either I've lost my mind or this thing is copying more than nutrients. Look-

He hands Keyrah the lab print out.

Beat, his tone sharpens, uncharacteristically serious.

SAM
if I'm right, this plant is
rewriting us into itself.

She studies it, shaking her head.

KEYRAH
This can't be right.

Sam looks over to CC who checks her—

WATCH

A military-encrypted notification glows faintly.

SAM
Who's your friend?

She turns her wrist away before anyone notices.

CC
Private First Class James, sir.

SAM
Oh, honey no sir here, just Sam.
You wearing the hell out of those
fatigues by the way — come on.

Sam leads CC and Keyrah to the corpse flower.

CC
I like him.

KEYRAH
It's hard not to.

They approach the corpse flower. Keyrah and CC's eyes go wide
— their mouths drop.

KEYRAH
Oh my God, has anything changed
regarding environmental factors?

SAM
No.

He stares nervously, hiding dread under jokes.

SAM
She's grown like she knows we're
watching.

Keyrah circles the flower in wonder.

CC
The spadix has to be huge.

KEYRAH
Good eye.

Sam turn their heads to CC, shocked.

SAM
I'm not mad at that.

Keyrah dons gloves, takes a sample.

CC
What are we looking for?

KEYRAH
Confirmation. Or a mistake.

Sam takes the sample to the equipment in the back.

Ami and Ramesh enters.

AMI
I knew you'd sneak in before saying
hello.

They smile and meet for a warm hug.

KEYRAH
You looking good sista.

AMI
So are you. Who are you out here
trying to impress?

They share a chuckle.

Keyrah and Ramesh share a hug.

KEYRAH
Good to see you, Ramesh.

RAMESH
You too, Keyrah.

Keyrah gestures towards Ami, and Ramesh shakes his head subtly – a private question and response communicated.

Sam joins the group as Ami stares at the Corpse Flower.

AMI
Why is she so damn big?

Keyrah exchanges a look with Sam – truth vs. secrecy flickers between them. Ami catches a glance.

AMI

Don't hide behind your science,
Keyrah. What's going on?

KEYRAH

We don't actually know. We're
running an analysis right now.

She remembers her manners.

KEYRAH

I got carried away. Everybody I
want you to meet someone who is
going to be with us during this
monumental time.

CC

Good evening everyone, I'm First
Class Private James.

KEYRAH

She saved me from a doomsday
cultist earlier. Ami, and Ramesh.

They shake hands and exchange pleasantries.

KEYRAH

That is a mouthful. Is there
something shorter we can call you?

SAM

What do your friend's call you?

CC

They call me CC.

SAM

Okay, well since I like you we're
friends now, CC.

Everyone chuckles – DING (O.S.)

SAM

Okay, the analysis has officially
started. We will know what's going
on tomorrow.

KEYRAH

Perfect. For now, lets get caught
up before it gets too late.

SAM
Where's the alcohol, Ami?

AMI
Excuse you.

They exit the tent laughing – engaged in AD-LIBBED
CONVERSATION–

CORPSE FLOWER – SLOSHES from inside.

DREAM SEQUENCE – INT. KEYRAH'S TENT – NIGHT

Keyrah lies half-awake. Marquis appears, serene.

MARQUIS
Plants remember. Roots carry
memory. Maybe that's why you
couldn't let me go.

Behind him – vines snake over Xavier's body. His eyes open,
glowing faint green.

XAVIER
Mom– it's inside me.

END DREAM

Keyrah GASPS awake – drenched in sweat. Not grief this time.

Forewarning–

EXT. RESEARCH CAMP – DAY

The sun shines on the hundreds of people, of all ages,
entering the camp, being ushered by local law enforcement.

RAMESH holds a camera in his right hand, pressing buttons
with his left as the crowd passes him. He places the camera
on his right shoulder and with his left hand he counts down
with his fingers – THREE, TWO, ONE.

CAMERA'S P.O.V.: Ami stands with microphone in hand and a
smile on her face. Crowds of people walk behind her. She
speaks into the microphone.

AMI
Welcome to your front row seat of
one of Mother Nature's mysterious
births.

(MORE)

AMI (CONT'D)

Hundreds from around the world have come to see and smell the bloom of the *Amorphophallus Titanum*, A.K.A., the Corpse Flower. Stay tuned and you too will be able to witness it—

RAMESH (O.S.)

Cut!

Ramesh pulls the camera from his shoulder with a troubled look on his face. He hits a couple buttons.

AMI

What's wrong?

RAMESH

We lost signal, so we weren't able to transmit the whole broadcast.

AMI

Shit. Do we need to do it again?

RAMESH

No, I recorded it to the hard drive just incase something like this happened. I'll download it manually to the server, you go and hang out with your girl.

Ami smiles and hugs Ramesh, who blushes. Ami turns and walks away towards the research tent—

RAMESH

Wait.

Ami turns around. Ramesh stares longingly.

RAMESH

Uh, I'll take that too.

Ami looks down at her hand.

She chortles, shakes her head, approaches Ramesh and hands him the microphone.

AMI

Thanks. Oh, let me—

Encircling Ramesh's neck with her tender embrace, she adjusts his collar.

AMI

I swear, sometimes I think you can't do anything by yourself.

Ramesh chuckles – their gazes lock, sharing a silent moment.

AMI

Okay um, I'll see you in a bit.

Ramesh watches as Ami hastily retreats, leaving a trail of unspoken remorse.

OUTSIDE OF RESEARCH TENT - MINUTES LATER

Beaming joy, Keyrah stands at the entrance with Sam and CC at her side surveying the crowd.

Keyrah addresses the masses.

KEYRAH

I want to thank you all for showing up for this once in a decade event.

The crowd settles and is quiet.

KEYRAH

When I was a girl, my grandmother told me: every plant carries secrets. Some heal. Some kill. There are over 390,000 species that we know of – Imagine what we don't know yet.

The crowd cheers. A LITTLE GIRL (10 years old) clutches a stuffed Venus Flytrap. Keyrah leans in and whispers.

KEYRAH

My son, has the same one.

She winks at the Little Girl – they share a smile. Keyrah leads the crowd inside the tent with CC close behind.

SAM

(to crowd)

Due to space, we're only allowing small groups in at a time.

INSIDE RESEARCH TENT - CONTINUOUSLY

Keyrah approaches the corpse flower with a line of people behind her – they look around in wonder.

KEYRAH

She is the largest one of her kind, so she may smell really bad once she starts blooming. I hope you all brought masks.

The crowd laughs.

They reach the corpse flower – all in awe.

KEYRAH

There she is.

She turns to the crowd.

KEYRAH

Any questions?

A member from the crowd raises their hand–

Printer BEEPS – Keyrah's gaze snaps towards the back.

KEYRAH

I'm sorry, I have to check that. I will answer your question first when I get back. Hopefully this analysis will give us something more to talk about.

She approaches the printer in the back. CC remains next to the corpse flower.

Keyrah glances back.

KEYRAH

Don't touch it. Photos are fine.

She pulls the lab print out from the printer tray and scans the print out – her face hardens.

CC catches a glimpse of Keyrah's face and approaches her.

Keyrah slips the paper to CC who examines it.

LAB PRINT OUT – "60% Plant/40% Homosapien DNA".

CC

Jesus Christ. That's–

Keyrah's gaze sweeps onto the corpse flower.

KERYAH

It's integrating DNA.

She takes the lab print out and places it in her pocket.

PHONE RINGS – she startles and answers it – it's Michael.

KEYRAH

Hey, Michael what's up?

INTERCUT - INT. KEYRAH'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Michael leans against the island, phone to his ear. The television - displays a technical difficulty notice.

MICHAEL

What happened to the-

PHONE DISCONNECTS.

Michael's thrown - he looks at his phone.

INT. KERALA, INDIA - RESEARCH TENT - CONTINUOUS

The spathe twitches - Keyrah lowers the phone.

CC

What happened?

KEYRAH

We lost connection-

MALE CROWD MEMBER (O.S.)

Somethings happening!

Keyrah and CC whip towards the Corpse Flower.

Its form contorts out of shape - surrounding plants SHUDDER in unison.

A COLLECTIVE GASP ripples through the observers.

A few crowd members inch closer, teeming with excitement.

Keyrah sets down the analysis data, places her phone in her pocket and approaches the anxious crowd, with CC close.

FEMALE CROWD MEMBER

It's blooming!

The spathe slowly droops down from all sides, at its heart a grotesque spectacle unfolds.

MALE CROWD MEMBER

I don't smell anything.

A FOUR FOOT column of viscous, veined, amber-tinged flesh, eerily reminiscent of a flayed grape, pulsed with an unsettling luminescence.

A hush comes over the onlookers, broken only by the sharp CLICK of a camera and an inconsiderate flash.

The four foot column shivers and darkens in it's tint.

CC uses her watch to send a message – her eyes bounce back and forth between the watch and the corpse flower.

Awe-struck, Keyrah approaches, captivated.

KEYRAH

It's not supposed to look like
that–

CC's left hand clamps onto KEYRAH'S ARM with vise-like grip—her right hand rests on her holstered pistol. Her eyes flick to the exit, calculating. Keyrah catches none of it. a silent tension tightens the air.

From the amber-tinged flesh, a head rises, lifting itself from a recumbent posture – revealing its anterior view.

A COLLECTIVE GASP fills the room, accompanied by the subtle shuffle of hesitant footsteps.

The muscular PLANT LIKE HUMANOID CREATURE stretches its limbs towards the canvas. Another COLLECTIVE GASP escapes the crowd; they recoil, mesmerized, unable to look away.

With a savage, swift arc of it's limb it DECAPITATES Male Crowd Member. His body hits the ground KURPLUNK, the detached head bouncing towards the horrified onlookers.

The crowd erupts into a chaotic panic, seized by terror, they stamped towards the exit behind them.

The reign of terror continues with the creature's merciless slaughter – Sam enters.

Keyrah recoils in abject horror, witnessing the brutal carnage she clutches the dog tag around her neck through her shirt. ONE, TWO, FIVE, EIGHT, TEN BODIES FALL.

CC pulls her pistol and aims at the creature as it pursues the crowd. Keyrah pulls her arm down, shaking her head.

KEYRAH

If it's sixty percent plant you
can't kill it with bullets– And
what if it releases spores or
something?

CC

We don't have a choice and let's
hope the forty percent that makes
it human is in it's head.

PLANT LIKE HUMANOID CREATURE halts attacking mid-swing – listening. It whips it's head to the right, towards Keyrah and CC – charges at them, its advance brutal, targeted, and unstoppable.

Sam–normally witty–races past the creature and shoves Little Girl out of harm's way, taking a brutal shove himself. He grimaces but holds strong.

PLANT LIKE HUMANOID CREATURE swings again–

BANG! CC fires. The creature collapses, twitching.

LITTLE GIRL lies on the ground trembling, blood marring her clothing and face. The downed CREATURE next to her.

The stuffed Venus Flytrap lay in a puddle of blood – a BLOODCURDLING SCREAM rips from her throat.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM – UNKNOWN LOCATION – DAY

Ten by thirteen box, Dimly lit, with dark colored walls. A wooden table with four chairs sit in the middle. A large one way mirror rests on the wall. Keyrah sits at the table.

KEYRAH, runny and smeared mascara, starring at the wall.

ROOM BEHIND ONE WAY MIRROR

CC watches – the door opens, General James enters, grave and shuts the door.

CC

She's not a suspect. She's a survivor.

GENERAL JAMES

She's both.

Keyrah's voice cracks inside.

KEYRAH

I need to see my son.

General James and CC look at each other.

INTERVIEW ROOM

General James sits in front of Keyrah, CC leans against the wall behind him.

JAMES

We don't have time. Tell us what you know.

KEYRAH

(explodes)

I DON'T FUCKING KNOW ANYTHING!

Silence. CC steps forward, softer.

CC

We're trying to understand this.

KEYRAH

(whispers)

My son. I need to get back to him.

JAMES

(firm)

We're trying to protect your son, and everyone else. But we need more than grief. What happened in that tent?

Silence overtakes the room, once more.

KEYRAH

(through clenched teeth)

It wasn't just a plant. It was us.

He studies her.

GENERAL JAMES

We're calling them Acclimites and we have about two days to stop them before our trigger happy counterparts start nuking shit.

INT. KEYRAH'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MICHAEL and XAVIER watch cartoons on the couch, cocooned in normalcy. The TV glitches—feeds flooded with corpse flower carnage across the world.

Michael yanks the remote — changes channel, shielding Xavier.

XAVIER

What's wrong?

MICHAEL

That was not a Spider-Man marathon, buddy. That's what's wrong.

He forces a smile, eyes darting with dread.

TV: Spiderman gets clobbered and crashes to the ground.

XAVIER

Oh no, Spider Man is dead, Uncle!

MICHAEL

He's not dead, Munch. He's just unconscious.

XAVIER

Subconscious?

MICHAEL

Unconscious. It's kinda like falling asleep. Heroes get knocked down. Then they get back up. Watch.

They continue to watch—

Xavier springs up in his seat.

XAVIER

Uncle! You're right! He's back up.

Michael forces a smiles.

His phone RINGS – FaceTime – he glances at it, then pauses the movie.

MICHAEL

Go play for a second, I gotta answer this.

Xavier's scoots off the couch.

Michael answers the phone.

MICHAEL

(near whispser)

I've been trying to call you. What the fuck is going on?

INTERCUT – KEYRAH IN MILITARY ROOM – SAME TIME

Plain room, furnished with a single small round table and two chairs. Two MILITARY POLICE (MPs) stand at the open door to the room. Keyrah sits at the table, phone to ear.

KEYRAH (V.O.)

Michael, tomorrow at 8pm – Franklin High football field.

(MORE)

KEYRAH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A helicopter will pick you and
Xavier up. Don't be late.

He nods, news feeds confirmed – this is really happening.

MICHAEL

If one of those things show up?

KEYRAH

Hide. Run. Don't fight.

Her voice breaks.

KEYRAH

I can't lose him too.

Xavier appears on screen, smiling, oblivious.

XAVIER

Hi, Mommy! Don't worry. You're
strong.

Tears streak Keyrah's face – she wipe them away.

KEYRAH

(soft)

You're my strength, Munch.

INT. MILITARY SITUATION ROOM – DAY

Dark, lit with computer monitors surrounding a long
conference table with a speaker in the center. A large screen
rests on the wall behind the head of the table.

Generals, CC and Keyrah gather. Tension thick.

GENERAL JAMES

We've confirmed that these
Acclimites are around the globe.

General James points a small remote at the large screen
behind him and hits a button. The screen plays a video.

LARGE T.V. SCREEN: Unstable phone camera footage, a group of
fifteen armed young men rally, SPEAKING RUSSIAN. Excited and
pumped for action, they walk down an unpaved road of a small
impoverished village.

GENERAL JAMES (O.S.)

We've retrieved footage from social
media around the world – look.

ZOOM INTO T.V.

UNSTABLE CAMERA PHONE SCREEN

Continuation of unstable phone camera footage—

YOUNG MAN WITH MOLOTOV exits from the last house and joins the mob of young men. He's welcomed — they SPEAK IN RUSSIAN.

ZOOM OUT FROM UNSTABLE CAMERA PHONE SCREEN

EXT. RUSSIA - SMALL VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

YOUNG WOMAN holds a cell phone, recording the rally, behind her, the mob of young men. FIFTY VILLAGERS stand on their porch watching the mob parade out of the village.

Young men leading the mob, stop and listen — the rest of the mob follows suit. Still, silent, their gaze fixed ahead — O.S. FAINT RUSTLING.

YOUNG WOMAN with eyes wide, takes a nervous swallow and aims her camera phone ahead.

RUSTLING grows louder, and louder.

MEMBERS OF THE MOB squint in discomfort from the sound and its volume.

UNSTABLE CAMERA PHONE SCREEN

FIVE PLANT LIKE HUMANOID CREATURES emerge, their forms advancing into view. Camera zooms in — revealing unsettling alterations. Their once-ethereal bodies are now denser, their forearms brandishing sharp needle like twigs.

VILLAGERS — GASP and step back, fear stricken.

YOUNG WOMAN'S breathing quickens, a frantic flutter in her chest. Her eyes dart to the seething crowd then fixes her gaze on the encroaching horror.

CREATURES charge, emitting an unsettling RUSTLING sound.

YOUNG MAN WITH MOLOTOV belts out a war cry, lights the Molotov and chucks it at the rampaging creatures—

SHATTER — a PLANT LIKE HUMANOID takes the molotov to the head and SQUEALS as it falls to the ground burning — the FOUR remaining creatures continue their charge.

One creature lifts its arm and ZIP — shoots a twig like needle out of its forearm, striking a mob member standing in front of the Young Woman. She recoils and watches the body PLOP to the ground — eyes vacant.

Mob members, holding guns, open fire BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! – a flurry of shots hurl towards the creatures.

FOUR PLANT LIKE HUMANOID CREATURES stop running, their form statues amidst the lethal storm of bullets. Heads bowed, they endure the brutal fusillade, each impact ripping through their frames, showering splintered fragments like confetti.

Shooting ceases – CLICK, CLICK, CLICK – magazines depleted. The crowd's gaze of the mob, locked in a single unwavering focus, pulsed with a collective, ragged breath–

FOUR PLANT-LIKE HUMANOID CREATURES heads lift with unsettling slowness and tilted quizzically. Then, MONSTROUS GRINS SPLIT THEIR FACES, growing into a LARGE FREAKISH SMILE revealing teeth made of LARGE ROSE THORNS.

MOB collectively recoils. A single member turns and bolts for the village – ZIP, he crumples, face sliding on the ground. The remaining members, a panicked wave of humanity, surge back towards the village, trampling and SCREAMING.

YOUNG WOMAN scrambles through the crowd, frantically dashing towards the village. ZIP, ZIP, ZIP – members of the mob fall one by one.

She hurdles over a mob member who stumbles to the ground – ZIP, ZIP, ZIP needles wiz by her head – TWO MORE BODIES fall.

YOUNG WOMAN
(in Russian)
Fire! We need fire!

VILLAGERS at the edge of the village seized with terror; their eyes wide, fixed on the approaching onslaught. A YOUNG COUPLE share a glance, then flee into their home.

Swept with desperation, villagers surge towards the inner village.

YOUNG WOMAN risks a fleeting backward glimpse.

YOUNG WOMAN P.O.V.: FIVE MOB MEMBERS sprint in close proximity, behind them the FOUR remaining creatures.

Nearly to the edge of the village – She stumbles on a corpse – THUMP. Flipping to her backside, one hand records the nightmarish scene while the other digs into the soil to aid her escape.

THREE MOB MEMBERS fend off the creatures with farm tools, but their resistance, was brutally and swiftly extinguished.

TWO OTHER MOB MEMBERS dash pass Young Woman and into the village. The creatures approach—

SHATTER! One creature is smacked in the chest with a molotov — SQUEALING as it burns to the ground — THREE CREATURES LEFT. The creatures cease moving, as if turned off.

Young Woman looks back to see Young Couple standing with another Molotov in hand. They signal for her to hurry and go with them. Young Woman stands and sprints back.

Terror etched itself onto Young Woman's face as she cast a fearful look over her shoulder. She stops and records the creatures. Young Couple grips her arm — they stop. Together, they stand horrified with wide eyes—

THREE PLANT LIKE HUMANOID CREATURES — plate like shells resembling Succulent leaves grow from their still bodies, forming what looks like armor.

Young Woman reaches over, snatches the Molotov from the Couple and throws it at the creature — SMASH! It shatters, engulfing all them in flames—

Young Couple and Young Woman watch—

The three creatures brush the fire from their bodies and dash towards the Young Woman and Young Couple.

They run deeper into the center of the village — ZIP, ZIP.

PHONE CAMERA P.O.V.: shakes to the ground, next to a lifeless. Young Couple runs a few feet before tumbling to the ground — still and lifeless. THREE CREATURES run past Young Couple's bodies, deeper into the village.

ZOOM OUT TO—

T.V. SCREEN

Three creatures run deeper into a village — V.O. SCREAMS AND YELLING OF VILLAGERS. The video pauses.

ZOOM OUT TO REVEAL

INT. MILITARY BASE — SITUATION ROOM — DAY

ON LARGE T.V. SCREEN: attacks in Russia, New York, London, Kenya. The creatures ADAPT — bullets stop working, succulent shells grow — resistant to flames and harden like armor.

KEYRAH

They're communicating, like roots
in a forest, but on a global scale.
One adapts, they all learn.

The room stirs.

NIGEL EVANS (40s, British, sharp) bursts in, late.

NIGEL

Did I miss the apocalypse briefing?

He drops into a chair, scanning the footage.

GENERAL JAMES

Dr. Evans is an evolutionary
biologist.

NIGEL

Mother Earth's antibodies. We're
the infection.

CC

That's your theory? Earth wants us
extinct?

NIGEL

Not theory. Observation. She's had
enough of us.

Military members exchange unsettled glances.

INT. GENERAL JAMES OFFICE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Keyrah sits in a decontamination blanket, staring at the
60/40 genetic printout. General James stands across from her.

GENERAL JAMES

We're pulling you out. Civilians
and dependents first flight, you'll
rendezvous with your family in a
day or two.

Keyrah doesn't raise her voice.

KEYRAH

I'm not a civilian. I'm the one who
recognized the shift.

Nigel watches, calculating.

NIGEL

Recognized— or accelerated?

CC steps forward – steady, grounded, her soldier.

CC
 She's the only one who can learn
 from it – faster than it learns
 from us.

General James locks eyes with Keyrah.

GENERAL JAMES
 And if you're wrong?

Keyrah looks at the printout again. Makes her decision.

KEYRAH
 Then we were already too late.

Beat.

KEYRAH (CONT'D)
 Let me stay.

INT. MILITARY BASE - RESEARCH ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Forty-thousand square feet of half-library, half-laboratory. Towering bookshelves surround a glass-encased lab, sterile and humming. On a metal slab, under a sheet – the dead Acclimite Keyrah and CC survived.

RESEARCH ROOM DOOR – sturdy looking, metal and mahogany with a vertical rectangle wired glass window at average head height – a key pad on the wall to the right.

V.O. BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. The door makes an INDUSTRIAL UNLOCKING SOUND, then CLICK.

The door opens.

Keyrah, CC and Nigel enter with two MPs at their back. The MPs walk way before Nigel shuts the door behind him. He looks to the keypad.

NIGEL
 Who puts a keypad on the inside of
 a room?

He scoffs.

NIGEL
 Americans.

He follows Keyrah and CC – they survey the room in awe.

KEYRAH

This is—

NIGEL

A lot of books.

He leans near a shelf examining the books.

NIGEL

Boring ones at that.

SAM (O.S.)

Boss lady!

From the shadows—SAM, AMI, and RAMESH. They rush forward. Ami clocks Keyrah's emotional detachment before giving her a hug.

Sam throws an arm around Keyrah.

KEYRAH

I'm so glad you're all okay.

SAM

(military voice)

Looks like we've all been
interviewed and processed.

(in his normal voice)

I made them call us the dream team.

Keyrah and CC smiles.

Ramesh avoids eye contact, fidgeting with his camera strap. CC clocks it, unimpressed.

AMI

They're saying it was anything but
what really happened. And if I tell
the truth, they'll contain me.

Keyrah leans in.

KEYRAH

Then tell it anyway.

They share a smile.

RAMESH

Why aren't we working with other
countries to fight these things?

KEYRAH

That's the government's call—and
I'm sure they are.

RAMESH
You trust them?

KEYRAH
Yeah, I do.

RAMESH
After all the lies and secrets they
keep from your people, you trust
them to do the right and non-
profitable thing?

Ami clocks the tension.

AMI
Let's not do this now.

RAMESH
No. Now is exactly when it matters.

Sam glances at the covered body, steels himself.

SAM
Alright. Debate later. Who's gonna
help me cut this thing open?

He snaps on gloves, hiding his fear with sass. But it's
bravery - he's stepping up, leading.

Keyrah meets his eyes, nods.

KEYRAH
Let's do it.

Ramesh looks at his phone: text from Tru - "Heard your
working on the plant thing with the Americans. They don't
share and we're trying to save the world too. Need a favor."

Ramesh scans the room - then returns his phone to his pocket.

INT. MILITARY BASE - SITUATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

General James sits at the head of the table, facing the
illuminated large monitors. All other seats are empty.

TWO LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: split into four parts, each part
occupied by a general of a world leader. On the bottom of the
screen is the name of the country the party represents.
Countries in attendance: China, Russia, Germany, U.K., Japan,
France, India and Saudi Arabia.

GENERAL JAMES

We all have to consider the impact
this could have on our civilians.

RUSSIA'S GENERAL

If there's no solution after twenty-
four hours, our next conversation
will be about nuclear and
biological warfare on these things.

GENERAL JAMES

Well, let's not get too hasty-

U.K.'S GENERAL

We agree with Russia on this and so
does everyone else here.

The other generals nod in agreement.

GENERAL JAMES

Give me forty-eight hours.

The generals look at each other-

RUSSIA'S GENERAL

You got forty-eight hours.

TWO LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN: Russia's box goes black and one by
one the other countries boxes follow.

INT. KEYRAH'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A light clicks off - Michael tucks Xavier in. Xavier clutches
a stuffed Venus flytrap toy, illuminated by the moon's light.

XAVIER

Mom's gonna save us, right?

Michael hesitates, forces a smile.

MICHAEL

Yeah, buddy. She always does.

He turns off the lamp. Xavier whispers to himself:

XAVIER

Be strong like mom.

INT. MEDIA CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Ami uploads footage. A MILITARY OFFICER looms.

OFFICER
Your feed goes through us now.

AMI
The world deserves the truth.

OFFICER
The world deserves stability.

He cuts her connection. Ami clenches her fists, defeated but burning inside.

INT. MILITARY RESEARCH ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The acclimite's corpse lies under bright lights. Keyrah, Sam, Ramesh, and Nigel stand around the table. CC positioned in the corner, hand on sidearm, protector posture.

Sam, takes the lead, pulls the sheet back. The creature's thorned teeth gleam under the fluorescents.

RAMESH
(uneasy)
Do we— have to?

CC
We're not here to braid its hair.

Sam starts the dissection. His hands are steady.

SAM
If I let fear drive, we all die.
Hold the damn clamp.

Ramesh holds the clamp, Sam slices — green ichor spills, mixed with red. Steam curls upward. Keyrah makes a cut too.

Sam fills three vials with green goo and labels them One, Two and Three. He sets them on metallic tray.

KEYRAH
Chlorophyll and hemoglobin.
Photosynthesis and blood.

NIGEL
(leaning in, smirking)
Earth's newest predator comes with
a side of irony.

Ami enters with nose flared, she stands next to Ramesh and crosses her arms.

AMI
(to Ramesh)
They shut my upload down.

Ramesh clenches his jaw and shakes his head.

Sam walks away.

SAM
Ami, I need you.

Ami follows Sam – CC studies Keyrah.

CC
You hesitate. Why?

KEYRAH
It's almost human-like and because science takes patience. You can't just shoot answers.

CC
Human-like, isn't human. And sometimes shooting's the only thing that works.

Their eyes lock – friction. Nigel, enjoying the tension.

RAMESH
(to himself)
I'm not waiting for permission.

Ramesh palms vial number three of green goo and slides it into his pocket. He scans everyone's face before he exits.

INT. KEYRAH'S HOME – NIGHT

Michael approaches Xavier's bedroom door.

His phone buzzes – social feeds of Acclimites spreading. He scrolls past memes, doctored clips, conspiracy hashtags.

He mutters to himself:

MICHAEL
Nobody knows what's real anymore.

He puts the phone in rest mode, cracks open Xavier's door to observe Xavier – he's sound to sleep.

He pauses, enjoying the moment of innocence before closing the door.

INT. MILITARY BASE - STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

Maps lit in red. Pins scatter across continents. The world is bleeding.

GENERAL JAMES presides. KEYRAH, CC, SAM, AMI, RAMESH, and NIGEL sit grim.

GENERAL JAMES

Acclimites are slaughtering us.
We're running out of things to
throw at them.

KEYRAH

Stop throwing soldiers at them like
mulch! We need time.

Tension spikes. The room splits - military urgency vs. scientific patience.

GENERAL JAMES

Then we drop hell on them.

Keyrah rises, fierce.

KEYRAH

You can't bomb them. We don't know
enough about them to know what will
happen if you do. Look, we're
exploring ways that will combat
their biology - we just need time.

CC

So what's your plan?
Photosynthesize them to death?

Ramesh's phone buzzes. He checks it under the table.

TEXT FROM TRU: "I hope you do your part. Anything that can tell us what we're dealing with, send it. Lives depend on it."

His fingers hover. Conflicted and terrified - he makes a choice with a slight nod of his head. His moment to matter - he pockets his phone.

KEYRAH

Containment. Tell everyone not to
attack - just hide. We understand,
then we attack - united.

General James contemplates.

GENERAL JAMES

I'll get on the horn with the world's generals, but let me be clear Dr. Davis - time is something we don't have.

He exits.

RAMESH

Excuse me. I have some errands to run before we dig back in.

He stands, all eyes on him, he hurries out of the room. Ami watches his odd exit and shakes it off.

KEYRAH

(to herself)

It won't behave like a predator.
It'll behave like an ecosystem.
That's how we avoid eradication.

NIGEL

(quietly, cutting in)

And what if eradication was never the point?

The room falls silent.

NIGEL

She—Earth—doesn't want us dead fast. She wants us desperate. Bleeding. Controlled.

He meets Keyrah's eyes.

NIGEL

Like an immune system does.

Keyrah flinches - the allegory hits home.

INT. RESEARCH ROOM - DAY

Sam runs rapid tests, juggling multiple stations. Ramesh enters as he cracks jokes while multitasking.

SAM

If anyone asks, yes, I can split atoms and keep this hair perfect.

CC actually smiles - briefly.

CC
(low, to Sam)
Say less. Move smart.

Sam smirks and nods.

Alarms BLARE. A containment tank shudders.

The acclimite corpse twitches violently.

RAMESH
(shrieking)
It's alive!

He stumbles back, nearly knocks over equipment.

Sam steps in fast, clamps the thrashing limb down with a restraint, almost gets slashed.

SAM
(to Ramesh)
Congratulations, you just found a
new way to make coffee nervous.

He tightens the restraints, breathing hard but steady.

Keyrah grabs his arm.

KEYRAH
That was reckless.

SAM
Yeah. But it worked.

CC gives him a nod – respect earned.

EXT. SKY - OVER A CITY - NIGHT

PROPELLOR WHIRLS – A large military evacuation helicopter glides through the air in the distance – blinking lights help outline it.

MILITARY EVACUATION HELICOPTER

PILOT (late 30s, female) dressed in fatigues and wearing large dark goggles, helmet and large headphones with attached mic, maneuvers the cyclic stick. CO-PILOT (late 30s, male) dressed in fatigues and wearing the same accessories.

In the back, SHEPARD (mid 30s, muscular male) sits holding on to a strap that's attached to the helicopter with one hand as the other hand holds an assault rifle in his lap.

Co-Pilot points across Pilot's body towards the ground. Pilot looks in the pointed direction.

PILOT'S P.O.V.: through helicopter door – a school with a large, lit football field.

Pilot nods and moves the cyclic stick and the helicopter dips out of sight–

INT. KEYRAH'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Michael stands near the cracked front door with two duffle bags at his feet. He appears anxious. He looks at his watch.

WATCH: "7:40PM".

Michael sighs and approaches the stairs– An oddly shaped shadow casts inside from something passing by the front door.

MICHAEL

Xavier! If you don't hurry, we're gonna miss our helicopter ride!

XAVIER

Coming, Uncle! I'm coming down right now!

Xavier obviously stomps in place.

XAVIER

You hear me walking?!

Michael smirks and shakes his head.

MICHAEL

Yeah I hear you, but I expect to see you too.

The front door creaks–

Michael whips around, staring at the front door.

FRONT DOOR – comes to a stop, revealing a sliver of the outside.

Michael approaches–

He reaches and grabs the handle. He takes a deep and silent breath–

He cautiously pulls the door open.

XAVIER

Ready!

Michael jumps as he turns around to see Xavier standing in front of him wearing a Black Panther backpack and a mischievous smile.

A phone peeks out of his front pocket.

MICHAEL

You took that long for a backpack?
Not looking for that phone that's
sticking out of your pocket?

Xavier keeps his smile and shakes his head. His smile fades.

XAVIER

Uncle, who's that?

A shadow overcasts the doorway's entrance. Before Michael can completely turn around—

VERONICA

Michael, I'm glad you're home.

VERONICA (late 20s, Black female), wearing PJs, bonnet and slippers stands worried in the doorway.

MICHAEL

What's wrong, Veronica?

VERONICA

I'm trying to find Devarius. I've
knocked on everyone's door, but
nobody is answering — I told him to
check the mail and come right back.

MICHAEL

We haven't seen him.

Michael grabs the duffle bags and signals to Xavier to come with him. They both exit, Michael shuts the door.

VERONICA

Where you two going? Wait, is it
because of those plant people?

Michael turns towards Veronica signaling for her silence. Xavier places earbuds in his ears and plays on the phone.

XAVIER'S AUDIO P.O.V.: muffled dialogue from Michael and Veronica under the video game he's playing.

Michael looks at his watch.

WATCH: "7:52PM"

Veronica continues to ADLIB. Something across the street catches Michael's eye. He turns his attention to—

NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET

NEIGHBOR (50s, white female) stands in the window watching Veronica and Michael's exchange — her eyes wide and mouth open. She looks as if she sees a ghost.

She covers her mouth and snatches her curtains closed—O.S.
SQUISHY CRUNCH

MICHAEL turns back towards Veronica.

VERONICA STANDS HEADLESS! Blood squirts from the base of her neck. Behind her, an Acclimite baring a LARGE SMILE MADE OF THORNS COVERED IN BLOOD.

Michael looks down at the—

ACCLIMITE'S HANDS, each holding a crushed and mangled body.

Michael takes a step back and looks at—

XAVIER plays on the phone, he's locked in—

Michael scoops him up and dashes away. Xavier nearly drops his game, but catches it.

Xavier takes an earbud out of one ear.

XAVIER
Uncle what's wrong?!

MICHAEL
We're in danger and I need you to do exactly what I say and ask no questions, okay?!

XAVIER
Okay.

MICHAEL
Put your earbuds in, close your eyes and listen to music until I tell you to do different.

Xavier places his earbud in, hits the phone screen a couple times — MUSIC PLAYS

XAVIER'S AUDIO P.O.V.: remixed version of "I Met a Bear" plays in his ear.

He holds Michael tight.

The Acclimite pitches Veronica's body twenty feet, a fastball flying at Michael.

MICHAEL ducks his head while maintaining his sprint. Veronica's body nearly hits his head, landing in front of him – he hurdles over the tumbling body.

ACCLIMITE belts out AGGRESSIVE CLICKS and effortlessly throws the two mangled bodies in the air, down the block, at Michael one after the other. WHOOSH-WHOOSH! As if it was throwing a deep pass route.

TWO MANGLED BODIES – soar, flapping like laundry on the clothes line, on an intercept course with Michael and Xavier.

Michael reaches the end of the block, turning the corner. The bodies hit with a BONE RATTLING THUD. One, tumbles into a car – CRASH! The other rolls into a house, breaking the porch.

The sound of O.S. SHOES RUNNING ON CONCRETE fade-

INT. MILITARY BASE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ami, wearing a large purse, strolls pass two MPs.

AMI

Thank you for your service.

MPs nod, without breaking a stride.

MP 1

Our privilege ma'am.

Ami observes them continuing down the hall – she dips into a secluded room.

SECLUDED ROOM

A metal table and two chairs sit in the middle of the room. Ami shuts the door with care and hurries to sit down. She sets her purse down and gives a lingering glance at the door.

She pulls a laptop and hotspot router out of her purse.

She opens the laptop and stars at it. Her half-finished report: "Global Governments Suppress Bloom Truth."

Her fingers hover over "send." She hesitates. She knows pressing it could mean exile– or worse.

She closes the laptop, tears brimming.

EXT. FRANKLIN SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Michael approaches the brightly lit field from the shadows, with Xavier on his back. O.S. HELICOPTER PROPELLER WHIRLS - In the center of the field, they see the helicopter!

MILITARY EVACUATION HELICOPTER

Pilot and Co-pilot examine the gauges on the console while carrying ADLIBBED CONVERSATION.

SHEPARD surveys the field, assault rifle at the ready. He peers into the shadows and relaxes.

SHEPARD

We got friendlies approaching.

He unbuckles.

SHEPARD

I'm going to make contact.

PILOT

Copy.

CO-PILOT

Head on a swivel out there.

SHEPARD

Copy that.

Shepard hops out of the helicopter and jogs over.

SHEPARD

Michael and Xavier?

Michael nods, smiling - we're saved!

SHEPARD

Come with me and stay low.

He smiles at Xavier who smiles back - Michael and Xavier approach Shepard on the field.

SHEPARD looks up over Xavier's head. His eyes widen.

SHEPARD

Get to the helicopter.

He readies his assault rifle. Xavier and Michael turn to look behind them-

SHEPARD
(whispers)
Don't turn around.

XAVIER and MICHAEL stop moving. Forty yards behind them, peaking from around a pillar, an Acclimite. Its head cocked to the side – it bares its large thorn like teeth.

SHEPARD
RUUUUNN!!!

Michael and Xavier take off in a full on sprint towards the helicopter in the center of the field.

Acclimite belts out some aggressive CLICKS and dashes towards them in pursuit.

Shepard lets loose rounds after rounds from his assault rifle, hitting the creature with nearly every bullet – the creature is spins from the rounds.

Xavier falls to the ground dropping his game.

XAVIER
Uncle!

Michael looks back – *shit! I gotta get him.* He stops and runs back to get Xavier.

Shepard is out of rounds, he ejects the mag and places a new one in – CLICK. He aims and–

SQUISH-CRACK! Acclimite smashes Shepard's head into his neck with one hand and SMACK! Slaps his body to the side with the other hand.

Acclimite snaps it's head towards Michael and Xavier.

MICHAEL, down on one knee, scoops Xavier up in his arms and looks over to the creature.

MICHAEL
Hold on tight!

Xavier locks his finger around his uncle's neck and buries his head in his chest.

Michael dashes to the helicopter – Acclimite gives chase.

The creature holds up an arm and shoots needles at Michael and Xavier – ZIP, ZIP, ZIP, a barrage of needles fly past them hitting the helicopter – CLING, CLING.

Pilot and Co-pilot watches as Michael approaches the side of the helicopter. ZIP, ZIP, ZIP – needles puncture the windshield and into the head of the Co-pilot. He's lifeless.

Michael dives inside the helicopter.

MICHAEL

GO! GO! GO!

Pilot lifts off, tilting the helicopter to the side enough to turn the creature into chopped salad – problem gone.

INT. MILITARY EVACUATION HELICOPTER - SECONDS LATER

Michael sits on the floor with his back against the cargo wall. He's sweating, out of breath and is having a hard time keeping his eyes open. Xavier sits next to him.

MICHAEL

Let me see something.

Michael leans Xavier forward and checks his back.

XAVIER'S BACK, needle free, but his backpack is riddled with them.

Michael takes off Xavier's backpack.

MICHAEL

Look.

Xavier gives his total attention.

MICHAEL

These are poisonous, so don't touch
this backpack until your mom
removes these, okay?

Xavier nods.

Michael tosses the backpack to the side.

MICHAEL

Okay. I'm going to rest now. Don't
wake me up even if we get there.
Let your mom do it.

XAVIER

Okay, uncle.

Michael's head rests on the cargo wall and his eyes close.
Xavier rests his head on Michael's lap.

MICHAEL'S LOWER BACK, two needles in it.

INT. MILITARY BASE - RESEARCH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ami sits in the center with books, taking notes. Horticulturist walks past her pushing a cart that carries spilled soil, a bucket and water cans. He exits.

LABORATORY

Keyrah, Sam and Nigel, dressed in hazmat suits, look busy doing their own thing. Ramesh's gaze locked on the Acclimite - apprehension and fear on his face. CC stands at the entrance, hand resting on her holster.

Keyrah places a beaker of floating green particles over a burner - burns arm, wincing in pain, but continues her work.

Sam pulls a needle from the creatures arm, clips part of it - green goo drips. He places the goo in a dish and scans around for vile number three missing from a tray.

Nigel grabs a beaker and walks past a large withering Fiddle Leaf Fig, freshly repotted, outside of the glass wall of the laboratory. A few leaves become transparent - then opaque.

FIDDLE LEAF FIG'S POT: cracked at the bottom, a secondary root stretches along the edge of the floor to under the laboratory entrance.

The Acclimite corpse lies strapped down. Monitors blip erratically.

ACCLIMITE'S P.O.V.: looking up to the ceiling. Sam approaches, stands next to Keyrah - Ramesh in the background, eyes locked Acclimite.

SAM

Heartbeat where there shouldn't be
a heartbeat. That's comforting.
It's kinda beautiful, right?

Keyrah leans in - not out of curiosity, but recognition.

KEYRAH

(soft)
It's - listening.

CC moves to block-

CC

(soft)

Not the move – you're too close
doctor.

Keyrah doesn't pull back.

AMI

It's learning you.

SAM

Then we can teach it.

Nigel steps in, cold and clinical.

NIGEL

Or it's mapping your weaknesses–

Acclimite corpse twitches – Ramesh flinches.

RAMESH

We shouldn't be in here. It could
wake–

CC

It will wake if you keep whining
loud enough.

Sam gives her a side-eye, then refocuses. He injects dye into
a vein-like vine.

The monitors flare. A neural map appears, branching like
roots.

KEYRAH

It's learning even in death.

Sam turns to Keyrah.

SAM

You weren't afraid of it. You felt
something.

Keyrah doesn't reply.

The neural map on the monitor flickers – branches
multiplying.

SAM

Wait. That's not stimulus response.

Keyrah steps closer to the table.

The Acclimite's vitals SPIKE.

NIGEL
It's accelerating.

Keyrah slowly pulls her hand back.

The vitals settle. The branching STOPS.

A beat.

KEYRAH
(quiet, shaken)
It's not learning from the test.

CC
Then from what?

KEYRAH
(from the truth landing)
From us.

Silence.

KEYRAH (CONT'D)
Every time we engage it... every
time we try to understand it...
(swallows)
We're training it.

CC watches – her jaw tightens.

BEEP – Sam crosses CC's line of vision.

LIBRARY

Ami skims through a book. A pile to her left.

HOURS LATER

Keyrah and her team sit in the center of the library space.
She looks over a notepad, tapping a pen against her leg.

SAM
Lab results for their needles
suggest that the toxin in them only
impact those with human DNA. So,
they're meant just for us.

NIGEL
Does anyone else feel special?

AMI
Aren't they part human?–

KEYRAH

Back on topic. It looks like we deprive them of water, or deprive them of oxygen? Both sound like murder – I can't get on board–

RAMESH

Aren't those the same things we need to live too? Your arm.

KEYRAH'S ARM, lightly wrapped in gauze.

AMI

You should get that looked at.

KEYRAH

I'm fine.

NIGEL

What if there's a symbiotic solution? Maybe we can negotiate with her.

SAM

Since we can't control rain fall, I'm going to go with deprive them of oxygen.

AMI clocks Keyrah in heavy contemplation.

CC

We can use Oxygen Bombs.

RAMESH

A what?

CC

They're called thermobaric weapons. They consume all of the oxygen in a targeted area.

Ami notices Keyrah's face transition from contemplation to worry – she approaches Keyrah.

AMI

Keyrah, what's going on?

The rest of the group clocks Ami's concern.

KEYRAH

If it died as the first one, then why does it look different?

SAM
What's different, sweetie?

KEYRAH turns towards the laboratory at a snail's pace.

The team turns towards the laboratory – they stare–

KEYRAH'S P.O.V.: The sheet that covered the creature lies on the floor – THE CREATURE IS GONE!

Nigel jumps out of his seat.

NIGEL
Oh-oh. That won't do at all.

Everyone else gets up and looks around scanning the room. CC places a hand on her side arm, on guard.

RAMESH
It's out. It's gonna kill us–

AMI
Stop! Just, be alert.

RAMESH'S EYES dance left to right.

MATCH CUT TO:

PAIR OF EYES dance right to left.

WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL–

INT. MILITARY BASE – GUARD ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The pair of eyes belong to MP 2 who hides his mouth and nose with two Uno cards. The room is dark, lit by monitors a remote control joystick sits on the desk.

MONITOR 2: laboratory, metal slab, missing Acclimite.

MP 1
Go ahead and put that card down, so
I can call Uno. I'm locked in now,
no distractions.

The door opens and MP 1 turns to see who it is.

GUARD ROOM DOOR – it's Craig and Rose.

MP 2
Uno!

MP 1 turns back to the game.

MP 1
Damn it! No, redo.

ROSE
Shouldn't you guys be watching the security cameras?

CRAIG
We here to release ya'll - move.
Both of ya'll suck at Uno anyway.

The MPs pick up their cards, stand and exit as Rose and Craig take their seats. Rose leans towards a security monitor.

ROSE
Wait!

MP 2 stops and approaches Rose.

ROSE
Where's the creature's body?

They share a look of worry. Rose scrambles for the joystick. She moves the joystick around - Craig and the MPs are over her shoulder, eyes locked on the screen-

INT. MILITARY BASE - RESEARCH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the center of the room, the group - on pins and needles scan the area. Nigel backs into furniture and YELLS. Everyone SCREAMS - Ramesh the loudest.

NIGEL
Sorry.

SAM
Fuck! We can't do this for too much longer. We're gonna go crazy.

KEYRAH
Let's go for the lab. It might be watching us right now, so I'll count to three and we book it. Do not block the keypad. Got it?

Everyone nods.

KEYRAH
One, two, three.

Everyone darts towards the laboratory door, glancing over their shoulder as if being chased-

They reach the lab door, leaving space for Keyrah to enter the code on the keypad – she approaches and fidgets with the keypad – BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. She sighs.

NIGEL
Everything okay over there?

KEYRAH
Yeah, I just hit the wrong button.

RAMESH
I think I hear it coming. Come on, come on, come on.

CC, back to back with Keyrah, aims her gun – scanning.

LABORATORY DOOR KEYPAD – Keyrah's fingers hit the keypad, SIX, ONE, FIVE, FOUR, FOUR–

ROSE (V.O.)
WAIT!

Keyrah looks up, examining the ceiling.

CC
Rose?

ROSE (V.O.)
Listen, we're watching you through the security camera and– we think we see it. Do not open that door.

Everyone, except for CC, scans the inside of the lab.

RAMESH puts his hands on the glass and stands on his tippy-toes, as if to look over objects–

CC
Anybody see anything?

RAMESH
I don't see anything.

AMI
I don't either.

SAM
Nope.

Keyrah contemplates then steps away from the keypad. She bumps into CC, who quickly glances back at Keyrah before returning her attention towards the library.

CC
What's wrong?

Keyrah puts a reassuring hand on CC's shoulder.

KEYRAH
Hi Rose, my name is Dr. Keyrah
Davis. Can you tell me what it is
you see?

ROSE (V.O.)
Sure. Uh this might sound weird,
but it looks like an outline of
something in front of the glass.

Keyrah looks at CC who glances at her. Keyrah lowers her
voice and addresses her team.

KEYRAH
Hey, there are six plants that can
camouflage themselves. This thing
might have evolved again.

She steps towards the glass, observing.

Sam and Nigel back away from the glass and then Ami.

NIGEL
(smirks)
It psychologically manipulated us
to think it was out, in order to
get us to go in. It played on our
need to survive. Clever.

Ramesh leans on the glass.

RAMESH
What if it's a camera malfunction
and that thing is actually waiting
for us to leave the r-

BANG! Acclimite slams violently against the glass, shattering
Ramesh's composure. He YELLS, recoiling away from the glass,
landing on the floor. BANG! BANG! BANG!

NIGEL
Well that answers that. Shall we.

CC
Go.

She ushers the team with her head towards the entrance, in
the opposite direction on the other side of the room -
firearm trained at the Acclimite. She stops Keyrah.

CC

I need you alive more than I need
you to be right.

Keyrah nods – they run to the entrance with the rest of the group.

Ramesh, transfixed, watches the Acclimite hurl itself into the glass – a hairline fracture, spiderwebs.

GUARD ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Rose and Craig watch with wide eyes – as the two MPs step back towards the door.

ROSE

Did you guys give them the key code
to get out?

Craig turns towards the MPs.

CRAIG

Hello! Did you give them the code?

Rose faces the MPs who shake their heads.

ROSE

We gotta let them out.

RESEARCH ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The team beats on the door – BANG! BANG! BANG!

KEYRAH

Open the door!

NIGEL

HEEELP!

AMI glances over her shoulder to see Ramesh locked in fear on the determined Acclimite, before shifting to the glass.

LABORATORY GLASS – Crack spreads with every impact.

AMI'S gaze snaps to Ramesh – she darts towards him.

AMI

Get up! Come on!

Ramesh snaps to and staggers to his feet. Ami grabs his arm, pulling him back the way she came, towards the entrance.

–CRASH! The laboratory glass explodes, unleashing the Acclimite upon its prey.

KEYRAH, CC AND SAM'S P.O.V. - TOWARDS THE LABORATORY

Sprinting, Ami and Ramesh dodge and leap over obstacles - behind them, the Acclimite tramples everything in its destructive path. IT'S GAINING ON THEM!

Sam DONKEY KICKS the door with urgency. Keyrah and CC join in on the door POUNDING.

V.O. BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP - the door swings open. It's ROSE AND CRAIG! Sam, Keyrah and Nigel run through the doorway - Keyrah pivots.

KEYRAH

Come on!

Ami lowers her head and explodes into a blur of motion, pulling away from Ramesh - Acclimite nearly upon them.

Ami runs through the open door into Keyrah's arms. Craig steps into the doorway with an altered shotgun.

He aims it at Ramesh.

RAMESH'S EYES widen.

CRAIG (O.S.)

Get down!!

Acclimite swings its large hand - Ramesh slides, feet first, barely avoiding the Acclimite's clutches.

Craig fires a round - BLAM!

TIME SLOWS DOWN

CRAIG'S SHOTGUN - Sparks expel two bulky green pellets, the size of tennis balls, flying towards the Acclimite.

BULKY GREEN PELLETS - fly over a sliding-

RAMESH'S eyes closed, face of anguish. A drip of green liquid nearly hits his face, landing on the-

FLOOR - green liquid sizzles, burning a hole.

BULKY GREEN PELLETS - approach the Acclimite-

TIME RETURNS TO NORMAL

ACCLIMITE, SMACKED by the bulky green pellets that burst on contact. SCREECHING, it claws at itself in agony.

RESEARCH DOORWAY

Ramesh slides into Craig – SLAM! They hit the ground, their eyes on the Acclimite.

ACCLIMITE dissolves, screeching and clicking– It slowly raises it's needle baring arm.

RAMESH and CRAIG scramble out of the way.

DOOR SLAMS, needles CLINK, CLINK against the door–

HALLWAY – OTHER SIDE OF RESEARCH DOOR

They team struggles to catch their breath. Craig and Ramesh make their way to their feet. Rose gives them a once over.

ROSE
Everyone okay?

Ramesh nods, but runs his hands over his body to check–

Ami slams her body against Ramesh.

Ramesh recoils, stunned by the force of Ami's embrace.

AMI
(shaky voice)
Your too scary to run so fucking
slow.

The corner of Ramesh's lip slightly raise as his face conveys shame and embarrassment – a flurry of mixed emotions.

CRAIG
Well, acid might not work anymore.

He tosses the shotgun to the side.

CRAIG
That thing was dead, wasn't it?

KEYRAH
It's body was dead, but somehow it
came back to life and... Our tests
shouldn't have taught it how to
evolve like that.

NIGEL
Somebody somewhere gave it new
stimuli. If it only evolves as a
counter measure from direct
attacks, there is no way it evolves
to go invisible!

He looks around suspiciously.

Ramesh avoids eye contact, brushing himself off.

ROSE

Then how?

Keyrah's eyes go wide.

KEYRAH

Your grounds keeper replaces the soil in the potted plants.

Nigel smirks before looking at Keyrah.

NIGEL

That potted plant next to the lab was all but dead even after being well cared for.

AMI

I don't get it.

KEYRAH

The potted plant connected to the Acclimite, must've been via a secondary root, transferred its life force and the soil's memory so it would survive and evolve.

CC

Damn. It doesn't get any more strategic than that.

SAM

They're so damn resilient.

Keyrah looks up as if she had a thought.

KEYRAH

That's why! That's why they have human DNA.

INT. MILITARY BASE - SITUATION ROOM - SAME TIME

General James and Generals bark over maps covered in red. Satellite images show blooms in cities.

GENERAL JAMES

We're past containment - several countries acted prematurely on biological intel we didn't send. Now these things can camouflage.

NIGEL

So, one of us.

CC's gaze scans the room, she bristles at the complication.

GENERAL JAMES

From this moment forward, our priority is suppression. No public transmissions. No leaks. If not, these things can end up invincible overnight.

Keyrah studies the data, horrified.

KEYRAH

They're not random. They're coordinated.

NIGEL

Like white blood cells swarming infection. Us.

CC

We are not germs.

NIGEL

Tell that to the planet.

The brass argue. Nigel leans to Keyrah.

NIGEL

Odds of global cooperation? Zero. Odds of us improvising something stupid? A hundred.

He smirks. For once, Keyrah almost smiles back.

KEYRAH

We learned why she used human DNA. She needed our resilience.

General James looks over to CC who nods once.

GENERAL JAMES

Damn. So, you all came up with a plan?

Overhead intercom SQUEALS – everyone listens.

VOICE OVER INTERCOM (V.O.)

We have an incoming Helo. Security and medical personnel report to the helipad.

CC

I think your brother and son are arriving.

A look of relief comes over Keyrah, she smiles and takes off out of the room. CC and Nigel follow her.

SECLUDED ROOM

Ami and Ramesh sit across from each other at the metal table. On her laptop, Ami replays the aftermath footage of the massacre, the bloom, the creature's first kill.

AMI

If they bury this, the world will never learn.

RAMESH

If you expose it, the government will bury you.

On her laptop – composed email: with a subject header “Bloom Truth”. Attached, a report: “Global Governments Suppress Bloom Truth.” She drags the footage into the email.

She hits send. A warning message: ‘TRANSMISSION BLOCKED.’

She exhales, furious – then plugs a drive into her laptop.

AMI

You can censor the feed. But not the truth.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - HELIPAD PLATFORM - SUNRISE

HELICOPTER BLADES WHIRL – the sun peaks over the hills in the distance, lighting everything with hope. Cargo crates surround the platform.

Twenty armed military personnel have established a perimeter around the landing site – weapons trained on the descending helicopter.

Keyrah, CC, Sam and Nigel exit a steel door from ascending stairs, they shield their eyes from the sun's glare. They approach the military's perimeter.

Ami and Ramesh exit shortly after, shielding their eyes.

HELICOPTER touches down, its spinning rotors slowing to a shuddering stop. Blood stains mar the interior windshield, puncture holes and green goop cover the exterior.

A palpable tension hangs heavy in the air—

ARMED MILITARY PERSONNEL, weapons poised, uneasy, their trigger fingers tremble with anticipation.

KEYRAH gazes at the helicopter with expectant faith.

XAVIER (V.O.)
(muffled)
Mom!

Helicopter back door swings open—

ARMED MILITARY PERSONNEL clench their weapons.

CC
Stand down! It's the doctor's son!

As the helicopter's rotors throbbed to a halt, Xavier leaps out, sprinting towards Keyrah. She meets his urgency, scooping him up in her arms.

Pilot emerges signaling to Armed Military Personnel; lowering their weapons, they approach the helicopter.

KEYRAH sets him down and kneels — her face a poignant mask of conflicting feelings.

KEYRAH
I missed you Munch.

XAVIER
I missed you too mommy.

KEYRAH
I'm sorry I left you, I will never
do it again.

XAVIER
It's okay mommy.

Keyrah grins. A hint of recollection flicker in her eyes.

FOUR MILITARY MEDICS carrying gurneys and medical supplies blow past her towards the helicopter. One of the medics, MONICA (late 20s, white female) stops and kneels with Keyrah and Xavier.

MONICA
Hey, buddy. Let me check you out
and make sure you're okay.

Keyrah's attention slides to the Three Military Medics as Monica checks out Xavier.

She places a stethoscope on Xavier's back.

MONICA

Take some deep breaths for me.

She clocks a small, bleeding scratch on his arm, faint green residue outline the wound. Xavier takes exaggerated breaths.

Keyrah's gaze locked on the medics, she stands and approaches helicopter.

KEYRAH

Stay here, Munch.

Monica looks up to Keyrah, her face hardens. She softens it before returning her attention to Xavier.

Pilot and Medic 1 carries a gurney from the far side of the helicopter. A shrouded form beneath a stark white sheet.

KEYRAH looks down then returns her gaze back to the helicopter, a smile grows on her face.

Medic 2 and Medic 3 exit the helicopter, supporting Michael between them, his arms draped around their necks. They lower him down on a gurney.

XAVIER lights up upon catching sight of his uncle.

XAVIER

He's up!

Xavier runs to Michael, escaping Monica's grasp.

Xavier blows pass Keyrah, she gives chase.

KEYRAH

Munch!

Smiling ear to ear, Xavier drops to his knees in front of Michael and shakes him profusely. Keyrah approaches.

XAVIER

Wake up uncle, we're here. Mom's excited to see you too. Uncle wake up, wake up!

KEYRAH smiles. Her gaze drawn to—

MEDIC 2, who averts his gaze. Finally, meets Keyrah's eyes with a mournful shake of the head.

Keyrah's smile fades, her gaze shoots over to Medic 3 who clutches a stark white sheet to their side. Her eyes well – a STIFLED SHRIEK escaped her lips, a sound choked with anguish.

Xavier stands. Out of breath, he places his hands on his hips and squints.

XAVIER
Maybe he's deep sleeping, mom.

Keyrah pulls Xavier close, wrapping her arm around his chest.

KEYRAH
He isn't sleep, Munch.

Medic 3 draws the white sheet over Michael.

XAVIER shakes his head rapidly.

XAVIER
Mom, what are they doing? He's just sleeping. Stop it!

Medic 2 and Medic 3 pick up the gurney.

KEYRAH
Uncle is gone, Munch.

Xavier attempts to break free from his mom's arm with tears in his eyes.

XAVIER
No, he's subconscious! Like Spider Man was. I'll show you!

Xavier fights to break free. Sobbing, Keyrah embraces him tightly as Medics carry the gurney away.

XAVIER
No! Uncle saved me, he's a hero!
He's subconscious, not dead! Let me show you!

Xavier gives up his struggle, buries his head into Keyrah and they mourn together.

XAVIER
Why won't they let me show them?

SAM, AMI, RAMESH and CC – stricken by the heart-wrenching display, fight back tears. Ramesh, more anxious than usual.

Xavier's hand shakes – he breaks into full body convulsions.

Keyrah freaks and lays him down.

KEYRAH
Munch? Munch?! – I need a medic!

TWO MEDICS rush in, pushing past Keyrah, delivering aid.
Keyrah watches – jaw dropped, wide welling eyes, helpless.

INT. MEDICAL CORRIDOR – NIGHT

A glass-walled MEDICAL ROOM beyond– cots, equipment, the harsh good light that forgives nothing. Keyrah paces the corridor, the two MEDICS triaging bruises, vitals.

AMI
(to Keyrah, barely)
We'll get him home.

RAMESH watches Keyrah's hands– the tremor she doesn't see.
SAM posts near the door like a bouncer. Inside, Xavier's eyes flutter open, stares small at the ceiling.

XAVIER
Mom?

KEYRAH
(at the glass)
I'm right here, Munch. Breathe with me. In–two–three–

A DOCTOR enters the medical room, checks Xavier's pupils, reflex hammer tap. All routine. Too routine.

DOCTOR
Looks like shock. Fluids and rest–

KEYRAH
(through glass)
He was near the needles. He–
(searches)
He wasn't hit. I don't think–

DOCTOR
(kind but moving on)
We'll monitor.

CC clocks Keyrah's face: she doesn't buy it. Ami rubs Keyrah's back. Ramesh forces a smile that can't hold.

SAM
We're here.

Monica enters and whispers something to Doctor. Doctor whips his gaze towards Xavier's scratched arm. He shares a look of concern with Monica.

Xavier rolls his head toward Keyrah— trying to be brave. XAVIER's hand twitches. Once. Again. Then— His whole body SEIZES. MONITOR SPIKES. MEDICS slam rails up.

KEYRAH

No— No— open the door! That's my son!

MEDIC

(to corridor)
Out! Out!

A curtain snaps across the glass, leaving Keyrah in her own reflection, pounding the pane. Inside silhouettes scramble— suction, ambu-bag, the choreography of crisis.

Keyrah presses her forehead to the glass, counting with him though he can't hear:

KEYRAH

(whisper)
In—two—three. Out—two—three.

Through a gap in the curtain, for a second, faint moss-green rings ripple Xavier's veins at the wrist— then vanish. The team shares the same terrified thought. No one says it.

The MONITOR settles to a fragile rhythm.

Keyrah shakes, empty and furious— just an observer of what she cannot reach.

INT. MILITARY BASE - BARRACKS - LATER

Stark, empty room; pale walls and polished hardwood floors. Two tiers of metal framed bunk beds, rigidly aligned. Keyrah lies on the bottom bunk closest to the entryway, staring into an unseen distance. MUMBLING to herself.

Her eyes well — she clutches the dog tag around her neck.

General James enters the doorway, witnessing a woman on the edge of breaking — KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

GENERAL JAMES

Can we talk?

Keyrah's eyes slide to the door, scanning for an update. She pulls herself from the bunk and to the door.

DOORWAY

General James and Keyrah stand in a thick silence.

GENERAL JAMES

I want to first say that I'm sorry
for your loss. Losing someone close
is never easy.

Keyrah remains still, missing something behind her eyes.

GENERAL JAMES

Your boy's a fighter. The needle
that grazed him infected him with a
toxin that overloads the nervous
system, causing him to seize.
Because it was just a graze, we
have a few days to find a solution.

Keyrah nods.

GENERAL JAMES

Sam ran some tests on your brother.
Apparently it turns the nervous
system to a beacon – even after
death.

(beat)

We can't give away our position.

Keyrah walks out of the room emotionless – with purpose.

General James' gaze lands on the floor. He sighs and shakes
his head before following her.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Keyrah, Sam, Ami, Ramesh, CC and military staff stand around
a large contained fire – in the flames a wrapped corpse.

Keyrah's eyes glossy, but tearless. She stares into the
flames, orange lights reflecting off her face.

The only goodbye she'll get.

Ramesh fights back tears more than the rest of the group. Ami
glances over at him, then back to the fire.

INT. MILITARY BASE - SITUATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Keyrah, Ami, Nigel, CC, Sam and Ramesh sit in a heavy
silence. Ramesh, overly anxious.

Ami clocks Ramesh's bouncing leg and fidgeting fingers.
She confronts him.

AMI

What's going on with you?

Ramesh stares at her, eyes welling.

AMI

You're scaring me. Why are you
acting like this?

General James enters and sits at the head of the table.
Ramesh looks at the inquisitive faces around him.

RAMESH

It's my fault. I didn't know. I
took a vile from the lab and sent
it to a friend of mine in China.

Ami recoils—

RAMESH

He said I would be helping the
world. Doing my part.

Expressions in the room ranged from pinched-lip restraint to
open-mouthed shock, but all held a palpable disappointment.

NIGEL

You almost got us killed—

GENERAL JAMES

We have to deal with that later.
Look like global coordination is
impossible. Every country's acting
on its own now.

NIGEL

Humanity can't agree on dinner, let
alone wear masks for three weeks.
So, that sounds about right.

GENERAL JAMES

We've lost contact with leadership
of five major countries.

(beat)

I'm hoping you all were able to
come up with something.

CC looks over to Keyrah before she responds.

CC
We weren't able to—

SAM
We can contain! We just need to
understand the root adaptation
cycle—

KEYRAH
(quiet, without emotion)
We take their air.

The room goes silent.

AMI'S eyes go glassy — not crying, but witnessing her friend
die in a different way.

NIGEL
There it is.

SAM shakes his head, his eyes search the floor.

KEYRAH
The Acclimites breathe. They
exchange oxygen. They circulate it
through their biomass.
(beat)
No air. No network. No
regeneration. No them.

SAM
And if we lose— everything else?

Keyrah turns to him — emotionless.

KEYRAH
We already have.

The room absorbs that.

KEYRAH
They're reacting to us — learning
us. So we flip it. We give them one
thing to chase, and when they reach
it we send them to hell.

CC turns towards Keyrah.

CC
Tell us how.

KEYRAH

We use Green Bank Observatory Science Center to send a low bass frequency to radio stations around the world to attract them. Once enough are gathered we burn the air. One strike. Simultaneous detonations.

(beat)

We don't give them time to learn.

General James looks around the room.

GENERAL JAMES

I'll coordinate with the remaining world leaders. We'll keep this small Dr. Davis, three of you and three of my men. Have your three meet us at the helipad in fifteen. This is our last play before extinction protocols.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - HELIPAD PLATFORM - MINUTES LATER

O.S. HELICOPTER PROPELLER WHIRLS - Keyrah, Sam, Ami, Ramesh and Nigel exit the steel door and approach the platform - they stop and stare at the-

HELICOPTER: THREE MILITARY SOLDIERS conduct a weapons and equipment check. PILOT fiddles with switches over head.

Keyrah, Nigel and Ramesh approach the helicopter. Ramesh receives cold shoulders from all. Keyrah turns to Ramesh-

KERYAH

If anyone else knew how to hack radio broadcast signals, you wouldn't be going.

She approaches the helicopter - RAMESH'S ARM, grabbed by Ami's hand.

They stare at each other, estranged.

AMI

Come back. Okay?

Ramesh nods.

Ami walks away, joining Sam at the steel door.

INT. HELICOPTER - SECONDS LATER

Ramesh enters, sitting next to Nigel. Nigel turns his body – door SLIDES SHUT.

Ramesh's gaze fixed on Ami as the helicopter lifts.

HELIPAD PLATFORM

Ami and Sam watch the helicopter lift into the sky.

EXT. OBSERVATORY SCIENCE CENTER - NIGHT

Long two story building with manicured lawn. In front, a well lit, large connecting oval driveway that spills into a large parking lot. Center of the oval, sits a large satellite.

Distant HELICOPTER BLADES WHIRL O.S. – six unidentified figures approach the front door – three with flashlights.

INT. OBSERVATORY SCIENCE CENTER - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

A large receptionist table welcomes you in the dark, vast and hushed space. Dim lighting highlights displays and vaguely illuminates a path. Thick glass separates every room.

CLINK! CHAINS SLIDE AND HIT THE GROUND. The door opens.

Soldiers enter with assault rifles with attached flash lights. First to enter, RIVERS (30s, female) and close behind, DONALD (30s, male). They scan the area– Donald glances over his shoulder, at the door.

DONALD
Clear for entry.

Ramesh, Keyrah and Nigel enter with another armed soldier, MERCY (30s, country, cornbread fed male) who brings up the rear. Mercy enters walking backwards, covering their six.

Rivers examines the room and holds down a button on her shoulder walkie.

RIVERS
Helo, we are in with no signs of
any combatants, go ahead and shut
her down.

She turns to the group.

RIVERS
Alright, lets find this transmitter
so we can get out of this place.

They walk further into the ominous complex.

RIVERS

Let's keep the lights off for now.
We don't want to give these things
a bat signal.

They pass a room on the right labeled "SOLAR ROOM" that displays a large, interactive, model of the solar system and a smaller room on the left, labeled "GIFT SHOP" filled with: books, telescopes, and souvenirs.

MAIN CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ramesh and Rivers enter a circle shaped room full of expensive looking radio equipment. In the center of the room a control panel and a rolling chair.

Ramesh hurry's to the control panel and powers it on - ELECTRONIC BUZZ. He smiles and starts searching the control panel area. Rivers approaches him.

RIVERS

Is this it?

RAMESH

Yeah, this is it.

Rivers engages her shoulder walkie.

RIVERS

We got jackpot. First floor, main
corridor - Southeast side of the
facility, second room-

She looks around at the equipment.

RIVERS

You'll know it, when you see it.

DONALD (V.O.)

Copy.

MERCY (V.O.)

Ten-four.

Ramesh continues to search around the control panel and desk for something. Rivers observes.

RAMESH

(to himself)

Come on baby, I know you're here.

RIVERS

What are you looking for? Maybe I can help.

Ramesh lifts an empty coffee cup, looks under it and sets it down disappointed.

RAMESH

I'm looking for the password to get into the system. Should be on a sticky note or a piece of paper.

RIVERS

You think they would leave a password just laying arou-

RAMESH

Found it.

Ramesh holds an orange sticky note in the air.

ORANGE STICKY NOTE: "password: 1radio-signals!"

Rivers shakes her head.

RIVERS

(to herself)

Civilians.

Ramesh sits in the office chair and TYPES. He crumples the sticky note and tosses it in a trash basket placed at his feet.

The rest of the team arrives. Keyrah and Nigel rush to Ramesh, while Donald and Mercy fan out.

RAMESH

Keyrah, do you have the frequency ready?

KEYRAH

(cold)

It's on here.

She digs in her pocket, hands it to him and walks away.

Ramesh hits the play button by accident – THE FREQUENCY HUMS.

He drops the phone, IT'S WEDGED BETWEEN THE DESK. Panic washes over everyone's face. Mission Soldiers ready their weapons with their heads on a swivel.

Ramesh squeezes his hand into the tight space – IT'S TOO BIG!

MERCY

Turn that shit off!

RAMESH

I can't reach it.

Keyrah springs forward and reaches between the desk.

KEYRAH'S FINGERS reach the phone. They maneuver, placing the phone between the middle and index finger. SHE HAS IT!

Keyrah turns the frequency off – the room is silent. Keyrah and Ramesh fight to control their breathing. The team waits for the next shoe to drop–

METAL CLINKS – Everyone snaps to the left.

RIVERS holds up a fist and cautiously approaches the left side with weapon trained– Reaching the left side, she scans around and then lowers her weapon. She turns and approaches the group–

RIVERS

It's all clear –

A BIRD FLYS OUT FROM BEHIND SOME EQUIPMENT, Rivers ducks. She approaches the control panel, plants a hand on Ramesh's shoulder, leans towards him and whispers.

RIVERS

Let's not do that again. Okay?

She stands a few feet behind Ramesh.

RIVERS

The faster we get started, the faster we get done.

Keyrah extends the phone towards Ramesh.

A weary sigh escapes Ramesh's lips as he accepts the phone.

Keyrah places the phone in his hand and retreats, observing as Ramesh fiddles with the phone, cords and buttons on the control center–

KEYRAH watches Ramesh work. Nigel approaches her.

NIGEL

Thank you for saving our butts.

Keyrah doesn't respond.

NIGEL

What I actually wanted to say and
couldn't find a good segway to say
it was, you are a great mum and
your son is blessed to have you.

Keyrah scoffs.

KEYRAH

Good mom's don't leave their kids
after the end of the world starts.

Nigel nods in agreement.

NIGEL

True, but you left before you knew
it started.

(beat)

I will say, a great mum would leave
their kid with an entire army.

They share a grin.

KEYRAH

So, how did you come up with the
Earth's immune system theory.

NIGEL

I strongly believe that Earth is a
living thing. Living things have
immune systems and they evolve.

He leans closer.

NIGEL

You know, they say the dinosaurs
posed a threat to the Earth during
their stent – over population,
gasses and all. I believe Earth
increased her gravitational field
to pull in a comet that would do
the job of getting rid of her first
virus, the dinosaurs? She would've
done the same to us, but damn it we
mastered technology.

(beat)

We either adapt to co-exist with
her, or she takes us out for being
a threat to her.

KEYRAH contemplates the possibility—

RAMESH (O.S.)
Alright. So, I got good news and
bad news.

Everyone turns towards Ramesh.

RAMESH
The good news is, we are connected
and uploading.

Mercy shoots Ramesh a glance – and what's the bad news?

RAMESH
Right. The bad news is due to the
age of this equipment, the upload
won't be completed for another four
hours or so.

RIVERS
Well, that can't be helped.

She turns to Donald.

RIVERS
Give Helo the heads up on our ETA.

Donald engages his walkie. Rivers turns to Ramesh.

RIVERS
Ramesh, keep that phone on a
charger and make sure you don't let
that system go to rest mode, or
whatever it does.

She then turns to the soldiers.

RIVERS
Find the best place to set up camp.

The soldiers approach the exit.

DONALD
Looks like we having a sleepover
ladies and gents.

Ramesh tinkers with the intricate control panel, as Keyrah
and Nigel follow the soldiers out.

RAMESH
Um, can someone stay in here with
me?

MAIN CORRIDOR – OUTSIDE MAIN CONTROL ROOM – HOURS LATER

Huddled together, Keyrah, Ramesh, Nigel and soldiers lie asleep. A silent, unseen presence glides into the periphery of the frame.

UNIDENTIFIED CHARACTER'S P.O.V.: approaches Ramesh-

RAMESH overcasted by an ominous shadow, he stirs awake rearing to scream, but a hand covers his mouth.

It's Mercy.

MERCY

Shhh. Don't think Rivers would appreciate you fucking up twice now, would she?

Ramesh shakes his head and Mercy moves his hand from Ramesh's mouth.

MERCY

Got a little beeping going on in the control room. Thought you might want to check it out.

Extending a strong hand, he offers assistance. Ramesh accepts, clasping hands, he is lifted to his feet.

CONTROL ROOM - MINUTE LATER

Ramesh scrutinizes the monitor, as Mercy's gaze, unwavering, rest over Ramesh's shoulder.

RAMESH

Looks like the upload is completed. We're done here.

MERCY

Great. I'll wake everyone up and we can get the hell out of here. Give me this first.

He snatches the cell phone and shakes it at Ramesh before he puts it in his pocket. He approaches the entrance.

Ramesh leans in towards the monitor.

RAMESH

Ugh, I have to enter that password again in order for it to finalize. Where did that paper go?

Ramesh eyes widen, he snaps on to the trash basket at his feet and digs through it.

EXT. OBSERVATORY SCIENCE CENTER - HILL - CONTINUOUS

In the distance, the Helo sits at the hill's peak, facing the observatory. HELO PILOT (40s, white male) snacks on jerkey.

He stops chewing, his eyes narrows in intense concentration, scanning the observatory. Frantically he snatches binoculars in the adjacent seat and peers through them.

BINOCULAR P.O.V.: hundreds of Acclimites swarm on the center.

Pilot lowers the binoculars, throwing them back in the seat - they bounce off the seat and HIT THE DOOR.

Motionless, he awaits his consequence to his mistake - Nothing.

He grabs the radio.

INT. OBSERVATORY - MAIN CORRIDOR - TWO MINUTES LATER

Everyone's awake and squatting low. River whispers.

RIVERS

Helo reports we got a fucking swarm outside.

She turns to Mercy.

RIVERS

Where's Ramesh?

Mercy looks behind him and shakes his head.

MERCY

I'll get him.

He creeps into the-

CONTROL ROOM

On his hands and knees, Ramesh sorts through a scattering of crumpled orange sticky notes. Mercy approaches ducked low - they whisper.

MERCY

What the hell are you doing now!?

RAMESH

I have to enter the password again to complete the process. It's an old system.

MERCY

We got hundreds of those things
here, now!

Ramesh's eyes widen.

RAMESH

Help me!

They sort through the crumpled sticky notes with urgency—

The ground RUMBLES — They halt and listen—

Mercy's eyes bounce left to right.

MERCY

Shit, that ain't good. What does
the sticky say?

RAMESH

Something about, radio signal.

Mercy goes into overdrive, sorting through sticky notes.

MERCY

Here! I got it.

He passes it to Ramesh, who swiftly gets to his feet and
TYPES in the password. The computer BEEPS.

RAMESH

Okay, done.

MERCY

Let's go.

MAIN CORRIDOR

Mercy and Ramesh arrive with all eyes on them.

RAMESH

Computer issue.

RIVERS

Glad you could make it.

Ramesh nods with wide-eyes.

RIVERS

Hey, it's going to be okay. We do
this all the time behind enemy
lines.

(MORE)

RIVERS (CONT'D)

We're gonna distract them with a grenade explosion, he'll fire up the bird and we're gone. Follow our lead. Ready?

Keyrah, Nigel and Ramesh give confirming nods.

RIVERS

Okay. On me.

She crouch-walks along the wall, the others follow, Ramesh and Mercy pick up the rear.

The ground stops rumbling – they stop.

The building's structure creaks.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK – Ramesh and Mercy look at each other before examining the area. Above them, behind a glass wall of an exhibit, SKULKS AN ACCLIMITE.

ACCLIMITE, on the hunt, its nostrils slightly elevated. It emits a series of CLICKS, puncturing the silence.

RIVERS signals for the group to stay quiet and low. She continues to crouch-walk and the group follows–

Cell phone hits the ground.

AT MERCY'S FOOT, Keyrah's cell phone, that he took from Ramesh lies face up.

MERCY winces with regret. Cautiously, he unbuttons his sidearm and pulls it from the holster–

The Acclimate dives through glass – SMASH!, GLASS SHATTERS over their heads, it clears the corridor and partially goes through the adjacent glass window.

MERCY

FUCK! RUUUN!

Keyrah grabs her phone and everyone sprints for the exit–

The Acclimate claws at them repeatedly with no prevail. It struggles to pursue – but isn't able to move. Its leg is stuck, impaled by a large piece of glass sticking up from the adjacent window sill.

The Acclimate belts out a series of aggressive CLICKS – the walls around them explode with Acclimites bursting inside.

RIVER

Fire explosive rounds.

TIME MOVES IN SLOW MOTION

Mercy, Rivers, and Donald discard their weapons from their hands and draw modified hand guns.

They fire shots at Acclimites that close in. Bullets explode on impact.

TIME RESUMES NORMALLY

RUMBLING shakes the round again.

RIVERS
Shit! This is bad.

Rivers engages her walkie.

RIVERS
Fire it up now!

ZIP, ZIP, ZIP – needles wisp past their heads from the rear. The stuck Acclimite isn't done trying to kill them.

ACCLIMITE rips its leg off and hops on leg in pursuit, shooting needles from its arm.

NIGEL
Get down!

They reach the lobby, almost out of the building – everyone gets low, except for Donald, glancing back–

SWAP! SWAP! – needles plow into his face. He drops immediately – Ramesh stumbles over his body.

Ramesh's gaze lands on a handle of a weapon. He grabs it.

Mercy scoops Ramesh from under his armpits with both arms and gets him to his feet.

Nigel, Rivers and Keyrah near the exit–

CRASH! Two Acclimates burst through a window on an intercept course towards them.

POP – the leading Acclimite's face light up in a crimson flair. It swings attacking the closest Acclimite to it.

Keyrah, Nigel and Rivers look over to see–

MERCY HOLDING RAMESH UP FROM UNDER HIS ARMS – Ramesh aims a flair gun in the Acclimites direction – hands shaking.

RAMESH
(voice trembling)
Go, hurry.

Keyrah, Nigel and Rivers exit the observatory.

CRASH! Six more Acclimites burst through the glass from the outside. Mercy shoves Ramesh over the reception desk and dives over with him-

EXT. OBSERVATORY SCIENCE CENTER - NIGHT

Rivers, Keyrah and Nigel run from the building. Keyrah slows, comes to a stop and turns towards the observatory.

KEYRAH
We can't leave them there.

Rivers and Nigel come to a stop.

NIGEL
I don't think we could help them if we wanted to. Scientifically speaking that is.

KEYRAH
Well we gotta do something.

RIVERS
He's right doctor. If we go back in there, we won't be coming out.

Keyrah contemplates a solution.

RIVERS
We got a world to think about and he just bought us some more time to think about it.

Keyrah nods.

RIVERS
Come on, helo's there.

Rivers points to a hill in the distance, where the helo sits. They run towards it-

ON THE HILL - HELO - SECONDS LATER

Eerily desolate and silent. They approach, then stop-

HELO - blood stained windshield.

RIVERS unfastens her side arm, pulls it from her holster and trains it on the helo.

They creep closer.

NIGEL COLLAPSES! Rivers whips towards Nigel aiming downwards, trembling slightly.

Keyrah's gaze falls to the ground – she recoils.

NIGEL lies next to HELO PILOT'S MUTILATED BODY. He scurries to his feet covered in blood and bits.

INT. OBSERVATORY SCIENCE CENTER – LOBBY – CONTINUOUS

A horde of Acclimites lurk, emitting a series of CLICKING sounds while stalking the lobby.

Trembling and covered in sweat, Ramesh peaks from the side of the reception desk.

RAMESH'S P.O.V.: One legged Acclimite presses it's severed leg to its nub.

ONE LEGGED ACCLIMITE'S NUB reconnects to severed leg in a tethering of vines.

RAMESH slinks back behind the reception desk.

He and Mercy sit on the floor with their backs on the desk. They whisper.

RAMESH
They can reattach themselves.

MERCY
Like fucking Legos?

Ramesh nods.

RAMESH
How are we getting out of here?

Mercy reaches above his head and grabs a pen from the reception desk. He throws it over his head towards the Acclimites and peaks out from the side of the desk.

MERCY'S P.O.V.: The pen hits the floor and almost instantly Acclimites blitz the pen – ZIP, ZIP, ZIP – needles fly bouncing off surfaces.

ACCLIMITES – STRAY NEEDLES REST IN THEIR BODIES.

Mercy ducks behind the desk.

MERCY

Well, shit. It looks like their needles don't affect them either.

RAMESH

How did they respond?

MERCY

Damn near instantly.

Mercy takes a breath.

MERCY

Two things. One – that flare gun shit was tight.

Ramesh smiles proudly.

MERCY

Second – you're the one getting outta here.

He nods as a tear falls from his eye.

MERCY

Hey, don't cry for me – I'm a fucking hero. You hear me?

Ramesh wipes his face, sniffs and nods.

MERCY

You just make sure you tell them about everything we figured out.

Mercy pulls two objects from different utility pockets.

Mercy's hands rests on his lap. In his left hand a concussion frag and in his right hand a grenade.

MERCY

When they react to the helo starting up, I'll confuse them with this, you run, then I'll blow them up with this.

RAMESH

Will it damage the control center?

MERCY

It won't reach back there, but it will make this room part of the front lawn.

Ramesh forces a grin.

CLICKING FROM ACCLIMITES STOP—

Mercy and Ramesh look at each. They both peak from opposite sides of the reception desk.

ACCLIMITES STARE in their direction with tilted heads. They raise their faces to the air and CLICK AGGRESSIVELY.

Mercy and Ramesh duck behind the counter. Both contemplating, wrestling with confusion.

Mercy looks over to Ramesh as he wipes the sweat from his face with both hands and wipes it on his pants.

MERCY

Shiiit. They can smell.

Ramesh's gaze shoots to Mercy.

FOUR ACCLIMITES approach the receptionist desk, CLICKING, their nostrils slightly elevated and ushering the way—

MERCY and RAMESH await their death as O.S. ACCLIMATE FEET APPROACH. Mercy looks down at his hand.

MERCY'S RIGHT HAND opens, revealing the grenade.

He looks over and locks eyes with Ramesh.

RAMESH looks at the revealed grenade, then back to Mercy. He fights the urge to cry and nods in agreement.

MERCY places a finger in the ring of the pin.

The Acclimites close in, nearly on top of them.

Mercy pulls the—

O.S. WHIRLING PROPELLER BLADES in the distance, snatches the attention of the Acclimites.

Mercy looks over to Ramesh.

Mercy pulls the pin to the concussion frag and throws it over the desk.

BANG! Acclimites SCREECH and flail.

Mercy stands to pull the pin on the grenade—

ZIP, ZIP, ZIP — he falls backwards, dead. Needles in his face.

Ramesh stares wide eyed at Mercy's lifeless body. His gaze lands on the pinned grenade in Mercy's hand – he grabs it and fumbles at Mercy's radio, thumb on PTT.

INT. HELO – SAME TIME

Rivers sits in the pilot seat, pushing buttons. In the back, facing windows, Nigel and Keyrah scan the outside.

RAMESH (V.O.)

(wrecked)

Keyrah– Rivers– listen. They–they don't die from their own needles and they can reconnect themselves. Whatever they are, they don't care about each other and are like homing missiles for humans.

Nigel and Keyrah hurry over to River.

RAMESH (V.O.)

(on radio; urgent)

Get them out. Tell everyone I'm sorry and tell Keyrah – we have to do what they do. But we have to adapt faster than they can.

(beat)

Tell Ami that I loved her. I finally got a part to play.

Keyrah looks to River.

KEYRAH

Ramesh!

INT. LOBBY – SAME TIME

Ramesha holds the grenade to his chest, with a finger on the pin. He swallows – steels himself.

RAMESH

I'm a fucking hero, I'm a fucking hero. I'm a fucking hero!

An Acclimite materializes from above him on the counter and stabs through the top of his head.

TINK, TINK – the grenade hits the floor. It's missing a pin.

INT. HELO - SAME TIME

Keyrah reaches for the walkie - River slaps her hand away.

KEYRAH

You're just going to leave them?!

BOOM! - front of the center goes up in bright orange carnage.

River clenches her teeth.

RIVERS

He bought us time. Don't waste it.
Strap in.

Keyrah, conflicted, rushes to her seat.

The grass in the distance stirs.

The helo lifts into the air.

NIGEL

Bloody hell.

A horde of Acclimites become visible, charging the helo.

KEYRAH

Go! Go! Go!

She pulls out her phone, plays the low frequency sound and throws her phone out of window, as far as she can.

Most of the horde follows the phone as the helo continues to lift and veers away from the pursuing Acclimites.

An Acclimite leaps towards the helo and latches on the landing skids.

Nigel approaches the door, needles nearly hitting him. He stares down at the Acclimite - throws a first aid case, hitting it flush - it falls to the ground.

The helo escapes into the night sky.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - HELIPAD PLATFORM - HOUR LATER

Helo's propeller kicks up wind as Keyrah and Nigel step out onto the platform. Ami runs up to them and is blocked by Keyrah - She looks beyond Keyrah into the-

Helo's propeller slows, Rivers steps out - helo is empty.

Ami looks to Keyrah for an answer to an unspoken question.

Keyrah shakes her head.

Ami cries hysterically, collapses to the ground – caught by Keyrah and Nigel. Keyrah passes along Ramesh's message.

INT. COMMAND ROOM – NIGHT – LATER

Keyrah, Nigel, Ami, CC and Sam sit in cold silence.

AMI

Then people need the truth.

KEYRAH

They'll call it panic.

AMI

(deciding)

They'll call it whatever lets them avoid changing.

GENERAL JAMES barks orders O.S. Keyrah's face says Xavier. CC reads it.

CC

(low)

Go. I'll cover.

INT. SIDE OFFICE – NIGHT – MOMENTS LATER

AMI slips in, locks the door. From her bag: laptop, hotspot. She hesitates– the cost written on her face– then opens the file and sends.

INT. MEDICAL CORRIDOR – SAME TIME

KEYRAH returns to the glass. XAVIER looks worse: pallor near-translucent; pulse threadbare – he's dying.

Doctor confers with a Nurse– their faces say "out of options."

Doctor approaches the glass.

DOCTOR

Sorry, Dr. Davis. I would say your goodbyes now.

Doctor walks away.

A tear runs down Keyrah's face, she lowers her head and sobs.

She holds the dog tag around her neck – her head rises, eyes wide with hope as if she remembers something.

KEYRAH
(to herself)
They're part human, but their plant
DNA makes them immune.

She walks away with purpose – passing Nigel who observes her.

INT. LABORATORY – NIGHT – MOMENTS LATER

Keyrah searches through the wrecked supplies.

INT. GUARD ROOM – SAME TIME

Two MPs play Uno.

MONITOR: Keyrah grabs an object and exits the laboratory.

INT. RESEARCH ROOM – SAME TIME

Keyrah approaches the exit – dead Acclimite at her feet. She abstracts fluid from it with a syringe and continues to exit–

CC reveals herself from behind a bookcase.

CC
Keyrah–don't do this.

Keyrah stops.

KEYRAH
I won't lose him.

CC's COMMS CRACKLE faintly – a distorted voice: "Stand by. Hold her." She shut it off, pained.

CC
I can't let you do this.

KEYRAH
I know.

Keyrah dashes for the door and CC pursues.

Keyrah makes it the door first, exits and shuts it behind her. Locking CC inside.

CC POUNDS on the door.

CC
 Keyrah, you don't know what'll
 happen! Keyrah!

INT. MEDICAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Keyrah enters determined. Nigel notices the syringe.

NIGEL
 Every immune system needs a bridge.

KEYRAH
 (without looking)
 Then let me build one.

Nigel gestures for her to continue.

Keyrah approaches the door and knocks. NURSE opens the door, clocking the syringe in Keyrah's hand – her face drops. O.S. commotion from the hall.

Keyrah pulls the nurse out of the room, steps in shuts the door – General James, CC and armed MPs enter and watch through the glass.

CC
 Keyrah stop! He won't be the same!

KEYRAH
 I don't need him the same – I need
 him alive!

She sobs, holding Xavier's face in her hand.

KEYRAH
 (choked)
 I'm sorry Munch. I love you. I love
 you – I love you–

She raises the syringe towards Xavier.

GENERAL JAMES
 (to MPs)
 Do it.

The MPs burst through the door, weapons trained on Keyrah.

Keyrah's hands raised – an empty syringe in one of them.

MONITOR spikes– then settles.

Xavier takes an exaggerated inhale – his eyes flutter open – irises flash moss-green. The color fades. He's unconscious, but stable.

GENERAL JAMES

Detain her.

CC steps in front of the MPs for a second, then stands aside.

CC

(to Keyrah)

What did you do?

KEYRAH

Save my son.

Cuffs. Front, not cruel – she's escorted away.

GENERAL JAMES

(to CC)

You knew?

CC

I knew she was a mother.

She exits, leaving General James hating the answer, but understanding it.

INT. MILITARY BASE - COMMAND CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Dark, illuminated by large display screens and rows of military personnel sitting at computers. General James and Nigel stand in the center facing large display screens. Keyrah, cuffed, in the back – two MPs by her side.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: split into four segmented parts, revealing radio stations in different locations.

GENERAL JAMES

On the left, four major cities in the states. On the right, four major countries East of us.

(beat)

Pray to God this works. Crank the signal!

Ami enters, red, puffy eyes. She clocks Keyrah in cuffs and approaches – MP blocks her.

Keyrah shakes her head as to call Ami off.

Ami approaches Nigel.

AMI
What happened?

NIGEL
Evolution.

Ami's face wrinkles with confusion.

Command Center Specialist, RACHEL (30s, white female) reports back to General James.

RACHEL
The signal's initiated at full
volume, sir.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: heavy base HUMS in the distance. One by one Acclimites appear – their heads tilted to the sky.

Ami's face, terrified, but determined to not turn away.

AMI
There's so many of them.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: swarms of Acclimites wander around radio stations.

GENERAL JAMES
Well, let's see if we can take care
of that.

He faces Rachel.

GENERAL JAMES
Target the American stations.

Rachel looks down, hits a few keys on a keyboard and returns her gaze to the large screens.

RACHEL
Targets locked.

General James takes a breath.

GENERAL JAMES
Fire.

Rachel hits a button.

RACHEL
Fifteen seconds til impact.

A hush falls over everyone, all eyes fixed on the screens.

RACHEL'S gaze drops to her monitor.

RACHEL
Five, four, three, two—

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: even more Acclimites swarm around the radio stations.

RACHEL (O.S.)
—one. We have impact.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: displays static.

Nigel, Ami and Keyrah look at each other before surveying the room. The room is silent.

GENERAL JAMES
Send the drones.

RACHEL
Sir.

She shifts her gaze down her row to FOUR SPECIALIST, who returns her gaze. They nod, pivot towards their screens and grab joystick controls.

RACHEL
Drones up.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: DRONES' P.O.V.s: four drones, lifting off the ground. They rise and their cameras adjust on the destruction in front of them. They drift towards the smoke and rubble.

Silence stalks the room.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: one drone's P.O.V. cuts to static, then another one.

KEYRAH
What's happening?

The room becomes uneasy.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: another DRONE'S P.O.V.: cuts to static, then the last one.

The room is buzzing with concern.

RACHEL
No need to worry. The static is due to the heat from the blast. They should be functioning soon.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREENS: DRONES' P.O.V.: the image has returned, but the quality has diminished. The drones search through the rubble and smoke.

Relief washes over everyone in the command room.

KEYRAH

Did anyone see that? On the top left side.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TOP RIGHT: Nothing in sight.

Nigel walks towards the screen, squinting.

NIGEL

I don't see anything.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TOP LEFT: a human silhouette climbs to its feet in the smoke – another human silhouette climbs to its feet behind it–

Eyes are wide, everyone a statue of anxiety.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TOP LEFT: coming through the smoke and revealing themselves are – TWO YOUNG MEN (20s white), dressed in comfortable street clothes, playing around amongst the rubble.

General James approaches Rachel.

GENERAL JAMES

What the hell are they doing there?
Their in a hot zone.

Rachel places a headset over her head and presses a button on the side.

RACHEL

Attention two male civilians. You are currently on a hot zone–

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TOP LEFT: Two Young Men look around before locking their eyes on the drone. They start laughing, waving and being silly.

RACHEL (O.S.)

for your protection we need you to leave this area immediately as it is hazardous to your health.

Ami and Keyrah smile at the Two Young Men being silly.

AMI

It's done. Ramesh's sacrifice
wasn't for nothing.

RACHEL

Sir. A few minutes go, we had an
unauthorized transmission leave the
base. Check you screen.

General James looks at a screen near him.

GENERAL JAMES

Damn it, Ami. Confine her to her
quarters.

Two MPs grab Ami by each arm and escort her out of the room.
Ami shares a glance of triumph with Keyrah before escorted
out – Keyrah nods and barely smiles.

She returns her attention back to the screen.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TOP LEFT: Two Young Men have their arms
linked and are dancing as if to celebrate. O.S. LAUGHING FROM
COMMAND CENTER CROWD.

RACHEL

Cute guys, but seriously. Get out
of there before you get radiation
poisoning that can't be treated.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TO LEFT: Young Men wave and walk away.

Rachel smirks.

Keyrah's smile fades.

KEYRAH

Wait, what are they doing now?

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TO LEFT: Two Young Men run towards the
drone, their faces are panicked and their arms are flailing
as they try to express something. They look behind them
occasionally during their panic state.

NIGEL leans in, his eyes scanning the screen.

NIGEL

Something's wrong.

LARGE DISPLAY SCREEN TO LEFT: Both young men stop moving and
fall flat on their face. Behind them coming out of the smoke
are a HOARD OF ACCLIMITES!

Keyrah shakes her head in disbelief.

KEYRAH

(to self)

How is that possible? It doesn't make sense.

Keyrah stares hopelessly at the monitor.

KEYRAH

We don't fight them – we survive them.

General James approaches Keyrah.

GENERAL JAMES

Convince me there is nothing we can do right now.

Keyrah continues to stare at the monitor.

KEYRAH

We're going up against the combined and evolved attributes of every plant species we have on record.

She turns towards General James.

KEYRAH

Probably every species that has ever existed. We just threw the kitchen sink at them and they shrugged it off. We adapt or die.

General James contemplates.

Alarm BLARES – RED EMERGENCY LIGHTS FLASH. ROGELIO (30s, Mexican male) enters the doorway.

ROGELIO

Sir, we have a breach. Thirty or so of those things are here, we gotta get you out of here. Now!

He grabs General James, pulling him away out the door.

CC shoves through the panicked bodies – bruised, helmet cracked, breathing hard.

CC

Keyrah!

She spots Keyrah across the chaos – relief and regret all over her face.

Keyrah sees her – looks away. Dread pours into the–

CORRIDOR

General James and his escort head East. Keyrah and Nigel scurry West approaching an intersection.

CC hesitates – torn between following her father or Keyrah.

Choosing Keyrah, she breaks West, sprinting after her.

MUTILATED BODY slams into a fleeing military member. Erasing them from sight. Another military member draws their weapon–

An Acclimite lunges into view devouring the armed military member's head. Keyrah, Nigel and CC halt – two more Acclimates reveal themselves from around the corner.

They sprint in the opposite direction – Acclimates pursue. CC fires twice behind them – controlled, deadly accurate – buying Keyrah a second she desperately needs.

THREE MILITARY personnel in heavily armored suits carrying flamethrowers, approach CC, Keyrah and Nigel. They split between the heavily armored suits.

CC
 (to Keyrah, urgent)
 Don't stop. Don't look back. I've got your six.

She supports the flamethrowers firing accurate shots as Keyrah and Nigel continue down the hall.

Keyrah's gaze falls back towards the heavily armored suit personnel as they release hell on the Acclimates.

CRASH, Keyrah collides with a frantic military member and hits her head on the ground. Her gaze still on the heavily armored suit personnel.

CC notices Keyrah is down. She slides to her knees beside her – grabs Keyrah from under her arms and drags her backwards.

CC
 Keyrah – look at me! Stay with me!

Keyrah blinks, dazed.

KEYRAH'S P.O.V.: foggy blur of a wall of fire. An Acclimite breaks through the flames, slamming one of the heavily armored suit personnel into a wall. The Acclimite stomps the personnel's body and smashes the fuel tank – KABOOM!

CUT TO BLACK

KEYRAH P.O.V.: eyes open slowly – blurry vision. Blurry vision fades away – CC sits at her side.

INT. MILITARY BUNKER – INFIRMARY – UNKNOWN

Concrete walls and ceiling with rows of single beds. Mobile chests of medical supplies stacked in the middle of the room.

CC

Good, you're awake. Had us worried.

KEYRAH, bandaged, hands cuffed – tries to sit up and winces.

KEYRAH

Where am I?

CC

Underground bunker; one of many in fact. You've been out for a couple days now. What's left of the human race is either fighting for their lives on the surface, or underground – like us.

Keyrah's eyes widen.

KEYRAH

Xavier! Where's Xavier?!

She forces herself to sit up–

There's a knock on the door.

CC

Come in.

Door opens – MP enters with Xavier. He runs to Keyrah.

XAVIER

Mommy!

He slams into Keyrah with a big hug – she grunts in pain from the impact, but holds Xavier tight.

CC smiles.

In tears, Keyrah releases the hug but keeps Xavier close. She holds his face, kisses his forehead. She examines his eyes.

The whites of Xavier's eyes – a faint green tint.

KEYRAH

I'm so happy to see you Munch.

XAVIER
I'm happy to see you too.

Keyrah gives him another big hug.

INT. MILITARY BUNKER - COMMONS AREA - UNKNOWN

Massive reinforced concrete walls and ceilings, with sealed doors. Civilians and military personnel walk about.

CC, Keyrah and Xavier enter with FOUR MP escorts. Keyrah looks around observing the area.

General James approaches.

GENERAL JAMES
So you decided to wake up. Good.
How's the head?

KEYRAH
It's still attached.

General James smirks.

GENERAL JAMES
Private James, take Xavier to get
some popcorn. Gotta get Dr. Davis
caught up. We got work to do.

CC holds a hand out towards Xavier.

CC
Come on.

Xavier grabs CC's hand.

XAVIER
I'll save you some mom!

Keyrah smiles, watching them exit - two MPs trailing.

KEYRAH
People make desperate choices at
the end of the world.

General James nods.

GENERAL JAMES
You should know, he's not them. But
he's not us either. He's something
different.

He walks away - leaving Keyrah to contemplate.

MEETING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

General James speaks at the head of the table with Keyrah, Nigel and Ami listening. MP's in the background.

MONTAGE

INT. UNDERGROUND - LAB - UNKNOWN

Encased in glass, a few computers and lab equipment. Keyrah and Nigel, in lab coats, examine samples - MPs hover.

INT. UNDERGROUND - OPEN SPACE - UNKNOWN

Ami reports from behind a desk - lights, camera and backdrop.

END MONTAGE

INT. UNDERGROUND - GREENHOUSE - UNKNOWN

Neat lines of diminutive seedlings, each row meticulously identified, receive a gentle mist of water from a slender plastic tubing overhead.

LABELS: "Tomatoes", "Carrots", "Peas", "Potatoes"

Xavier walks down the aisle, clutching a bottled water. The vegetation on both sides, reach out to him as he passes. He casts a furtive glance around, then darts to the back.

He kneels down and lifts a wooden crate, revealing a Calathea plant labeled, "Michael". Opening the bottled water, he pours water on it and smiles-

He's grabbed from behind by the shoulders and turned around - It's Keyrah. Her MP escorts ten feet behind her.

KEYRAH

Munch! What are you doing?

XAVIER

Nothing.

Keyrah's eyes fall to the Calathea - her eyes go wide before returning her gaze to Xavier.

Nigel enters eating, Xavier whips towards him and points.

XAVIER

Mr. Nigel knew.

Keyrah's motherly gaze shifts to Nigel - he freezes.

NIGEL
Uh, tell her what you told me.

XAVIER
They want us to stop hurting her.

KEYRAH
Stop hurting who, Munch?

XAVIER
Earth.

KEYRAH
She's just fighting to survive.
Just like we are now.

She hugs Xavier tight – her eyes locked on the—
CALATHEA leaning towards Xavier.

XAVIER smiles – a mouth full of thorns.

THE END