

ANNIHILATION

OPEN ON -

EXT. OUTER SPACE

- blackness, and stars.

In the stars, a lump of rock and ice, moving through space, leaving a trail of dust and ice crystals.

Locked deep inside the ice, blue-green iridescence.

Rotate around the METEOR, to reveal -

- the MOON.

Float past the bone-white orb, over the Sea Of Tranquility, to reveal -

- Earth. Blue-green jewel.

Race towards the planet.

Start to blaze as we hit the atmosphere.

Lighting up like phosphorus.

CUT TO -

EXT. OUTER ATMOSPHERE - NIGHT

- the METEOR burning in the outer atmosphere of Earth.

The integrity of the rock and ice suddenly gives way.

The body fragments.

CUT TO -

EXT. LOWER ATMOSPHERE - NIGHT

- the meteor fragments separating, drifting away.

Most pieces burn away to nothing.

Until there is only one.

Racing down towards the OCEAN.

On which we find a COAST LINE.

And then a LIGHTHOUSE.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

The meteor has almost burned to nothing before it impacts.

What was a vast lump of extraterrestrial rock is now barely an ember.

A SPARK.

Then it hits the ground by the LIGHTHOUSE...

... drilling into the earth like a bullet hole.

CUT TO -

- an alien form.

A creature from another world.

It has tendrils. It shimmers with iridescent colour. It has immense fractal complexity in its shape.

And it's moving. Gently, like a sea anemone in a swell.

Beats pass.

Then we hear a woman's voice.

WOMAN (O.S.)
This is a cell.

As we watch, the alien creature starts to divide.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Like all cells, it derived from an existing cell.

The creature is now half-way through the division, separating into a mirror of itself.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
By extension, all cells were ultimately derived from one cell. A single organism, alone on planet Earth, perhaps alone in the universe, about four billion years ago.

The creature completes its division.

Immediately its two halves start the same process again.

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
One became two. Two became four. Then eight. Sixteen. Thirty two.
(MORE)

WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 The rhythm of the dividing pair,
 which becomes the structure of
 every microbe, blade of grass, sea
 creature, land creature, and human.
 The structure of *everything* that
 lives -

CUT TO -

INT. JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICAL SCHOOL/SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

- LENA KERANS.

Thirty years old. Recently completed her doctorate, now
 teaching a seminar class of first-year MEDICAL STUDENTS.

LENA
 - and everything that dies.

Beat.

LENA (CONT'D)
 As students of medicine, as the
 doctors of tomorrow, that's where
 you come in.

She gestures to the screen behind her - which shows the
 electron microscope images that we have been watching.

LENA (CONT'D)
 The cell you've been looking at is
 from a tumour. Female patient,
 early thirties, taken from her
 cervix. Over the course of the
 coming term...

LENA pauses.

A couple of the MED STUDENTS look up from their note-taking,
 aware of the silence -

- and see that their tutor has been momentarily distracted.

Her head is turned to the window -

- where outside, above the tree tops, a FULL MOON hangs in
 the blue sky.

The image of the MOON in daylight is gently surreal.
 Arresting, because the sky is so cloudless and clear.

Almost absently, LENA'S hand goes to her neck, and her
 fingers lightly touch a SILVER LOCKET that hangs from a
 slender chain.

As the silence extends, the STUDENTS exchange a glance.

Then LENA'S focus returns. Becomes aware she has zoned out.

LENA (CONT'D)
... Excuse me.

She picks up the thread.

LENA (CONT'D)
Over the course of the coming term,
we will be closely examining these
cancer cells *in vitro*, and
observing autophagic activity.

EXT. JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICAL SCHOOL/CAMPUS - DAY

LENA walks across the campus.

A man in his forties jogs up to her.

DANIEL MAITLAND.

DANIEL
Lena.

LENA
Dan.

LENA doesn't break stride, so he falls in beside her.

DANIEL
I keep looking for you at lunch,
but you never seem to be around.

LENA
I've been catching up on some
writing.

DANIEL
All work and no play. It's not
healthy.

LENA keeps walking.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I wanted to ask. Do you have plans
Saturday?

LENA
... Saturday.

DANIEL
Sarah and I have a few people
coming over. A garden party, while
the weather holds.

LENA gives the neutral frown of someone prepping a polite
excuse.

LENA
You mean this Saturday?

DANIEL
Yes.

LENA
Actually, I do have something
planned.

DANIEL
Are you sure? I think it'll be a
lot of fun. We've asked Amir and
Jenny, and -

LENA
(cuts in)
Thanks, Dan. I appreciate it. But
I was going to paint our bedroom.

LENA corrects herself immediately.

LENA (CONT'D)
The bedroom.

DANIEL looks at LENA.

DANIEL
It's been a year, Lena. You're
allowed to come to a barbecue.

DANIEL reaches out.

Catches LENA'S arm.

Stops her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
It's not a betrayal. Not an insult
to his memory.

Beat.

LENA
I'm going to paint the bedroom.

DANIEL gives way. Removes his hand.

DANIEL
Home improvements.

LENA smiles perfunctorily.

LENA
Yes.

EXT. SUBURB - DAY

Bright, flat sunlight pushes through tree tops.

A broad road. Detached houses. Green lawns.

Two children on push-bikes glide down the sidewalk.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A quiet house.

Stillness in the rooms.

Photographs in the BEDROOM show a couple. LENA, with a man in his early thirties. KANE.

KANE is a soldier. Images show him in uniform, with comrades, in a baked landscape of rock and dust.

He smiles easily at the camera. Full of life in these frozen snapshots.

One of the images shows a wedding. LENA in white. The couple embracing.

Another shows the couple in Verona. Perhaps the honeymoon.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LENA sits on the sofa.

Legs curled beneath her.

In one hand, she holds her SILVER LOCKET.

It's open. Inside is a PHOTO of KANE.

She gazes at it.

We can feel LENA'S effort to modulate her breathing. Inhaling and exhaling through parted lips.

Less controlled, tears spill down her face. Down her cheeks and neck. Into the corner of her mouth.

TITLE:

ANNIHILATION

Then, into the quiet and stillness, MUSIC intrudes.

CUT TO -

INT. HOUSE/GARAGE - DAY

- the garage. Full of dust and boxes and junk.

LENA pulls stuff from shelves. On a mission. Searching for a particular half-collapsed cardboard box.

Inside: tins of paint and a roller.

CUT TO -

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

- the speakers from which the MUSIC is playing.

- the framed photographs of LENA and KANE, which are now off the walls, and stacked on the landing.

- a PLASTIC SHEET as it rises up, billows, then settles over the DOUBLE BED.

- a flathead screwdriver pushes under the rim of a tub of paint and pops the lid.

LENA runs a primed roller over the wall. Leaving a fat white stripe over the old colour. Flecking her shirt and face with paint. Smearing it off her forehead with the back of her hand.

Repainting the room is an act of moving on.

She is energised. Focused.

So focused -

- that she doesn't see the figure that appears in the doorway of the bedroom.

KANE.

He seems different to the photos. In uniform, but bloodless in his complexion. Older in his gaze.

He watches LENA painting.

Oddly blank. Not announcing his presence -

- until she turns, needing to reload the roller -

- and sees him.

First, she jolts at the sight of the figure.

Second, she recognises him.

LENA
(whispers)
Oh God.

The roller slips from her hand.

Lands with a wet slap on the floor.

She walks towards KANE.

Puts a hand on his cheek, in the way she might touch a clear window to see if it holds a pane of glass.

Then she grabs his face with both palms. Kissing him as she talks.

LENA (CONT'D)
Oh God, oh God - I thought you were
gone - gone forever - forever.

She's crying, laughing.

He isn't.

CUT TO -

- the two of them falling down to the paint-flecked plastic sheet over the double bed.

LENA on top, pulling off her shirt, pulling at KANE'S belt and trousers.

They start making love.

But her passion remains completely unmatched by him. He is glazed and distant. No more than compliant.

Until finally -

- she has to acknowledge it.

She breaks off.

Hurt, confused. Looking down at him.

LENA (CONT'D)
... Kane?

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

KANE sits at the table.

In front of him is a glass of water.

He stares at the clear liquid, but doesn't drink it.

LENA stands by the counter.

Confusion has transformed now into frustration and anger.

LENA

You must be able to tell me something. Vanished off the face of the Earth for twelve *months*. I deserve a better explanation than... *no* explanation.

KANE doesn't answer.

LENA (CONT'D)

No one knew anything about your unit. I contacted everyone. Everyone I could. The other wives and partners knew as little as me.

Beat.

LENA (CONT'D)

Was it covert?

KANE

... Maybe.

LENA

What does that mean: 'maybe'?

KANE

Okay, yes. Covert. I think so.

LENA

Pakistan again.

KANE

No.

LENA

Yemen?

KANE

I can't tell you.

LENA

So it is classified.

KANE

I mean: *I can't tell you*. I don't know where it was. Or...

He trails off.

LENA frowns.

LENA

You're telling me you don't *know* where you've been? How can that even be possible? Was it hot?

(MORE)

LENA (CONT'D)
 Was there snow? Did the people
 speak Swahili, or Portuguese, or
 Pashto?

KANE says nothing.

LENA processes for a beat. Fighting back the strangeness of
 the conversation. Trying to assert reason.

LENA (CONT'D)
 How long have you been back?

KANE
 I don't know.

LENA
 Well - how did you get back? Which
 base did they fly you to?

KANE
 I don't know.

LENA
 What about the rest of your unit?
 Did they return with you?

For the first time, we see something tangible in KANE. A
 helplessness. A dimly understood fear.

KANE
 I don't *know*.

Silence.

As LENA suddenly understands: her husband is profoundly
 damaged. His body has returned to her, but not his mind.

She takes a seat opposite him at the table.

Then takes his hand. He doesn't resist.

LENA
 Kane.

He looks at her.

LENA (CONT'D)
 How did you get home?

KANE
 I...

He breaks off a moment.

KANE (CONT'D)
 I was outside.

LENA
Outside the house.

KANE
No. Outside the bedroom. Just upstairs, on the landing. The door was open, and... I saw you.

Beat.

KANE (CONT'D)
I remembered you. I remembered your face.

Silence.

Then KANE detaches his hand from LENA'S.

He reaches for the glass of water.

Takes a single sip.

Then puts the glass back down.

REVEAL -

- in the water, a strand of blood hangs. Suspended.

It can only be from inside KANE'S mouth.

KANE looks up at LENA.

KANE (CONT'D)
I don't think I'm very well.

CUT TO -

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

- the interior of an AMBULANCE, driving fast through the night streets. SIREN howling.

KANE - strapped to a stretcher in the back, rolled-back eyes, half-raised - vomits blood.

A PARAMEDIC tries to support him with one arm while speaking urgently into a radio.

PARAMEDIC
Male, thirty one, hemorrhage, in seizure. Wife reports confused state. Possible concussion, but no sign of head wound.

Kneeling by KANE, LENA wipes at the blood on his face. Tries to hold his lolling head.

LENA
Baby, baby, stay with me -

PARAMEDIC
Prepare emergency team for ETA in
six mikes -

Suddenly -

- the PARAMEDIC is interrupted by a second SIREN joining the first. Then a THIRD and FOURTH.

Blue lights start pulsing through the windows.

Above the sirens, the PARAMEDIC shouts to the AMBULANCE DRIVER.

PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
Did you call for a police escort?

AMBULANCE DRIVER
They aren't police!

PARAMEDIC
What the Hell?

The PARAMEDIC looks out of the window.

As he does so -

- the interior of the ambulance is flooded with BLINDING WHITE LIGHT and a ROAR OF ENGINE NOISE.

From LENA'S bleached face, disorientated by the horror and sensory overload, **CUT TO -**

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

- the street outside the ambulance, where the reason for the noise and light is explained.

The AMBULANCE is flanked by three black SUVs, and above it, a HELICOPTER.

No more than four metres off the ground.

Shining a spotlight straight down at the front windscreen.

CUT TO -

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

- the AMBULANCE DRIVER -

AMBULANCE DRIVER
Jesus Christ!

- dazzled, slamming his foot on the brakes -

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

- sending the vehicle into a skid -

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

- which slams LENA and the PARAMEDIC hard against the wall of the vehicle.

The semi-conscious KANE is held fast by the stretcher straps.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

- the AMBULANCE skids to a stop.

The SUVs expertly slide to halt around it.

Then immediately disgorge UNIFORMED ARMED MEN. Black gear, stubby semi-automatic machine guns. SPEC OPS.

The SPEC OPS soldiers pull open the rear doors of the ambulance.

Drag out LENA and the PARAMEDIC.

In the FOREGROUND the HELICOPTER lands in the road. Obscuring our vision, and deafening us.

Through the obliterating rotor blade wash, we can hear LENA.

LENA
(screaming)
*What are you doing? Let him go!
Let him go!*

CUT TO -

- LENA, fighting as two of the SPEC OPS try to hold her.

- the PARAMEDIC and DRIVER being dragged out of view.

- KANE pulled on his stretcher from the AMBULANCE.

- something jammed into LENA'S neck. A one-hit disposable syringe.

The tranquiliser drops to the floor, as the fight bleeds out of LENA. Then consciousness.

Sound and light fade as the sedative takes over.

BLACK SCREEN.

CAPTION:

PART ONE - THE SOUTHERN REACH

CUT TO -

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/INTERVIEW ROOM

- a view of door. Set into a concrete wall, in an otherwise featureless and windowless room.

Silence, except the sound of breathing.

REVEAL LENA.

She is sat on a chair, on one side of a table. She wears the same clothes we last saw her in. But time has passed. Several hours at least. The blood of her husband is now dried black, stiffened on the material of her short and trousers, rusted and flaking on her hands.

She is trembling.

Beats pass.

Then the door UNLOCKS, startling LENA.

REVEALING a woman in her late-forties.

This is DR VENTRESS.

Glasses. Suit. Smiling.

She's holding a small plastic bottle of mineral water.

DR VENTRESS

Hello.

DR VENTRESS enters the room and closes the door - which locks behind her.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

You probably feel dreadful.
Queasy. A nasty metal taste in the
mouth. Headache.

LENA looks at her.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

Would you like some water?

The doctor holds out the plastic bottle.

LENA hesitates.

Then with slightly uncertain fingers, takes it.

Opens it.

Has a sip.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
That's better, isn't it?

LENA returns the woman's gaze.

LENA
Who are you?

DR VENTRESS
I'm a psychologist.

LENA
What does that mean?

DR VENTRESS
That I study people's emotional states.

LENA
I know what a fucking psychologist is. I'm asking: why am I talking to one?

DR VENTRESS
Because I'm in charge of the facility you're in.

LENA
... I'm in a psychiatric hospital?

DR VENTRESS
No.

LENA
Then *what*? Where am I? And where's my husband?

DR VENTRESS ignores the questions. She takes the chair opposite LENA, and sits down.

DR VENTRESS
You're a biologist.

LENA
So what?

DR VENTRESS
You completed a doctorate at Johns Hopkins.

(MORE)

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
Your research area is the
genetically programmed life-cycle
of the cell. Is it fascinating?

LENA leans forwards. Enunciates.

LENA
Where is my husband?

DR VENTRESS
Yes. Let's talk about him.
Sergeant Kane. When did he arrive
home?

LENA
That depends how long I've been
here.

DR VENTRESS says nothing.

LENA (CONT'D)
I think it was yesterday.

DR VENTRESS
Had he contacted you at any point
over the last few months?

LENA
No. He left on - whatever he was
doing. Whatever spec-ops mission.
That was the last I heard until he
reappeared.

DR VENTRESS
He didn't tell you what he was
doing. Or where he was going.

LENA
He never did. I never asked.

DR VENTRESS
But you made regular requests for
information about him to his unit
CO, until six months ago. Then you
stopped. Why was that?

LENA
Because we had an agreement.
Between us. Six months of radio
silence meant I was to assume he
was dead. And move on.

DR VENTRESS gives a sympathetic nod.

DR VENTRESS
It's not easy to move on.

LENA
I didn't.

Silence.

LENA sits back in her chair.

LENA (CONT'D)
You know what? I think I just
figured you out. You're CIA.
And Kane was on some kind of
operation for you. And you believe
he told me something before he got
sick.

LENA fixes the woman opposite with an even gaze.

LENA (CONT'D)
So let's cut the shit. I'm done
answering questions. It's your
turn.

A pause.

DR VENTRESS
I'm not CIA, but I used to be. And
your husband is in the same
building as you. And I should tell
you, he's extremely ill.

LENA catches her breath. But stays composed.

LENA
Ill in what way?

DR VENTRESS
We don't actually know. He doesn't
test positive for any known
condition - but, objectively, his
body is hemorrhaging and his organs
are failing.

LENA
... He's dying.

DR VENTRESS
Yes.

Beat.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
We have him on life-support in an
induced cold-coma. His metabolism
is slowed nearly to a stop. It
gives... a degree of time.

LENA
He must have been exposed to
something.

DR VENTRESS adds nothing.

LENA (CONT'D)
Radiation. A virus of some sort.

LENA leans forwards.

LENA (CONT'D)
For Christ's sake - I might
actually be able to *help* him. You
have to tell me where has he been
and what was he doing.

DR VENTRESS
I can't talk about that. You
understand.

LENA
Clearly, I *don't!*

DR VENTRESS
You understand that I'm not going
to talk about it.

The doctor stands.

The door unbolts in anticipation of her exit.

As it swings open, it reveals a SPEC OPS SOLDIER standing
guard in the corridor outside.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
I'll be back later.

LENA
You still haven't told me *anything*
about what's going on or what I'm
doing here!

DR VENTRESS has reached the door.

DR VENTRESS
We'll speak again.

LENA stands.

LENA
At least let me change out of these
clothes!

DR VENTRESS pauses.

LENA holds up her hands.

LENA (CONT'D)
I'm covered in my husband's blood.

CUT TO -

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/SHOWER

- LENA, under a shower stream, washing the blood from her body. From her hair. Fingernails.

REVEAL the shower space. Another windowless room. Tiled walls and floors. A military feel, or prison. Rows of un-partitioned shower-heads.

An ORANGE JUMPSUIT is folded on a changing bench. A pair of white sneakers are beneath it.

At the door of the shower room, an armed SPEC-OPS SOLDIER stands guard.

His back is to the room, to protect LENA'S modesty.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/CORRIDOR

LENA walks down a corridor, back towards the interview room. Wearing the jumpsuit and sneakers.

The SPEC OPS soldier walks slightly behind.

LENA glances back at him.

SEES SOMETHING.

On his belt, a clip containing two of the one-hit SYRINGE VIALS that were used to sedate her.

LENA
Do you know my husband? Sergeant Kane.

The SPEC OPS SOLDIER doesn't react.

LENA (CONT'D)
Just wondering if you've served together. You are the 427th, right?

The SPEC OPS SOLDIER stops by the door to the interview room.

SPEC OPS SOLDIER
Just here, please, ma'am.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/INTERVIEW ROOM

LENA stops in the door frame.

LENA
I just want to know what's happened
to him.

SPEC OPS SOLDIER
Enter the room, ma'am.

But rather than take a step back, she takes a step forwards,
towards the soldier.

Her eyes brim.

LENA
Please.

SPEC OPS SOLDIER
Ma'am.

A tear spills.

Her hand touches the soldier's chest, in the way she touched
KANE'S chest.

LENA
If you know anything at all, can't
you just -

It's a ploy.

There is a SUDDEN fluid motion.

With her other hand, LENA has unclipped one of the
TRANQUILISERS.

In a FLASH it's up and jammed into the soldier's neck.

SPEC OPS SOLDIER
Ah! *Bitch* - you -

His hand claws at the vial. Knocks it out.

All too late. He exhales. Folds. Falling forwards into the
room.

As he hits the concrete, **CUT TO -**

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/CORRIDOR

- LENA bolting the interview room door closed.

She looks left. Right.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/CORRIDOR

LENA walk-runs through the facility. Silent on the linoleum
floor in her white sneakers.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/ELEVATOR LOBBY

LENA enters an elevator lobby.

She goes straight to the control panel, and hits the call button.

Nothing happens.

Beside the panel is a glass plate, with the outline of a hand. The elevator requires a palm-print biometric pass.

LENA

... Shit.

AT THAT MOMENT, startling LENA, the elevator CHIMES.

The car has just arrived on this floor.

As the doors start to open, **CUT TO -**

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/ELEVATOR

- inside the elevator, where DR VENTRESS is arguing with a SPEC OPS CAPTAIN.

DR VENTRESS

While the facility remains under my command, the way I structure the team is my business, Captain.

They exit the elevator, into the lobby -

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/ELEVATOR LOBBY

- without noticing LENA, pressed to the wall, just out of their line of sight.

SPEC OPS CAPTAIN

In forty eight hours, it won't be under your command. It'll be under Pentagon control, where it should be.

DR VENTRESS

So take it up with Washington. By the time you've found anyone with the authority to stop me, we'll be gone.

As they walk away, LENA slips inside the elevator, just as the doors start closing.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/ELEVATOR

Inside the elevator, LENA hurriedly scans the different floor options.

It's LENA'S first geographical indication of where she is. There are four levels in the building. One below ground, and three above.

B is SECURITY.

* is LOBBY.

1 is RESEARCH.

2 is LIVING.

By the digital readout, she is on B.

LENA
'Southern Reach'? What the Hell?

LENA hesitates over the panel for a moment.

Then hits the LOBBY button.

Nothing happens.

She hits it again.

Nothing.

Sees - beside the control panel, another BIOMETRIC READER.

LENA (CONT'D)
... Oh shit.

She touches the biometric pad.

An error code sounds.

LENA (CONT'D)
Come on, please. No, no, no...

A terrible sense that she has managed to escape from a small locked room into an even smaller one.

Then SUDDENLY -

- the elevator starts moving.

On the digital panel, the numbers start moving upwards.

Past the lobby - to level 1. Where it stops.

The doors OPEN, revealing a man in a white lab coat. A SCIENTIST of some sort. His head is dropped, reading through a sheaf of forms, which he is filling out.

LENA stands, back straight against the wall, terrified to meet his gaze.

But he hardly seems to notice her. Just touches the biometric pad, and presses the button for Level 2.

The doors close. The elevator starts moving again.

Then, still without raising his head, the SCIENTIST speaks.

SCIENTIST

Man, the bureaucracy of this place.

LENA knows a response is needed. Doesn't want to give the man an excuse to look up.

LENA

... Tell me about it.

SCIENTIST

Need to fill out an application
just to have a nervous breakdown.

This feels like it can be met with silence.

Then a beat later, the doors chime.

And open -

- REVEALING a large room, thronged with people, and a buzz of conversation.

SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

After you.

LENA has no choice but to walk out.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/MESS HALL - DAY

LENA has entered into the MESS HALL of the facility.

It is packed with SOLDIERS, SCIENTISTS, and ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF.

They sit at tables, chatting. Carry trays with food, and drinks.

On the far side of the room, there is a floor to ceiling glass wall, through which for the first time in the facility we see DAYLIGHT.

Bright, burnished, gold.

In the middle of the wall is an open double door, leading to the outside.

She realises at once: she has to make it across the room to that door. To the exterior, the sunlight. It's the only exit, apart from the elevator from which she has just come.

But among the uniforms and lab coats and suits, there is only one person wearing an orange jumpsuit.

LENA.

She takes a breath. And simply starts walking.

Not hurried, not slow. Not drawing attention to herself.

And for a moment, it seems as if it might work. The people around simply don't notice her.

Then -

- someone looks at her.

A WOMAN, sat at a table.

She frowns.

Taps the arm of the person beside her.

LENA starts walking quicker.

WOMAN

... Hey!

LENA ignores her. Walks faster for the door and the sunlight.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

HEY!

LENA breaks into a run.

One of the SOLDIERS ahead turns. Sees. Tries to block her path.

LENA jumps onto one of the long refectory tables. Runs down the length, scattering food and drinks.

Someone tries to catch her leg.

She jumps over them.

Is nearly at the double doors.

Two SCIENTISTS try to block her and she has no choice but to go straight through them, knocking them flying.

And then -

- she is through the doors, and out.

EXT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/VIEWING PLATFORM - DAY

LENA makes only five or six steps into the sunlight.

Then -

- slows.

And stops.

Arrested by the view in front of her.

REVEAL that LENA is standing on a VIEWING PLATFORM. Essentially a massive balcony, which projects from the MESS HALL, three stories above the ground.

And the facility from which she has escaped turns out to a kind of gatehouse structure - like a medieval castle, dragged into a brutalist Twenty First Century.

Either side of the facility, a concrete wall extends. Massive, buttressed, punctuated with watch towers. It looks designed to contain or defend against something mythic in scale.

This would be a stunning sight in its own right - but it's the view from the platform that stopped LENA in her tracks.

It shows a landscape, behind which the sun sets.

A stretch of bare ground, for a few hundred yards beyond the concrete wall, leading to a dense forest.

And in front of - or permeating - the forest, there is a *shimmer*.

Similar to a heat haze - it gives a glassy liquid quality to everything seen through its prism.

But unlike a heat haze - and like a prism - it splits light.

So, through the shimmer -

- the sun distorts into a deliquescing orange orb, fringed with chromatic aberrations of blue and green.

- the colours on the clouds split into a full rainbow spectrum, spread across the sky like psychedelic Northern Lights.

- the trees in the forest distort gently, as if pushed by a gentle wind that eases the trunks into movement, as if they were as light as leaves.

SPEC OPS SOLDIER (O.S.)
GET ON THE GROUND RIGHT NOW!

REVEAL behind LENA, an arc of three SPEC OPS SOLDIERS, all pointing their guns at the back of her head.

But before the moment can unravel, DR VENTRESS appears, pushing past the soldiers, brushing down their gun barrels as if warding away a wasp.

DR VENTRESS
Is there really any need for that?

SPEC OPS SOLDIER
Sir, she -

DR VENTRESS
(cuts in)
Shut up and step away. Give us space.

The soldiers do as ordered.

Throughout, LENA hasn't turned from the fauvist view.

The doctor steps beside her.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
It's obvious what your husband saw in you. Impressive: to have escaped. To this point at least.

LENA talks as if through a dream.

LENA
Where am I?

DR VENTRESS
Northern Florida. Thirty miles from the coast. It was the Blackwater State Park, but we now call it the Southern Reach.

LENA
... Why is a National Park sealed behind a fifty metre high concrete wall?

DR VENTRESS
Well, quite. That is the question.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/COMMAND CENTER - DAY

The COMMAND CENTER of the Southern Reach Facility.

A large room, with one wall given over to a floor-to ceiling window, which faces the landscape and the Shimmer.

In the middle of the room is a large digital map. It shows the coast of Northern Florida, the boundary wall of the Southern reach facility, and - in illuminated blue - the border of the Shimmer.

On the adjacent wall there is a collection of images.

Some show a tall white LIGHTHOUSE - with archive architectural plans of the building. The rest are a sequence of TEAM PHOTOS. Small groups of men and women with backpacks and hiking gear. Some with weapons and uniforms.

LENA walks to the digital map table.

DR VENTRESS, standing by the window, starts to talk.

DR VENTRESS

It started when a park guide reported an event to the local police. A lighthouse on the coast was surrounded by what he called a 'shimmer'. A friend of his had entered to find out what was going on - and never returned.

Beat.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

That was thirteen years ago. We evacuated the area and concocted a cover story - an accident on a cargo ship, carrying nuclear waste. Then we set up a covert body to investigate the phenomena. And three hundred billion dollars later, we know nothing more than was contained in that first brief police report.

Behind the doctor, the landscape undulates and refracts.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

Something goes in, and it doesn't come back. And I'm not just talking about people. Drones, robots, animals, birds, radio waves, radar, particle streams. It's a black hole. Nothing gets out.

Beat.

LENA

You have no idea what it is?

DR VENTRESS

We have many. An extra terrestrial event; a multi-dimensional event;
(MORE)

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 a religious event. The ideas are
 endless. What we lack are facts.

DR VENTRESS has joined LENA at the map. She indicates the border of the shimmer. Concentric circles - like tree rings - dated by year.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 Area 'X'. The only thing we can
 say for certain is that it's
 getting bigger. Initially, it
 enclosed the lighthouse and an area
 of about fifty square metres. It
 now covers an area the size of
 Chicago.

LENA looks the dated bands. Sees the expanding gap between the most recent circles.

LENA
 The expansion rate is increasing.

DR VENTRESS
 Exponentially. In five years, the
 Shimmer will encompass the Southern
 United States and most of Mexico.

LENA
 ... And in ten years?

DR VENTRESS
 The planet.

LENA looks back at DR VENTRESS.

LENA
 Does the planet get to hear about
 this?

DR VENTRESS
 Does it matter?

DR VENTRESS traces her finger over the glowing blue Shimmer bands on the map.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 It makes me think of cancer. The
 invasion. The spread. If the
 cancer is terminal, is it better to
 know?

LENA
 I'd want to know.

DR VENTRESS
 Yes, but is it *better* to know.

LENA walks to the TEAM PHOTOS.

Starts scanning the faces.

DR VENTRESS watches. Then indicates with her hand.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
He's over there.

LENA sees KANE.

In a group of spec ops soldiers. Similar to the images at home - her husband is smiling, looking straight at the camera, an Armalite rifle held loosely in his hands.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
Twenty three expeditions. A
hundred and thirteen men and women.
And only he came back.

Beat.

LENA
Will you let me see him?

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/MEDICAL CENTRE - DAY

KANE lies on a bed. Surrounded by the tubes, lines, and the machinery of life support.

His skin is almost the colour of ivory.

His heartbeat monitor shows four beats per minute.

LENA stands beside him. She exhales, and steam wreathes her.

DR VENTRESS watches from behind an observation window. The edges of the glass are frosted with ice crystals.

LENA reaches for KANE'S hand.

Holds it.

A tear slips out of her eye.

And freezes on her cheek.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/MEDICAL CENTRE - DAY

LENA joins the DR VENTRESS on her side of the observation window.

LENA
How long can you keep him alive
like this?

DR VENTRESS

If he could stay here, maybe months. But I'm afraid there's a complication. The Shimmer will soon extend to where we're standing right now. The facility is preparing to relocate -

LENA

- and he won't survive the move.

DR VENTRESS

... No.

A beat.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

I don't think either of us will, as it happens.

LENA

What do you mean?

DR VENTRESS

Southern Reach has failed in its objectives, and I'm about to be relieved of command. Before that happens, I've authorised a final mission into Area X. And this time, I'm going to lead it.

DR VENTRESS pauses.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

I'm like you, Lena. The cancer may be terminal, but I need to know. I need to see what happened in the lighthouse with my own eyes.

LENA processes.

Then speaks.

LENA

When do you leave?

DR VENTRESS

Tomorrow morning.

LENA

How many in the team?

DR VENTRESS

Four.

LENA looks evenly at the doctor.

LENA

Five.

Beat.

DR VENTRESS

Lena -

LENA

(cuts in)

He's my husband. He's dying.

DR VENTRESS

And you'll go in there and find a cure? I think the chances are slim.

LENA

The chances are zero if I don't even try. I owe it to him.

DR VENTRESS

(echoes)

You owe it.

LENA

Yes.

Beat.

DR VENTRESS

Well, in any case, it's not simply a question of your motivation. There are processes to observe. Evaluations, and -

LENA

(cuts in)

While the facility remains under your command, the way you structure the team is your business.

DR VENTRESS knows she has been quoted from her exchange with the SPEC OPS CAPTAIN, but isn't quite sure how it could have happened.

She smiles faintly.

DR VENTRESS

... Good point.

Beat.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

I have to admit, a biologist would be an ideal addition to the expedition's skill-set. And the team is short-handed.

(MORE)

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 Given the track record, it hasn't
 been easy to find volunteers...

LENA waits, letting the doctor talk herself round.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 If you were to join us, I don't
 think it would be wise to explain
 your connection to the previous
 mission. It might not be...
 helpful. To the group dynamic.

LENA turns to the glass.

Looks back at the near motionless body of her husband.

LENA
 Whatever it takes.

CUT TO -

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/FIRING RANGE - DAY

- a FIRING RANGE, in which a woman is firing an automatic
 rifle, straight at us.

Her name is ANYA THORENSEN. She's a handsome woman in her
 mid-thirties. Close-cropped hair, wearing a white vest that
 shows muscled arms. Obviously lifts weights.

She has a very distinctive TATTOO encircling her forearm,
 depicting an *ouroboros* - a snake eating its tail.

CUT TO -

- a TARGET, with BULLET HOLES appearing. Loosely grouped,
 but finding their mark.

CUT TO -

- the woman firing in the next alley.

This is CASS SHEPPARD. She's in her mid-forties. Glasses,
 pony-tail efficiently tied back. Could be a mother at school
 gates, if not for the automatic rifle.

CUT TO -

- a similar spread of BULLET HOLES appearing on a target.

CUT TO -

- the next alley, where we find JOSIE RADEK.

RADEK is in her mid-twenties, but feels younger. She has the
 sheltered quality that people have when they've passed
 straight from school to college to doctorate.

She's having trouble with her weapon. She looks frightened by the recoil, leaning her face away from the stock, and convulsively screwing her eyes as the gun starts firing.

CUT TO -

- a near random spray of rounds that hit in various places, but not the target.

CUT TO -

- LENA.

Stepping up to the fourth alley in the firing range.

Lifting a rifle. Squeezing the trigger.

She keeps the gun steady, fires in neat three round bursts, and the stock pushed tight up against her cheek bone.

CUT TO -

- a neat grouping of rounds, appearing in the middle of the target.

CUT TO -

- DR VENTRESS. Observing.

She shifts her gaze to THORENSEN, SHEPPARD, and RADEK -

- who are clearly surprised to find this new person in the fourth firing alley.

LENA empties the last rounds in her clip.

The final volley of gunshots leave a ringing echo in the concrete chamber.

Broken by DR VENTRESS.

DR VENTRESS

Team.

The women remove their ear defenders.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

I'd like to introduce Lena Kerans, a biologist we have sequestered from Johns Hopkins, to join us on the mission to the lighthouse. Ms Kerans, meet Anya Thorensen, a medic. Cass Sheppard, a geologist. And Josie Radek, a physicist.

Beat.

Then LENA lifts a hand.

LENA

... Hi.

EXT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY - NIGHT

The facility is picked out in the moonlight.

A row of FLOODLIGHTS along the perimeter wall illuminate the wasteground and the tree line.

Stars vibrate through the Shimmer.

EXT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/VIEWING PLATFORM - NIGHT

LENA stands on the viewing platform, leaning against the guard rail.

She's holding the SILVER LOCKET containing KANE'S PHOTO in her hand. Gazing at it.

A few metres away, RADEK and SHEPPARD sit at a table.

SHEPPARD is studying one of her maps, and RADEK is making notes in a small pad.

THORENSEN appears beside LENA.

She's holding a pair of binoculars.

LENA, gazing at the locket, her head many miles away, doesn't notice.

THORENSEN

Hey.

LENA looks up, snapped back to focus -

- and closes the locket with a soft snap, before THORENSEN can see the image inside.

LENA

... Oh, hey.

THORENSEN

Wasn't meaning to pry.

LENA

No - it's just -

THORENSEN holds up a hand.

THORENSEN

It's cool. No need to explain. I just saw you over here, and...

THORENSEN shrugs.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
... I don't know. I was thinking
we should bond or something.
Considering we're travel buddies.

LENA
You bet.

LENA slips the necklace back over her head.

LENA (CONT'D)
Have you been at the facility a
long time?

THORENSEN
Nearly a year now. I was a
paramedic in Chicago. Tried to
join MSF, thinking I'd work out in
Asia or something. But my
application got flagged by some
computer system, and Southern Reach
got in touch. That chime with how
they got to you?

LENA
Yeah. Similar story.

LENA nods towards the Shimmer.

LENA (CONT'D)
Do you ever get used to the view?

THORENSEN laughs.

THORENSEN
It's weird. The Shimmer is the
strangest thing I've ever seen.
Like - what's the Grand Canyon to
this? But at the same time, you do
kind of get used to it. You have
to accept it, because it's there.

Beat.

LENA
I have a question.

THORENSEN
Shoot.

LENA
Why's our team all women?

THORENSEN
Affirmative action. It's an
important part of the struggle that
women get equal opportunity to go
on suicide missions.

THORENSEN holds up her fist.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
Yes, sister?

LENA bumps it.

THORENSEN smiles.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
It's also because they think a team of women might have a better chance of survival than a team that includes men.

LENA
I don't follow.

THORENSEN
There's two theories about what goes wrong inside Area X. One: something in there kills them. Two: they kill each other. Theory one favours a male team, all big and butch, armed to the teeth. Theory two favours a female team. Less propensity to violence. And so far, the male teams have been shit out of luck.

LENA looks at THORENSEN. Sees this is for real.

LENA
They really think the previous expeditions might have killed each other?

THORENSEN
It's a little more than they just 'think' it. You know there's a guy who made it back? The only one. They've got him in an induced coma in the med center.

LENA
... I did hear that.

THORENSEN
So technically he wasn't the first to walk out of Area X. He was the second.

LENA frowns.

LENA
The second?

THORENSEN hands LENA her binoculars, then gestures out across the deforested area towards the tree line.

THORENSEN
Check your ten o'clock, about
twenty metres from the tree line.

LENA raises the binoculars and looks where THORENSEN has indicated.

Sees a bundle of rags and white bone. At this distance, the bleached dome of skull is the only thing that allow us to understand it was a human.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
See the bones?

LENA
... Yes.

THORENSEN
He's been laid there about six
months now. Too far away to
positively ID, but from his
uniform, they know he was on the
previous mission.

FLASHBACK TO -

EXT. THE SHIMMER/TREELINE - DAY

- LONG LENS on the trees.

A MAN walks out. Unarmed. Wearing the SPEC OPS uniform.

Through the mirage distortion, he seems to have a long beard.

THORENSEN (O.S.)
Just strolled out the forest one
day.

Even at this distance, the MAN seems slightly dazed. Or uncertain.

THORENSEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Didn't seem in a hurry. Stood a
while. Started walking.

The MAN takes a few steps in the direction of the distant wall.

THORENSEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Then -

Rapid puffs of red from the MAN'S head and chest. Noiseless.

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

- pop.

Followed by the delayed crack of the rifle retorts.

CUT TO -

EXT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/VIEWING PLATFORM - DAY

- LENA, lowering the binoculars.

LENA

... No one saw who did it.

THORENSEN shakes her head.

THORENSEN

No. But we all got our ideas.

LENA looks at THORENSEN. Waiting.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)

Well - it's got to have been the
guy that got out, right? The one
they're keeping in the freeze box.

Beat.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)

Lieutenant Kane.

On LENA, processing this.

CUT FROM the night view -

EXT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/GATES - DAWN

- to the dazzling low morning sun.

Then the concrete flank of the Southern Reach building, as
the MASSIVE METAL GATES of the facility unlock.

And swing open.

Revealing the five women of the team.

Each carrying their backpacks, and automatic rifles.

Ahead of them is the dusty scrubland of the deforested area.

A few beats.

Then DR VENTRESS starts walking.

Behind, the gates swing shut.

EXT. DEFORESTED AREA - DAWN

The team walk in single file.

DR VENTRESS leads.

Then THORENSEN, then SHEPPARD, then RADEK, then LENA.

They walk right past the BODY that THORENSEN pointed out.

As they pass it, LENA pauses.

Sees the skull. The way patches of hair and dried skin still cling to the underside of the skull, where it has been shielded from the wind and sun.

Sees the missing section of bone above the left eye socket, blown out by a bullet.

Sees the curve of ribs, visible where the material of the uniform has started to disintegrate.

Ahead, DR VENTRESS has reached the treeline.

DR VENTRESS stops before entering the forest. Then turns, to look back at LENA.

They lock eyes through the shimmering air.

CUT TO BLACK.

CAPTION:

PART 2 - AREA X

CUT TO -

EXT. THE SKY - DAY

- the FULL MOON, hanging in a clear blue daylight sky.

The same image that distracted LENA as she taught her medical students.

CUT TO -

EXT. HOUSE/GARDEN - DAY

- the garden of LENA'S house, where LENA and KANE are sunbathing on the lawn. LENA in a bikini. KANE in shorts.

Around them are the remains of an impromptu picnic.

They lie side by side, looking up at the sky.

LENA

I love seeing the moon in daytime.
It's like God made a mistake,
leaving the hall lights on.

KANE

Mmm - not sure about that. God
doesn't make mistakes.

LENA

Oh really.

KANE

Yeah. It's kind of key to the
whole being-a-God thing.

LENA

I observe his mistakes every day.

KANE

... You know he's listening, right?

LENA

If you take a cell, and prevent the
incremental shortening of
telomeres, you circumvent the
Hayflick division limit and prevent
the cell from entering senescence.

KANE

Woah. So weird you say that. I
was about to make the exact same
point.

LENA

Would you like me to explain what
it means?

KANE

I would. Because I find it
arousing when you patronise me.

LENA

It means the cell doesn't grow old
and die. It becomes immortal.

KANE

Don't stop.

LENA

We see the process of growing old
as somehow natural. Whereas in
fact, it's fault in our genes. We
inherited it, but we don't need it,
or want it.

(MORE)

LENA (CONT'D)
And without the fault, I would be
able to stay looking like *this* -

She illustrates the point by indicating herself.

LENA (CONT'D)
- forever.

KANE glances at her bikini-clad form. Then back at the sky.

KANE
Okay. Mistakes were made.

Beats pass.

LENA
... So are you going to tell me
where you're heading this time?

KANE
Nope.

Beat.

LENA
I know there's something strange
about the mission.

KANE
... Why?

LENA
Because the silence around it is
even more deafening than usual.

Beat.

LENA (CONT'D)
I don't even get a clue?

KANE sighs.

KANE
Okay. You get one clue. We'll be
under the same hemisphere. So, if
you step outside and look up,
you'll know we're seeing the same
moon in the sky. Day or night.

LENA looks sideways at KANE.

LENA
Holy shit.

KANE
... What?

LENA
Are you kidding me? Is that what
you think I do when you're away?

KANE hesitates.

KANE
I'm just saying -

LENA
- You think I come out into the
garden, pining, looking up at the
sky?

LENA puts her hand on her chest. Mimics herself.

LENA (CONT'D)
To think my darling Kane is looking
at this self-same Moon. Oh my
distant celestial friend -

KANE laughs. Shoves her sideways.

LENA keeps going.

LENA (CONT'D)
- please care for my beloved...

KANE grabs her. Tries to stop her talking.

LENA (CONT'D)
- my brave soldier...

KANE
Jesus - you know what you are?
You're disrespectful, not just to
the men and women of the armed
forces -

LENA yelps as he starts tickling her.

KANE (CONT'D)
- but the also the President.

LENA
(between gasps)
You forgot the flag!

KANE
I was getting to the flag.

LENA can no longer talk because he's tickling her too hard.

She becomes helpless with laughter, as they rolling on the
grass.

Eventually, catching her breath back.

LENA
Oh my hero.

KANE
Screw you.

LENA
Okay.

They start kissing.

With passion.

CUT TO -

- the FULL MOON.

Suspended in the blue. Crater patterns only faintly visible in daylight.

Then -

- the MOON SHIMMERS.

And then, like a cell under a microscope -

- the MOON starts to DIVIDE.

CUT TO -

INT. TENT - DAY

- LENA, waking with a jolt.

Wearing a T-shirt and underwear.

Looking around. Surrounded by BRIGHT ORANGE.

Taking a moment to understand she is inside a tent.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING/CAMPSITE - CONTINUOUS

LENA unzips the front flap of her tent and climbs out -

- to discover a campsite. Five small tents, circled around a burned out fire.

The campsite is positioned in a grassy clearing, deep inside a forest. The surrounding trees are Oak and Cyprus.

Looking up, the sun and clouds are seen through the familiar mirage-like distortion - as if the Shimmer is like a dome structure, which we are now inside.

Just in front of LENA, THORENSEN and SHEPPARD sit surrounded by packets of food.

A little distance away, RADEK is looking at a piece of electronic equipment.

DR VENTRESS is nowhere to be seen.

LENA looks stunned.

LENA
... What the Hell?

THORENSEN and SHEPPARD look round.

THORENSEN
Good. You're finally awake.

LENA
Uh...

LENA takes a moment.

LENA (CONT'D)
Sorry, you're going to have to give me a moment. I'm a little...
thrown.

SHEPPARD
Join the club.

THORENSEN
You don't remember setting up camp,
right?

LENA
... I don't remember anything,
after we reached the tree line.

SHEPPARD
None of us do. But check your
boots and pants. They'll be wet
and covered in mud. And we've been
doing an inventory of the food.
From the depletion in our stocks,
we've been out here for at least
forty eight hours.

LENA shakes her head.

LENA
That's not possible.

RADEK walks over, looking nervous.

RADEK
Guys - you want to know what's
weird?

THORENSEN
I want to know what isn't weird.

RADEK pulls her short-wave radio from her belt. Gives it a burst.

It plays STATIC.

RADEK

I've been checking all my radio and electronic equipment. None of it is working properly. Like, I can switch on the sat-phone, and the GPS, and they boot up fine - but there's no signal. Even though we've probably got twenty satellites above us right now - nothing. And check this out.

RADEK holds up a magnetic COMPASS. The needle is spinning slowly.

RADEK (CONT'D)

It's like we're in the middle of the most massive electromagnetic interference.

There is excitement in RADEK'S voice. And a note of panic.

RADEK (CONT'D)

So we've got no compass, no comms, no coordinates, and no landmarks. We don't know where we are, or what direction we should be heading.

SHEPPARD

Radek - be cool. We know we're in the state park. So if we go South, we hit the ocean. Once there, we can follow the shoreline until we hit the perimeter wall.

RADEK

But how do we know what's South?

SHEPPARD stands. Pulls up her sleeve. Shows her wrist watch.

SHEPPARD

Take your watch. Point the hour hand at the sun. Split the difference between the hour hand and twelve.

As she's talking, she's doing.

Having orientated the watch to the sun, she points into the forest.

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)

South.

THORENSEN raises her eyebrows.

THORENSEN
Get you, Sheppard.

SHEPPARD
Yeah. Get me.

DR VENTRESS
Very impressive.

LENA looks around.

DR VENTRESS is right behind her.

She shows no sense of concern about the situation. She seems almost serene.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
And honestly, Radek - we weren't really expecting the equipment to work, were we? After thirteen years of expeditions, and thirteen years of radio silence.

She gestures at the tents.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
Let's pack up and get moving. It's already gone ten o'clock. We don't want to lose any more of the day.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

The five women are walking in knee-deep water.

It's hot. Heavy backpacks. Heavy weapons. Hard going.

It's also impossible to gauge the depth of the swamp.

THORENSEN suddenly steps into a hole. Sinks into the black water, up to her waist.

THORENSEN
God *damn* it.

LENA offers THORENSEN a hand. Hauls her out.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
Now I know why we all got amnesia. Why would you want to remember this shit-hole?

THORENSEN marches ahead, soaked, pissed off.

LENA looks around.

Sees the Cyprus trees with their fanned-out roots, Spanish moss on the branches, dappled sunlight through the high canopy. All reflected in the glassy water.

LENA turns to RADEK.

LENA
I'd like to remember it.

RADEK
Sure. It's beautiful.

They start walking again.

LENA
So you're a scientist too? A physicist, right?

RADEK
Astrophysicist. Specifically the life-cycle of stars.

LENA
And what is the life-cycle of stars?

RADEK
Long.

LENA laughs.

LENA
I do the life-cycle of cells. Short.

RADEK shrugs.

RADEK
Still a cycle.

UP AHEAD -

- SHEPPARD has seen something.

A structure, through the trees.

SHEPPARD calls back to the others.

SHEPPARD
Over here!

EXT. SWAMP/FISHING HUT - DAY

On the bank of the swamp is the half-collapsed frame of a wooden hut, and a short jetty.

The hut is smothered on one side by a dense carpet of brightly coloured FLOWERS. They cover the ground and push up the side of the building like a snow drift.

The five women approach it.

THORENSEN

Think this place might show up on the maps?

SHEPPARD

Doubt it.

SHEPPARD peers inside the door frame.

The roof has partially fallen in. Sunlight illuminates the interior.

There's a bench and a table. Some hooks on the walls.

Everything metal is long corroded. Everything wooden is black and damp, and patched with moss.

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)

I think it's just a fishing hut.

BACK OUTSIDE -

- LENA crouches by the brightly coloured flowers, growing on the side of the structure.

Like a sprawling bouquet, they are very varied. Some large. Some small. Some a vivid blue. Some red. Others are creamy white, with scatterings of orange-fringed crimson on the broad petals.

LENA

... These are extremely strange flowers.

DR VENTRESS

Why?

LENA

To look at them you wouldn't say they're the same species.

LENA pulls back an area of flowers to show the plant system beneath.

LENA (CONT'D)

But they're all growing from the same branch structure. So not just the same species. The same plant.

RADEK

They're like snowflakes. Each one is different. I've never seen anything like it.

LENA

It seems stuck in a continuous mutation. Some kind of morphogenesis error.

DR VENTRESS

You mean it's a pathology?

LENA

It's very pretty, but you'd sure as Hell call it a pathology if you saw it in a human.

LENA picks a white and crimson petal, and holds it.

DR VENTRESS

Amazing pattern. Like a Rorschach test.

LENA offers it to her.

LENA

So what do you see in there?

RADEK has found something else.

RADEK

Hey, check this out.

In the undergrowth behind the hut, there are the hulls of two upturned flat-bottomed fibreglass boats.

She crouches down, and get a hand under the lip of the hull.

Lifts the fibreglass boat easily.

RADEK (CONT'D)

We could use these. Be much quicker way of getting across the swamp.

REVEAL -

- something that RADEK hasn't seen.

In the black swamp water behind RADEK, there is the half-submerged head of a huge ALLIGATOR.

Its armoured skin is BLACK. Obsidian. Reflective.

And it has strange eyes. Red pupils that bleed into yellow, like diffusing saffron.

Oblivious, RADEK turns back to LENA and DR VENTRESS.

RADEK (CONT'D)
Shall we see if they still float?

The NEXT MOMENT -

- the ALLIGATOR LUNGES at RADEK.

Thrusting out of the water. Massive jaws pulling open. We can see amidst the water spray and flash of movement, this creature is at least two times the size of a normal gator, in bulk as well as length.

LENA
Radek!

RADEK reacts -

- and sees the gaping MOUTH and TEETH as they lunge towards her.

She turns away -

- just as the creature's jaws SNAP.

Closing on her BACKPACK.

RADEK'S screams are abruptly knocked out of her -

- as the ALLIGATOR viciously snaps its head to the side, tossing the young woman like a ragdoll.

RADEK remains held fast by the shoulder straps on her bag.

Then -

- the ALLIGATOR pulls back into the water, and both the creature and RADEK are gone.

A moment of stunned silence.

Then LENA is running for the water.

LENA (CONT'D)
RADEK!

DR VENTRESS
Lena! Stop!

LENA doesn't listen.

Runs into the swamp up to her knees, gun raised, sweeping the black mirrored surface.

LENA
RADEK!

THORENSEN and SHEPPARD appear from the hut.

THORENSEN
What the Hell happened?

LENA
A gator took her! We've got to -

AT THAT MOMENT -

- RADEK bursts out of the water, only a couple of metres from LENA.

Her backpack is gone. She's gasping for breath.

RADEK
Help! HELP ME!

LENA grabs her.

Starts dragging her out of the swamp.

RADEK (CONT'D)
It's got my bag!

LENA
Fuck the bag!

Just as they reach the bank -

THORENSEN
Shit!

- as the water erupts behind them as the GATOR appears and lunges again.

LENA shoves RADEK hard to the side, and pulls her rifle to her shoulder -

- and opens fire.

She empties an ENTIRE clip into the GATOR. Rounds slam into torso, punching through the reptile armour.

But incredibly, the creature isn't killed.

It simply redirects its attention from RADEK to LENA.

LENA desperately tries to jam in a new clip -

- as the GATOR propels itself in her direction.

Just as the creature is about to reach her -

- the CLIP is driven home, and LENA cocks her gun and opens fire again -

- emptying this magazine at point blank range, directly down the GATOR'S THROAT.

The muzzle flash illuminates the interior. Bullets slam into the flesh.

This time, LENA is joined by SHEPPARD, THORENSEN and DR VENTRESS.

In five seconds, four women empty four magazines. Riddling the creature's head and torso.

After the last shot is fired, the ALLIGATOR remains supported on its legs, jaws open, frozen for a moment, half out of the water.

Then the legs buckle.

And the jaws shut.

It's dead.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. GATOR - DAY

IN DARKNESS, we hear RADEK'S voice.

Muffled.

SHEPPARD (O.S.)
Be careful! There might be a
reflex!

THORENSEN (O.S.)
I think its reflex days are behind
it.

SUDDEN DAYLIGHT -

- as we see the jaws being prized back open, from the POV of the gullet.

We are inside the wet cave of the GATOR'S mouth, looking out over a slab of tongue, and jagged stalagmite/stalactite teeth.

LENA is peering in.

Behind her, we can see RADEK and DR VENTRESS.

The jaw is being held open by SHEPPARD and THORENSEN.

LENA
... Woah.

LENA sticks her head even further inside.

LENA (CONT'D)
It's the exactly same as the
flowers.

We see what LENA sees.

Behind the row of teeth, there is a second row. Internal,
folded backward slightly.

And behind the second row, there is third, these almost flat.

LENA (CONT'D)
Look at the teeth. Concentric
rows. Something here is making big
waves in the gene pool.

SHEPPARD
Sharks have teeth like that.

DR VENTRESS
Could it be a cross-breed?

LENA
You can't cross-breed different
species. They have different
genes.

THORENSEN
(strained)
Hey - that's all cool. But can you
get your head the fuck out so we
can let this go? It's getting kind
of heavy.

A final beat on LENA'S puzzled expression.

Then LENA nods.

LENA
Sure.

LENA retracts her head.

The jaw shuts with a wet thump.

Back to BLACK.

CUT TO -

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

- a tree in the swamp.

The trunk is clustered with fat mounds of moss, flourishing
like petri-dish cultures.

They have bright colours. Not just greens, but intense reds, and purples, and rust colours.

They look like disease.

CUT TO -

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

- the flat-bottomed boats gliding over black water. Swampland floating by. Serene.

The first boat holds DR VENTRESS, RADEK and THORENSEN, with THORENSEN paddling.

The second boat holds SHEPPARD and LENA.

While SHEPPARD paddles, LENA is preoccupied by a mark on her forearm.

It looks like a faint bruise.

LENA pushes at it with her thumb. Vaguely puzzled about where she picked it up.

SHEPPARD
You hurt, Kerans?

LENA
Just a bruise. Guess I picked it up with that gator.

SHEPPARD
Likely.

Beat.

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)
So where did you learn to shoot?

LENA looks round. Prepares to gets her internal story straight.

LENA
My husband was military. We used to go hunting together in Pennsylvania. Deer.

SHEPPARD
Was military.

LENA
Yeah.

SHEPPARD
He quit.

LENA

... No.

LENA hesitates. Doesn't want to lie to SHEPPARD - but does.

LENA (CONT'D)

KIA.

It's almost the truth.

SHEPPARD

I'm sorry to hear that.

Beat.

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)

But I guess there had to be something.

LENA

What do you mean?

SHEPPARD

Signing up for something like this - it's not something you do if your life is in perfect harmony.

SHEPPARD nods towards the other boat.

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)

We're all damaged goods here. Thorensen is teetotal, therefore an addict. And Radek won't wear short sleeves because she doesn't want you to see the pale scars on her forearms.

LENA

Ventress?

SHEPPARD

She's like an office building in a financial district. All steel and glass and height. But what for?

Beat.

LENA

You?

SHEPPARD pauses.

SHEPPARD

I lost someone. Like you. But, a daughter. Leukemia.

Silence.

LENA
Thorensen called this a suicide mission.

SHEPPARD
I doubt it's as shrink-wrapped as that.

LENA
But on some level.

SHEPPARD
You tell me, Kerans. When you volunteered, did you have high expectations of making it back?

LENA
I wasn't thinking in those terms.

LENA looks at SHEPPARD evenly.

LENA (CONT'D)
But now you mention it: yes. I'm going to be making it back.

SHEPPARD smiles.

SHEPPARD
Babe, I'm sticking with you.

They lapse back into silence.

Behind them, SHEPPARD'S oar strokes leave a gentle disturbance on the water.

CUT TO -

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

- THORENSEN in the lead boat.

Eyes narrowing.

THORENSEN
We got something here...

REVEAL -

- the two boats gliding towards a shoreline.

Behind which, there is a cluster of low concrete buildings.

EXT. ABANDONED BASE - DAY

The five women walk into the collection of buildings.

They have a distinctively military feel. Prefab huts, breeze block walls, chain-link fences, guard huts by the gate.

Nature has been busy reclaiming the area. Tall grasses push through cracks in the tarmac. The concrete is stained with rain and dark algae.

And as with the trees in the swamp, brightly-coloured mosses bloom on the buildings.

DR VENTRESS notices LENA'S gaze going to them.

DR VENTRESS
More mutations.

LENA
I saw many on the trees. They're everywhere.

DR VENTRESS
They look malignant, don't you think? Like tumours.

LENA doesn't answer.

DR VENTRESS addresses the group.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
At least now we know where we are. This was the previous Southern Reach headquarters, before the Shimmer swallowed it.

SHEPPARD pulls her map out. Scans.

SHEPPARD
Yes. I've got it. Right here.

RADEK exhales.

RADEK
Awesome. We're not lost any more.

THORENSEN looks around.

THORENSEN
And it's nice timing. A pretty good place for us to stay the night.

DR VENTRESS
Agreed.

She points to a low building up ahead.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
That used to be the barracks. We'll billet in there.

INT. ABANDONED BASE/BARRACKS - DAY

The door to the barracks dormitory opens, and the five women enter.

Light pushes through the grimy windows, and the foliage that has grown up outside.

It illuminates rows of beds with bare mattresses.

THORENSEN pulls off her bag and drops it on the nearest one.

THORENSEN
I've slept in worse.

SHEPPARD
Not sure I have.

LENA takes a couple of steps further into the room. She's seen something, a couple of beds further into the barracks.

There's something lying on the ground.

When she gets closer -

- she sees it's someone's BACKPACK.

And she recognises what *kind* of someone. Khaki. Military. Spec ops.

Beat.

Then LENA turns to the others.

LENA
Uh - guys. Come and look at this.

The others join her.

RADEK
... Whoa. Someone else is here?

LENA
Was here. It's covered in dust.

THORENSEN
You think one of the other missions?

DR VENTRESS
Certainly could be. No reason to assume they weren't able to reach as far as us.

SHEPPARD
Why would they leave their gear here?

THORENSEN

Guess they left in a hurry.

LENA opens the bag. Starts pulling stuff out.

Produces a washbag.

A scrunched-up rain poncho.

Then -

- a VIDEO CAMERA.

SHEPPARD

... Hello.

LENA glances back at the others.

THORENSEN

What are you waiting for? Do it!

LENA pops open the flip screen.

Presses the play button.

... And the camera is stone dead.

LENA

Figures.

RADEK

No problem. Just take out the memory card and we'll stick it in my camera.

CUT TO -

INT. ABANDONED BASE/BARRACKS - DAY

- the five women, standing around RADEK'S camera, waiting for her to switch it on.

RADEK clips shut the card hatch, and powers the camera up.

RADEK

There we go.

CUT TO -

INT. SCREEN - CONTINUOUS

- extreme CLOSE UP on the tiny SCREEN of RADEK'S camera.

The video starts.

At first, abstract. Something dark and unfocused, accompanied by the kind of noise you hear when someone accidentally dials their phone from their pocket.

Then the image and noise suddenly resolve.

And we find we are looking at KANE.

And he's looking at us.

KANE

I don't know how long we've been here.

CUT TO -

INT. ABANDONED BASE/BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

- LENA.

Freezing at the sight of her husband.

She shoots a glance at DR VENTRESS.

DR VENTRESS doesn't look back.

KANE (O.S.)

It must at least be weeks. But it could also be months, or years.

CUT BACK TO -

INT. SCREEN - CONTINUOUS

- KANE.

We see he is sitting on steps, in sunlight. Somewhere in the abandoned base.

Red eyes, unshaven. Wired. As if he hasn't slept in days.

He's looking just past the lens - addressing not the camera, but the CAMERAMAN.

KANE

We've lost track. Of time, and everything else.

Beat.

KANE (CONT'D)

Sometimes I think I must be dreaming. But I know I can't be. Because I never wake up.

Beat.

KANE (CONT'D)
 If anything, it's the other life
 that feels most like a dream. The
 wife. The home. They don't seem
 to -

KANE breaks off. Glances over his shoulder.

KANE (CONT'D)
 You hear that?

CAMERAMAN
 I heard it.

A beat later, there is a distant crackle of automatic
 gunfire.

KANE looks back at the CAMERAMAN.

KANE
 They're coming back.

KANE stands abruptly. Out of frame.

KANE (CONT'D)
 Get to positions.

The video jerks sideways as the CAMERAMAN moves.

Then **CUTS STRAIGHT TO** -

- an INTENSE night-time FIRE-FIGHT.

KANE and two others soldier - PEYTON and SHELLY - are
 crouched behind a LOW WALL somewhere in the compound.

They take turns to fire over the top of the wall. Faces lit
 by muzzle flashes.

KANE (CONT'D)
Reloading.

PEYTON takes over from KANE.

Firing at something in the darkness.

PEYTON turns to the CAMERAMAN and shouts:

PEYTON
*You seeing that? You getting it on
 film? You got to get it!*

CUT TO -

INT. ABANDONED BASE/BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

- DR VENTRESS.

DR VENTRESS
Freeze it there.

RADEK hits pause.

REVEAL the image on the screen.

The picture is blurred, smeared by the fast left-right pan of the CAMERAMAN. But it seems to depict a SHIRTLESS MAN, running at the lens, no more than five or six metres away, burned-out by a blasting strobe of MUZZLE FLASH.

There's something strange about the MAN'S form.

His neck is twisted, pushing his head sideways into an unnatural position. It feels wrong. Broken.

Where his jaw should be, there is a cavity, as if his mouth has swallowed the lower part of his face.

It's unclear - his jaw may have been shot off. His neck may actually be broken.

But his arms also have a strange broken quality. It's subtle, but the break point of the elbow is slightly *higher* than it should be. The upper arm too short, the forearm too long. The deformation is oddly animal-like.

And again, as with the neck and jaw, ambiguous. Are we seeing what is *there*, or a distortion caused by the lighting and the smeared freeze-frame.

BURNED OVER THIS IMAGE is a bright red streak. It is the RED DOT LASER SIGHT of KANE'S gun, carved across the frame like the tail-light of a car burned onto a retina.

The aim is about to settle on the MAN'S torso.

SILENCE, as the five women absorb what they are seeing.

Broken by THORENSEN.

THORENSEN
... Whoa. What the Hell happened to that guy.

SHEPPARD
Has his jaw been shot off?

THORENSEN
I don't know. Injuries do freaky stuff to people, but...

The sentence trails.

DR VENTRESS
Press play again.

CUT TO -

INT. SCREEN - CONTINUOUS

- the film restarting.

A split second later, KANE is firing. Bullets hit the RED DOT. And the DEFORMED MAN drops.

The video CUTS again.

This time to the violent sway-motion of the CAMERAMAN running.

The video CUTS again.

Now the CAMERAMAN is crouched beside KANE who is by the corner of a building, who is hunched over as incoming rounds hit the concrete.

The firing is sustained -

- then stops.

Immediately KANE swings out and RETURNS FIRE.

From somewhere nearby, over the noise of the firing we hear screaming.

Then PEYTON shouting:

PEYTON (O.S.)
Cease fire! Cease fire!

The video CUTS again.

This time the CAMERAMAN is following SHELLEY.

Now we're in an interior.

Which we recognise, as the video aperture corrects for the light -

- as the BARRACKS.

CUT TO -

INT. ABANDONED BASE/BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

- RADEK, wide-eyed - realising.

RADEK
Oh shit - *shit* - that's here!
They're walking right down *this*
room!

DR VENTRESS
Radek, be quiet.

CUT BACK TO -

INT. SCREEN - CONTINUOUS

- SHELLEY and the CAMERAMAN walking the length of the barracks.

Then into the SHOWER ROOM at the far end.

There, they find KANE and PEYTON.

Standing beside another man. His name is MAYER. And he's handcuffed to one of the water pipes.

KANE and PEYTON are arguing. Raised voices.

KANE
What the Hell do you want me do,
Peyton? Actually cut him open and
take a look?

PEYTON
We got to, Kane.

MAYER starts pleading.

MAYER
No - no you don't. You don't have
to!

PEYTON
We got to.

MAYER
Kane, please.

KANE
You mean *I've* got to.

MAYER
Jesus - Jesus Christ - *Kane!*

KANE
God damn it.

KANE reaches to his belt.

Pulls a long fixed-blade knife.

KANE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

MAYER starts screaming.

MAYER
*Jesus - I swear to God - there's
 nothing wrong with me! There's
 nothing wrong!*

KANE'S head snaps around to the CAMERAMAN.

KANE
 You aren't filming this.

MAYER
 (screams)
 KANE! DON'T -

The image dies.

CUT TO -

INT. ABANDONED BASE/BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

- the five women.

Looking at the black screen.

LENA is in a place beyond horror - mind assailed, not able to process what has just happened.

SHEPPARD breaks the spell by leaning forward and switching the screen off.

RADEK
 ... Oh God.

THORENSEN
 You know them, right?

For a moment, LENA thinks THORENSEN is talking to her.

Then sees THORENSEN is directing the question at DR VENTRESS.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
 It's the team that went in the year
 before us. The spec ops guys.

DR VENTRESS
 Yes.

SHEPPARD
 Including the one tied to the
 chair.

DR VENTRESS
 His name was Mayer.

Beat.

Then THORENSEN starts walking.

In the same direction we saw SHELLEY walk. Down the length of the BARRACKS, to the showers.

After a few moments, the others go after her -

- except LENA.

Halfway down the barracks, DR VENTRESS stops.

Looks back at LENA.

A beat between them.

Then LENA follows.

INT. ABANDONED BASE/BARRACKS/SHOWER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LENA enters.

To find RADEK, SHEPPARD, THORENSEN and DR VENTRESS.

In front of them is MAYER'S body. Still cuffed to the chair.

Desiccated, skeletal.

His ribs have been broken open at the sternum, and are splayed open like a book. Like inverted wings.

And his skull is sitting on the ground. Laid in front of his feet.

Silence.

RADEK

... I don't want to stay here tonight.

No one says anything.

RADEK (CONT'D)

I don't want to stay here tonight!

DR VENTRESS

I don't think we have a choice. It's late in the day for us to move on.

RADEK

Please -

SHEPPARD

Hey.

SHEPPARD puts a hand on RADEK'S face. Gently redirecting the younger woman's gaze away from the corpse.

SHEPPARD (CONT'D)
 We won't have to stay in the
 barracks. We can choose another
 building. And we'll figure out a
 guard rota.

LENA looks down at MAYER'S open rib cage. The skull, and
 dislocated jaw.

THORENSEN
 Right.

CUT TO -

EXT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

- LENA'S face.

Asleep. In darkness.

Then LIGHT flooding on to her closed eyes.

Stirring her.

IN THE FOREGROUND -

- a glass of ORANGE JUICE is laid down. On to a bedside
 table.

LENA blinks herself awake...

... to see her bedroom.

And KANE drawing the curtains.

Then turning to her.

KANE
 Freshly squeezed.

LENA
 That's a surprise.

KANE
 I'm full of surprises.

He sits on the bed next to her.

KANE (CONT'D)
 But not all of them good. I'm
 leaving a day early.

LENA
 You mean today?

KANE
 I mean now.

Beat.

LENA
... Shit.

LENA props herself up.

LENA (CONT'D)
I had a whole day planned. We were
going to go to Sam and Mary's for
lunch, and then drive out to -

KANE
(cuts in)
- I'm sorry. We can't.

LENA reaches out with her hand. Takes his.

LENA
Well, can we at least -

He pulls his hand back.

LENA (CONT'D)
... 'Now' means 'right now'.

KANE
Yeah.

A beat.

LENA picks up on something in KANE. A detachment. A subtle coldness.

LENA
... What is it?

KANE doesn't answer for a moment.

Then he looks at her.

KANE
I love you, Lena.

LENA frowns.

LENA
... I love you too.

On KANE.

Gazing back at her flatly.

Giving nothing back. Unreachable.

CUT TO -

INT. ABANDONED BASE/REC ROOM - NIGHT

- LENA'S eyes, flicking open.

Echoing the image of her waking that we just saw. But this time, when she rubs the sleep out of her eyes, she's in the Shimmer.

REVEAL what was once the REC ROOM of the abandoned base. There's a dart board on the wall, and a pool table with mould-covered baize, and a pinball machine with broken glass.

She's got a sheen of sweat on her face. Wipes it off.

Looks around.

On the floor, she sees THORENSEN, asleep on her unrolled bedding.

Beside THORENSEN is RADEK, also asleep.

Beside RADEK is SHEPPARD.

Awake.

SHEPPARD winks.

LENA

Hey.

The two women whisper quietly to each other.

SHEPPARD

How you doing, babe.

LENA

... Fine.

LENA nods at RADEK.

LENA (CONT'D)

Good she's getting some rest.

SHEPPARD

Yeah - with the help of a little sedative.

LENA

How about you? Get any sleep?

SHEPPARD shakes her head.

SHEPPARD

I'd need a horse-tranq to knock me out. I'm at least as freaked as Radek. Just hiding it better.

Beat.

LENA
I'll go check on Dr Ventress.

SHEPPARD
You got it.

EXT. ABANDONED BASE/REC ROOM HUT - NIGHT

LENA exits the REC ROOM hut.

The hut is on the edge of the abandoned facility. The starlight doesn't illuminate much, but we can just about make out the chain-link perimeter fence, and beyond it, the black shape of the forest.

DR VENTRESS is sitting at a picnic table, just outside the door, studying a map by torchlight.

DR VENTRESS
What are you doing up, Kerans?
You're not due to relieve me until
three AM.

LENA
I'm done sleeping for the night.

DR VENTRESS
In that case, you might as well
take a look at this.

DR VENTRESS taps way-point positions on the map.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
Here's us. Here's where I think we
camped last night. And here's the
lighthouse. Judging by the
distance we covered today, we won't
reach it tomorrow. But look, South
West from here -

DR VENTRESS indicates a new position.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
- Ville Perdu. A tiny community,
evacuated ten years ago. I think
we should aim there for tomorrow
night. Then pick up the road to
the coast.

LENA says nothing.

DR VENTRESS notices the non-response.

She looks up at LENA from the map and the torchlight.

A beat between them.

Then LENA speaks.

LENA

The previous expeditions. Were they selected in the same way as this one? From volunteers.

DR VENTRESS

Yes. They were.

LENA

Even the soldiers?

DR VENTRESS

... No one was ordered to go.

LENA meets the doctor's gaze.

LENA

Then I have to ask: why did my husband volunteer for a suicide mission?

DR VENTRESS pauses.

DR VENTRESS

Why would I have an answer to that question?

LENA

Because you ran the programme. You must have assessed him. And he must have told you.

DR VENTRESS

So you're asking me as a psychologist?

LENA

Yes.

DR VENTRESS

Then, as a psychologist, I think you're confusing suicide with self-destruction, and they're very different. Almost none of us commit suicide, whereas almost all of us self-destruct. Somehow. In some part of our lives. We drink, or take drugs, or destabilise the happy job -

Beat.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

- or happy marriage.

LENA reacts. Uncertain whether this was targeted at her.

DR VENTRESS continues.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 But these aren't decisions.
 They're impulses. And in fact, as
 a biologist, you're better placed
 to explain them than me.

LENA
 What do you mean?

DR VENTRESS
 Isn't the self-destruction coded
 into us? Imprinted into each cell.

Silence.

DR VENTRESS shrugs.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 So.

The word hangs.

And LENA is spared having to find a reply -
 - by a strange noise, from somewhere in the darkness.

A POPPING.

A TEARING.

Not organic. Metallic. Surprisingly loud.

The heads of the women flick round to the source of the
 noise.

LENA
 ... What was that?

DR VENTRESS
 I don't know.

LENA unslings her rifles and raises it, switching on the
 night-vision scope.

CUT TO -

- the green-white view.

Scanning the tree line, through the fence.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
 You see anything?

LENA
 No, just -

LENA breaks off.

LENA (CONT'D)

Yes.

Through the scope, there is something.

A large hole in the perimeter fence.

The chain-link twisted, pulled open.

CUT TO -

- SHEPPARD emerges from the REC ROOM HUT, into the moonlight, holding her weapon and a flashlight.

SHEPPARD

What's going on? I heard a noise.

LENA

Something's just come through the fence.

DR VENTRESS

What do you mean: through the fence?

LENA dips the gun.

LENA

It's ripped open like a zipper.

SHEPPARD

But what could do that?

LENA

I don't know. Something big.

ANOTHER NOISE.

And this *is* organic. It's a thump of movement.

Then a panting breath. A snort.

And it feels *very* close.

The three women freeze.

A beat.

Then SHEPPARD lifts her FLASHLIGHT.

Points it straight in front of her.

And illuminates a huge creature...

... less than two metres away.

It looks something like a BLACK BEAR. But like the GATOR, it's twice the size it should be.

And it's *stranger* than the GATOR. It seems to be enmeshed with plant matter. Stems and leaves are growing out of its fur. Its fur hangs like the Spanish moss on the swamp oak branches. Long thorns push outwards, bristling over the crown of its skull, along its snout, down its arms.

And it's up on its hind legs. Standing like a man, towering over SHEPPARD and LENA. Blotting out the stars.

Then it opens its jaws. And it looks as if some of the plant matter is actually growing from inside the BEAR'S mouth.

It is a terrifying and transfixing sight.

SHEPPARD

... shit.

The next moment - with shocking speed - the BEAR lunges downwards -

- at SHEPPARD.

There is a glimpse of her being pulled to the side, and almost COMPRESSED. Like a glimpse of someone being hit by a car.

Then the FLASHLIGHT winks out.

And SHEPPARD is gone.

Sucked into a rush of movement and blackness.

LENA, who has hardly had time to draw breath, now reacts.

LENA

Sheppard!

No answer.

LENA clamps the night scope to her eye, scanning desperately.

SEES something massive in the darkness, moving fast, back towards the fence. A glimpse of SHEPPARD, dragged like a rag doll.

Then it's gone. The creature, and SHEPPARD, have vanished.

LENA (CONT'D)

SHEPPARD!

THORENSEN appears, holding her gun.

THORENSEN

What's going on? Where is she?

LENA

She's gone! She was right here next to me - and something took her! It was like a bear, or -

Sudden screaming.

High, desperate. And sustained.

It's SHEPPARD. But she's nowhere close. It's from the trees.

THORENSEN

... Oh Christ.

LENA, THORENSEN and DR VENTRESS start running toward the sound.

They reach the break in the fence.

But the forest beyond is immeasurably massive and dark, and the screams are from deep inside.

LENA calls out -

LENA

SHEPPARD!

SHEPPARD'S shrieking continues.

Then -

- abruptly stops.

EXT. THE SHIMMER - DAY

Daybreak, through the SHIMMER.

EXT. ABANDONED BASE/REC ROOM - DAY

RADEK is sat on the ground. Shaking uncontrollably.

DR VENTRESS sits on a chair, on the far side of the room, observing RADEK with a neutral expression.

LENA and THORENSEN are standing.

RADEK

We have to go back. We have to go back now.

THORENSEN

She's right.

DR VENTRESS

Right in what sense?

THORENSEN

We've been attacked twice, we've lost one of the team, and we have documentary evidence that the previous team were also under attack - not just by mutated creatures, but *each other*. How more 'right' could she be?

DR VENTRESS

We haven't reached the lighthouse. We still don't understand the cause or nature of the Shimmer.

THORENSEN

But we have data, observations, photographs, samples -

DR VENTRESS

- all of which make the phenomenon less explicable, not more.

THORENSEN

That's beside the point! Our mission parameters are to get into Area X, find something out, and live to tell the story.

DR VENTRESS

Mission parameters?

DR VENTRESS stands.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

I'm not sure I have any mission parameters.

THORENSEN shoots a glance at LENA.

THORENSEN

... What the Hell?

DR VENTRESS

I plan to get to the lighthouse. But I'm not going to pretend it's for a mission. It's because I want to know what's inside.

DR VENTRESS walks to the door.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

I'll do it alone, if need be. You simply decide whether you're coming with me, or not.

DR VENTRESS exits.

Leaving LENA, THORENSEN and RADEK alone.

Silence.

THORENSEN
... She's crazy.

Then THORENSEN turns to LENA.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
Thanks for the back-up, Kerans.

LENA
... I didn't know there were sides.

THORENSEN
There are sides.

LENA hesitates.

LENA
Okay. Then I agree with you. We
should be heading back.

THORENSEN looks relieved.

THORENSEN
Right. Good. The three of us can -

LENA
(interrupts)
Just a minute.

Beat.

THORENSEN already doesn't like this.

LENA (CONT'D)
We head back: yes. But I don't
think we do it by retracing the
route we took here. It took us
approximately four days to reach
this point, right? But the coast
is only two days away. And as
Sheppard pointed out: once we hit
the shore, we can follow it until
we hit the perimeter wall. It's
impossible to get lost, and it will
be easier terrain than making our
way back through the swamps.

THORENSEN
You're saying we get out by going
deeper in?

LENA
... If you like, yes.

THORENSEN

If I 'like'? No Kerans, I don't
fucking 'like'.

THORENSEN doesn't disguise her suspicion.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)

This isn't just a way of talking us
round so we keep heading for the
lighthouse.

LENA

It has nothing to do with the
lighthouse. I believe the coast is
the best route out. That's all.

Silence.

THORENSEN glances at RADEK.

The younger woman has closed her eyes. Just trying to block
it all out.

THORENSEN

(under her breath)

Shit.

EXT. ABANDONED BASE/REC ROOM HUT - DAY

LENA exits the hut. Wearing her backpack. Carrying her gun.

DR VENTRESS stands in the spot where SHEPPARD was attacked,
gazing towards the broken fence.

LENA approaches.

LENA

We're coming with you.

DR VENTRESS glances back at LENA.

DR VENTRESS

I knew you would be. But I'm glad
about the others. Better we stick
together.

DR VENTRESS shoulders her backpack.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

Incidentally, Lena, I just wanted
to say: on top of whatever else is
going here, you shouldn't worry.

LENA

... Worry about what?

DR VENTRESS
Your secret. It's safe with me.

LENA pauses.

LENA
'My secret'. You're talking about
my husband?

LENA lowers her voice.

LENA (CONT'D)
Is that not *our* secret? In that
you were the one who instructed me
to keep it.

DR VENTRESS shrugs.

DR VENTRESS
By all means. If that way of
seeing it is helpful to you.

THORENSEN and RADEK appear at the door to the REC ROOM HUT.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
(calls)
Are we good to go?

THORENSEN makes no reply.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

The four-person team walk in single file.

DR VENTRESS on point. Then RADEK. Then THORENSEN. Then
LENA.

As they walk, LENA becomes aware that THORENSEN is talking to
herself.

Low muttering. Unintelligible. It sounds like some kind of
internal private argument, unwittingly externalised.

LENA watches.

LENA
Hey Thorensen.

THORENSEN'S gaze flicks round.

There's a flash of something in her eyes.

Something like anger. Something like a lack of recognition.
As if whatever she's seeing at that moment, it isn't LENA.

Then it's gone.

THORENSEN
What?

LENA
You okay?

THORENSEN turns away.

THORENSEN
I'm fine. Leave me alone.

CUT TO -

- DR VENTRESS.

Suddenly stopping.

She's seen something just ahead.

Then RADEK sees it too. Puts a hand over her mouth.

As LENA reaches them, REVEAL -

- crushed undergrowth, forming a trail into the trees.

And along it, unmistakable splashes and smears of blood on the leaves.

RADEK
... Sheppard.

DR VENTRESS
Very likely.

LENA
She might still be alive.

DR VENTRESS
I think it's unlikely.

LENA
I think we need to know.

Beat.

DR VENTRESS
I'm not risking the entire mission.

LENA
Fine.

LENA cocks her rifle.

THORENSEN
I'll come with you, Kerans.

LENA glances at THORENSEN.

Again, sees something in her eyes. A slight sheen or glaze.
Something not quite right.

LENA
I'll go alone. Quicker, quieter.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

LENA heads through the swamp.

Gun raised. Following the blood trail.

From somewhere nearby, she hears a noise.

Perhaps the BEAR. Perhaps something else.

She freezes.

Looks into the trees.

There is movement in the foliage. Something could be out there - a creature, or person. Or equally it could be a trick of the light, and shadows.

LENA watches. Waits.

Sees something.

But it's not the BEAR.

It's a DEER.

Or a deer-like creature.

Elongated legs. Branch and leaf structures flowing out of its back.

Then - skittish - it's gone.

Sweat runs down LENA'S face. She blinks it out of her eyes.

Silence returns.

LENA heads on.

EXT. SWAMP/CLEARING - DAY

Dense foliage.

In it, we find LENA.

Crawling forwards on her belly.

She's seen something up ahead.

REVEAL -

- the end of the blood trail, in a clearing.

In the middle of the clearing, sunlit, is SHEPPARD. Lying on her back, facing upwards. Clothes soaked with blood.

LENA watches.

Waits.

No sound, except wind in trees.

INT. SWAMP/CLEARING - DAY

LENA cautiously approaches SHEPPARD'S body, gun raised, continually scanning the tree line.

As she reach her colleague -

- REVEAL SHEPPARD.

Her midriff is torn. Either bitten or clawed. Through the dark congealed blood and ripped material, we glimpse the blue-white coil of intestine.

But her face is intact.

There are flecks of blood on her cheek.

And her eyes are open.

Then -

- something very strange happens.

Her LEFT EYE - and her left eye only - makes a sudden jittering movement. Like a quiver.

LENA jumps.

LENA

Jesus!

Then SHEPPARD'S slightly parted lips move. As if just starting to form a word.

LENA (CONT'D)

... Sheppard?

CUT BACK to SHEPPARD'S face -

- as SHEPPARD'S mouth is pushed more fully open, which reveals that INSIDE her mouth, there is a creature.

The size of small snake. The texture and colour of worm.

SHEPPARD'S cheeks undulate gently with the movement.

And the LEFT EYE suddenly starts to sink into the socket, as if being consumed.

CUT TO -

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

- LENA, returning to where DR VENTRESS, THORENSEN and RADEK are waiting.

RADEK
Did you find her?

LENA
She's dead.

The finality in LENA'S voice dissuades follow-up questions.

Wordlessly, RADEK, THORENSEN and DR VENTRESS shoulder their backpacks.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Distant from the small group.

They are far figures, moving through the green.

Flitting in and out of view.

Then merged totally. Gone.

EXT. THE SUN - SUNDOWN

The light of the setting sun, refracting into a rainbow.

EXT. OUTSIDE VILLE PERDU - SUNDOWN

The four women stand on a dirt road.

Ahead is a small town. A backwater place. The twenty or so buildings are largely wooden and single-storey.

Plant-life has been busy reclaiming the structures.

The moss tumour-growths are even more extreme here. Some of the buildings are half-swallowed by the red and green clusters.

DR VENTRESS
This is where we camp tonight. The ocean is another two hours hike from here. We pick a house. Secure the windows and doors. And we don't venture out until sun-up.

EXT. VILLE PERDU - SUNDOWN

The women enter the town.

Not talking.

Scanning. Alert.

Weapons unslung, and hands resting with the finger above the trigger guard.

LENA is distracted by the sight of one of the houses - from which a tree has appeared to grow from the inside. Branches push out through the windows and roof shingles.

RADEK

Kerans.

The quiet urgency in RADEK'S voice makes everyone look round.

RADEK is frozen to the spot.

LENA follows her gaze -

- and jolts.

Twenty or so metres ahead, in the dark space between two of the buildings, there is what appears to be the silhouette of a MAN.

Motionless. Arms at his side. Facing them.

Only after registering the shape of the MAN does it become clear that there is something odd about him.

He's slightly misshapen. His arms and torso are too thin. His legs are too thick.

A beat.

No one has moved.

LENA takes a step towards the MAN. Raises a hand.

LENA

Hello?

The silhouette of the MAN doesn't react at all.

LENA takes another step -

- and the shift in perspective reveals another figure.

This one is behind the man, behind the building. Not in shadow, but caught in the light from the dropping sun.

It looks like a CHILD.

Also motionless, also misshapen.

But now, in the light, the oddness of the shape makes more sense.

The CHILD is not flesh and blood, but plant. A twisting root system form calves and feet, leading up to knotted branches and densely packed leaves.

Like a topiary.

EXT. VILLE PERDU/STATUE GARDEN - SUNDOWN

LENA, followed by the others, walks through the space between the buildings, past the shape of the MAN -

- into something that is like a statue garden.

In the space between the back of the houses and the tree-line of the forest, there are twenty or so plant figures.

Some of them have grown into reasonable facsimiles of a man, or woman, or a child.

Others are incomplete. The legs, and half the torso. An outstretched arm, becoming a tangle of twigs and leaves beyond the bicep.

Others have exploded far beyond the basic outline of a human, expanding out into tree structures.

THORENSEN

What are these things? Were they made by the people who lived here?

DR VENTRESS

Impossible. The area has been empty for years.

THORENSEN

Or made by one previous teams?

LENA examines a CHILD PLANT.

LENA

They haven't been cut this way.

LENA plucks a LEAF from the CHILD FIGURE.

LENA (CONT'D)

They've grown this way.

THORENSEN

What are you talking about? That makes no sense.

RADEK speaks quietly.

RADEK
I think it does.

RADEK has sat on the grass between two of the figures.

RADEK (CONT'D)
In fact, it makes total sense.

All turn to RADEK.

RADEK (CONT'D)
I'd thought the radio waves were blocked by the Shimmer, and that's why no one inside could communicate with base or GPS.

RADEK glances upwards.

RADEK (CONT'D)
But I look up. I see the sun. And the sky. The light waves aren't blocked.

Bright rainbow colours fringe the clouds above.

RADEK (CONT'D)
They're refracted.

RADEK reaches for her short-wave radio, hooked on her belt, and switches it on.

RADEK (CONT'D)
And it's the same with the radios. The signals aren't gone...

Through the STATIC FUZZ, there are sounds. Pulses. Soft distorted tones, that rise and fall.

RADEK (CONT'D)
... They're split. Scrambled.

RADEK switches the radio off.

Shifts her gaze to LENA.

RADEK (CONT'D)
The leaf in your hand. You know what you'd find if you sequenced it? Hox. Pax 6.

DR VENTRESS
Hox? What are you talking about?

LENA
They're the genes that define body structure. But in animals. Not plants.

RADEK

The plants have *arms*. The arms are attached to shoulders. The legs are attached to hips.

LENA is trying to collect her thoughts, mind racing.

LENA

No - they're just simulacra. Like a stick insect or chameleon. What you're saying is simply not possible.

RADEK

None of this is possible, Lena. But it's what's *happening*. The Shimmer is a prism. It refracts everything. Light, waves, fields, DNA.

RADEK hesitates.

RADEK (CONT'D)

All DNA.

THORENSEN interrupts, overwhelmed by confusion and frustration.

THORENSEN

Stop! Just - stop talking science. Speak English. What do you mean, 'All DNA'?

LENA

You know what she means, Thorensen. She means our DNA.

LENA lets the leaf drop.

LENA (CONT'D)

Whatever's happening to everything else will also be happening to us.

In the low sun, everything upright is silhouette, fringed with gold.

On the ground, the long shadows of the women and the plant statues are fringed with chromatic aberration, and are indistinguishable from each other.

INT. VILLE PERDU/HOUSE - NIGHT

The women are inside the FRONT ROOM of one of the abandoned houses.

The KITCHEN is off the front room.

The kitchen and living room windows have been barricaded, and LENA and THORENSEN are positioning a heavy dresser to jam the front door.

Once it's in place, LENA turns to the others.

LENA
You all get some sleep. I'm
keeping first watch.

EXT. THE MOON - NIGHT

The moon in the sky, through the Shimmer.

INT. VILLE PERDU/HOUSE/FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

LENA sits at the dining table. The room is lit by her upended flashlight. She's removed the top, exposing the bulb, like a candle.

She's watching the other three.

Laid out on their bedding. Their soft breathing.

Satisfying herself that they're all asleep.

Then she quietly opens her backpack.

Removes a small case. Inside is the equipment we saw her select from the Southern Reach laboratory.

A field microscope. A scalpel.

She removes a blade from a sealed foil packet.

Clips a blade into the scalpel.

Then she rolls up her left shirt sleeve.

It reveals her forearm -

- and the unexplained BRUISE she first noticed while talking to SHEPPARD as they paddled through the swamp.

The mark is now darker. And larger. Roughly circular, with a slight indication of a pattern. It's as the bruise were painted with ink on wet paper, and the marks have blurred into something too abstract to understand.

LENA gazes at the strange, oddly malign shape.

Then pushes the scalpel into it. Drawing blood from the dark marks.

A beat.

The sight of the crimson bead has hypnotised her.

CUT TO -

INT. VILLE PERDU/HOUSE - NIGHT

- LENA leaning over her microscope.

CUT TO -

- extreme CLOSE UP on blood cells. The biconcave shape are clearly visible.

The MAGNIFICATION increases. We see inside the translucent cell structure...

... Where something is *shimmering*.

CUT TO -

- LENA, leaning away from the microscope.

Blank-faced.

Then she stands, walks past the apparently sleeping figures of RADEK, THORENSEN and DR VENTRESS.

INT. VILLE PERDU/HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

LENA enters the KITCHEN.

Goes directly to the sink.

And - quietly, with a minimum of fuss - throws up.

When she has finished, she turns around -

- and sees RADEK. Standing at the kitchen door. Looking at her.

RADEK
Well?

LENA
Your thesis is correct.

RADEK
What did you see?

LENA
It's in me.

RADEK
It'll be in all of us.

LENA
... I imagine so.

RADEK exhales.

Beat.

RADEK
Do you think you can get any sleep?

LENA doesn't answer.

RADEK (CONT'D)
You should try.

CUT TO -

EXT. SKY - DAY

- CLOSE UP on the MOON in daylight.

CUT TO -

INT. JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICAL SCHOOL/SEMINAR ROOM - DAY

- LENA, talking to her students.

LENA
So we can describe cancer as a genetic mutation that causes unregulated cell growth. But genetic mutation is also the reason we exist. We wouldn't have evolved from the single-cell organism from which we're all derived.

LENA pauses.

LENA (CONT'D)
I think it's partly why cancer frightens us. It doesn't just hurt us, and kill us. It changes us.

CUT TO -

EXT. VILLE PERDU/STATUE GARDEN - NIGHT

- the moonlit human shapes in the statue garden.

Not quite motionless. Moving gently in wind.

CUT TO -

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

- LENA'S face, moonlit.

Seen over a man's shoulder.

In bed. Having sex.

CUT TO -

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

- LENA.

Now sitting at her bedroom window. Gazing out at the night sky over the suburban street.

REVEAL the man on the bed behind her.

It isn't KANE.

It's her work colleague. DANIEL.

Beats pass.

Then LENA speaks.

LENA
This was a mistake.

DANIEL
Okay...

He pauses.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
... But it's a mistake we keep making. It's not exactly the first time I've been in your bed, or you in mine. Whenever he goes away, we find ourselves right here.

LENA
It's still a mistake.

DANIEL half-laughs.

DANIEL
You want to have this conversation again?

Silence.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Fine. Let's have it again. You spend more time away from your husband than with him.
(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)
You can't talk to him about your work, and he won't talk to you about his. And there is a clear physical and intellectual connection between us. Have I covered the bases?

LENA
You didn't mention your wife.

DANIEL
I love my wife, as I always make plain. She's blameless in this.

DANIEL sits up in bed.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Come on, Lena. What's really going on here?

LENA doesn't answer. She's zoned him out.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Is it because you haven't heard from him? You think...

DANIEL hesitates.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
... You think something may have happened to him?

Beat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Or you think he knows. That's it, isn't it? You think somehow he's found out about our affair.

The note of anxiety in DANIEL'S voice pulls LENA out of her glaze. He's clearly more worried by the idea that KANE knows about their affair than KANE being KIA.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
... Has he found out?

LENA glances back at DANIEL.

Watches him for a moment.

Flat. Dead.

LENA
You should go.

DANIEL frowns.

DANIEL
Look, Lena, I -

LENA
Dan.

DANIEL cuts himself off.

LENA (CONT'D)
I'm not interested in talking to
you, or anything you have to say.
Just get dressed and get out, will
you?

A beat.

Then DANIEL stands.

Starts to put on his clothes.

DANIEL
You know it's not me you hate.
It's yourself.

LENA
No, Dan. It's you too.

LENA turns away, back to the window.

CLOSE ON LENA'S FACE.

LENA (CONT'D)
This is never going to happen
again.

She shuts her eyes.

Behind her, out of sight, we hear DANIEL leave.

Then -

- we hear THORENSEN'S voice.

THORENSEN (O.S.)
You lying bitch.

The voice intrudes in the way an alarm clock intrudes on a
dream. The sudden awareness that the alarm is real, and the
dream is not.

CUT TO -

INT. VILLE PERDU/HOUSE/FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

- LENA opening her eyes.

Sees THORENSEN and RADEK.

DR VENTRESS is nowhere to be seen.

RADEK looks terrified.

And THORENSEN is leaning over LENA. Eyes wide, lips curled back over teeth.

Holding her automatic rifle. Pointed at LENA'S head.

LENA startles - waking fast. Sitting upright.

LENA

... What's going on?

THORENSEN

You don't get to ask that question.
You get to answer it.

RADEK tosses something.

It lands on LENA'S lap.

LENA looks down -

- and sees KANE'S face, looking at her out of her open SILVER LOCKET.

LENA'S blood freezes.

She looks up -

- just in time to see THORENSEN spin her rifle around, and smashes the stock down. Knocking LENA out cold.

CUT TO BLACK.

Then **CUT TO** -

INT. VILLE PERDU/HOUSE/FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

- the view-finder POV of a CAMERA, as it POWERS UP.

The camera is being handheld by RADEK, and is filming LENA and DR VENTRESS -

- who are both tied to kitchen chairs. Wrists bound behind their backs. Ankles tied to the chair legs.

Blood has run down LENA'S face from a cut inside her hair-line.

DR VENTRESS is bruised under the eye.

THORENSEN stands in front of them, holding her gun.

DR VENTRESS

Thorensen -

THORENSEN'S gun swings immediately to DR VENTRESS.

THORENSEN
(cuts in)
Shut up.

The gun swings back to LENA.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
Keep talking, Kerans.

CUT OUT from RADEK'S camera POV. *The rest of the scene intercuts the camera footage with normal photography.*

LENA
But Thorensen, I'm telling you - that's all there is to it! He's my husband. He was on the previous mission. He went in, came out, and was sick, and I needed to understand what had happened to him. I thought maybe if I knew what had damaged him, I could -

THORENSEN
(cuts in)
Bullshit. You think I don't know this whole thing's a set-up? You two - you've been working together. You tricked us. You lied to us. You led us here.

THORENSEN'S gun swings back DR VENTRESS.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
Tell me I'm wrong.

DR VENTRESS
You're wrong. But you're also not interested hearing in the truth.

DR VENTRESS looks at THORENSEN. Hard. Unfazed.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
Or not able.

THORENSEN
What do you mean by that?

DR VENTRESS
Isn't it obvious?

DR VENTRESS looks to the VIDEO CAMERA - to RADEK.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

Tell me, Radek. If the Shimmer is refracting us physically, couldn't it refract us psychologically too? Our perception? Our minds?

THORENSEN

Wow. You're a real piece of work, Ventress.

DR VENTRESS

Does Thorensen's behaviour seem rational to you at this moment? Does it seem sane?

THORENSEN

See what she's trying to do, Radek? See how she's trying to twist this?

DR VENTRESS turns back to THORENSEN.

DR VENTRESS

You really can't see that what's happening in this room is exactly what happened on the previous missions?

RADEK

Thorensen - it is possible. What she's saying.

THORENSEN

Jesus Christ! Don't listen to her!

RADEK

But it *is* possible! Think about what's happening in this place. The things we're seeing. We could all be locked in some kind of rolling hallucination -

AT THAT MOMENT -

- RADEK is interrupted by the sound of SCREAMING.

It's a woman. Coming from somewhere outside.

And we've heard it before. It's the sound SHEPPARD made as she was being killed in the forest.

The screams fade out.

A beat of stunned silence in the room.

Broken by THORENSEN.

THORENSEN

Sheppard.

LENA
... It can't be Sheppard.

THORENSEN
That was her.

LENA
I saw her body.

Another sudden burst of screaming.

This time, it sounds much closer, and within it, we can hear words.

SHEPPARD (O.S.)
Help me - oh God please - please
help me -

It cuts out again.

DR VENTRESS
Kerans?

LENA
She was *dead!* I *saw* her *body!*

THORENSEN
You're telling me that's not Sheppard?

LENA
It can't be real!

THORENSEN
So it's a 'hallucination'? That we're all *sharing?*

BANG.

All jump.

Something has knocked against the barricaded FRONT DOOR of the house.

All heads turn to the sound of the noise.

RADEK
(hyperventilating)
What was that?

SHEPPARD (O.S.)
Please - please -

SHEPPARD'S voice is right outside the door.

Something scratches against the wood.

THORENSEN
 (calls)
 Sheppard?

SHEPPARD (O.S.)
*Please, Thorensen, is that you? Oh
 God, I'm hurt, I'm hurt -*

THORENSEN
 Fuck.

THORENSEN starts for the door.

DR VENTRESS
 Thorensen, no!

LENA struggles against her bindings.

LENA
 Radek - untie me!

SHEPPARD (O.S.)
I'm bleeding -

THORENSEN
 It's her! I've got to let her in!

RADEK is frozen, staring at the door -

- as THORENSEN starts pushing back the dresser that
 barricades it.

THORENSEN (CONT'D)
 Sheppard - hold on -

SHEPPARD (O.S.)
Hurry -

DR VENTRESS
 NO!

LENA
 (yells)
Radek! Untie me NOW!

RADEK finally reacts. Moves to LENA, pulling her KNIFE -
 - but too late.

THORENSEN has pulled the dresser back, and pulled the door
 open.

It reveals the huge plant-enmeshed BEAR-CREATURE that killed
 her.

Lit now in the light from the room.

- is the huge shape of the plant-enmeshed BLACK BEAR.

Eyes reflecting light from the room as bright yellow discs.
 Long thorns cresting over its head and shoulders.
 Oddly elongated claws, like a long hooks of a sloth.

THORENSEN
 ... Sheppard?

The BEAR lifts a paw. And makes a simple motion - an upwards swipe across THORENSEN'S midriff.

THORENSEN bends forward. And something wet and heavy splashes out of her stomach, onto the floor.

Then she drops to her knees, then pitches forwards...

... at the feet of the BEAR.

The BEAR turns to look at RADEK.

And opens its jaws, as if to howl.

But instead, it emits SHEPPARD'S high, desperate scream.

OVER THE SCREAM -

LENA
 GET ME OUT!

- RADEK'S knife slices through the rope tying LENA'S hands -

- just as the BEAR-CREATURE forces its way into the room.

Charging RADEK, LENA, and DR VENTRESS.

The women are knocked violently aside.

LENA'S CHAIR breaks as she lands -

- allowing LENA to kick out of the ropes that tie her ankles.

She crawls across the floor -

- as the BEAR turns to RADEK -

- and spears RADEK through the CHEST with a hooked claw.

Lifting RADEK into the air, her feet leaving the ground.

RADEK is impaled but alive. Hyperventilating. Legs bicycling in the air. Hands trying pull herself off the claw.

LENA scrambles across the floor.

Reaching for THORENSEN'S weapon, which lies beside her body.

Grabbing it.

Turning -

- as the BEAR turns, still holding RADEK suspended.

And LENA OPENS FIRE with the AUTOMATIC RIFLE.

Emptying the entire clip into the BEAR'S freakishly deformed head.

For a moment it remains upright.

Then it topples like a felled tree.

CUT TO THORENSEN -

- on the floor, expelling a final gurgling breath, as she dies.

EXT. VILLE PERDU - SUNRISE

First light, over the town.

EXT. VILLE PERDU/HOUSE/PORCH - SUNRISE

RADEK sits on the porch of the house, slumped on a rotting wicker chair.

Her chest is bandaged - but the bandage is soaked through with blood. Her skin looks like white wax.

Her eyes open.

She sees LENA sitting beside her.

LENA holds a water bottle to RADEK'S lips.

RADEK
... Thank you.

RADEK'S voice is weak.

She drinks a little.

RADEK (CONT'D)
... Dr Ventress?

LENA
Gone, about half an hour ago. The coast isn't far, so I'm sure she'll make it. The only real purpose of this expedition was to give her a chance to reach the lighthouse. Find out what's inside, after all these years.

LENA pauses.

LENA (CONT'D)
I don't much like her. But I'm
glad she'll get what she wanted.

A beat.

Then RADEK glances at LENA.

RADEK
Why didn't you leave me here?

LENA says nothing.

RADEK (CONT'D)
I can't survive these injuries.
You know that.

No answer.

RADEK (CONT'D)
You plan going to stay with me.
Until I die.

LENA
Yes.

RADEK nods.

Then pauses.

RADEK
It was strange, hearing Sheppard's
voice last night. I suspect that
as she was dying, part of her mind
became part of the creature that
was killing her.

Beat.

RADEK (CONT'D)
It's a terrible thought. To die
frightened and in pain, and have
that as the only part of you which
survives. Trapped in the mind of
an animal.

Beat.

RADEK (CONT'D)
I wonder if I'll be trapped in you.

Silence.

RADEK (CONT'D)
There's morphine in the medical
kits.

LENA

Radek -

RADEK

Give me whatever's left. Shut my
mind down. Then shoot me.

LENA

Radek, please. Don't ask me to do
this.

Silence.

RADEK'S gaze remains fixed on LENA'S face.

Eventually, LENA has to meet it.

EXT. VILLE PERDU/STATUE GARDEN - DAY

Sunlight in the statue garden.

A few beats of quiet.

Then the sound of a single gunshot.

The retort slaps off the sides of the houses, then vanishes
into the forest.

A few beats later, LENA appears.

Face drained of colour and emotion.

She stares at the foliate people.

CUT TO -

- the statue garden.

LENA has set all the figures on fire.

She's watching them burn.

And she's howling with rage and grief. For RADEK, SHEPPARD,
THORENSEN, and KANE.

Setting fire to the forest feels like revenge.

From orange flames, wrapped around human forms -

- CUT TO BLACK.

CAPTION:

PART 3 - THE LIGHTHOUSE

CUT TO -

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A long hook of beach, where the swamp gives way to the sea.

Massively empty. Miles of undulating dunes, and the great flat ocean.

Along the beach, strange shapes rise.

Visually similar to the tumour-like growths on the plants and buildings...

... but these are made of sand. Like massive termite mounds, as much as thirty foot high, morphed into spires and oddly organic abstractions.

Only one other landmark can be seen.

A couple of miles distant, seen through a blue haze of air and sea spray.

The LIGHTHOUSE.

Slender, tall. And white - where one can still see of the original construction, behind the brightly coloured moss.

Leading that direction, a snaking line of footprints are clearly visible in the damp sand.

The trail left by DR VENTRESS.

CUT TO -

LENA.

Standing on the pale sands.

Wind pulls at her hair.

She looks down at her arm...

... where the BRUISE has now resolved into something immediately recognisable.

The dark circle and blurred indication of patterns have become a TATTOO.

Exactly the same distinctive image that THORENSEN wore.

The *ouroboros*.

She touches it with her thumb, as half-expecting it might wipe away.

And when she pulls her thumb away -

- something *moves* in her flesh.

Not just a flex. Much more fundamental.

A bone, shifting and contracting.

Or a muscle, worming its way to a new position.

LENA closes her eyes.

EXT. THE OCEAN - DAY

From the ocean, a single figure walks along the shore.

Between the abstract SAND STRUCTURES.

In the foreground, the back of a huge whale-like creature breaks the surface...

... then slides back beneath the waves.

EXT. BEACH/LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

LENA stands on the beach.

The LIGHTHOUSE is still a few hundred metres away.

The area here is littered with bones and scraps of clothing.

The scene of a massacre, many years ago.

Blown and blasted by the wind, sand, sun, and salt.

The bones look like ivory. A bright red backpack has been bleached pink. The body beneath it has almost been completely submerged into the dune.

LENA reaches down and picks up the top half of a skull.

The back of the skull morphs into the star-shape of a vertebrae, as it had been fused with its own backbone.

LENA drops it back on the sand.

Then continues towards the tall white lighthouse building.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

From the top of the lighthouse, we watch LENA approach.

Below, at its base, its door hangs open, swinging in the sea breeze, knocking gently against its frame.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

LENA enters the base of the lighthouse.

Light filters down from the window, thirty metres above.

It illuminates a round room, with some specific features.

A wooden staircase winds up the circular wall to the top of the structure.

Abandoned on the floor, there is some MILITARY GEAR. A BACKPACK, surrounded by cannister-shaped GRENADES, and a RIFLE.

Opposite where LENA enters, there is a TUNNEL in the floor, about two metres in diameter. At its entrance, the wooden boards have been pulled up, and laid out as a kind of ramp structure, leading downwards.

INSIDE the tunnel something glows. The soft blue-green light of phosphorescence.

Finally, in the middle of the room there is a VIDEO CAMERA on a tripod. The camera faces a long black scorch mark, rising up the curved wall, from a blackened heap on the ground. The nature of the heap is unclear. It's charred and fused beyond all recognition.

LENA takes this all in.

Her gaze finally settling on the CAMERA.

CUT TO -

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

- the PLAYBACK ON THE CAMERA.

Which opens TIGHT on SHELLEY screaming:

SHELLY
GET AWAY! GET AWAY FROM ME!

It's a blurred, shaking image.

PEYTON is trying to hold SHELLEY, who is bare-chested, and struggling violently.

KANE is holding a rifle on them both.

All the soldiers are unkempt. Unwashed. Bearded.

KANE

Let him go for Christ's sake!

PEYTON releases SHELLEY.

SHELLEY breaks away. Running for a tree-line.

KANE opens fire.

CUT TO -

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

- SHELLEY, lying in the grass, filmed by the CAMERAMAN.

KANE and PEYTON stand either side.

We can see that SHELLEY has been shot in the chest.

He's not dead yet. He's making a wheezing sound, as his punctured lungs collapse.

Now that the camera is focused and steady, we can also see that SHELLEY has some extremely strange deformations.

On his neck, there is a split, or opening. Effectively a large tracheotomy, shaped as a sideways mouth, running from the concave skin above his collar bone to under his chin.

Inside the mouth, where there might be a tongue, there is something fat and white and red. It looks like a skinned SNAKE. Air bubbles through the blood around it, and the SNAKE is writhing slowly.

There are more deformations on SHELLEY'S arms. Each one is split, just below the elbow, into two.

Each split has secondary protrusions, finger-like, at irregular intervals.

PEYTON looks haunted. Jaw locked into a rictus.

PEYTON

Oh God, Shelley...

KANE cuts PEYTON off -

- by lifting his gun and firing a quick burst into SHELLEY.

In SHELLEY'S throat, the skinned SNAKE judders and contorts.

Then stops moving.

KANE pulls at PEYTON'S shoulder.

KANE
Come on.

CUT TO -

EXT. BEACH - DAY

- the BEACH.

KANE and PEYTON are standing on the sand, facing the ocean.
They appear to be waiting for something.

After a few seconds, it appears.

First, a disturbance in the water - as if caused by a quake
on the seabed, a hundred metres from the shore.

KANE jabs a finger.

KANE
There. It's coming again.

Then an area of water is rising, as if forming a hill.

Then the surface of the water breaks -

- and a DOLPHIN launches itself into the air.

The DOLPHIN is the size of a BLUE WHALE.

The vast creature holds for a moment, suspended in mid-air,
before gravity takes hold. Pulls it down with an almighty
crash.

KANE turns to the CAMERAMAN. Wired. Wide-eyed.

KANE (CONT'D)
Unreal.

CUT TO -

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

GREEN & WHITE NIGHT VISION.

PEYTON is firing his machine gun at the night sky.

Bright tracer rounds arc into the stars, dipping slightly,
then burning out.

KANE
What the Hell are you doing?

PEYTON
Killing it.

KANE
You're just shooting at stars.

PEYTON
Where the fuck you think it came
from?

He fires off another full clip.

KANE
Quit wasting rounds! You're losing
it, Peyton!

PEYTON laughs. Slams in a fresh magazine.

PEYTON
(to himself)
Losing it. Oh man.

Turns to face KANE and the CAMERAMAN.

PEYTON (CONT'D)
Have you two taken a look in the
mirror recently? Or even a look at
each other? Cause you *really*
fucking should.

PEYTON flips to his rifle's underslung GRENADE LAUNCHER.

PEYTON (CONT'D)
Eat it, you son of a bitch!

A hollow thump - as the grenade is fired.

Then an explosion high in the air, like a firework,
momentarily lighting up the sand and water.

Then a moment of quiet.

Waves lapping on the shore.

KANE
Think you got it?

PEYTON makes a sobbing sound.

CUT TO -

EXT. BEACH/LIGHTHOUSE

- the CAMERAMAN recording the area of bones, in the dunes
near the lighthouse.

CUT TO -

EXT. BEACH/LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

- KANE and PEYTON.

They're a little distance away from the camera, where the dunes get flattened by the tides.

PEYTON seems to be having some kind of seizure.

He's on all fours, head dipped, with his spine buckling as if he's retching.

KANE isn't helping.

He just holds his rifle. Watching.

Then PEYTON lifts his head -

- revealing there is something wrong with the shape of his skull. At this distance, it's hard to tell what. Some kind of deformation that has elongated his face.

Some words are exchanged between them.

A beat.

Then KANE shoots PEYTON.

CUT TO -

EXT. BEACH - DAY

- KANE.

He's a long way distant from the camera. Standing waist-deep in the ocean.

After a few moments, KANE starts pounding the water with his fists. Screaming and yelling.

The rage is miniaturised by the scale of the landscape. Voice almost lost against the surf.

Then he stops.

And looks back towards the CAMERAMAN.

Stares.

CUT TO -

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

- KANE, walking towards the lighthouse.

Through the towering SAND STRUCTURES.

CUT TO -

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

- KANE entering the lighthouse.

He slips off his BACKPACK.

Lays down his RIFLE.

CUT TO -

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

- GREEN & WHITE NIGHT VISION.

The camera position is locked-off, on a tripod, in the middle of the room.

It faces KANE.

KANE is sat on the floor, cross-legged, with his back to the curved wall.

Holding something in his hands.

KANE

I thought I was a man.

KANE pauses.

KANE (CONT'D)

I had a life. People called me Kane. But now I'm not sure.

Beat.

KANE (CONT'D)

If I wasn't Kane, what was I?

KANE looks at the CAMERAMAN.

KANE (CONT'D)

Was I you? Were you me?

The CAMERAMAN doesn't answer.

KANE (CONT'D)

My flesh moves like liquid. My mind is cut loose.

Beat.

Then KANE looks straight down the lens.

His pupils glow like a cat's eye in the infra-red light.

KANE (CONT'D)
I can't bear it.

He opens his palm.

He's holding one of the cannister-shaped GRENADES.

He glances up at the CAMERAMAN.

KANE (CONT'D)
Ever see a phosphorous grenade go
off? Shield your eyes. They're
kind of bright.

KANE hesitates.

KANE (CONT'D)
And if you ever get back, find
Lena.

CAMERAMAN
I will.

KANE pulls the pin on the grenade.

There is a soft quick ticking, like wristwatch by your ear.

KANE gazes directly at the camera. Unafraid.

KANE
Five, four, three, two -

THE NEXT MOMENT -

- the grenade detonates.

A blinding white flame, as if KANE is suddenly holding the
sun in his lap. A high pressure rush of noise.

Initially, we can scarcely see KANE'S shape through the glow.

Then it dims slightly, starting to burn itself out.

We see his blackened shape bend. Fall forwards onto the sun.

A couple of moments pass.

The flare continues to die down.

Then -

- the CAMERAMAN walks forward. Stepping into frame.

It's our first ever view of him.

His back is to us.

He gazes at the hunched charcoal figure, as it continues to blaze with the fierce white light.

Then he turns his head. And in the etched light of the phosphorous, we see his face.

It's KANE.

ON THIS -

- the image FREEZES.

CUT TO -

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - DAY

- LENA.

Staring at the small screen on the camera, which remains frozen on KANE'S face.

LENA
(whispers)
No.

Her eyes flick to the blackened heap under the scorch marks.

Now able to make sense of the shape.

LENA (CONT'D)
No, no, no...

She is interrupted by a sound.

A distorted scream. Echoed and distant, as if having passed through passages and chambers.

Female.

DR VENTRESS.

It's coming from the torn up floorboards. The TUNNEL, that leads down into bedrock.

LENA looks to where the floorboards have been pulled up.

To the tunnel entrance, and the soft blue-green light.

LENA controls her fear.

Knuckles white around the grip of her rifle.

INT. UNDER THE LIGHTHOUSE/TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

LENA makes her way down the tunnel, gun raised.

The walls continue the curve of the lighthouse above, and the floor is sloping downwards -

- which means the passage is corkscrewing into the ground.

It is unclear how the rock has been cleared. The walls, ceiling, and floor are made of smooth black rock, like obsidian.

The rock is rippled, as if worn smooth by an ancient stream or lava flow.

It is seamed with PHOSPHORESCENCE - illuminating everything in the way that sea creatures light their way in the depths.

And the walls seem to be moving.

Or gently undulating.

The surface of the walls are covered in CILIA. Tiny anemone arms waving, caught in the flow of slow-moving water.

The flow movement is *down*. Deeper into the tunnel. As if what lies *inside* is feeding on what lies *outside*, and being channeled along a vein and capillary structure.

INT. UNDER THE LIGHTHOUSE/TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

As if from LENA'S POV -

- we continue.

And as we circle downwards, the ripples on the smooth black rock walls become more pronounced.

Then stop being random undulations...

... and become FORMS.

Organic. Embedded into the rock like fossils.

First, there are fractal PLANT shapes. Leaf, branch, fern.

Then, in the flora, there are ANIMALS. The patterned armour of an alligator, or its teeth, of the fat swirl of tail. The snout and claw of a bear. The curls of snakes. The feather imprints of birds wings.

And then - we start to see HUMANS.

A torso. An arm. A face, trying to push out from between the other forms. Or finger tips, stretched out, as if trying to grab or be grabbed.

The tunnel has become a tableau. A boiling sea of people and creatures - melded and frozen in black marble.

Animal into plant. Plant into human. Human into animal.

And then -

- movement.

Treacle slow, but unambiguous. No longer frozen. No longer fossils.

The walls are alive.

Or the things inside them are not dead.

And at the moment of that realisation -

- the tunnel suddenly stops, and opens out into a CHAMBER.

INT. UNDER THE LIGHTHOUSE/CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The chamber is roughly semi-spherical. Three quarters of a sphere, with the bottom levelled out into a floor.

The sculpted forms of humans and animals continue across the floor, but as they rise up the walls they taper into curved points.

Either side of these points, the walls are glassy smooth.

The arrangement is similar to petals, as if we are on the inside of flower before it has unfurled. The interior of a vast lotus bulb.

The very center of the chamber is particularly bright - because it is to here that the phosphorescent veins and channels all lead.

And standing on this brightest point -

- is DR VENTRESS.

The doctor is *internally* lit. Cilia cover her skin like undulating fur. She shimmers gently.

LENA hesitates in the entrance.

She looks around.

Up at the petal structure.

Down at the energy feed beneath DR VENTRESS.

Then back to the glowing figure of the doctor.

LENA takes a step inside the chamber.

LENA
... Doctor Ventress?

DR VENTRESS turns to LENA.

She has the same expression as KANE when he appeared back home.

Alzheimer's-like. In her eyes there is confusion. But through the confusion, a vibrating sense of fear.

LENA (CONT'D)

Dr Ventress - what's happened to you?

DR VENTRESS hesitates. As if half-remembering.

DR VENTRESS

I had to know what it was. What was waiting. I had to know.

Beat.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

And now it's inside me. I can feel it.

LENA

... It's inside you?

DR VENTRESS

Yes.

LENA

What is inside you?

DR VENTRESS

Something old. The very oldest thing. From so far away. From stars. Of stars.

LENA

... Something alien?

DR VENTRESS

Yes. *Alien*.

DR VENTRESS looks down at her glowing hands.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

It's not *like* me. It's not *like* me at all. I don't know what it wants. I don't know what it wants from me.

The cilia on her palms move like wind over a wheat field.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)

I think it doesn't want anything. It doesn't care. It doesn't feel anything.

As she talks, something disturbing begins to happen to DR VENTRESS.

Splits, complex fissures, start rippling across her skin. As if her form is becoming unbalanced.

She can feel it. The panic is rising in her voice.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
It's more than death. Nothing of
what we are will remain. It's
going to annihilate us. That's
what it is. That's what's waiting.
It's *annihilation*.

DR VENTRESS looks back at LENA desperately. Panic now surging.

DR VENTRESS (CONT'D)
Annihilation.

Then DR VENTRESS can't speak any more.

She has started undergoing an extraordinary physical transformation.

It is a shape-shift of a kind that our mind cannot entirely make sense of - like a computer animation of a four dimensional shape casting a three dimensional shadow. A vector cube that unfolds and refolds from within itself, its interior indefinitely becoming its exterior.

IN THIS CASE - it is the doctor's skin that is unfolding and refolding.

Her face splits open like a starfish.

From out of the starfish, multiple circles of radiating objects emerge. Gold orbs, each with unique radiating Mandelbrot-like ferns.

The rainbow ferns radiate ever-increasing size and complexity.

The concentric circles are endless.

The sense of expansion becomes vast.

Until the mesh of immense structural detail becomes -

- the mesh of undulating CILIA on skin.

But DR VENTRESS is gone.

Where she stood, there is a shape.

The ALIEN.

A BEING.

An uncoalescing, fracturing form. Made of light, and ice, liquid. Endless refractions.

Glimpsed within these deliquescing shapes, a creature from the world of electron microscope images.

Surrounded by radiating impressions of infinitely smaller versions of itself.

LENA and the BEING gaze at each other for a few hypnotic seconds.

Then the BEING starts UNFOLDING again. Expanding, collapsing in on itself.

And this time, during the TRANSFORMATION -

- we see fleeting glimpses of other bodies and faces. SHEPPARD and THORENSEN. PEYTON and MAYER. Unknown team members from the previous expeditions.

For a moment it is RADEK who stands in front of LENA.

Then DR VENTRESS again.

Then the RADIATING SHAPES have filled the chamber.

They surround LENA.

Then LENA herself is starting to unfold. Unravel like fabric.

LENA

No -

Through this -

- she lifts her gun.

Like a dream -

- which shatters, the moment she squeezes the trigger and FIRES.

BULLETS slam into the BEING.

The rounds have an amazing effect.

Where they hit the body, a hole expands, like a bullet into ballistic gelatine - but does not contract.

Where they penetrate the body, they leave bright trails of emerald light, like sunlight through dust motes.

For a moment, the BEING is poised in this state.

Hugely misshapen.

Speared with brilliant green.

Then it EXPANDS.

TRANSFORMS.

And RESOLVES -

- into a HUMANOID FIGURE.

Sexless. Featureless. Having the arms, legs, head and torso of a human - man or woman. But nothing else.

No eyes, or mouth, or nose, or muscle form.

LENA is transfixed by the sight.

The FIGURE turns to LENA.

And we see its smooth facial area. *Internally* lit. Cilia covering the skin like undulating fur, shimmering gently.

A beat, between the woman and the humanoid.

LENA'S weapon is out.

She has no more clips.

She starts to run.

The HUMANOID observes her run.

Then it starts to follow her.

The first step is slow.

The second faster.

The third is as fluid and powerful as LENA.

It starts sprinting.

INT. UNDER THE LIGHTHOUSE/TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

LENA sprints back up the tunnel.

Stumbling over the shifting melded animal/human shapes.

Crashing to the ground.

Scrambling back up.

CUT TO -

- the HUMANOID. In pursuit.

And we see something strange happen.

Where LENA fell and tripped -

- *the HUMANOID does exactly the same thing.*

Falling in the same place. In the same way. A simulacrum of LENA'S action.

CUT TO -

- LENA, reaching the TUNNEL exit.

Climbing back up into the base of the lighthouse.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LENA scrambles across the room -

- towards the door to the LIGHTHOUSE.

But she doesn't make it.

The HUMANOID simply appears in front of her, before she reaches the door.

It is unclear how it got there.

A frozen beat.

Then LENA STRIKES the HUMANOID with all her strength.

And moment later, *in a mirror of her actions -*

- the HUMANOID STRIKES HER BACK - but with incredible power.

LENA is sent flying backwards across the room.

She collides with the CAMERA and TRIPOD.

All skid across the room to the wall.

But it has provided LENA with a weapon. As the HUMANOID reapproaches her, she picks up the TRIPOD and swings it like a club, smashing the camera against the HUMANOID'S head.

And again, the HUMANOID mirrors the actions. Using its arm like a club.

For a second time, LENA is sent hurtling back across the room by the force of the impact.

But this time towards KANE'S BACKPACK.

She collides with it, and the PHOSPHOROUS GRENADES beside it.

And as she gets to her feet, the HUMANOID is again on her. Standing directly in front of her. Featureless, eyeless, but somehow *watching*.

Utterly, infinitely more powerful than she is.

For the first time, we see something beaten in LENA. Something broken.

LENA

Please -

She expects a killing blow.

And flinches -

- *and the HUMANOID does the same.*

LENA sees.

She immediately realises what we already know. The HUMANOID is mimicking her.

She is fighting *herself*.

We can see her thinking: *can this be true.*

The killing blow still hasn't come.

LENA lifts a hand.

Fingers trembling with adrenaline and fear.

And the HUMANOID'S opposite hand also rises.

She pauses.

The HUMANOID'S hand pauses.

LENA'S hand starts moving again. Until -

- she touches its cheek.

An exact mirror of the gesture where she touched KANE'S face at the start of the film, when he appeared at their bedroom at home.

A beat.

Then the HUMANOID raises its hand.

LENA holds motionless, suspended, except for tight breathing and trickling beads of sweat, as the softly glowing hand lifts to her face...

... Then -

- lightly touches her cheek also.

And as it does so -

- the HUMANOID starts another FOLDING TRANSFORMATION.

Rippling, folding, collapsing.

And this time, resolving itself as KANE.

LENA gasps.

For a moment, the two face each other.

Then LENA opens her mouth to speak.

LENA (CONT'D)

... Kane?

Beat.

KANE

Kane?

Another beat.

REVEAL - at LENA'S feet - the PHOSPHOROUS GRENADES.

CLOSE, on LENA. Processing. Controlling herself.

Then - slowly -

- she reaches down.

Opposite her, in a slightly delayed mirror action -

- KANE does the same.

LENA'S hand closes around one of the metal cannisters.

KANE does the same.

LENA rises again. Never taking her eyes off KANE'S face.

KANE rises.

A final beat.

LENA watching KANE'S face.

LENA

(whispers)

I'm sorry.

Then LENA pulls the pin.

KANE mirrors.

Soft ticking from the cannisters.

Seconds passing.

LENA (CONT'D)
(breathes)
Five, four, three, two -

Then -

LENA drops the grenade -

- and throws herself sideways.

KANE'S head turns, sees -

- but he's too late to fully react.

LENA'S PHOSPHOROUS GRENADE DETONATES.

And a moment later, so does KANE'S.

The interior of the lighthouse is suddenly illuminated by stark white light.

The route to the exit is blocked by the blaze.

LENA scrambles for the STAIRS that spiral up to the top of the LIGHTHOUSE.

Climbs upwards.

Beneath her is LIGHT and SMOKE.

In the brightness, we can glimpse the SHADOW SHAPE of the HUMANOID/KANE - shape-shifting in silhouette.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE/TOP - DAY

LENA has reaches the top - a semi-circular balcony around the old housing for the lamp.

Below her is a fifty foot drop to the burning interior of the lighthouse.

The whole wooden structure of the building is starting to burn.

She kicks out a window.

The jump to the ground looks lethal. The lighthouse is ringed with a concrete platform. The only hope might be the sloping sand dunes, just beyond the ring of concrete, which could take the deadly impact out of the fall.

But the fire behind doesn't give her a choice. Within a minute, her options will only be to jump or burn.

LENA takes a step back, to give herself the chance to run at the window, and propel herself through with enough force to reach the dunes.

But as she steps back, she JOLTS.

And TURNS.

The HUMANOID is directly behind her.

It's burned. Horribly damaged. Locked into jittering transformations, none of which can quite resolve.

Shadows of humans and creatures and alien forms flicker across it. All in expressions of agony.

It is a TRULY NIGHTMARISH SIGHT.

Reflexively, LENA screams.

In its broken mirror state, the HUMANOID also screams.

A maw appearing where a mouth might be.

Then, as if with a final effort, it makes a FINAL TRANSFORMATION -

- and resolves into LENA.

A literal mirror image. Down to the finest detail.

Their stances mirror each other.

They are dressed identically.

They are smeared with blood identically.

And we have literally no way of telling who is who.

A frozen beat.

Then one LENA lunges at the other.

Strikes.

Impacts.

And one LENA topples backwards, over the edge of the balcony -
- falling down into the phosphorous blaze.

The other watches.

TIGHT ON HER FACE.

As she watches herself fall.

Blank.

Held.

Face illuminated by the bleaching light.

There is no clear indication as to which LENA lived, and which LENA died.

EXT. LIGHTHOUSE - SUNDOWN

WIDE on the burning LIGHTHOUSE.

Long flames curl from the top window, into a plume of dark smoke.

The sun is setting, and is clustered with the psychedelic colour refractions we always see through the Shimmer.

Except that something is clearly happening.

The movements and vibrations of the Shimmer are settling.

And the colours are becoming less intense.

Then all along the beach, the SAND STRUCTURES start collapsing. First one, then three, then seven. Then all together.

Wind collects them as they fall.

And as they fall, they REVEAL a figure walking across the sand towards us.

LENA.

CUT TO -

EXT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/VIEWING PLATFORM - SUNDOWN

- the viewing platform of the Southern Reach Facility, where people are exiting from the MESS HALL.

Excitedly gathering to look at the view over the scrubland to the tree-line...

... where the SHIMMER is now clearly melting away.

And the refractions are reverting to the blues, reds and oranges of a normal, beautiful sunset.

PULL BACK.

Wide.

Then **CUT TO -**

EXT. THE NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

- a STAR-FIELD in a night sky.

Dense constellations. The Milky Way.

Drift down.

Past the MOON.

To the SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY.

And a lone woman walking out of the tree line, across the scrubland towards it.

LENA.

LENA (O.S.)
I want to see my husband.

CUT TO -

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/MEDICAL WARD - NIGHT

- a medical ward.

LENA is walking down it, with a DOCTOR alongside, and two SPEC OPS SOLDIERS following.

DOCTOR
It was miraculous. It happened the same night that the Shimmer disappeared. His blood pressure stabilised, and his pulse rate started to rise. By the next morning, he was not only awake. He was lucid. Coherent.

They have reached a door in the ward.

Through the glass panel, LENA can see KANE inside.

Sitting at a chair. Gazing out of the window.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
There's no trace of abnormality anywhere in his system.

LENA
I'd like to see him alone.

INT. SOUTHERN REACH FACILITY/WARD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LENA enters.

Closes the door behind her.

KANE looks round, and they lock eyes.

Neither speak.

After a moment, LENA goes to the WINDOW.

Looks out at the NIGHT SKY.

LENA
Are you Kane?

Silence.

Then KANE gives a slight shake of the head.

KANE
I don't know.

Beat.

KANE (CONT'D)
Are you Lena?

LENA hesitates.

Then turns to face him.

BEHIND HER -

- we can see through the window to the night sky.

And in that sky, we see a SHOOTING STAR.

Then another.

Then another.

CUT TO -

INT. LOWER ATMOSPHERE - NIGHT

- the shooting stars as FALLING METEORS.

As we saw in the opening images of the film. A hunk of rock, burning as it falls through Earth's atmosphere.

And as the nearest meteor splits apart, we see in its core.

Something shimmering.

CUT TO BLACK.

END