

BLU

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APA  
DMG

Her name is BLU.

She is ten years old, shy and quiet. Big eyes but not a fan of eye contact - just doesn't connect too well with other people.

Right now, Blu plays on a tablet in the BACK of a FAMILY SUV. Her MOTHER has been talking to her.

MOTHER (O.S.)

...soon you won't be my little girl any more!

From Blu's childlike POV, a lump of cinnamon colored hair is her Mother, driving.

OUT THE WINDOW - among fall foliage, a SCHOOL comes into view, a LINE OF VEHICLES in the drop off line.

As Blu takes a breath, looking anxious, we see she is clutching blue flashcards. About to disembark, when...

HORNS honk from the cars in front. WIDER...

A LINE OF VEHICLES, Connecticut plates, are jumbled in a disorganized mess, cars all trying to go their own ways.

Blu covers her ears, the HORNS really bothering her as Mother tries to *soothe* her...

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

TWENTY KIDS Blu's age are watching a BOY give an awkward ORAL PRESENTATION, flashcards in hand.

BOY

...to remember we have discovered less than half of the animals on earth.

Blu grips her flashcards; we maybe glimpse the name of "Temple Grandin" as the subject. She's up next and nervous as Hell. She also holds a pen in her little hand. CLICKS the tip of it.

Then CLICKS it again.

The Boy finishes. A TEACHER tells him "Good Job," then...

TEACHER

Blu, you're following.

Blu keeps CLICKING the pen. The Teacher CALLS to her again but Blu only CLICKS faster, trying to tune the world out. Somewhat succeeding.

The BOY snickers at her. OTHER KIDS join in.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK...

CUT TO:

INT. COUNCILORS OFFICE - LATER

Through the glass of a door, Blu's Mother now ARGUES with the SCHOOL COUNCILOR and that Teacher.

BLU - is in a chair outside the office. Can only barely make out the words because, in her mind, the overhead fluorescent lights BUZZ just as loudly.

Blu catches the word "AUTISTIC" said by the Councilor. Mother continues to ARGUE against this.

The lights BUZZ on and on.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

New construction, two story, cookie-cutter / identical homes. MOVE IN on one of them...

INT. HOME

..And THROUGH the house until we find Blu, changed into her pajamas, coming down the BANISTER / STAIRS with the FRONT DOOR ahead.

A briefcase is hung on the banister above a man's shoes. Blu's getting closer to the KITCHEN, can see it through the slats of the banister, hears a TV...

REPORTER (O.S.)

*...trying to save hundreds of humpback whales off the coast of Hawaii. The cause for one of the greatest mass beaching in history is unknown...*

Now Blu can see the TV:

An aerial shot of a coastline. Dozens of gray masses dot the shore.

But an EVER BUILDING second group of NOISE, surpasses the television. Blu's focus shifts to it to see her Mother is now arguing with FATHER - the man is the same age as Mother and very tall from this perspective.

MOTHER

...her teacher said she can just do the report tomorrow - It's not a problem...

FATHER

It is a *problem!* *Whether you want to admit it or not* our daughter needs help --

Her Father suddenly stops when he sees Blu watching. Mother stops talking as well. A beat.

Until her Father makes a *monstrous face*, rushes toward Blu, reaching the bottom of the stairs and yelling...

FATHER (CONT'D)

Gonna get ya!

Blu GIGGLES as she runs back up the stairs, her Mother joining in as well and chasing her the whole way up and into her ROOM.

INT. HER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room of a girl her age, stuffed bears, half-finished puzzles and dolls. But there are also an overwhelming array of light-up toys. They shine and blink.

Blu falls on the bed, Mother tickles her a bit, then Father tucks her in.

FATHER

We got ya!

And for a moment, all's right with the world.

FADE TO:

INT. HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two night lights and the hall light stays on outside Blu's closed door, framing it in white.

Blu lies awake, trying to sleep.

She looks to her flashcards, dreading what they represent. Then at her digital clock and to see it's *really, really late*.

Blu actually scrunches her eyes closed, hoping that will do it.

Nothing. She SIGHS.

The clock and night lights *buzz* BRIGHTER for a moment, fascinating her, before they all suddenly blink off.

In the dark, Blu hears FOOTSTEPS.

But the darkness only lasts a few moments, the electricity returns. Her clock's face is scrambled.

Outside Blu's room, a SHADOW passes by, heavy FOOTSTEPS moving through the light of the closed door.

A SECOND SHADOW follows.

Blu sits up. Thinks it over, then goes back to bed. Shutting her eyes.

TIGHT on BLU for a bit. A RUSTLE is heard with the barest lightening of the room, but she keeps her eyes shut.

Then Blu opens her eyes, revealing...

TWO SILHOUETTES are standing at the foot of her bed.

Blu shrinks back, the Silhouettes remain where they are, *unmoving*.

It's her PARENTS. They seem to be sleepwalking. But before Blu can try to wake them...

They turn, in *unison*, and march out of the room.

Blu can hear the CREAK of the stairs as her parents head down them.

Unsure what to do, she... puts on furry slippers.

WITH BLU

We follow her out into the hall and then to the stairs. The front door is wide open.

She moves into the darkness OUTSIDE. And stops.

Her mother and father are standing in the road, facing off in the same direction. But they are not alone.

WIDER

The ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD must be out here. People in work clothes, pajamas, underwear, even a NUDE CHUBBY WOMAN dripping wet in a shower cap. They all face the same direction.

Blu walks among the crowd of sleepwalkers. Gets to her parents.

Her mother and father's eyes are open. And worse - their faces are twisted into impossibly wide grins. So are all the other faces.

Blu pokes and pulls at her mother. No reaction.

Even with her limited frame of reference, Blu knows this is very wrong.

Then, in perfect union, the crowd turns 90 degrees at once, facing off as before, just in another direction.

A SCREAM breaks the silence, then OTHERS, BLOOD CURDLING.

Everyone has woken up, their formation breaks.

In a moment, Mother has seen Blu and picked her up, cradling her, the woman more frightened than her daughter.

FADE TO:

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NINE A.M.

Cal king bed, photos of Blu with her parents on both end tables. A small home gym at the far end.

Blu sleeps alone in the middle of the bed, sheets messed up on either side. Suddenly the door opens *fast*.

Mother and Father are here. They're *themselves* but haggard and worried, NEWS is on downstairs, too loud.

MOTHER

Come downstairs when you want, love.

Blu looks at a clock, she's going to be late for school. Rushes past her parents and to her ROOM, but...

FATHER

No, hon. School's been canceled today.

Her parents leave her. As that unseen NEWS drones on, Blu looks to her flashcards. *No school...*

She smiles, raising her hands in a triumphant "YES!"

A TELEVISED NEWS REPORT

Shows UNREST in CITIES around the world.

INT. KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Mother watches the NEWS on TV, Father on his laptop. Both parents are worried, feeling helpless.

ON THE TV - REPORTS show FOOTAGE of people "Sleepwalking" - from fast food SECURITY CAMERAS, to a TAPED STADIUM CONCERT to an ATM CAMERA, it seems to have happened in many different locations, including overseas.

Blu is still in her pajamas. For her, this is a snow day.

Still, she rubs Mother's forearm, would like to alleviate the woman's concerns.

THEN

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

The TV still on. On the floor, Blu plays with action figures and dolls, organization to her play. Mother is still on the couch, Father is making coffee.

A CNN TELEVISION ANNOUNCER is talking about...

CNN ANNOUNCER

...Happened at two-twenty-seven Eastern Standard time...

Father shows Mother the coffee, declares...

FATHER

Tonight, *we stay up.*

Mother nods in agreement. Blu stays focused on her toys.

CUT TO:

ON BLU - NIGHTTIME

Being given Mountain Dew in a kid's glass. Mother and Father are having coffee.

Blu looks at the bubbles, pleased with them. She drinks along with the adults. Her mom gives a worried smile.

CUT TO:

A CLOCK

Reading 2:24. It changes to 2:25. Mother's nervous BREATHING can be heard. We are in...

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

NEWS on in here but the sound is low. The video shows a wide room with SLEEPING PEOPLE and text: "Volunteer sleepers" superimposed underneath them.

In the bed, Blu is bookended by her fully-dressed parents, wide awake, nervously watching the clock.

MOTHER

Two minutes.

Father tries to be strong...

FATHER

Nothing's going to happen.

But they both hold Blu tight as he turns the TV to...

A CABLE CHANNEL showing RIOTS in BERLIN. The German Riot POLICE repel the PROTESTORS in incredible synchronicity.

MOTHER

Put on the local news.

Father clicks over to "CHANNEL 5." LIVE shots of a industrial park three story BUILDING with the sign "DREAM QUEST LABS." FLAMES can be seen inside.

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

That's right in Hartford.

As FIREFIGHTERS tend to the blaze in the B.G., a FIELD REPORTER interviews a LAB EMPLOYEE - George R.R. Martin look-a-like, currently wide-eyed, unstable.

FIELD REPORTER

You set the fire? On purpose?!

LAB EMPLOYEE

I was hoping to stop what we did but it's too late! It's all our fault!

(rambling)

It was for the insects! But we made a mistake - we took it back to our colony!

FIELD REPORTER

(confused)

Sir? What do you mean our colony...?

Lab Employee points into camera. Mumbles something about being "Too connected" and then he...

Runs back into the flaming building!

SCREAMS of onlookers and then even the Reporter's are heard as the man can be seen burning.

FIELD REPORTER (CONT'D)

Oh, God - CUT AWAY!

The shot changes to the stunned, local NEWS ANCHORS, who composes themselves as best they can.

No time to reflect on what they witnessed, one NEWS ANCHOR speaks, sounding as nervous as anyone else...

NEWS ANCHOR

Just a few more seconds until the exact time the sleepwalking happened last night...

BLU

Gets kisses from both her parents, holding her so tight it hurts. Mother tells Father...

MOTHER

You're smothering her.

The sound of CAR HORNS and CHEERS interrupt them. They come from the TV but can also be heard through the windows.

It's 2:27. Everyone in this room and on the multiple screens on the TV are fine.

Father gets up, exhales, looks out the window. Then he gives a relieved look to Mother; she returns it.

MOVE TO:

PARENT'S BEDROOM - LATER

Still night. Father isn't here but Blu and her Mother are in bed, snuggled, Mother's coat around them both.

Blu wakes, sees her plastic cup is empty. Grabs the cup and slips out of bed so as not to wake Mother.

INT. BANISTER / KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Blu comes downstairs hearing TV SOUNDS but this time it's not news but raucous LAUGHTER.

Dark in here, Blu enters to see Father, awake in front of the TV. A partially-empty bottle of booze on the coffee table, he smiles at her, buzzed, bleary or both.

She smiles back, is glad when he waves her over. The TV is showing a very, VERY old COMEDY SHOW.

FATHER

(mutes the TV)

Needed a laugh; still looking for it.

(off Comedy show)

He's telling a joke called "The Aristocrats." You're too young to get it.

But Blu looks at her Father. She wants to hear it. Finally, SIGHING, he relents.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Okay. "The Aristocrats." A family walks into a talent agent's office. 'Sorry' says the agent, I don't hire families - they're too cute. 'Hold on,' says the dad - you haven't seen our act.

Father talks faster, gearing the joke to his "audience" of one. He stands.

FATHER (CONT'D)

So the family does their act, BREAKING and SMASHING everything in the Agent's office, destroying it. And then they burp and fling snot from their noses. Then...

(off Blu's smiles)

They poop everywhere!

Blu LAUGHS. Music to his ears, Father builds off it.

FATHER (CONT'D)

There's that laugh I wanted. Everywhere -  
Poop, poop, poop!

(stops, points to Blu)

Anyway - at the end of the act, the agent  
says, 'That was awful. What do you call  
your act?' And the Dad says...

Father throws his arms up and out, stepping wide like a  
circus showman.

FATHER (CONT'D)

'We call ourselves... The Aristocrats!'

Blu is happy but utterly confused. The silence returns.  
Father sits, sips his drink, *reflective*.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Told ya you wouldn't get it. Yet. See,  
it's the journey of the joke, Blu - not  
the destination. Like life, it doesn't  
have to make sense. It's the journey that  
matters.

(off her look)

When you're an old lady, I know you'll  
understand this.

She believes him. He gives her a peck on the forehead.

Blu gets up, heading to the fridge to fill her cup.

In The B.G. Father changes the TV to NEWS, an AERIAL  
TRAFFIC REPORT, a jam even at this hour.

As Blu uses the fridge's WHIRLING illuminated water  
dispenser, its otherwise steady light suddenly blinks  
off, just as all the lights in the house also PULSE and  
the TV goes to STATIC.

She's more fascinated than irritated by the interruption.

ON SCREEN - the TV HISSES back to picture. Still showing  
that aerial traffic shot but now the helicopter is lower.

Blu taps the dispenser again and this time water flows.

On the couch, Father sits rigidly still.

The TV illuminates the profile of his face - revealing a  
wide grin.

Now Father rises. Turns without a word and...

Heads past Blu and for the banister, where...

Mother is coming downstairs. Father opens the front door and heads out; Mother right behind.

Blu watches, confused.

She plunks down her water. Follows after her parents.

HOLD ON THE TV - that helicopter camera drops further, further and as it HITS PAVEMENT it goes to --

STATIC.

EXT. HOME - CONTINUOUS

Blu comes outside. Sees even more PEOPLE out here than last night. Impossibly-wide grins on their faces.

All of them SHUFFLE-WALK in a line, as if on a mission. CLOSER reveals there are actually two lines, the first is predominantly made up of the very OLD or HOSPITAL PATIENTS.

If Blu's parents are part of either procession, they're too far ahead and she can't see them now.

But she does spot TWO POLICE OFFICERS, heads for them.

Blu runs to them, finding they're as grinning and glossy-eyed as everyone else.

She even sees that Boy Her Age from class. Shuffling along.

Now, the two Processions change directions. Every single person in unison like a flock of geese in flight. Heading separate ways.

Blu watches them go, alone. Then, in the silence, she makes her way back to the house.

FADE TO:

INT. HOME - MORNING

Leaning on the banister, Blu looks at the front door for the umpteenth time. No one is coming back. Her stomach RUMBLES.

## KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Holding her mother's phone, Blu is looking at a magnet from the fridge that advertises "Julian The Pizza Man."

The phone has been DIALING, Blu's expression suggests she's been waiting a long time. We see she has made a little pile of scrounged up dollars and change.

Finally, the phone CONNECTS. But from the other end, there is only a combination of BUZZING and CHIRPS...

VOICE ON PHONE (O.S.)  
(unintelligible)

Blu is confused, a little worried. The BUZZING repeats what might be a GREETING or a THREAT. Insect-like.

She hangs up fast. SLIDES the phone away from her like it's poison.

Resolved to make do, Blu looks around the kitchen.

## KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Two bowls, filled to the brim with chocolate and gummy worms, are topped off with SPRAYED whipped cream.

Now Blu digs in a spoon, shovels out a gob of her creation. Munches it... *Impressed.*

She walks to the static-y TV and surfs channels. Literally nothing is on.

Knowing she's not supposed to, Blu carefully puts her shoes up on the furniture.

ON THE TV: a LOCAL CHANNEL still has a LIVE CAMERA FEED of a city street, dutch angle.

Blu shrugs, leaves it on. Eats more sugar.

CUT TO:

## LIVING ROOM

LAUGHING is heard before Blu enters frame on her pink bicycle, racing through the house on a wonderful sugar high. KNOCKING over her dad's briefcase, she keeps going.

MOVE TO:

ASSORTED SHOTS of an empty house. A CLOPPING sound builds...

PARENTS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Those CLOPPING sounds as camera moves in. Heading for a walk-in CLOSET.

More CLOPPING reveals...

Blu in one of her mother's dresses. Trying on heels.

Looking in a mirror she tries on a shade of lipstick. Smiles at herself.

LONG FADE TO:

LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

All dressed up, Blu lies on the couch, holding her stomach in pain. She WHIMPERS.

She looks around as if expecting her mother will appear.

But then just SIGHS, alone in an empty house.

PARENTS BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Blu going through the medicine cabinet. She's found the Alka-Seltzer. Shakes out tablets and frowns at them.

Gingerly, she CRUNCHES into one. It's chalky and she spits it out. But an idea strikes her.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Blu is putting the Alka-Seltzer tablets into the same kid's glass she drank Mountain Dew out of.

Blu isn't sure how many to put in, throws in seven or eight, adds water, loving the instant bubbles.

She smiles, expects this to be as delicious as Mountain Dew, drinks...

...and almost throws up.

FADE TO:

INT. PARENTS BEDROOM - EVENING

A clock shows it's just after 8 P.M. Feeling a little better, Blu sits in front of her father's laptop. She's in her pajamas - decided to sleep in here.

The laptop screen shows the connection is down. Blu tries assorted sites with zero luck. Finally gives and gets up.

Seeing her mother's coat on the bed. Blu picks it up, smells it, missing her mother's scent.

Crawls in bed, those photos of her parents looking down on her. She fixates on a recent one of Father.

Blu lies back, hugging the coat. Looks up at the ceiling.

And then tears choke her eyes. Her nose runs as she COUGHS her sobs.

But there is no one to comfort her.

FADE TO:

ASSORTED SHOTS - DAWN

Sun breaks over the suburban neighborhood on another day. No people are in sight, only their leavings - a few cars still RUNNING, doors to houses left open, a hose SPITTING water down a driveway.

KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Blu eats a reasonable amount of cereal. Then puts the bowl in the sink.

MOVING THROUGH THE HOUSE - Blu looks at the mess she's created.

She sees her dad's briefcase on the floor. Picks it up with a kind of reverence.

Puts it back on the BANISTER. As if it too is waiting for him to return.

Then she looks back around, makes a decision.

ASSORTED SHOTS OF...

Blu cleaning the house.

## LAUNDRY CLOSET

With some difficulty, Blu heaves yesterday's clothes into the washer, then pours in too much detergent. Sees the bleach and decides to throw in a dash for good measure.

She almost puts in her mother's coat, but takes in the scent and stops. Wants to keep that just the way it is.

## LIVING ROOM - LATER

The WASHER running O.S., Blu is still cleaning up. The TV still shows the same dutch angle feed.

Just then, Blu thinks she hears something on the TV. Moves forward and turns the volume all the way up until it hisses. ON SCREEN...

...The shot still shows that empty street. But a CHIRPING, insect-like sound can be heard just O.S.

The buzzing/chirping sound continues, a continuous THrum, burrowing into Blu's head.

She MUTES the TV. Tries to put it all out of her mind.

THEN

NIGHTTIME - Blu is at the table, flashcards in hand - memorizing her oral report.

She finishes, confident. *Now what?*

## EXT. HOME, PORCH - NIGHT

Blu sits on the steps. SHOOTING STARS fall above her. Non-stop, one after another.

She watches the stars in hew own trance, a few seconds may pass or an hour when a NOISE is heard. Far off, in the distance...

It's a VOICE.

Blu perks up. Stands and looks to the DISTANCE.

Less than a quarter mile away, a flashlight illuminates a WANDERING MAN. He has a walking stick in hand, someone we might call a HIPPIE.

He looks distressed, CALLING out...

WANDERING MAN  
HELLO! Anyone?!

BLU

Thinks it over. Not supposed to talk to strangers, but..

She opens the door to her house and hurries on her shoes,  
not bothering to tie them.

THE WANDERING MAN - NIGHT

Is CALLING out.

BLU - is about to yell for him. But she stops...

WIDER

In the darkness, a THRONG of HUMAN SHAPES have appeared,  
running toward Wandering Man. Perhaps FIFTY or more, hard  
to see, only that they're moving in a kind of *unison*. An  
amoeba shaped out of human flesh.

Wandering man hears their footsteps, turns, signaling to  
them...

WANDERING MAN  
I'm over here!

But his smile fades quickly.

WANDERING MAN (CONT'D)  
Slow down, WAIT...!

The human-flesh-amoeba doesn't slow, whisking him away in  
their swarm. The man's SCREAMS are heard, even louder  
than the combined noise of the fifty pairs of feet.

BLU - CONTINUOUS

Wants to gasp but stays quiet.

As the man's screams abruptly cut out, she gets back  
inside her house.

INSIDE

Blu shakes, frightened. Catches her reflection in the hallway mirror. She looks so *small*.

FADE TO:

INT. PARENTS BEDROOM - MORNING

HEAR CLINKING sounds before seeing Blu, trying out the home gym equipment. She's pulling down on a bar, struggling, not even sure what she's doing.

Blu releases the weight and it clinks back into place. She frowns at it - so much for that.

A HIGH PITCHED BEEPING is heard.

Blu looks around for its source, realizes it's coming from...

LIVING ROOM TELEVISION - CONTINUOUS

The live shot of the city is no more, it now shows an "Emergency Broadcast System" card. Blu runs in, sees it.

The beeping stops and a font that would have looked dated even in the 1980's reads: "Stay Tuned For More Information."

Blu camps out and waits.

FADE TO:

THE TV SCREEN - LATER

BEEPS again, rousing a cross-legged Blu from her trance. A COMPUTER GENERATED VOICE announces...

EMERGENCY BROADCAST VOICE

*You're evacuation center is...*

(beat, different voice)

*Tweed New Haven Regional Airport.*

Blu gets to her feet. Taking this in.

She moves to her mother's cell phone and opens the map feature, but of course the screen reads...

*No Signal.*

As Blu realizes, the BROADCAST REPEATS.

Undeterred, Blu has an idea, hurries to the bookshelf.

Digs around, finding an old ATLAS.

The book seems almost as big as she is. She heaves it off the shelf, LANDS it on a table, opening it.

BLU - RUSTLES through pages, coming to her state of Connecticut. As the MESSAGE announces the airport again...

She finds it on the map. Circles it with a pink crayon.

Then she turns the atlas this way and that, trying to find just where the hell she is.

FADE TO:

THE ATLAS - LATER

Still open on a single page showing the state of Connecticut, a route has been traced to the airport, presumably from Blu's area.

The map's scale shows an inch as fifteen miles.

With her fingers, Blu estimates the distance. She's about three inches away.

She takes a long BREATH. Intimidated.

And shoves the heavy atlas away from her.

ASSORTED SHOTS OF THE HOUSE - LATER

Holding her mother's jacket, Blu wanders the rooms, lonely. CUTS of her...

-- Looking out the window at the dead neighborhood. And then toward the horizon.

-- CLICKING a light switch on and off, over and over, her eyes staring off.

-- Eating peanut butter and jelly. Almost out of almond milk. Knows the food won't last forever.

-- Changing the channel on the TV, all channels showing the same Emergency Broadcast, she can't get away from it.

INT. ATTACHED GARAGE - LATER

The home of Father's Audi, Mother's SUV and Blu's pink bike. Blu is playing catch with herself, bouncing a basketball off the high walls.

Her mind is somewhere else, thinking off, when she BOUNCES the ball particularly hard, missing the catch...

The ball HITS the Audi and its car ALARM BLARES.

BLU - cover her ears, the sound extra painful to her. She runs from it and INSIDE...

MOMENTS LATER

Blu in the kitchen, hands over her ears as the somewhat muted ALARM sounds through the walls. Then, blessedly, it dies.

She EXHALES. Relieved. Notices the Atlas.

Then looks away from it, just wants to enjoy the silence. But...

A RUSTLE is heard just outside the closest window.

And suddenly a TALL MAILMAN shuffles up to the glass and stands there.

BLU - hasn't been spotted yet and gets down, hiding. Can see The Mailman's reflection in an opposite inside window.

IN THE REFLECTION - The Mailman's head swivels back and forth like a sentry. His / its movements are jumpy and quicker than physics should allow. Head cocked at angles that seem impossible.

We will come to know this type is a "SOLDIER DRONE" - big and strong and they don't wear those awful grins, only flat expressions.

Blu waits where she is. Keeping her wits as she hears...

RECORDING (O.S.)

...*Tugboat*.

Finally the Mailman SHUFFLES off.

Blu takes a breath. Her eyes wander to that Atlas as, distantly, she again hears...

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

*...Tugboat.*

CUT TO:

KITCHEN - LATER

With squared scissors, Blu is cutting out the atlas map page. Pauses as if she might get in trouble.

But she knows those days are over and frees the page.

Then, with a marker this time, she traces the route she'd have to take. Highway 95.

NINE SANDWICHES - LATER

Perfectly symmetrically cut, and Blu is still making more. Shoves them into her Dora The Explorer backpack. Then puts in forks, spoons, bottles of water, two throw blankets, an oversized pillow and...

That framed photo of Blu with her Father. And...

Mother's jacket.

The jacket won't fit - the backpack isn't nearly big enough. Blu looks to the hallway closet...

LATER - She has dug out a worn, larger pack, MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL stenciled on it.

Blu adds more things she thinks she'll need - a flashlight, bug spray, a stuffed animal...

THEN

INT. HOME, FRONT DOOR, BANISTER - AFTERNOON

Blu has taken a shower and dressed in an outfit that seems part safari and part old Baptist church lady.

Looks at her reflection in that mirror, a bit of pride in it this time. She adjusts her hat, unaware of the huge bleach stain running the back of her shirt.

Ready now, she moves for the door, DRAGGING that pack more than carrying it.

Cracks the door, checks to make sure the coast is clear.

Then she takes a last look back at her house, eyes finding her dad's briefcase.

With a bit of sadness, our girl leaves home, heading out into the world.

EXT. HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Fall in New England with all of her colors.

Blu has gotten the pink bicycle out of the garage's side door. She tries to climb on but the pack is too heavy to get up, let alone balance.

She walks the bike away from her home. This *sucks*.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

She finds the Wandering Man's stick, other than his now-dead flashlight, it's the only sign he was ever here.

Still pushing the bike - she takes the stick, maybe out of respect.

EXT. GAS STATION / "JULIAN THE PIZZA MAN" - LATER

Where the tract housing development meets a main road.

It's totally abandoned, several cars left (or crashed) in the street. At the PIZZA PLACE, a STRAY DOG is eating the remains of a perfectly good slice, abandoned at an outdoor table.

THREE SEPARATE FIRES burn in the distance, no threat to the immediate surroundings.

Wheeling the bike, Blu is exhausted; bummed-out from the weight of her high school pack. But she sees something that gives her hope...

A small sign for 95 North.

That's good. But she isn't making any time with this weight. And the sun is only a few hours from setting.

She takes off the pack and lets it CLUNK to the ground. Wipes sweat, then starts to get rid of some stuff, sad to see a stuffed animal go...

But, in the silence, she hears a HUMMING.

Blu is alert, ready to run. Then she sees the source of the sound.

An abandoned, IDLING SEDAN in the road. 1990's era, the driver's door wide open.

A idea comes into Blu's mind. It scares her a bit... in a good way.

INT. SEDAN

A real beater but your first car usually is. Blu gets behind the wheel, finds she's too short to see the windshield.

She sees a child's booster seat in the back of the sedan. Thinks about it...

And puts her backpack on the seat instead, sits on it.

Better. Now she just has to figure out the controls. Turns the key but since the car is already on...

A terrible GRINDING sound makes her jump. *Done.*

She angles the rear view as she's seen her mother do. But only turns it so she can see herself. *Done.*

The transmission is on the wheel, she pulls on it. CLUNKS it into reverse.

The car begins moving in the wrong direction. Scared, she pulls again, CLUNKING the transmission into "1."

Now the car rolls forward.

Blu struggles to reach the pedals. Then has an idea: grabs the walking stick and presses it down on the gas.

The car REVS forward and she lets up - finds she doesn't really need to use the gas much; just needs to get the hang of the wheel.

EXT. SEDAN - MINUTES LATER

Moving about ten miles an hour, the car rolls along.

On the side of the ROAD ahead, there's movement in the treeline. And then --

RECORDING (O.S.)

*Tugboat.*

And then, The Mailman emerges from the trees.

Now we see the source of that word - a half-open child's birthday card with a ship on it, flapping in the wind.

As the car approaches, The mailman looks right at --

BLU

Who shrinks as The Mailman starts walking toward her.

So she presses down on the stick / gas - the car SHOOTs forward.

Leaving The Mailman in the dust.

HOLD ON THE MAILMAN

Walking, not running, he starts his pursuit.

BLU

As The Mailman fades out of sight for now, her nervousness begins to fade. Her smile is followed by...

A LAUGH - the freedom of the open road, even at this speed. For Blu, she might as well be driving a Rolls.

Getting comfortable, Blu finds the switch for her window. Feels the barest wind. She tosses her hat high and away.

SEDAN - LATER

The car is moving around 20 M.P.H. Still in first gear, Blu has settled in, no seat belt, occasionally hitting the gas with the walking stick. There's a Mountain Dew in an aftermarket cup holder and, unsure, she takes a swig.

It's warm and bad but it's *hers*. She drinks again.

HIGHWAY ENTRANCE

Just up ahead. A sign for 95 North.

Blu steers around more stopped cars and onto grass. Now she's on...

## THE HIGHWAY

Two lanes each way, many cars spaced out, stopped in the road or crashed. The destruction goes on for miles.

It's dead silent except for the sedan.

IN THE CAR, Blu takes this all in.

Sobered, she glances at her atlas page, doing the best she can to find where she is. As she looks down, THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD...

...A GRINNING FIGURE appears in the road.

BLU

SWERVES and barely avoids "him." Recovers, and looks out the rear window...

POV - the Figure is joined by SEVERAL OTHERS.

OUTSIDE THE SEDAN

Now, PEOPLE can be seen on the side of the road. Their eyes stare off, their faces twisted into grins. We'll call these the *WORKER DRONES*.

The Worker Drones begin to march into the road.

HIGH, WIDE ANGLE

From a distance, the scope of the Drones is more than Blu could imagine; THOUSANDS of people moving as a single organism.

AHEAD, the SWARM has one intent, to block the road.

Already, BEHIND the sedan, a THOUSAND DRONES have closed off the road.

BLU - uses her walking stick to REV the car higher - Still in first gear, it WHINES in pain as the speed increases to 25 M.P.H. Then 30.

AHEAD - the end of the SWARM is closing Blu's way out. Only a few of the drones are actually on the highway - but a THOUSAND MORE are soon to fall in line.

The sedan swerves as best Blu knows how, dodging the Figures. Blu avoids a *grinning* older WOMAN and then a KID, but --

-- a MIDDLE-AGED DRONE hurries in front of the car, and --

-- BAM! The sedan CLIPS him, ROLLING his stiff body up over the hood, CRACKING the windshield.

Blu CRIES out in pain for what she's done - as if giving voice to the silent, still-grinning figure.

Misery on Blu's face, she's almost through the Swarm, trying to see out the cracked windshield, when --

-- She spots an open CAR DOOR ahead, too late, HITS it --

-- And the IMPACT angles her sedan just enough to --

-- PLOW into the rear of an abandoned truck -- the front third of her car accordions.

CLOSE ON BLU

Dazed from hitting the wheel. Possible concussion. But there's no time for any of that now, as...

OUT THE SEDAN'S REAR WINDOW - grinning DRONES are coming her way.

BLU - can't go forward. Looks at her shifter, remembers reverse -- begins CHUNKING the transmission through different gears.

But the sedan isn't responding. FLUIDS leak from the engine.

Blu hears marching FOOTSTEPS from the APPROACHING SWARM.

Time to go. Blu crumples and pockets the atlas page. Then pulls on the handle of her door but... it has been jammed shut in the impact.

She climbs across the seat, opens the passenger door.

Jumps out, then remembers her backpack. Grabs that too. As she heaves it up...

The framed photo of her Father tumbles out the open end, falling into the back seat.

The DRONES are less than a hundred yards away now, filtering through stopped cars like water - only to amass as one group where the road allows.

No time, Blu has to leave her father behind.

EXT. SEDAN / HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

WOODS on either side.

More dazed than she knew until standing, Blu stumble-runs from the car, the pack slowing her. She'll never outrun her pursuers.

She makes it across the highway's opposite lane and into...

THE WOODS

More light by the edge of the highway; these woods get darker the deeper Blu moves in. The sound of a RIVER O.S.

Blu stumbles on as fast as she can, feeling the effects of the accident.

Hears the RIVER, has no better idea than to head for it.

BEHIND - her pursuers CRASH through, blotting out the light.

EDGE OF WOODS / THE RIVER

Blu comes to the water. It's moving FAST. There's a small, rotted DOCK and... a boat.

But the boat is partly sunk; useless.

Blu realizes she's trapped. Hears the CRASHING BRUSH of Drones and looks back.

A LONE FIGURE, ahead of the others, BREAKS through BRUSH, and -- grabs her.

Before Blu can scream, her mouth is covered and the Figure, an early 20's GUY, speaks..

THE GUY

I'm not like them! I'm different.

The Guy looks as scared as she does.

He pulls her toward the river. The dock...

There's a space underneath. The Guy yanks Blu under the wood with him.

UNDER THE DOCK

About ten feet square. Looks like The Guy has been camping out here. Hand still on her mouth, he whispers...

THE GUY

*Not a word.*

Blu nods. He removes his hand.

The Guy quickly dumps out the contents of Blu's pack and then...

Throws the empty backpack into the river.

WIDER

The Drone-amoeba comes to the edge of the river. They see the pack in the water.

Then, like a group of lemmings, a tentacle made of humans reaches out for the pack and FALLS into the water --

-- and the fallen are swept away. Drowning in silence.

UNDER THE DOCK

Blu and The Guy watch this through the slats.

They can just barely make out the thousand other drones on the river bank. Can feel their low BUZZING.

Then, the Drones back away in unison. Returning the way they came.

Blu and The Guy breathe.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE WOODS - DUSK

Dark enough that we see more of those shooting stars.

The Guy carries Blu's supplies wrapped in his jacket as he leads her through the woods on a trail he knows.

They can see where the Drones came through, a fifty foot wide swath of trampled grass.

THE GUY

I've been hiding out. Moving every few hours in case they got onto me. Thanks to you they almost *did*.

(sounding kinder)

I got one word for you...

(pauses dramatically)

Ants.

Blu is still addled from the car crash.

THE GUY (CONT'D)

I call 'em "drones." Seen two kinds, named 'em *Soldiers* and *Workers*.

(explains)

I think they see you and me as a threat - Because we're not part of their group, colony, whatever. I've seen them grab people like us.

(repeats)

Not kill, just take them off somewhere.

Blu steadies herself on a nearby tree. The Guy sees this.

THE GUY (CONT'D)

But there's only a few of us for every thousands of them - who's gonna win, huh?

Still moving, The Guy begins digging into Blu's pack, finds the sandwiches, psyched.

THE GUY (CONT'D)

Anyhow - Hopefully those ants don't ruin our picnic!

The Guy LAUGHS at his joke. Takes a huge bite. Comments on the food...

THE GUY (CONT'D)

Well, any port in a storm.

(then)

We're here. Home sweet home.

Home? Blu looks ahead...

In a CLEARING, an abandoned-looking STATION WAGON waits.

INT. STATION WAGON - MOMENTS LATER

Really bad in here, might as well be outside. The Guy takes the front seats.

Blu gets into the very back and finds the "bed" - really just a collection of moldy sheets and a ripped-down shower curtain.

Already wolfing down another sandwich, The Guy explains the car...

THE GUY

Gotta keep moving. I'm a ramblin' man.

Blu kind of nods, but she's having trouble staying conscious. Blu lies down on the bed.

THE GUY (CONT'D)

You okay? Want something to drink?

Blu closes her eyes. The Guy's VOICE sounds far off. Seems to be encouraging her to SLEEP.

The world goes to BLACK.

FADE UP:

EXT. CLEARING - MORNING

The sounds of NATURE trickles in to Blu's unconscious. An ant crawls on her.

She comes to, finds she's lying on the ground. Rises.

The station wagon and The Guy are nowhere in sight. Tire tracks lead away from her and off.

She's been abandoned.

Blu feels her throbbing head. But at least the concussion seems to be over and she blinks, focuses.

Looks around for her supplies but there are only empty water bottles and all the wrappers from her sandwiches.

Feeling peculiar emotions, perhaps embarrassment, gets to her feet, finds she's been lying on some brambles.

Remembers her atlas page, digs in her pocket...

Still has it. But there's a little *blood* on it.

It's coming from her palms. A few brambles stuck there.

A little grossed out, she picks off the brambles.

EXT. WOODS / HIGHWAY - MINUTES LATER

Where the station wagon tracks meet up with the road.

Blu emerges from the trees, gets to the highway and looks down it. All quiet for now.

With a glance at her map page, she has no choice. Walks.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

Blu tries to start a CAR - but it's long out of gas. Other CARS behind her suggest this wasn't her first attempt.

HIGHWAY - LATER

Blu trudges on, listening for any running engines. No luck. But she does see a SIGN off the highway:

MIDDLESEX COLLEGE NEXT EXIT

Blu finds the place on her atlas page. She's about 1/3 the way to her destination. Nothing to lose, She heads for the EXIT.

EXT. MIDDLESEX COLLEGE - AFTERNOON

A quaint New England campus with college brochure-worthy foliage.

Looking like a child with a hangover, Blu walks for the STUDENT UNION building.

INT. STUDENT UNION, RESTROOM - LATER

Blu cleans herself up in the sink.

She stops, taking a minute to look at her disheveled appearance. Her eyes large and dilated in the mirror, she SIGHS.

INT. STUDENT UNION, COMMON AREA - LATER

Calming MUZAK plays on a loop.

There's a vending machine, its buttons lit up. Face to the glass, Blu presses the same C5 button *over and over*, hearing its BEEP - the repetitions calming her.

Then she notices aspirin for sale in the machine. Snaps from her trance and puts in whatever cash she can dig out of her pockets. She presses the button for it...

...But the WHIRLING sounds are cut short as the machine freezes up, the aspirin trapped just short of dropping.

Blu shakes the machine as much as her little body can. No luck. She checks around, a mischievous look on her face.

MOMENTS LATER

CRASH! Blu is using a chair to CAVE IN in the glass. She breaks through and grabs the aspirin.

STUDENT UNION - LATER

Munching a granola bar, Blu is combing through a gift shop, loading up. She's already "bought" the smallest sandals she could find as well as a rain hat and college backpack - ready to head out again.

Walking for the exit, she notices a POSTER: READING EXPLAINS THE WORLD.

CU POSTER: A jumble of IMAGES from astronauts to sea sponges to pyramids to...

A cross section of ants in their tunnels.

Blu is focused on the word "Explain." She gets an idea...

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - LATER

Two levels, eerily quiet. Find Blu in one of the many BOOK AISLES.

She's totally focused, reading one of a handful of old books she's pulled.

We can read book titles like: GETTING THE JOKE; THE INNER WORKINGS OF COMEDY or THE SCIENCE OF WHY WE LAUGH or FRIARS CLUB HUMOR. Not a thing about ants.

ON HER CURRENT PAGE

Blu is reading "*The Aristocrats Explained.*" It's a somewhat more profane rendition of her father's joke. This one goes on and on for PAGES.

CLOSE ON BLU - trying to understand. No apparent luck so far. Then --

-- A far off CHUGGING SOUND interrupts her studies.

Blu snaps alert. The CHUGGING is coming from OUTSIDE and somehow ABOVE her.

EXT. MIDDLESEX COLLEGE - MOMENTS LATER

AN APACHE HELICOPTER is far off but not particularly high.

Blu waves for help. Jumping up and down.

The attack 'copter doesn't stop, moving left to right across her vision, occasionally obscured by the college's few BUILDINGS.

The nearest BUILDING is all dark glass and relatively tall at seven or eight stories.

Blu chases after the 'copter...

...Runs through a PARKING LOT, but a moment later the helicopter is out of sight.

She stops. Catches her breath, feeling defeated.

But then perhaps a little hopeful.

Until she spots something. Blinks...

The Guy's station wagon is parked here.

INT. MENS LOCKER ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Move through a HALLWAY in the catacombs of an athletic department. Then into the actual LOCKERS.

The Guy is salvaging hockey equipment to use as armor or weapons. He's trying on the helmet, looks a little silly.

Hears a NOISE behind him and whip turns, ready for fight or flight, sees...

Blu.

His fright becomes surprise. Then embarrassment.

THE GUY

Hey.

Blu doesn't know what else to do but stand her ground.  
Fists clenched.

The Guy looks guilty, angry, then even gives a sad smile.

THE GUY (CONT'D)

There's food here. You should be okay.  
Me, I got to move on.

Zippering up his own college backpack stuffed with  
scrounged cafeteria food, he moves past Blu.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The Guy heads for his station wagon in the shadow of  
those tall, glass buildings.

Blu follows after him. The Guy SIGHS...

THE GUY

You're like one of those drones!  
(gets to his car)  
What the hell do you want from me, little  
girl?!

A pause. Blu realizes she doesn't know.

He waves her off, honesty in his voice as he *explains*...

THE GUY (CONT'D)

We're all better off alone.

He looks sad at his own statement. But still gets into  
the wagon. He STARTS it up.

Blu looks at the nearest tall building. Squints...

CLOSER - in the glass, what looked dark is actually a  
jumble of DRONES. An awakened, WRITHING MASS.

The Guy - doesn't see them. Pulls away, fast.

Alarmed, Blu watches the car moving off, passing under  
those tall buildings, and then...

An OBJECT HITS THE STATION WAGON, CAVING in the roof.

As Blu watches, the car SWERVES and CRASHES as MORE OBJECTS fall on it like rain. The objects are...

The DRONES. Willing to leap to their death from the...

TALL BUILDING

With DOZENS of former-people on its roof. These KAMIKAZE DRONES walk off the ledge like bombs...

AT THE STATION WAGON

The Guy gets out, dizzy. MORE Drones CRASH to their deaths right behind him, forcing him into a run.

The Guy doesn't realize he's being herded until he SLAMS into the...

WALL OF (GROUND) DRONES

Grinning. Waiting for him. As The Guy BEGS and PLEADS, they engulf him.

BLU

Sees this all. Then GASPS as, above...

THE KAMIKAZE DRONES

Turn and spot her. Without a word these human gargoyles seem to communicate with...

THE WALL OF DRONES

Who stay where they are. But their ranks part.

And three, non-smiling, muscled SOLDIER DRONES are there. No grins, their expressions are flat, nothing any more or less interesting than anything else.

As they move for BLU, she drops her pack and runs back toward campus.

INT. MENS LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Blu hurries through, looking for a place to hide. Sees a door at the back.

INT. INDOOR POOL - CONTINUOUS

Low light. Glass walls and doors. The cloudy water separated into lanes by buoy ropes.

Blu hurries by the Olympic-sized pool, rushing to the opposite door - an exit outside.

Gets there, the door has an "Alarm Will Sound" sign. She hesitates...

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME TIME

The SOLDIER DRONE moves through. His dark-gloss eyes scan everywhere like a traveling security camera.

When an ALARM sounds, he jerks his head impossibly fast in its direction.

INT. POOL - MOMENTS LATER

ALARM BLARING. The Emergency exit door to outside is wide open. A shape at the opposite, glass door, is the Soldier Drone.

He enters. Moves toward the alarm door. A SECOND DRONE'S SHAPE is just outside the door, standing outdoors.

As Soldier Drone passes the pool...

IN THE POOL

Blu is hiding in the murk, lying back on a buoy rope, hands over her ears, her head just above water. Shivering from cold or fear or both, she can see the Soldier's reflection on the white ceiling as he passes.

AT THE DOOR

The Second Drone is a FEMALE SOLDIER, entering from outside. She wears red high heels, fused to her bleeding feet.

Oblivious to any kind of pain, she faces the Male. An interaction follows, garbled, BUZZES and CHIRPS.

BLU - watches the reflections of the two Drones, praying they'll keep moving.

And the Female does just this, heading back outdoors.

But Blu's eyes go wide as the first Soldier turns and heads back toward the pool.

Blu takes a silent breath and lowers herself, letting her body sink into the gloom.

#### UNDERWATER

The alarm sound is muted and distorted down here and somehow worse. Blu's cheeks are puffed with air.

She sinks all the way until her sandals touch bottom, looks around - and sees why the water is so murky --

BODIES. Perhaps a dozen, all *old people*, fully dressed or in hospital gowns, standing upright like a Terracota army.

Blu almost screams - but she can't; a quick look toward the surface reveals the Soldier Drone, his face angled down into the water, searching.

Blu stays quiet, nestled among the bloated corpses. Running out of air, alarm sound burrowing into her brain.

A bubble slowly - so *slowly* - escapes her. *Shit*.

#### SOLDIER DRONE

Notices the tiny bubble. He drops onto his knees, oblivious to any discomfort as he looks closer.

BLU - is *losing* it, about to give up. A SWAYING HAND from the nearest CORPSE lands on her and she bats it away.

SOLDIER DRONE - sees movement, more bubbles, and then, unmistakably, a rising...

...Corpse. The Drone reaches in and picks the full grown old man corpse up with just one hand.

Then Soldier Drone lets it SPLASH back in.

As the alarm finally cuts out, the Drone stands and moves for that door and outside.

Seconds after the Soldier has left, Blu comes to the surface, lungs empty, fully expecting to be caught.

Finds she's alone. Draws BREATHS.

Scrambles out of the pool. Looks for a place to hide.

FADE TO:

INT. SWIM COACH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

More closet than office.

Blu hides under the desk, she's found some blankets and made herself a little cubby of a living space, cramped but comfortable. Her own crackerbox dorm.

A THUNDEROUS sound makes her jump. It comes AGAIN and AGAIN.

Blu isn't sure if she should check it out. Finally throws off the blanket as the BOOMS continue.

EMERGENCY EXIT - CONTINUOUS

Blu sneaks to the still open door, peers out.

OUTSIDE

EXPLOSIONS rock the campus and places in the distance. That APACHE HELICOPTER, or one just like it, is now FIRING MISSILES at the ground below, including parts of this college.

That tall building is burning. Through the glass, Drones writhe on fire; BUZZING, CHIRPING SCREAMS. Many leap to their deaths, until --

-- The building COLLAPSES in a SHATTERING MASS.

The world settles.

BLU

Wanders outside - it's naive of her but still better than the pool

She sees a nearby CRATER with a PILE of CHARRED BODIES. We might recognize the red high heels on one of the corpses.

Suddenly, Blu hears RIFLE FIRE. The SHOTS are close, coming from around a nearby BUILDING.

EXT. MILITARY HUMVEE - CONTINUOUS

THREE MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY, two men and one woman, all from different branches of service, lower their rifles, having dispatched a Drone.

Blu watches them from the CORNER of that building. Their leader is a GUARDSMAN in his early 20's, handsome, seemingly friendly, but perhaps similar to "The Guy."

This makes Blu hesitate if she should approach.

Over the walkies, a CALL comes in. The "Friendly" Guardsman listens, makes the signal they have to go. We hear his explanation...

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN

...The others need us.

BLU - As the humvee loads up, it's her last chance to speak up. Torn.

Finally, she emerges from the corner --

BANG! A chip flies out of the building over her shoulder. Blu realizes the OTHER MAN has FIRED at her, before the man can shoot again...

She drops prone. Puts her hands over her head as if that will protect her. Hears "Missed it" before the Humvee TEARS AWAY.

Blu lies there. Managing her fear.

FADE TO:

AT THE WRECKED STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Rubble from the building all around, it's quiet, no combat sounds and no Drones in sight. If The Guy is dead, his body has been taken away.

Blu finds her dropped pack among the scattered debris. It's open, the water and snacks strewn about.

She searches for her mother's jacket. Gets more and more upset when she can't find it.

Then searches the area, the ground, for all she has left of her mother. No luck - she's frustrated, getting angry.

Near tears until - she sees the coat in a puddle.

Blu runs over with a desperate smile. Snatches up the jacket. Comforted to put it to her face for the scent.

But her smile fades. The scent is gone.

Tears line Blu's eyes but she rubs them away.

INT. SWIM COACH'S OFFICE - LATER

Back in her "room," the jacket is in Blu's hands. She stares off. Her face harder now.

She looks at her crumpled atlas page. The *airport*.

LONG FADE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Blu wears the college backpack and hiking clothes, ready for any weather with the rain hat. She has walked a long time, her energy pretty sapped.

She sees BUILDINGS up ahead. Corporate high rises, gleaming like jewels. Checks her atlas page.

As Blu concentrates, the faintest MUSIC can be heard on the wind. A simple tune, child-like. Blu stops, looks for its source.

It is coming from just off the highway...

LS - TRAVELING FAIR - SAME

Tents and rides are all lit up.

BLU

Tries to drink it all in. So tempted.

The calliope MUSIC gets LOUDER and LOUDER as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. / INT. TRAVELING FAIR - MINUTES LATER

Bright, rich colors and lights. The merry go round is still running. "Carousel Of Time" stenciled on its side.

Blu runs through her own private fair with a growing smile. No dead bodies, no horrors of any kind here.

ASSORTED SHOTS - Blu at the FUNHOUSE mirrors and -

The COTTON CANDY MACHINE and -

The BOTTLE GAME. She doesn't knock them down but close enough, she takes a stuffed bear anyway.

GIANT SLIDE. Potato sack over her shoulder, Blu is at the windy top, stuffed bear in hand. She has quite a view from up here, looks off into the distance.

POV - that GLEAMING CITY from before.

BLU - Drops the sack to take out her atlas page. Thinks it over.

And decides she doesn't want to leave here. Ever.

Crumples the page up. Almost tosses it away - but instead just shoves it down into her pocket.

Then she jumps on the sack. Sliding down with a smirk.

FADE TO:

TRAVELING FAIR, MERRY GO ROUND - AFTERNOON

We MOVE THROUGH, passing the horses to find Blu in a sleigh car, lying back, that stuffed bear for a pillow, her mother's jacket a blanket.

Mellowed, she looks up at the ceiling, the lights and stenciled sign.

Finally she rises, dizzy. Taking the jacket, she gets off the ride.

INT. BUMPER CARS

Dark. No riders, not even Blu. A CLICK before the ride MOTORS UP, driverless cars WHIRLING a few feet before shutting OFF.

Find Blu in the OPERATOR'S BOOTH with a piece of fried dough. Looks delicious - but she discovers it's stale.

She CLICKS the ride ON and OFF. Bumper car lights going from bright to dark...

CLICK and MOTOR. CLICK and MOTOR. Darkness and light, darkness and light. Blu's eyes stare off, glossy.

She CLICKS away, looking beyond the ride into the darkness as it once again becomes light but this time...

A SMILING DRONE HAS APPEARED.

Watching her.

WIDER - DOZENS and DOZENS of WORKER-DRONES are arriving. They tear off nearby scrap with repetitive movements.

Over and over.

BLU's heart catches in her throat. So frightened that she doesn't stop CLICKING - her version of freezing-up.

Light and dark, Worker-Drones appearing and disappearing in the light. The WORKER who spotted her is coming closer in the intervals.

Until it is right upon her. Blu keeps CLICKING.

A CRASH is heard behind Blu. She doesn't turn but HEARS the Merry-Go-Round collapse.

The Worker studies Blu - her frozen expression, her repetitive movements.

The Drone is now arms length away. Looming over Blu.

But then the Drone moves on. As if she's one of them.

TRACK WITH HIM, passing newly arrived WORKERS, making a line to harvest the scrap of the Merry-Go-Round and other structures.

We hear a single WORD.

RECORDING (O.S.)

Tugboat...

Worker Drone passes a FIGURE. It's...

The Mailman.

The Worker and The Mailman "talk" for a moment, insect-like CHIRPS.

STAY ON THE MAILMAN as he looks toward the BUMPER CARS.

Blu is gone. Only her mother's jacket left behind.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FUNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Through distorted mirrors and tilted walkways, BLU runs. She passes more Worker-Drones - fully focused on tearing down this place.

EXT. TRAVELING FAIR - MOMENTS LATER

Blu runs away from the Drone-swarmed FAIR as the music CUTS OUT.

Momentarily safe, she catches her breath. Turns back one more time to see the attractions *deflate*. Then CRASH in on themselves.

Sadness on Blu's face, she knows it's over. A WIND blows and she shivers without her mother's jacket.

Then Blu steels her will and, uncrumpling the Atlas page, turns for that CITY in the distance.

FADE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

Blu slogs on, no supplies this time, passing a sign with an arrow pointing the way to the AIRPORT. Seemingly too tired to even raise her head.

Until a TICKING sound is heard - far off but getting louder.

She snaps alert, getting off the highway, ready to hide. But when she sees a MOBILE HOME driving this way, she reconsiders.

Blu runs out in the road. The TICKING RV gets closer, slows and stops. The passenger window goes down.

An OLDER WOMAN is there. Says...

OLDER WOMAN

Well, I'm not supposed to pick up hitchhikers.

Blu is confused. Then Older Woman smiles.

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)

If we lose our sense of humor, we really  
are like *them*.

A door on the side of the RV opens and another, LATE 30's  
WOMAN is there. In her arms is a GIRL, Blu's age.

30'S WOMAN

Mom, please!

(then to Blu)

C'mon in. We're going to the evacuation  
place.

The young Girl adds "Airport" in her child-like, dreamy  
voice. Blu hesitates for only a moment before climbing  
in.

INT. MOBILE HOME

Blu is given water, settles in as the RV pulls away,  
engine TICKING. Older Woman explains to Blu...

OLDER WOMAN

That's the timing belt - don't worry,  
this old lady's got lots of miles left.

Blu nods. The young girl hands Blu a doll.

She tries to play with the doll. But something has  
changed. She's no longer interested.

30's woman sees Blu's expression. Speaks to her like an  
equal.

30'S WOMAN

Three generations of us. Whatever  
happened, the signal or whatever - It  
didn't get our bloodline. Genetics maybe,  
I don't know...

(looks to the front)

And mom doesn't care.

OLDER WOMAN

(looking in rearview)

What's the point? God gives us the hand  
we're dealt.

Blu hears this. The TICK, TICK of the engine giving way  
to...

EXT. CHECKPOINT / REST STOP - NIGHT

A homemade sign reads "Convoy" - lit up from the spotlights of a handful of MILITARY VEHICLES. GROUPS of PEOPLE gathered.

The RV MOTORS toward the lights. Two motorcycles, heading the same direction, BUZZ by. A MAN parked on a ten speed waves.

Pass some NATIONAL GUARDSMEN and even a few COAST GUARD stragglers, waving the bikes and RV out toward the REST STOP building.

INT. MOBILE HOME - SAME

Looking at all the other PEOPLE, 30's Woman LAUGHS with joy. Older Woman is a little more reserved, even wary. Blu and Older Woman meet eyes in the rear view mirror. They park where directed.

THEN

EXT. REST STOP PARKING LOT - LATER

Military SENTRIES look off in every direction. Vehicles are lined up.

Find Blu, wrapped in a blanket. Watching...

A meeting, about FORTY CIVILIANS and a DOZEN MILITARY standing in a semi-circle. A NATIONAL GUARD CAPTAIN is in charge but a BALD MAN with stooped shoulders, 50, is the one speaking.

BALD MAN

...Neurochemicals could be keeping the hosts in a state of bliss before the parasite takes it over completely.

30'S WOMAN

(speaking up)

What do you mean, 'parasite?'

BALD MAN

We all carry parasites - but these began as *insect* parasites - they take over ants bodies and brains. That lab in Hartford was working on modifying them - But I think the parasite... won. Sent out an electrical signal that got us acting like its usual hosts.

SOMEONE ELSE murmurs as if understanding...

SOMEONE ELSE (O.S.)  
Our brains are electric...

CAPTAIN  
(nods)  
But all the killings? Even themselves?

BALD MAN  
You're still thinking of them as individuals instead of one creature. Ant colonies are so united they behave like a *superorganism*. Millions of brains acting as one.

(off blank looks)  
When you get an infection, do you care how many white blood cells your body has to sacrifice to get rid of it?

BLU

Should be interested as Bald Man continues revealing what he knows, but, just to his right, mounted on the structure's door...

A lit up RESTROOM SIGN, "WOMEN," blinks on and off. An unfettered rhythm to it.

Blu is comforted, focuses on it, tuning out Bald Man.

CU - "WOMEN"

It blinks on and off. We're in Blu's mind now. All sound drops out, there is only the light.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Think quick!

Blu snaps out of it, turns as she is tossed an orange. She looks up to see that Friendly Guardsman from campus. The man ZIPS up his pouch of food.

Then smiles, obviously doesn't recognize Blu from when his buddy fired at her.

She follows his eyes up to those shooting stars, he quietly tells her...

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN  
Satellites. They're all being brought down. Not sure who decided on *that*.

Blu wants to talk but is at a total loss of what to say. So she just... grins awkwardly. The Guardsman gives a confused half-smile and moves on.

She watches him go, mad at herself. Makes a fist and lightly smacks her own head, "*Stupid.*"

That meeting begins to wrap up. Blu hears the Captain admitting he doesn't "Know what's going on either.." She tunes in to hear the end...

CAPTAIN

...Safer if we convoy... We'll be flown out once we get to the airport.

GRUMBLES of agreement. An unseen voice YELLS "Five Minutes" as civilians move to their own vehicles or military ones.

Blu looks toward Friendly Guardsman, his Humvee.

The man is talking to that FEMALE GUARDSMAN. An easy rapport as the two share a joke.

Eyeing the LAUGHING woman, Blu's eyes narrow.

HUMVEE - FOUR MINUTES LATER

Friendly Guardsman has the engine running. Those other Two are with him, Female Guardsman and the DUDE who shot at Blu.

Timid, Blu just *happens* to wander by. Eventually Friendly sees her, waves her over. Asks...

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN

You want a job?

INT. HUMVEE - ONE MINUTE LATER

Dude drives, the woman next to him. Blu is in the rear, loading bullets into M4 magazines. It's tough on her fingers but she struggles through.

Next to her, Friendly Guardsman gives her a small smile and the job's suddenly not so bad.

OUT THE WINDOWS, the civilian and military CONVOY has gathered. Horns HONK and the vehicles begin to move out.

IN THE HUMVEE, Dude HONKS his horn to join in. There are even a few HOOTS and HOLLERS. The Humvee begins to RUMBLE away, bringing up the rear.

A flask is passed around, the three adults all take a sip. Dude jokingly offers it to Blu but that Woman LAUGHS and tells Blu she's "too young."

Irritated, Blu keeps working.

MOVE TO:

EXT. THE CONVOY - MINUTES LATER

A HIGH ANGLE of the single line of a DOZEN VEHICLES, no two alike, save for the Humvees at the front and rear.

A SCOUT TRUCK is a half mile in front.

INT. HUMVEE - SAME

Over the radio, the scout truck's REPORT comes in, all clear ahead.

Blu keeps loading the bullets into the magazines. Realizes she's finished. Friendly smiles at her.

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN

Going to have to get you a promotion.

He digs into his pouch of food and finds some candy jewelry, tosses it to her. Blu smiles.

But the Woman speaks up, gazing out the rear window.

FEMALE GUARDSMAN

Thought I saw headlights.

DUDE

...Can't be them. They don't drive.

Just then, in the rear passenger window, they pass a FIGURE, it's grinning face illuminated. Blu jumps.

OUTSIDE / WIDER

SIX WORKER DRONES stand on either side of the highway, not approaching.

A seventh Drone's head turns as the Humvee brings up the rear.

## INSIDE THE HUMVEE

The Friendly Guardsman is on the radio, REPORTING this. Listening to RESPONSES...

Blu sits quietly, trying not to show fear. Hearing the Captain's order to "Stand Down" and...

CAPTAIN

...Sit tight. We're almost through.

## OUTSIDE

The convoy passes through the last of those Drones. Open road ahead.

INSIDE - Female Guardsman looks to her side of the jeep. She CURSES in shock, yells...

FEMALE GUARDSMAN

AMBUSH! It's an ambush...!

And then Blu sees it...

## A CAR STAMPEDE

Two Dozens cars side by side and coming this way. An unbroken line, three deep, perfectly coordinated.

OVER THE RADIO - PANIC and SHOUTING.

-- OUTSIDE, all the Drone car HORNS sound at once, like an overbearing whale-song.

Blu's Humvee and the other military vehicles OPEN FIRE.

## WIDER

As tracer rounds find the Drone Cars, the vehicles burst into flames, sheer physics breaking some of the coordinated attack.

But many Drone cars keep coming, they are --

-- Kamikaze road vehicles. Self-guided missiles. And --

-- DRONE CARS T-BONE parts of the CONVOY.

INT. HUMVEE - CONTINUOUS

Dude drives them OFF ROAD while Female and Friendly Guardsman FIRE with their M4's. Friendly's gun runs out or jams or overheats and he draws his Beretta sidearm. Opens his door to face the ONCOMING CARS.

FIRE is everywhere.

Blu hunches low, sees a CAR BARRELING for them --

-- It CRASHES into the Humvee, sending it spinning and --

BLU -- is thrown through the open door, finds herself flying through air, at --

-- THE GROUND, coming up fast and --

BLACKNESS

FADE UP:

BLU

Wakes with drops of water on her face in a white mist of smoke. Whatever fire was here was patted down by rain.

She finds she is off the highway in a water runoff area. Must have rolled here. Hands scratched up but overall she's largely unhurt.

There is white and grey ash in Blu's hair from whatever fire raged.

It will not come out.

Braving WIND, she struggles to her feet. Aches all over. No wrecked Humvee in sight, but there are pieces down here, tire scraps, a lone helmet.

Mourning is a luxury Blu doesn't have time for. She just fights the wind and hikes on up to the...

HIGHWAY

Not a soul in sight. A few abandoned vehicles but none of them familiar.

The fog is only getting thicker. Otherworldly. Blu tramps through. Takes out her atlas page but...

The WIND takes it.

Blu stumbles after the map but in moments it's gone from sight.

She resumes her walk, more lost and alone than ever.

THEN

A minute or an hour passes. In this thick fog, Blu can't see more than a few yards in front of her face.

Suddenly, a WHIMPERING CRY is heard. High pitched, eerie.

Blu fights her instinct to move in the other direction. The CRY comes again.

Like a boat drifting in fog, Blu is closer to the sound. The CRY is coming from the back of a VAN.

INT. VAN

Where Blu's eyes go wide. She's found...

A BABY. Dressed in blue, strapped into a rear-facing car seat for days. He's perhaps five months old. Malnourished.

There is a full bottle on the seat, maddeningly only inches away from the Baby's grasp. Some instinct taking over, Blu rushes forward.

Gives it to the baby, shutting him up for now. Looks around the VAN, spotting diapers and other supplies.

Realizes she's going to have to change a diaper and is a little grossed out.

Until the Baby looks at her with his big eyes.

And Blu looks back. She reaches forward, trying to figure out how to unclasp the seat.

ANOTHER SOUND is heard in the fog. Far-off.

Blu listens, hears it again.

RECORDING (O.S.)

*Tugboat.*

Blu shivers, knows who's coming.

She tries to unfasten the baby from the seat. Gets one of the two belts undone.

Suddenly, on the other side of the cars, a LANKY DRONE appears, face frozen in a grin.

It reaches for her - but its grasp isn't long enough. Then it PULLS on the door, locked.

Blu has only moments.

Even with the bottle, the Baby begins to CRY again.

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

*Tugboat.*

WIDER

MORE GRINNING DRONES appear in and out of the fog, hurrying toward her.

Lanky begins coming around the side of the car --

Blu is frantic, wants to quit.

And then, as Lanky is upon her --

She quits.

EXT. FOG / HIGHWAY

Tears in her eyes, Blu runs -- slipping around Lanky. The CRYING Baby haunting her in the fog.

And then the CRYING abruptly cuts out.

BLU

Runs on, feeling the SHADOWS of all the DRONES behind her.

EXT. A BUS - CONTINUOUS

A sudden pain gets her to clutch her stomach, Blu almost doubles over.

She notices the bus, looking for a place to hide.

Blu gets down on her hands and knees, scrambles UNDERNEATH the vehicle.

TIGHT ON BLU

Hiding, holding her stomach.

Seeing DRONES move past her. So far so good. Then --

RECORDING (O.S.)

*Tugboat.*

Closer, the recording sounds *warped* and *worn* now.

Blu can see the Mailman's BOOTS. He's approaching.

She crabwalks to hide between the rear tires.

The boots slow. But then continue on past her.

Blu takes a breath. Settles in.

Until she notices something outside the bus.

Blu strains her eyes, blinking away the remaining tears.  
Forming new ones.

Now we see what she's looking at.

A lump of cinnamon colored hair. It's a WOMAN, a hundred  
feet away, moving deeper into the fog.

BLU - checks around. Then slips out, giving chase.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Blu follows. Getting her first really good look...

At her Mother.

Just the two of them for now, Blu runs closer.

MOTHER

Grinning, she hears or senses her daughter. Turns...

And stops moving. They face each other.

Mother's grin disappears. She's studying Blu, firing  
synapses at the far edges of her brain.

Blu nods, comes closer, hoping.

Mother opens her mouth and --

SHRIEKS a terrible insect-like CALL.

Blu covers her ears in physical pain - but it's nothing compared to her breaking heart.

SHAPES emerge from the fog - Grinning Drones answering the call.

As Mother halts the shrieking, Blu shakes her head, crying, begging...

RECORDING (O.S.)

*Tugboat.*

Blu wants to run, wants her Mother to come with her.

But the woman's grin returns. Crying, Blu turns to run --

But it's too late, the net has closed.

The Mailman grabs Blu.

A LOT LATER:

The world is upside down.

POV - (UPSIDE DOWN) DRONE CITY

Even from this angle we can see the city has been transformed. In the distance, Thousands of Drones work, building massive ant hill-shaped buildings.

Pyramids of steel and glass, dwarf the former skyscrapers. A thick red smoke chokes the area.

RECORDING (O.S.)

*Tugboat.*

ON BLU - being carried upside down over The Mailman's shoulder. Stunned by such an alien sight.

She hears a PLEADING WOMAN'S VOICE, can't tell where it is coming from. Can't help the Woman anyway.

They approach a somewhat familiar building...

EXT. DREAM QUEST LABS - CONTINUOUS

The lab from the news. Blu is carried inside.

INT. DREAM QUEST LABS, RECEPTION AREA

What was once a large waiting room now has a thirty square foot HOLE in the center.

As Blu is carried in, she looks down into...

THE DEEP HOLE

Level after level of DUG OUT TUNNELS. A harrowing descent into different chambers, breaking off like tributaries.

A THOUSAND DRONES can be seen at work, digging with their bloody hands. Their low CHIRPING sounds throughout.

BLU

Prepares to be carried down into the depths, positive The Mailman will slip and fall to his death, but...

She is carried past the hole, kept on this level.

INT. LABORATORY

There are blown up PHOTOS of nightmarish PARASITES on the walls. Real-life monsters - all teeth, hair and suction-mouths.

In the low light of a red EXIT sign at the other end, abandoned research items can be made out.

RECORDING

...Tugboat.

Blu is carried in to this cave. She hears that Pleading Woman who was ahead of her...

PLEADING WOMAN (O.S.)

WHAT IS THAT?!

Lab beakers on the tables. Filled with a sludge-like greenish fluid and --

-- CRAWLING ORGANISMS.

PLEADING WOMAN (CONT'D)

GET IT OFF ME!

The Woman SCREAMS for a moment before going *totally silent*. Blu resigns herself.

She's lost. Her journey will all be over soon.

Blu searches for the nearest light. Finds one and focuses, hoping it will calm her. Trying to hear its BUZZ.

But in the relative silence she hears a new sound... A WAIL.

It's the baby.

*Blu looks over and sees the Baby - her Baby - in the arms of a MUSCLED FEMALE DRONE.*

With no expression, The Soldier Drone holds the child out over another aquarium tank filled with fluid.

Shapes move in the liquid. A SLOPPING SOUND as one of the organisms crawls to the surface.

The Baby WAILS again.

Blu perks up, wanting to help him. She tries to fight.

But in The Mailman's arms she's as helpless as the baby she's trying to save.

Still she fights, hitting, kicking, even biting her captor.

THE SHAPE IN THE TANK surfaces. The Baby held out for it. A quick glimpse shows a MULTI-LIMBED creature with an arched back. The size of a man's palm.

It FLOPS above the surface. Limbs reach out toward the Baby's mouth.

Blu stops fighting. Listening. She's heard something.

She looks to that EXIT sign. Begins tuning out the other sounds in the room.

Really focused on the EXIT, she appears to be in her own world again. As the EXIT sign HUMS she is listening to another sound; one she's heard *before anyone else*.

A little louder now, a CHUGGING sound makes it's way through the walls.

BLU - curls herself into a ball as, oblivious, The Mailman drags her toward another tank. Blu holds her breath, as...

OUTSIDE - SAME TIME

Above the LAB, a CHUGGING Apache Helicopter starts its attack run.

MISSILES LAUNCH --

WITH BLU

Watching her Baby in the clutches of the Parasite, she waits, timing it, as --

The MISSILES IMPACT on the Lab - FIRE ERUPTING as GLASS SHATTERS and WALLS CAVE IN --

BLU times the virtual earthquake to twist out of The Mailman's grasp, her shirt RIPS.

Momentarily free - She runs for The Baby just as the MULTI-LIMBED PARASITE is opening his mouth, but --

Blu snatches the Baby from the creature. As the Parasite falls to the floor --

Blu raises one foot and CRUSHES it into paste.

ARMS OF DRONES reach and claw at Blu. But Baby in hand, she slips by, around and through them.

Using her short-ness to slip under lab tables and then --

She is out the door.

BACK HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As the world around her burns, Blu runs through, Baby on her chest. DRONES chase her in a deadly game of "I'm gonna get ya."

She sees the FIRE EXIT door, RAMS it open, an ALARM BLARES.

FIRE EXIT STAIRS

If the ALARM hurts Blu, she doesn't show it, clutching her Baby, running full out.

ANOTHER EXPLOSION sounds as she gets to the ground level. The ALARM sounds WARPED and dying.

INT. LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Glass and pieces of steels from the partially-collapsing walls, but there is freedom just beyond the rollup doors.

Blu runs across a CREAKING floor to the exit. CRACK - her foot actually goes through the floor -

She gets a GLIMPSE of the DUG OUT CAVERN beneath the weakened floor - it drops off into nothingness.

Blu keeps moving, the floor CRACKING like thin ice beneath her feet but she has no choice.

The ALARM dies.

She gets to that door --

Locked.

Blu RATTLES it with no luck.

She sees a cracked window on her right. It's a few feet up; not sure how she could hoist the baby up there.

RECORDING (O.S.)

*Tugboat.*

Clutching the baby, Blu turns to see --

The Mailman approaching. Thirty feet away. Then fifteen.

Blu puts the baby on the floor.

Shaking with fear, Blu takes her hands off him.

The baby looks up at Blu, confused. She leaves him, running toward the window.

The Mailman gets within a few steps of the baby. He reaches out for the child, fingers close, but --

A CHILD'S FOOT steps in his way. WIDER shows --

-- BLU. A salvaged piece of steel in her hand like a club. She stands over the baby. She's *not going anywhere*.

The Drone closes in. Movements jumpy. And Blu does something we haven't seen her do before...

She SCREAMS.

YELLING at him, almost *roaring*, teeth clenched and ready to go all the way. A mama bear protecting her cub.

She will kill him.

The Mailman notes this and actually stops momentarily.

Then, if there are any emotions in his gloss black eyes, a look of amusement appears.

As The Mailman reaches out for The Baby --

Blu swings, KNOCKING his hand away, BREAKING a finger.

Then - CRACK.

His foot has caught in the floor. He looks down.

BLU

SCREAMS again and charges him, all fifty seven pounds of her swing into the Drone and --

-- He is momentarily off balance and --

CRACK - the floor gives way even more, swallowing him up to his knees.

RECORDING

*...Tugboat.*

Desperation in those black eyes of his as he claws for traction. And then for Blu.

But she's just out of reach, standing over him.

A desperate lunge and it seems as if Soldier-Drone will pull himself up.

But Blu raises her club.

BLU

("Fuck...")

Tug.

("You")

Boat.

She SMASHES the floor just in front of The Mailman, CRACKING it further.

As The Mailman dives for her, Blu even KICKS him once in the face and the floor GIVES WAY.

The Mailman takes the long fall into the chasm and is gone.

EXT. DREAM QUEST LABS - MOMENTS LATER

Burning and COLLAPSING in on itself. Nothing inside could still be alive.

WIDER shows Blu has escaped through the broken window. Clutching the Baby, she watches the place burn.

Thinking of her mother in there, Blu wants to cry.

But the WAIL of the baby breaks her trance.

He needs her.

DOWN THE ROAD - MINUTES LATER

Blu moves away from the fire and destruction. Smoke almost blotting out the sun.

The baby plays with the white streaks in her hair. Then smiles at her. Blu finds she's smiling too.

BANG!

Gunshot. Blu freezes.

It was a warning. Coming from...

A MILITIA ROADBLOCK

A mobile camp is splayed across the road with SEVEN ARMED MEN and WOMEN pointing shotguns and rifles at Blu. No uniforms in sight, just armed citizens.

MILITIA LEADER

Identify yourself or you will be shot!

Blu freezes up.

An ARMED WOMAN, 40, yells out...

ARMED WOMAN

It's got a baby! Shoot it!

MILITIA LEADER

Prove you're human! Say something! Speak  
OR WE WILL FIRE!

BLU

Is frozen. *Unable* to speak.

She only makes a nervous CLICKING sound with her tongue.  
Might as well be back in that classroom.

Armed Woman yells to the Militia Leader.

ARMED WOMAN

I can save the baby if you get rid of  
this drone!

MILITIA LEADER

Five seconds! Four...!

(then)

I'm going to shoot unless you can SAY  
SOMETHING!

As the countdown to Blu's death continues, the Leader's  
SHOUTING gets even louder.

Blu's ears hurt. She keeps CLICKING.

But she can think just enough to set down the baby.

His little eyes gaze up at her.

And, as Militia's Leader's COUNTDOWN reaches "One" --

-- Blu shuts her eyes and --

-- A SHOT rings through the air.

TIGHT ON BLU

Her eyes shut so hard they wrinkle. The world *silent*.  
Then...

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN (O.S.)

It's just a kid, fucknut!

Blu opens her eyes.

That Friendly Guardsman is here, eighth member of this  
group. He has just deflected the rifle of the Militia  
Leader, keeps the barrel pointed up.

Disgusted, Friendly Guardsman CHEWS OUT all the members  
before releasing the gun and moving over to Blu.

Blu picks the baby back up as Friendly Guardsman pulls  
them both over to...

BACK OF A TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

That LAB still burns. 'Copters circling, dropping ordinance. But this truck is blocking / protecting a clear ROAD that stretches off, seemingly forever.

Friendly Guardsman helps Blu to sit in the bed and tells one of the other men to "Get Medical."

Armed Woman moves to take the Baby from Blu. At first Blu resists, but...

ARMED WOMAN

I only want to help him.

Reluctantly, Blu hands over the baby.

Friendly Guardsman drapes a large blanket around Blu; the weight of it making her hunch over.

Now the Guardsman really studies Blu, recognizing her. He's happy as hell; in a kind of awe.

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN

You?! Well, shit!

(then)

How'd you made it this far? Out there, all alone...?

ARMED WOMAN

(calls over, agreeing)

You're just a little girl.

In answer, Blu looks over at the woman and then... shakes her head.

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN

(gets it)

Not any more, huh?

("but still")

How did you survive? Can you explain what happened out there?

CLOSE ON BLU

As the questions sound further away in her *mind* the man asks again...

FRIENDLY GUARDSMAN (O.S.)

Can you explain...?

Blu leans back, a very tired little person in a blanket. As she looks around, she hears everything at once:

- Back toward the lab, another EXPLOSION sounds.
- Nearby, the Baby COOS.
- Far away, *something* at least partly human, SCREAMS.
- WIND blowing her grey-streaked hair.

And now a thought comes to Blu, a look of...

*Understanding.*

Looking back the way she came, she takes in the smoldering wreckage - stretching back as far as the eye can see.

And seeing it, Blu raises her head confidently, she beams with a true and pure joy; because...

*She understands.*

To Friendly Guardsman's surprise, Blu shakes off the blanket and gets to her feet in the bed of the truck.

Around her, all the Militia stop what they're doing and look at her.

Blu throws her arms up and out, stepping wide like a circus showman.

With confidence in her voice, she announces...

BLU

*The Aristocrats!*

*Silence* from everyone around her. Crickets. No one but Blu gets the joke - not yet anyway. She doesn't care. Looks out at the great view from up here.

Still standing, Blu gazes down the road that lies ahead.

FADE OUT

\*