

HATCH
"PILOT"

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TEASER

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY - NEW YORK CITY 1919

A GURNEY BLASTS through DOUBLE DOORS. **NURSE ALICE KELLY** (23, army nurse vet, been to hell and back) and **DR. BENJAMIN DUNLAP** (40, talented, arrogant) push a SCREAMING **JOSEPHINE "JO" CONWAY** (19, pregnant, precious). Jo writhes in pain, Alice sees BLOOD POOLING under her vaginal area. Not good.

Jo's husband, **JAMES CONWAY** (22, upper middle class banker) watches on, terrified as they disappear into -

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jo is on the table, still bleeding. Alice checks her pulse, **DR. BERNARD RUSSELL** (30, entitled, overcompensating) assists Dunlap. On the sidelines, **NURSE MABEL MORRISON** (25, uptight, uncomfortable in her own skin), sneers at Alice, jealous.

ALICE

Pulse is dropping.

(gently)

Okay, Josephine, it's time to push.

On three. One, two -

Dunlap sees Alice is a step ahead of him. He hates it.

DUNLAP

Push!

Jo tries, but is depleted. The baby needs to come out, now. Dunlap pauses, braces himself for probable tragedy -

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

(to Mabel, soft, sincere)

Prepare the husband.

(to Alice, still soft)

Hold her hand.

Mabel nods, exits. Alice takes Jo's hand. Dunlap acts fast -

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

Forceps -

Russell hands him the FORCEPS - cold, claw-like. Dunlap inserts them DEEP, GRIPS THE BABY and TUGS. Alice winces. Finally, the baby is out, and Russell rushes it to a table. Jo's hand goes limp - she's dead. Alice's heart sinks. The baby lets out a SMALL WAIL, and Alice and Dunlap hurry over to the baby. Dunlap holds Alice back, mad at her forwardness -

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

Nurse Kelley, step back -

Alice reluctantly backs away. Dunlap inspects the baby -

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

Let the record show - male, three pounds, six ounces, Born 11 weeks premature. Suffering from jaundice, difficulty breathing. Bring it to the father. It will pass at home.

He hands the baby to Alice, like it's trash.

ALICE

But, Dr. Dunlap, he's -

DUNLAP

NURSE KELLEY.

Alice bites her tongue, fuming. Dunlap and Russell exit.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - LATER

Dunlap breaks the news to a shocked James. Mabel is stoic.

DUNLAP

Your... baby... was born premature.

JAMES

But - he's alive?

DUNLAP

Alive, but not whole. His condition results from an innate defect. He won't have the strength to pull through. I am sorry for your loss.

Dunlap leaves, Mabel follows. James stands there, helpless.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alice appears in front of James, with his living, breathing, son. When James sees how small he is, he's shocked, loses it -

JAMES

Is that - he's -

ALICE

Your son. He's alive. But he doesn't have much time -

James is hysterical, confused - Alice grabs his hand, leads him urgently to the back exit. REVEAL Mabel, eavesdropping, wearing a disapproving look. She follows them.

EXT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Mabel hides in the shadows, unseen, as she watches Alice try to put a confused and scared James in a CAB -

JAMES
I can't do this - it's madness!

ALICE
If you want your son to live, you need to trust me.

A beat, he nods. Alice shuts the door and tells the CABBIE -

ALICE (CONT'D)
Coney Island Boardwalk - east side
off 17th.

Cabbie tips his cap and takes off. Alice heads back inside. When the coast is clear, Mabel gets in a CAB, follows James.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - DUSK/NIGHT

James enters the Boardwalk, and is overwhelmed by a cacophony of carnival sounds - is surrounded by rowdy teenagers, freakshow performers. CARNIVAL BARKERS yell in his face -

BARKER #1
Come, sir! Let Marvelous Marvin
read your baby's mind!

BARKER #2
(pointing to billboard)
Come gaze upon the wonder of "Lorna
the Largest Woman in the World"!
Her dimples deeper than the ocean
and rolls bigger than the waves -

JUST THEN a FIRE EATER's flame almost hits James' baby. James runs, terrified, then bumps into an ELASTIC SKIN PERFORMER who's tugging and stretching the skin on his arms and face.

ANGLE ON MABEL'S CAB as she gets out, working hard to move through all the "sin" - when finally, she spots James.

BACK ON James, as a "normal" looking **WOMAN** approaches him.

WOMAN
What a beautiful child.

JAMES
(letting guard down)
Thank You. Do -

James realizes SHE HAS FOUR LEGS!

FRANCIS "THE FOUR LEGGED WOMAN"
Photo for the baby book?

A PHOTOGRAPHER pops up. James is freaked out by all of this - runs. BUT THEN, he sees a LIGHTED SIGN -

"ALL THE WORLD LOVES A BABY"

We follow James' eyes as they look down to see -

EXT. HATCHERY - CONTINUOUS

A SMALL CLUSTER OF PEOPLE looking in a window. James joins them - sees TINY BABIES like his inside of BABY INCUBATORS: metal cabinets standing 5 feet high, with glass doors and windows to see inside. To us it's normal healthcare, but in 1919 this was weird, out of the ordinary. A freakshow.

SUDDENLY an incubator BABY starts to cry and the onlookers react, making James nervous. He turns to leave as -

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(re: crying baby)
When she came here she only weighed
two pounds. Now, nearly five.

REVEAL **DR. MARTIN A. COUNEY** (50, lab coat, German immigrant, slight accent, gifted doctor, talented showman).

JAMES
What are those?

COUNEY
(deadpan sarcastic)
Babies.

This lightens the mood, as James smiles.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
They are incubators. The heat and clean air, keeps these babies, all born a bit early, healthy, and helps them grow to full term. It will do the same for yours.
(re: crying baby)
Her name is Lucille. I anticipate she will live a long, healthy life.

JAMES
But... the doctor said - my son's a degenerate... he won't live.

COUNEY

And this Doctor says he's wrong.

Couney holds the door open for James, insists he comes in. REVEAL Mabel has been watching this exchange in disgust and disbelief. She feels too out of place here and leaves.

INT. HATCHERY - MOMENTS LATER

James enters a large, sterile room. He scans the incubators - some empty, some with sleeping babies - and then clocks the people from outside looking in. Pointing, STARING. **NURSE ALMA ROMO** (26, Puerto Rican, grew up an orphan, *subtitles intentionally not included) approaches James.

ALMA

Su bebe es muy guapo. Tan precioso.

Alma reaches for the baby, but James backs away, sneering at her - an immigrant. Couney notices and intercedes -

COUNEY

It's okay, Nurse Romo.

Alma hands Couney a piece of paper with a BLUE STRING, exits.

COUNEY (CONT'D)

What is his name?

James is caught off guard - hadn't thought of that yet. Then:

JAMES

Joe. After his mom...

COUNEY

A strong name, for a strong boy.

Couney writes "Joe" on the blue stringed paper and ties it around Joe's foot. We CLOSE IN on baby Joe's face, and -

SMASH TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: "HATCH"

END TEASER

ACT ONE**EXT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**

An emotional Alice is smoking. The door next to her opens, and out steps **NURSE VIOLA HAYES** (22, beautiful, hardened, always an outsider). Startled, Alice hides her cigarette - Viola sees it, and then pulls out her own.

VIOLA
Got a light?

Alice sighs, relieved, then lights Viola's cigarette.

VIOLA (CONT'D)
I'm Viola Hayes.

ALICE
Alice Kelley.

Viola notices the fresh blood stains on Alice's uniform -

VIOLA
Mom didn't make it?

Alice shakes her head, no. Viola sighs, another one gone too soon. Alice takes a drag, blows the smoke out, and we -

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - DOCTORS' LOUNGE - SAME TIME

- Dunlap blowing smoke after taking a drag off his cigar. PULL BACK TO REVEAL a smoky lounge with sifters, cigar boxes, and luxurious leather chairs. Dunlap and Russell are chatting with **DR. VICTOR GREENWOOD** (24, handsome, genuine passion for saving lives), who's reading THE NEW YORK TIMES: "ARMISTICE DAY: TO BE OBSERVED," and "PRESSURE FOR SUFFRAGE."

DUNLAP
(giving Russell shit)
You can't get into Polly's.

RUSSELL
Ah, that's where you're wrong, Dunlap. In fact, I've become quite the regular. I've got an "appointment" this evening.

Dunlap snorts, half-believing him, but still impressed. Greenwood feigns laughter to fit in as "one of the boys."

GREENWOOD

(sarcastic)

Spending Armistice Day in the company of a hooker. Wilson would be proud.

Off Greenwood lightheartedly shaking his head -

EXT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - ALLEYWAY - SAME TIME

Alice and Viola are still smoking and chatting. Viola adjusts her uniform, causing her NECKLACE to poke out. Alice notices.

ALICE

Make sure you keep that hidden. The doctors don't allow jewelry.

VIOLA

I've never taken it off. They'll have to fire me.

Alice smiles, liking Viola's tough spirit.

ALICE

Family heirloom?

VIOLA

(somber)

It belonged to my -

(covering)

A friend... from nursing school back in Boston.

Viola looks mournful. Alice is curious, but respects her privacy. A relaxed silence hangs between them -

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - LOUNGE/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Alice walks by, overhears the doctors talking, eavesdrops.

GREENWOOD

(re: headline, war)

Imagine spending months in a shit filled hole, waiting for the Huns to come swarming after the shells fall. Poison gas. Nasty business.

DUNLAP

Yes, quite a sacrifice. But God reveals his will, even in death. You saw the caliber of man we sent into that thresher.

(MORE)

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

There's a class of man whose best use to society is to die bravely to make way for a class of men like us. The lord doesn't make mistakes, Greenwood.

Greenwood nods slowly, pretending to agree.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

Men like us who are doing so much to keep America safe, our values intact. To keep it pure.

FROM THE HALLWAY Alice reacts, disgusted. Mabel approaches.

MABEL (O.S.)

(to Alice, threatening)
I know what you did.

Alice turns, startled to see Mabel right in her face.

MABEL (CONT'D)

(more threatening)
Sending that diseased baby to a freakshow.

Alice didn't realize Mabel saw, tries to cover.

ALICE

Tuberculosis is a disease. A baby born too soon is not.

MABEL

If that thing stays alive, it puts other HEALTHY babies at risk.

ALICE

Do you ever get sick of not thinking for yourself? Maybe that's why I'm Head Nurse and you're not.

Mabel's stung. Alice turns to leave, Mabel's words stop her -

MABEL

I'm telling Dunlap what you did.

Alice thinks a beat, feeling threatened, but doesn't let on.

ALICE

Go ahead. You can't prove a thing.

They hotly stare each other down. Mabel gives in, leaves.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NIGHT

CLOSE ON the TICKLER ride - a cart of three girls, all screaming as it jostles around a track, having a blast.

PAN OVER to the boardwalk - bustling with couples on dates, families, teenagers goofing off. We see a giant Ferris wheel - the WONDER WHEEL - Coney's most famous ride, being built in the background. A sign reading "OPENING MEMORIAL DAY" is displayed out front. CAMERA keeps moving -

EXT. MARVELOUS MARVIN'S/PIERRE'S EDEN MUSÉE - CONTINUOUS

LANDS ON two prominent SIDESHOWS next door to The Hatchery -

1. "Marvelous Marvin the Mind Reader" - On the door is a picture of Marvin wearing a bejeweled Turban, holding a CRYSTAL BALL, looking straight ahead, making patrons feel like he's already reading their mind. Other signs say: "LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS OF MYSTIFYING PSYCHOLOGICAL ENIGMA," and "SIGNS FROM BEYOND, SEEN THROUGH HIS CRYSTAL BALL."

2. "Pierre Menard's Eden Musée Wax Spectaculaire" - A wax museum with historical recreations: "BLOODY SCENES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION!," "THE DEATH OF JEAN-PAUL MARAT BY FEMALE ASSASSIN CHARLOTTE CORDAY, SEE THE REAL BATHTUB SHE SLAYED HIM IN!" WAX STATUES of NAPOLEON, KING LOUIS are on display.

Standing out front, are the men who own them - **MARVIN MARCH** aka "**MARVELOUS MARVIN**" (40s, sideshow veteran, good guy if you don't cross him, can't read minds) and **PIERRE MENARD** (40s, ego, fake French accent, real name is Ed Miller).

Pierre has just finished hanging up his big new sign in front of his show - "FRENCH PIN-UP GIRLS, IN THE NUDE!" Marvin sees it and his eyes go wide. He stomps over to Pierre, angry.

Pierre calls out to some PATRONS walking by.

PIERRE
(french accent)
Madames and Monsieurs - come this way, see Pierre's erotic Parisian delights! Just 20 cents for more than a peep! Oui, Oui!

The Patrons are sold, pay to get in. Marvin approaches.

MARVIN
What the hell is that?!

As Pierre turns to see Marvin -

PIERRE
 (french accent)
 Pierre's erotic Parisian delights!
 Phénoménal!

MARVIN
 Cut the fake French shit. I don't
 give a flying fig about your wax
 brothel. It's the sign. It's bigger
 than the damn Titanic and it's
 blocking my show. Anyone walking
 east won't even see I exist.

PIERRE
 (no French accent)
 Then I'm doing them a service!

MARVIN
 (taken aback)
Excuse me?

PIERRE
 Go ahead, Marv. Read my mind. What
 am I thinking?

MARVIN
 That's not how it works -

PIERRE
 You should call yourself "Mindless
 Marvin the Biggest Phony on Coney."

Marvin reacts angered, but stops when a MOTHER and DAUGHTER
 walk by. CAMERA PANS OVER TO THE HATCHERY, RIGHT NEARBY -

EXT. HATCHERY - OUT BACK - CONTINUOUS

Couney and Alma unload a shipment of SUPPLIES - some labeled
 from FRANCE, some from USA. Alma opens a crate with a case of
 BABY POWDER.

ALMA
 ¡Finalmente, talco para bebés!

Couney looks to her encouragingly, teaching her English -

COUNEY
 Baby powder. Bay-be pow-der.

ALMA
 (almost)
 Buhbee pow-derr.

Couney smiles back, letting her know "good job."

ALMA (CONT'D)
Para las nalgas del feliz.

COUNEY
(trying to understand)
For happy... ¿Que es "nalgas"?

Alma gets what he's asking her. She SLAPS HER BUM, gesturing.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
(laughing, nodding)
Yes, for happy bottoms.

Couney counts the baby powder tins, and looks worried.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
(thinking aloud)
Hopefully this will last.

By Couney's look, Alma can tell something is wrong.

ALMA
¿Estás bien?

COUNEY
(calming her)
Everything is fine.

He smiles tightly, hands her the crate, gestures to take it inside. She leaves, worried, fingering her Rosary beads.

EXT. MARVELOUS MARVIN'S/PIERRE'S EDEN MUSÉE - CONTINUOUS

Marvin and Pierre are on the brink of a brawl -

PIERRE
Every single wax piece in my museum
is handcrafted by me. A skill that
requires actual talent.

Marvin almost reacts angry, but he concedes to his point.

MARVIN
That's fair.
(points to the huge sign)
But that sign is not. Take it down
or we're going to have a problem.

Marvin walks away, but Pierre can't help himself -

PIERRE
Hey, Marv! Would you lend me your
crystal ball? I'm taking your mom
out bowling later!

Marvin turns, sees Pierre "cupping a pair of fake boobs" over his chest, making oo-la-la sounds. Marvin fumes.

MARVIN
I'm warning you -

Marvin stares him down, then heads back towards his place.

ANGLE ON Couney as he fumbles with one of the shipment crates - he drops it.

EXT. HATCHERY - OUT BACK - CONTINUOUS

The crate is busted. Marvin comes to Couney's aid -

MARVIN
Hey, Doc, lemme help -

COUNEY
Marvin - thank you.

They lift the crate back up and we see it contains an incubator: a newer, different model than the ones inside - it's now damaged, cracked - Couney is distraught.

MARVIN
Our favorite fake Frenchman is
advertising wax sex workers now -

Couney glances over at Pierre's exhibit, and sees the sign. One look at the word "NUDE" and Couney is appalled. He returns to fiddling with the incubator, desperately trying to repair it. Marvin, fascinated by it, leans in to examine.

MARVIN (CONT'D)
Where do you get these alien cages?
Never seen anything like 'em.

COUNEY
They are only made in France. I
have been waiting for this new
model to come out for months.

Couney wears a look of dread. He may not be able to fix it.

MARVIN
You know what else is only made in
France? Absinthe. The real stuff.
Not that apple juice Pierre dyes
green. They say it makes ya
hallucinate. People pay a lotta
dough for that kinda sauce.

COUNEY
I do not imbibe.

Marvin's attention is back on the incubator.

MARVIN
So these... babies you put in here -
what's ya trick, Doc? Do you make
'em outta plastic, like dolls?
Don't tell me they're wax -

COUNEY
They're real.

MARVIN
Yeah and I'm a "real" mind reader.

Couney pauses, his interest piqued, then -

COUNEY
Are you not?

Marvin appears dumbfounded - he can't tell if Couney's being sarcastic. After a beat, Marvin bursts out laughing.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - ROOF/FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Alice, dressed in satin knickers, unwinds with a cigarette on top of a brownstone on the Upper West Side, a middle class neighborhood at the time. She stares off at the CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK, its attractions brightly coloring the night sky.

SUDDENLY - BOOM! BOOM! Fireworks go off over Coney, the SOUND startles Alice, she's frozen, caught in some memory, and we -

ANGLE ON a young woman climbing up the fire escape, toward the roof where Alice is. This is **JANE WILSON** (18, free spirit, living on her own since age 14), dressed in knickers, a garter flask and curlers. As she pops onto the roof -

JANE
Alice! I finished the dress! I back-
tacked the seams this time - Alice?

ALICE
(snaps out of it,
recovers)
Jane - you finished the dress -

Jane pauses - something is off with Alice. She sits down.

JANE
You okay?

ALICE
 (re: fireworks)
 I hear those damn things go off
 every night and I still can't -

Jane hands Alice her flask, signaling no explanation needed. A comfortable silence hangs between them as they trade flask rips and cigarette drags. Alice looks up at the sky, blows out smoke, sighs peacefully.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (in French)
 Au moins nous avons les étoiles.

Jane looks to her to translate -

ALICE (CONT'D)
 "At least we have the stars."
 (then, explaining)
 Something we'd say in the field
 when things got really bad. The
 only light in the night sky that
 wasn't... fire.

JANE
 Weren't the nurses stationed in a
 hospital?

Alice takes a deep inhale off the cigarette, passes to Jane.

ALICE
 Not my unit. We were on the front
 lines, with the men, sleeping with
 enamel basins over our bodies to
 use as shields for shrapnel. But we
 weren't given ranks or medals. We
 were called "Miss" or "Nurse."

JANE
 What would your rank have been?

ALICE
 (laughs)
 I guess I've never thought of that.

A beat. Jane pops up, stands like a soldier at attention.

JANE
 Sergeant-General-Colonel-Master
 ALICE KELLEY! Lieutenant Jane
 Wilson reporting for duty.

ALICE
 (laughs, plays along)
 At ease, soldier. Now show me that
 dress. That's an order!

JANE
 Aye, Aye Captain!

Off them laughing, heading back inside -

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - JANE'S ROOM/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A small room with two twin beds. Jane's side is covered in fabric and sewing supplies. She also has a collection of SUFFRAGETTE PROTEST SIGNS - "VOTES FOR WOMEN."

The other bed belongs to **MARISSA SUTTON** (18, conservative, judgemental, hidden past). She's lying down, reading a book.

Jane twirls in her sparkly flapper dress. Alice, impressed.

JANE
 Shorter hemline to show off my
 dancing shoes. Extra sequins to
 highlight the main attraction -

Jane shimmies her bust, Alice laughs. Marissa sneers at Jane.

ALICE
 Very modern. Coco Chanel should be
 paying you for designs.

JANE
 Who?

MARISSA
 It looks like a potato sack.

JANE
 Oh Marissa, shush. Men don't care
 about corsets anymore and female
 torsoes across America have never
 been happier.

Jane sits at her vanity mirror, fixing her hair/make up. JUST THEN we notice **FRIEDA SCHREIBER** (30, widowed, hardass German immigrant, runs the boarding house) who's been cleaning up the hallway, in an apron, listening to this conversation.

FRIEDA
 Women only stopped wearing girdles
 in America because of war
 rationing. Just be thankful you're
 not a woman in Germany.

(MORE)

FRIEDA (CONT'D)

The only diversity in fashion is color - either black or brown, and they don't even let you choose that.

MARISSA

Wearing that dress will give men the wrong idea, Jane.

JANE

Men were systemically raised to have the wrong idea about women. Whatever I wear or don't wear won't change that one bit.

ALICE

Getting our right to vote might.

JANE

Exactly! Did you hear Jessie Wilson is gonna be at the march?

MARISSA

Since when does the President's daughter support the demise of the family institution?

Alice rolls her eyes at Marissa's view of women's suffrage.

JANE

Ask her dad. He supports it too.

Alice chuckles - perfect retort. Marissa is appalled.

FRIEDA

The women in Germany have the vote.

Alice and Jane look surprised. Frieda launches into a rant -

FRIEDA (CONT'D)

But the only feminist organization is the Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine and the bourgeois women that run it want nothing to do with working women. You can be a feminist in Germany, as long as you're not working class. Even the feminists are not feminists!

(German, for "bullshit")
Schwachsinn.

A house mate **DENA KAPSALIS** (20, sarcastic, crass, second generation immigrant, embraces being "American" while trying to honor Greek roots) joins in, dolled up, ready to go out.

MARISSA
Dena's still wearing a corset!

DENA
Not for long... Ready, Jane?

JANE
Almost!

ALICE
Where you headed?

DENA
The Cotton Club!

ALICE
A night there could set you back a couple days salary.

DENA
Apparently Jane's real friendly with the owner -

Alice is surprised, curious, and not in a good way.

JANE
Oh it's nothing like that - I sit for his daughter sometimes and this is just a thank you.

Dena heads downstairs. Alice, worried, pulls Jane aside -

ALICE
I thought you were done with that -

JANE
I am - I just - it's complicated.

ALICE
Just... get home safe, okay?

JANE
I will.

Jane hugs her, leaves. A beat, then Frieda comes up to Alice -

FRIEDA
How come you're not going to this club of cotton?

ALICE
Duty calls.

FRIEDA

You keep working double shifts
you'll wear yourself thin.

ALICE

I'm sure the women in Germany work
longer hours than me.

FRIEDA

Actually no, they don't.
(off Alice's surprise)
I'll make you some coffee.

Alice smiles, appreciating Frieda.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alice walks down the hall with a fresh case of BABY POWDER
and a hand breast pump. She turns into -

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD - CONTINUOUS

A jam-packed room with PREGNANT WOMEN and NEWBORNS nursing.
No privacy, nothing comfy or cushy about it. A baby starts to
CRY, the rest follow, and moms collectively groan. One **MOTHER**
(20, distressed) calls out to Alice -

MOTHER

Nurse Kelley - I can't get Matthew
to go to sleep.

ALICE

Here, I'll try walking him around.

Alice puts the breast pump on the side table, then picks the
baby up. The Mother clocks the pump -

MOTHER

Nurse Kelley, I'm not feeding him -
(whispering)
- breast milk.

ALICE

But it's the best thing for him.

MOTHER

I'm not a poor Irish widow. Doctor
Dunlap says I can do formula.

Alice nods and feigns a smile. The baby stops crying, and the
Mother is impressed.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You're such a natural with him -
and all the babies. Do you have
children of your own?

Alice is somber, but manages to keep a soft smile.

ALICE

No.

MOTHER

Well, one day you will be a
wonderful mom. I know it.

Alice hands the baby back and walks down the line of beds,
stopping at new mom **ABBY BARNES** (20, on bed rest, in pain).

ALICE

Mrs. Barnes, how are you feeling?

Abby winces, shifts uncomfortably - pain in her vaginal area.

ABBY

Is it still supposed to hurt this
much? It's been nearly three weeks.

ALICE

Let me look at your incision.

Abby lays back as Alice lifts her hospital gown.

ABBY

I know I'm supposed to rest, but
it's been hard keeping the baby
down in a room with 12 other women.

ALICE

Can I have you lift your knees
toward your head - carefully -

Abby does so and Alice leans in to get a closer look.

THROUGH ALICE'S POV we see an incision from Abby's vaginal
opening - she's had an EPISIOTOMY - and there's swelling
around the STITCHES. Not yet infected, but still gruesome.

WE REVERSE to see Alice's face - she's alarmed. Alice lifts
her head as she covers Abby back up.

ABBY

How is it?

ALICE

(trying not to lie)

There's a little swelling, but
nothing to worry about just yet. I
will have the doctor tend to it as
soon as he gets in.

Alice helps Abby lie down, wishing she could help her.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NIGHT

It's middle of the night on the boardwalk - a rare, quiet
time. You can hear the ocean waves crashing to shore.

INT. HATCHERY - COUNEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Couney is going over financial papers, exhausted. The numbers
don't look good, his devastation grows.

Also on his desk is the BROKEN INCUBATOR he dropped earlier.

Couney grabs a pen and makes a few notes, then suddenly
agonizes in pain. HIS RIGHT HAND HAS GONE STIFF, rigid. He
works hard to move it, but it takes several moments before he
can get flexibility -

JUST THEN the sound of a JACKHAMMER plowing into concrete is
heard. Couney is alarmed, and seconds later, he can hear
CRYING BABIES in the main room of the Hatchery. Alma pops in -

ALMA

(re: jackhammer sound)

¿Que es eso?

Couney shakes his head, he doesn't know what the noise is.

COUNEY

(points toward main room)

Mira bebes.

Alma nods, exits. Couney grabs his coat and heads out -

EXT. MARVELOUS MARVIN'S - BACK - NIGHT

Marvin and a small crew of CONSTRUCTION WORKERS are building
an extra room off the back of Marvin's property. One of the
guys is manning the jackhammer, and the sound blares on. JUST
THEN Couney approaches Marvin and his crew.

COUNEY

Marvin! MARVIN!!

Marvin finally hears Couney and turns to see him.

MARVIN

DOC!

(to construction guys)
Cut it! Guys, take five.

The jackhammer stops, they break and leave the room.

COUNEY

What on earth are you doing?

MARVIN

I'm expanding. Adding a... new
attraction to my show.

Marvin looks coy. Couney doesn't compute -

MARVIN (CONT'D)

(trying to hint)
Something guaranteed to keep this
place open -
(off Couney's intrigue)
I'll tell you, but you gotta
promise this stays under wraps -
especially from that prick Pierre.

COUNEY

(dreading)
It's nothing illegal...

MARVIN

Right now it isn't, but in a couple
months, that story's gonna change.

Couney pauses, cautious. Couney looks around the room. He
clocks a few boxes with BAR WARE (glasses, bottles) -

COUNEY

I strongly urge you not to do this.

MARVIN

(defensive)
I'm going under no matter what,
Doc. And so is everyone on our
block. It's survival of fittest -

COUNEY

This cannot be the way -

MARVIN

(surprised)
I thought you'd appreciate more
foot traffic coming this way.

Couney knows Marvin has a point...

COUNEY

I cannot have any part in this,
Marvin. Please understand.

MARVIN

Suit yourself, Doc.
(then, mildly threatening)
But if I hear you blabbin' about
this to any authorities -

COUNEY

Never, I don't want the police here
anymore than you do.
(then)
I was never here.

Marvin nods slowly at Couney, cautiously, trying to get a
read on whether or not he's being truthful.

MARVIN

Okay, Doc.

Couney leaves, as Marvin stares him down we -

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - EXAM WARD - NEXT MORNING**

A cramped room with beds and a few curtains for privacy. As CAMERA PUSHES through, we see PATIENTS in varying stages of illness/injury, WAR VETS with missing limbs, KIDS coughing, a MAN with erosive lesions on his face (syphilis).

LAND ON Alice taking stock of supplies. Nearby, Mabel preps an exam bed. Dunlap and Viola enter.

ALICE

Doctor Dunlap, do you have a moment? It's Mrs. Barns. Her episiotomy, there appears to be abnormal swelling, possible infection - perhaps I should start her on a dose of carbolic acid -

DUNLAP

An incision of that nature takes several weeks to heal, Nurse Kelley.

ALICE

But she's in pain, and -

DUNLAP

Perineal pain during postpartum recovery is normal. Give her diamorphine, keep her on bed rest.

JUST THEN Mabel yells out from behind them to her very pregnant sister, **GRACIE DAVIS** (19, sweet, prettier than Mabel) entering the room - Mabel squealing with excitement -

MABEL

Gracie!

GRACIE

Sissy!

Dunlap moves away from Alice. Viola follows, giving Alice a look of sympathy regarding Mrs. Barns.

MABEL

(to Gracie)
You look radiant.

GRACIE

I don't feel that way. Just tired.

Alice looks over at Gracie's pregnant belly. Something about it gives her pause.

DUNLAP

(to Gracie, nice smile)
Mrs. Davis, I'll be in to do your
check-up in just a minute.

GRACIE

Thank you, Dr. Dunlap.

As Dunlap heads off with Viola, we notice Mabel staring at Viola -

GRACIE (CONT'D)

(sotto to Mabel)
Dr. Dunlap is a handsome fella...
(beat)
Mabel?

MABEL

Uh, yes. A shame he's married.
(changing subject)
Let's get you ready for your exam.
You'll have to undress this time.

Mabel leads Gracie to an exam bed, pulls a curtain around it.

ALICE

(sotto to Mabel)
How far along is Gracie? She
doesn't look much bigger since the
last time I saw her.

MABEL

Isn't your shift over? Bug off -

Mabel pushes Alice aside, takes off. Alice grabs Gracie's chart, something in it concerning her.

As Alice moves off to leave - Viola stops her, stares her dead in the eye - hands her a small vial of CARBOLIC ACID.

VIOLA

Go. Now. Before he's done.

In the BG we see Dunlap going to start Gracie's exam, pulling the curtain shut behind him. The two exchange an understanding look - and Alice heads off.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NATHAN'S HOT DOGS - DAY

A lively, sunny day filled with people. Alice sits on a bench, reading a newspaper story on PROHIBITION. Across the way from her is NATHAN'S HOT DOGS. She's just in earshot of -

NATHAN HANDWERKER (26, the Nathan of NATHAN'S HOT DOGS - handsome, and he knows it). He's calling out to pretty ladies walking by, charming the knickers off them.

NATHAN
HOT DOGS HERE! GETCHA HOT DOGS!
Best in the U S of A! Handcrafted
and served by yours truly.

Nathan points to his NATHAN name tag, impressed with himself.

Alice, laughs and then sees a woman come up behind Nathan and smack his head. This is **IDA HANDWERKER** (22, Nathan's wife). Alice's eyes go wide. She eavesdrops -

IDA
(to Nathan)
I'd like to see you tell all these
women that it's actually your
wife's recipe.

Nathan sighs (she's right), knows he's in hot water.

NATHAN
HOT DOGS! GETCHA HOT DOGS!

Alice meets eyes with Nathan, he waves at her flirtatiously.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
(to Alice)
How 'bout it, Miss? A dog, a bottle
of pop and a pickle, for ONE SHINY
NICKLE! Best deal on the 'walk!

As Alice chuckles and gets up to leave, CAMERA PANS OVER TO -

EXT. HATCHERY - CONTINUOUS

Outside the Hatchery, their resident barker, **ARCHIBALD "ARCHIE" LEACH** (aka Cary Grant before he changed his name to Cary Grant, 16, oozing charisma and energy, barely off the boat from Bristol, England), yells to people passing by.

ARCHIE
(into megaphone)
The tiniest, livin', breathin'
babies yoo'll ever lay eyes on!
(MORE)

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Come and see the bewilderin'
splendor that be!

People passing by ignore Archie - some running to exhibits nearby, specifically Pierre's tacky display of wax nudes. JUST THEN we see Alice strolling towards the Hatchery.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
(trying harder)
Babies! Beautiful, tiny babies!
Weighin' only three pounds!
(pulling out a sandwich)
Small as the sub in my sack lunch!

A few people stop to listen to Archie, reenergizing him.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
That's right! Babies smaller'na
sandwich!

Archie tosses the sub to a YOUNG MAN. He catches it, easy.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Look how easy he picks that up!
Pass it 'round, kid -

The Young Man passes the sub. A few people are intrigued, and get in line to pay for the show. We land on Alice paying too.

INT. HATCHERY - CONTINUOUS

Alice crosses off by herself, passing several incubators - and starts to greet each one of the babies.

ALICE
Hi, Mary. Frederick.

She takes a look at the next baby - LUCILLE - who looks enormous compared to the other babies. Alice is taken aback.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(slight concern)
Lucille, you're so big... You
should have graduated already.

It's clear Alice is a regular here. She keeps moving, then something makes her smile - James' baby (from the Teaser), breathing - alive.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I knew you'd be okay.

COUNEY (O.S.)
Handsome, isn't he?

Alice is startled. She turns and sees Dr. Couney, who has no idea Alice is the one who sent this baby here.

ALICE
Yes, he is.
(honored to meet him)
You're Doctor Couney.

COUNEY
You look familiar...

ALICE
You could say I've been here a few times. It's a pleasure to formally meet... Alice Kelley.

They shake hands, then Couney gestures to baby Joe.

COUNEY
He's our newest recruit.

ALICE
Just three pounds, six ounces...

COUNEY
Exactly... How did you know?

ALICE
Oh, just a guess.

COUNEY
You should take those skills down four doors - guessing weight over there will get you three nickels.

ALICE
I hear I can get three hot dogs with that.
(then)
What's his name?

COUNEY
(pointing to bracelet)
Joe.

Alice takes that in - knowing he was named after his mother.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
The father was nervous he wouldn't make it, but I knew he was a strong one. The next Jack Dempsey!

That makes Alice smile. She examines Joe's incubator closely.

ALICE
I thought these only existed in
Europe.

Couney looks surprised and curious she knew that.

COUNEY
That's right...

Alice fingers the glass, then notices nurse Alma pick up an incubator baby and cradle him, moves off to another room. When she pulls the door open, Alice gets a peak inside the NURSERY where a few babies are being breast-fed, weighed.

ALICE
If only these incubators were in
hospitals. So many lost...

COUNEY
One day American medicine will
catch up and realize that babies
born prematurely grow up to be fine
members of society... I'd even say
great people.

ALICE
And then what?

COUNEY
And then... I can retire.

Alice nods, appreciating Couney's altruism.

ALICE
I should get going.

COUNEY
Come back again, Miss Kelley. The
babies know when they have fans.
Maybe next time they'll sign some
autographs for you!

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL RECORDS ROOM - DAY

Mabel riffles through PATIENT FOLDERS/INFO, finds a file labeled "JOSEPHINE CONWAY." She makes sure the coast is clear, then steals the file, tucking it underneath a stack of hospital bed sheets. Just as she turns the corner into the -

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Mabel bumps into Viola, causing her to drop the bed sheets and Viola to crash into the wall.

MABEL
 (beyond embarrassed)
 I'm so sorry -

Mabel quickly grabs the blankets and stuffs the file back in.

VIOLA
 No, no - it's okay -

Mabel, nervous, can't form a sentence. Viola breaks the ice -

VIOLA (CONT'D)
 (going in for handshake)
 I'm Viola Hayes.

MABEL
 (returning shake)
 Oh uh, I'm Mabel - Mabel Morrison.

JUST THEN Dunlap's voice is heard -

DUNLAP (O.S.)
 NURSE HAYES! I need those bandages!

VIOLA
 Is he always like this?

MABEL
 Go down two doors, you'll find
 bandages in the storage closet.

VIOLA
 Wish me luck.

Viola leaves, Mabel stares off after her.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - ALICE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alice, in bed, hears SCREAMING. She jumps up, heads to -

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - JANE AND MARISSA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alice enters, horrified to see Jane on the floor covered in blood - EVIDENCE SHOWS SHE WAS GIVING HERSELF AN ABORTION. Alice runs to her aid. Marissa's huddled in a corner, scared.

ALICE
 Jane! Jane, you're pregnant??

JANE
 (woozy)
 Alice...

ALICE

Yes, Jane, it's Alice. I have you.
(then)
Marissa! What happened?

MARISSA

I just came in here and she was
like this! I don't know!

ALICE

Jane - talk to me

JANE

The girls at Polly's said I would
bleed a little bit. It's okay. I'm
okay.

Alice clocks all the blood, checks Jane's pulse. She is
fading fast. Marissa stays silent.

ALICE

Why didn't you tell me?

JANE

If you do it early enough it's not
a big deal.

(then)

Do you think it worked?

Jane starts to lose consciousness.

ALICE

Jane! Stay with me.

Frieda appears -

FRIEDA

Jane, Jesus Christus!

IN THE HALLWAY: Dena pokes her head out to eavesdrop. Frieda
clocks her and swiftly closes the door for privacy. Marissa
shakes in the corner helpless, as Alice handles shit -

ALICE

Frieda, I need you to phone the
operator for an ambulance -

FRIEDA

A hospital?! They'll crucify her!
ME. My babies - I'm all they have!

ALICE

We'll say we don't know her - we
found her outside! Frieda, please!

Frieda nods, not liking this one bit, but decides to help anyway. She takes off to make the call. Alice stays calm.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Marissa, we need something to stop
the bleeding. Clothing, towels,
sheets - anything that's clean -

Marissa doesn't move. Alice yells at her, desperate for help -

ALICE (CONT'D)
MARISSA! Come on!

Marissa looks away. Alice goes into trauma mode, rummages for supplies. She spots a BOX OF LISTERS (old-timey pads), rips into it, then places the PADS on Jane to slow the bleeding.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alice, covered in blood, pushes Jane on a gurney -

ALICE
DUNLAP! She's bleeding out!!

Dunlap and Mabel see Alice barrelling down the hallway and into an operating room. Dunlap hustles to her aid.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alice and Dunlap move Jane from the gurney to the operating table - Russell and Viola re there to assist. Dr. Russell looks at Jane's face and is startled - but he says nothing, and quickly gets back to work.

DUNLAP
How long has she been out?

ALICE
Not sure. Could be a miscarriage.

DUNLAP
Pulse -

ALICE
40 beats per minute! And dropping!!

Alice/Viola monitor Jane's blood loss, trying to transfuse.

ALICE (CONT'D)
More blood!

Viola attaches another vial of blood to Jane's I.V. Dunlap examines Jane's vaginal area, sees signs of a botched abortion. Dunlap stops working on Jane, then trades looks with Russell, gesturing for him to look at what he's seeing.

RUSSELL
 (looking at Jane's "area")
 All signs point to an abortion.
 (sotto, off Dunlap's look)
 She's one of Polly's girls.

Dunlap registers Russell was a customer of hers.

DUNLAP
 (to Russell, re: baby)
 Yours??

RUSSELL
 (shrugs)
 I don't know. She's probably slept
 with half the city -

Alice takes in what they're saying - continues to work. Viola takes over blood duty, Alice begins chest compressions.

ALICE
 We're losing her! Do something!

DUNLAP
 I will not treat her, Nurse Kelley.

Alice keeps pumping Jane's chest to no avail.

ALICE
 Come on, Jane. Come on, Jane -

DUNLAP
 She is a prostitute. Her sins have
 brought this upon her, God is
 calling her. I will not save her,
 and nor will you. That is an order!

Viola is disgusted by Dunlap's words - and shocked. Alice doesn't stop trying to save Jane.

ALICE
 I am sure the Hippocratic oath
 applies to all people!

DUNLAP
 She is hardly "people."

Alice ignores Dunlap and continues compressions. She knows Jane is seconds from death, but she can't give up.

ALICE
 (defiant)
 It's okay to pay for sex but not to
 get paid?
 (gesturing to Russell)
 Who's the real sinner??

DUNLAP
 The whore who murders her child.

Alice sneers at Dunlap. Just then - Jane goes limp.

ALICE
 Jane - JANE!

JANE IS GONE. But that doesn't stop Alice from doing
 compressions, working to save her life -

She pumps until she exhausts herself, accepts Jane is dead.
 We can read the devastation on her face, which turns to anger-

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (to Russell/Dunlap)
Cowards.

Alice storms out of the room. Viola is shocked by the scene
 she just witnessed, follows Alice out.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Alice is covered in Jane's blood, trying to process what just
 happened. Viola is there comforting her. Dunlap approaches.

DUNLAP
 (to Alice, stern)
 Don't you ever speak to me like
 that again.

ALICE
 I'll speak to you like that
 whenever you forget your moral
responsibility to hu -

Dunlap smacks her, hard. Alice is shocked, Viola appalled.

DUNLAP
 I will not have a woman upending
 the natural order of this hospital.
 It is my responsibility to care for
 God's people - not sinners and
 degenerates - and it is your
 responsibility to obey. Now go
 clean that whore's blood out of my
 operating room!

Dunlap turns and walks away, leaving an emotional Alice with a crimson cheek - sad and fuming mad. After a few beats, Alice steps up, unafraid.

ALICE

I quit.

Dunlap turns around, is instantly shocked and not having it.

DUNLAP

EXCUSE ME?

Alice turns and leaves, breathing heavily, shaking, processing what she just said. Dunlap fumes harder - no woman has been this defiant to him in his life, ever.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

Nurse Kelley, come back here this instant!

Alice keeps walking away, filled with rage and devastation.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

NURSE KELLEY!

Alice opens the hospital doors and leaves.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. WAR ZONE TENT - FLASHBACK**

DISSOLVE INTO AN UNKNOWN POV: A misty, chaotic war zone tent. A handful of wounded Soldiers and Nurses around us as we change a bandage on a WOUNDED SOLDIER. Nearby explosions shake the tent - and then we hear -

*SOLDIER (O.S.)
GAS! GAS! GAS!*

A YELLOW MIST starts filling the tent from the floor up. Everyone reaching for gas masks, the POV does the same. The mist thickens, we lose sight, until a gas mask is snapped over our face. Deep breaths until - SOMEONE RIPS OUR GAS MASK OFF - and as we inhale the gas - retching, coughing...

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - ALICE'S ROOM - TWO DAYS LATER - PRESENT

Alice shoots out of bed, coughing, smoke filling her room.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - COMMUNAL KITCHEN - DAY

Alice enters panicked, finds Frieda putting out a fire on the stove. Dena looks on - coughing. Alice opens some windows to let the smoke out. Frieda's kids are there - crying, mayhem.

FRIEDA
(to Dena)
Stop using the stove to dry your knickers!
(then)
Kids, go to your rooms!

The kids leave. Frieda hands the burned knickers to Dena.

FRIEDA (CONT'D)
New tenant moving in tomorrow, make a respectable impression and get rid of these.

ALICE
New tenant?

DENA
You've already rented Jane's bed?

Alice considers Frieda's quick replacement of Jane. Oddly, Alice doesn't appear sad or upset - just pensive.

FRIEDA
Will you be paying that bed's rent?
Cry as you might, Jane won't.

DENA
 Frieda, that's cold, even for you.

Suddenly Alice lifts her head, an icy look on her face -

ALICE
 Men die. There's nothing we can do
 about it - we have to keep moving
 forward. We have to be ready to
 save the next one, if we slow down,
 another will die -

Dena is shocked and confused to hear Alice speak this way.
 Alice is staring off into nothing, shell-shocked.

DENA
 Uh... Alice?

Alice snaps out of it and assesses the room, realizing where
 she is. Home. Then, she leaves. After Alice is gone -

DENA (CONT'D)
 What was that all about?

FRIEDA
 Alice has been through a lot. Leave
 her be.

Off Dena, curious and concerned -

INT. HATCHERY - NURSERY - DAY

Alma is singing a Spanish lullaby to Lucille (the full grown
 baby) while changing her diaper. Lucille giggles - she is
 adorable. Alma wraps the strap of the diaper around her
 belly, but it's too small.

Couney is inspecting the incubators - checking for loose
 parts, cracks in the glass, kinks in the oxygen tubing - but
 just as he's doing that, Alma calls out to him, interrupting
 his focus on incubator maintenance -

ALMA
 (to Couney, worried)
 Doctor, Lucille es... grande.

Couney examines Lucille, places her in a nearby bassinet.

COUNEY
 Lucille no more necesita incubator -
 (more so to himself)
 We need to make room for others...

Couney looks around the room at the other incubators - each one of them is filled, worrying Couney. He grabs a BABY GIRL from an incubator that has TWO BABIES in it and places her into Lucille's old incubator.

ALMA
(asking Couney)
Lucille... ¿Donde esta su familia?

Couney looks at sweet Lucille, his heart breaking.

COUNEY
(trying to explain)
Her family - su familia es no...

ALMA
¿No familia?

Couney shakes his head no. Alma clutches her Rosary beads, scared for Lucille. Frustrated, Couney heads to his office -

INT. COUNEY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Couney makes a beeline for the incubator he dropped before, and tries again to fix it, but again HIS HAND GOES STIFF, causes him to fumble, and the CRACK in the incubator glass gets bigger, irreparable, and Couney realizes it's a lost cause.

Angry, Couney throws the tool he was using at the wall. He grabs the incubator in a huff, carries it out to -

EXT. HATCHERY - OUT BACK - CONTINUOUS

He slams the incubator in the DUMPSTER, we see it lands on the CRATE LABELED that it is from "FRANCE."

As Couney heads back inside, he notices Marvin, working on his back room - looking pleased, excited, as if his plan may work. Couney takes a beat to think, then heads back in -

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - DUNLAP'S OFFICE - DAY

Mabel is speaking with Dunlap. We come in mid-convo -

DUNLAP
(concerned, angered)
You're sure?

MABEL
Mr. Conway confirmed.

Dunlap paces, fuming, his authority threatened.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - MATERNITY WARD/HALLWAY - DAY

Viola walks, carrying a stack of blankets. JUST THEN she hears FEEBLE CRYING coming from the Maternity Ward. She hurries to the doorway, sees Abby Barns, the mom with the episiotomy. She's woozy, sweating, looking like death.

VIOLA

Mrs. Barns!

Viola DROPS THE BLANKETS and rushes to her aid -

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - JANE'S ROOM - DAY

An emotional Alice is packing Jane's things. Rummaging through drawers, she comes across a NURSES CAP - Alice's from the war, a RED CROSS emblazoned on the front.

Curious, Alice notices on the inside of the nurse cap some EMBROIDERY, not quite complete, with the NEEDLE still in the last stroke of the thread - but the words are clear:

"Sergeant First Class, Nurse Alice Kelley, Field Hospital No. 127, 32nd Division"

Alice is overcome. Jane's absence is even more devastating. Then Alice sees Jane's SUFFRAGETTE PROTEST SIGNS, remembering the rally Jane wanted Alice to go to.

EXT. FRIEDA'S BOARDING HOUSE - STREET - NIGHT

A woman, **NINA PREWITT** (20, African American, Southern, aspiring writer, new to the city), is walking towards the boarding house with two suitcases, looking wary. She's getting the side eye from some of the neighborhood racists.

She reaches the boarding house, and walks through the SIDE YARD to the back door - passing the front door on her way.

INT./EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - COMMUNAL KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Frieda, Alice and Marissa are doing the dishes. They hear a KNOCK on the back door - which is strange. The girls trade looks as Frieda answers the door to see Nina -

NINA

Hello. I'm here to see Ms. Frieda Schreiber?

FRIEDA

Come in, girl, you'll catch a cold.

Marissa's eyes widen at the sight of Nina. She drops a plate.

FRIEDA (CONT'D)
Girls, this is Nina Prewitt.

ALICE
Good to meet you, my name's Alice.

NINA
Pleased to make your acquaintance.

Marissa won't make eye contact with Nina. Alice steps in.

ALICE
That's Marissa, your new roommate.

FRIEDA
Ms. Prewitt, your bed is up the stairs, first room on the right.

ALICE
I can show you -

Alice guides Nina out, exiting. Frieda confronts Marissa -

FRIEDA
You be nice. If I hear you whispering this into a policeman's ear, I'll put you out on the street. I won't have my babies going hungry to satisfy your idiotic superstitions. So if anyone asks about Ms. Prewitt, she's our live-in maid. Understood?

Marissa is angry, indignant.

MARISSA
I cannot share a room with her.

FRIEDA
And why, pray tell, is that?

Marissa fumes, they stare each other down.

FRIEDA (CONT'D)
Don't you be forgetting your own circumstance when you came to me, girl.

Marissa stands down, conceding.

FRIEDA (CONT'D)
(re: dish)
Now clean this mess up.

INT. HATCHERY - NEXT DAY

A FEW PATRONS are there, admiring the babies. Couney smiles at them, then from the corner of his eye he notices that one of the incubators has turned off, instantly worrying him. He runs to turn it back on, checks the baby - he's okay. Couney sighs with relief. Alma is nearby, Couney approaches her.

COUNEY

Nurse Romo - did you turn this off?

Alma has no idea what he is saying. Couney points to the incubator power source, tries to explain -

COUNEY (CONT'D)

The incubator - que paso?

Alma looks at the incubator, shakes her head, doesn't know.

Frustrated, Couney walks away. Through the window he notices a nurse of his at Nathan's Hot Dogs. He doesn't look pleased by it, walks over -

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NATHAN'S HOT DOGS - CONTINUOUS

- And approaches wet **NURSE MATTIE MERRILL** (20, sweet, naive, recently put her baby up for adoption) eating a hot dog and flirting with Nathan.

COUNEY

(stern)

Nurse Merrill -

Mattie turns with the hot dog in her mouth and sees Couney - then looks guilty. He caught her breaking a rule.

COUNEY (CONT'D)

I've made it very clear that no wet nurse of mine is to eat this slop.

Nathan reacts, offended by Couney calling his food "slop."

COUNEY (CONT'D)

No alcohol, no smoking, no snacking on junk.

NATHAN

I think she can do what she wants, Doc.

COUNEY

(to Nathan)

As long as she's breast feeding my babies, she is to remain on a strict diet.

Weirded out, Nathan gives Couney a strange look - HUH???

COUNEY (CONT'D)

(to Mattie)

The milk mustn't be contaminated.

MATTIE

I'm sorry! Please don't fire me!

Couney considers, then sighs. He has a lot on his mind, and this is the least of his worries.

COUNEY

You'll need to pump when we return to the Hatchery. Come now -

Mattie exits, blushing. Couney gives Nathan the death stare. As they head to the Hatchery, Couney sees Marvin fighting with a **SKETCHY LOOKING GUY** (40s) out back. Couney enters the Hatchery through the back to hear what is happening -

SKETCHY GUY

The deal with my guy in Canada fell through. It's out of my hands.

MARVIN

(distressed, mad)

I'm supposed to open by the end of the month. No shipment means no product means no customers.

SKETCHY GUY

If I had another guy, I'd tell you.

MARVIN

Well keep looking.

SKETCHY GUY

A lot of people gettin' in the game. Ya can't cross them or the coppers. Hard to know who to trust.

Couney, who has been watching this scene play out, knows exactly what they are talking about. It makes him nervous, but he keeps eavesdropping.

Marvin does not look pleased. On the brink of losing it.

MARVIN
To hell with you then!

SKETCHY GUY
(walking away)
Yeah good luck, pal.

Sketchy Guy leaves. Marvin paces, angry - then his eyes land on Pierre's enormous sign, enraging him even more. An idea comes to him and he marches over to grab the JACKHAMMER.

Marvin drags the jackhammer to Pierre's sign. TOURISTS turn an eye. He lifts the jackhammer up to rip through the sign.

It's too heavy... so he runs the jackhammer along the bottom of the sign tearing up the bottom - then down across the entrance to the wax museum, digging a trench. Pierre runs out, yelling.

PIERRE
What the hell are you doing,
Marvin??

Marvin keeps drilling, tearing into the wax museum with little regard, then stops -

MARVIN
I told you to take down that damn
sign. Next time listen.

Marvin stares him down, then leaves. Pierre, rattled. The tourists, scared. Couney, shocked by Marvin's behavior, puts his head down and walks away, back to the Hatchery.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - DAY

CLOSE ON: A WOMAN riding down the Coney Island slide. When she reaches the bottom, we're immersed in the culture of the boardwalk - GAME BOOTHS, FREAKSHOWS, CARNIVAL RIDES. The woman joins her FRIENDS. A MALE FRIEND slides down, going too fast on purpose - he slams into a stout man, **AL STANLEY** (50s). Al is annoyed, brushes himself off and heads to -

INT. HATCHERY - MOMENTS LATER

Al enters, baffled by the incubator babies, sees Alma -

STANLEY
(reading paper)
I'm looking for a "Mr. Couney"?

ALMA
(struggling)
¿Couney? Uh - he es -

Couney enters just then -

COUNEY
I am Doctor Couney.

Couney tries to shake hands, but Stanley pulls out some I.D.

STANLEY
Al Stanley, Coney Island Health
Inspector.

COUNEY
(suddenly alarmed)
What can I do for you, Mr. Stanley?

Alma observes - something doesn't feel right. She frowns.

STANLEY
We got a complaint from one of the
city hospitals. Something about
unsanitary services? I need to
check out your, uh, "clinic."

COUNEY
(showman-like)
Well, welcome! Please, have a look
around, and gaze upon the miracle
of a tiny life *hatch* before your
very eyes!

STANLEY
I'm not much for shows.

Stanley walks around the Hatchery, poking, prodding, tapping
on things. Couney follows close behind him grabbing his
office door and closing it swiftly as they pass it. Soon it
is just them. Alma, worried, looks on from afar.

COUNEY
Mr. Stanley, I assure you this is
not necessary. I am passionate
about saving lives.

STANLEY
Well I do have to report back to
this hospital that your facility is
tiptop and there's nothing to worry
about... but nothing's ever that
easy these days is it?

Stanley has taken a dark turn -

STANLEY (CONT'D)

(conning him)

Like these walls? They should be thicker according to city standards. All health care facility walls must be six inches thick.

Stanley writes down some notes.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I would hate for one of these babies to get sick because the walls aren't thick enough - I should shut you down right now, move these babies elsewhere but I am willing to let this slide... for a price. Gotta give a fair shot to my people on the boardwalk.

Couney sighs, as if he knew this was coming.

COUNEY

I have never asked for a single penny from a parent in exchange for the care of their infant -

Stanley gives Couney a condescending collegial pat.

STANLEY

Then I guess the cost for admission just went up.

As Couney takes that in, Stanley gets closer to Couney, menacing.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I mean it, Couney. You got one week to get me 200 clams. Pay up or I shut this place down...

(then, normal)

For the babies' safety of course.

Stanley leaves. Off Couney, looking even more concerned.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - DAY

As Stanley walks out - in a SWEEPING SHOT we see a SALESMAN hawking blackface masks, a FATHER buying one for his giggling SON, a troupe of LITTLE PEOPLE performers walking by, and a MAN wearing a sandwich board labeled "Protect Men's Rights."

LAND ON a CROWD of 100 SUFFRAGETTES, wearing "VOTES FOR WOMEN" sashes, holding signs: "HOW LONG MUST WOMEN WAIT FOR LIBERTY" and "PRESIDENT WILSON SUPPORTS WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE."

Alice is there with Dena, both holding the PROTEST SIGNS from Jane's room. They chant with the other SUFFRAGETTES -

SUFFRAGETTES

Forward, sister women! Onward even
more! Bondage is behind you!
Freedom is before!

Alice is awed by the spirit and tenacity of these women. Dena is desperately trying to keep warm in the frigid cold.

ALICE

(to Dena)

I wish Jane could have been here.

DENA

(half joking)

Yeah she would've reminded me to
dress warmer. I'm freezing my
bubbies off.

They walk through the crowd, and observe a group having a conversation -

SUFFRAGETTE 1

Our movement will never be taken
seriously if we invite Negroes -

DENA

And why is that?

SUFFRAGETTE 1

(to Dena, defensive)

We need to keep a respectful view
of women. Too much change all at
once would scare people off.

Dena shakes her head, thinking this is so unfair.

SUFFRAGETTE 2

I don't like it much either. But
she's right. This isn't just about
the right to vote. This is about
women achieving equality in every
aspect as men.

JUST THEN Alice thinks she spots Viola across the way, puts her sign down next to Dena -

ALICE

(to Dena)

Be right back -

DENA
 (to suffragettes)
 Every aspect? I work in a shipyard
 and there is no earthly possibility
 I could carry the same weight of
 steel as a man.

The suffragettes trade looks - she has a point.

ANGLE ON Alice headed towards Viola, through the thick crowd.

BACK ON Dena talking to the Suffragettes -

DENA (CONT'D)
 What about the draft? Are all you
 broads eager to sign up for that?

The women pause, not expecting that perspective.

SUFFRAGETTE 1
 I'd rather die in war than be
 forced into a life of child
 rearing.

DENA
 Okay. Then what about...
 synchronized swimming!

SUFFRAGETTE 1
 Men don't compete in that.

DENA
 (joking)
 Not now they don't. But this whole
 equality in every aspect thing can
 put ideas into their heads too...

A point they weren't expecting, that also makes them laugh.
 Dena laughs with them.

ANGLE ON Alice approaching Viola -

ALICE
 Viola!

Viola sees Alice and lights up, heads toward her.

VIOLA
 Alice!

BACK ON Dena and the Suffragettes.

SUFFRAGETTE 2

You should join the League of Women Voters. Your perspective would be valuable. We meet every Tuesday.

DENA

Sure. They serve free booze?

The Suffragettes laugh, amused by Dena's whole persona.

BACK ON Alice and Viola -

ALICE

I'm good - hanging in there. Haven't found work yet, but I'm okay for now. How's Bellevue?

Viola pauses, not sure how to answer.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Viola, what is it?

VIOLA

It's Mrs. Barns...

Viola, somber, signals Abby died. Alice is devastated, mad.

ALICE

DAMMIT!

VIOLA

You tried -

ALICE

I should've just treated her myself the second I saw the problem.

VIOLA

This is on the doctors, not you.

ALICE

I'd like to cut Dunlap root to stem. Give him a shoddy sew up job, throw him in a room full of sick people and tell him to "trust in God."

Viola nods - understanding Alice's anger. Gives her a hug.

VIOLA

You here with anyone?

ALICE

Oh, yeah, my friend Dena, she's -

Alice searches the crowd, sees Dena still conversing with the Suffragettes.

JUST THEN Alice's attention is brought to a CARNIVAL BARKER -

ARCHIE

All the world loves a baby! Watch
'em HATCH before your very eyes!

CLOSE ON Viola, staring at The Hatchery, confused.

VIOLA

(to Alice)

What is that place? Are those babies?

Alice pauses, not sure what to tell her. She starts slow -

ALICE

Remember that night with the
preemie and the mother, Josephine
Conway...

Viola nods, Alice takes a deep breath, then we -

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - CONTINUOUS**

We pick up at the tail end of Alice explaining to Viola what she's been doing. Viola looks dumbfounded.

VIOLA
 (pointing to Hatchery)
 So it's true - Mr. Conway's boy is
 in that place. Right now - alive.
 And you sent him there. And a dozen
 others. Against Dunlap's wishes.

Alice looks down, thinking Viola is angry, judging her.

VIOLA (CONT'D)
 You've saved so many lives, Alice!

Alice is relieved to hear her say that. Thinks for a beat.

ALICE
 (with purpose)
 You know what? You're right.
 (to Viola, genuine)
 Thank you.

Alice walks over to the Hatchery with purpose. Viola is confused, smiling curiously.

EXT. HATCHERY - CONTINUOUS

Alice approaches Archie, flips him 20 cents, and walks in -

INT. HATCHERY - CONTINUOUS

Alice spots Couney and struts right up to him. Alma is nearby, cradling a baby. Alice taps on Couney's shoulder, he turns around, happy to see her again.

COUNEY
 Miss Kelley, hello -

ALICE
 (pointing at incubators
 and the bassinet)
 Some of these babies - Lucille,
 Frederick, Mary, Joe. They're alive
 because of me. I sent them here -

COUNEY
 (utterly bewildered)
 You sent them?

ALICE
From Bellevue. Yes.

Couney pauses, putting a few clues together.

COUNEY
This must be why I received a visit
from the Health Inspector.

Alice looks disheartened.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
No. Don't trouble yourself.
(stern)
It's time they learn the truth. No
matter the cost. On behalf of
myself and my staff, we thank you
and wish you good fortune.

As Couney turns -

ALICE
I quit Bellevue. I can't work at a
place that treats preemies like
trash and female patients like
cattle. But this place. This place
is going to change the world - and
I want to be a part of it.

COUNEY
I don't have room for another
nurse.

ALICE
Find room.

COUNEY
Admission into the show is low and -

ALICE
Then you need more incentive -

Alice looks at the babies, formulating an idea - light bulb.

ALICE (CONT'D)
The babies - why do people pay to
see them?

Couney doesn't follow.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Because they're small! But
What if they looked even smaller by
putting them in bigger clothes?

Couney steps back, baffled he had never thought of that.

COUNEY

(really impressed)

Bigger clothes... clever. This is a show - they should have costumes!

ALICE

(excited, still making her case)

I know nurses in this city, women - allies that would continue to send babies here. Think of all the other preemies left to die that weren't born at Bellevue, who didn't get our help... I can set up a network - we can help mothers, fathers, families and save lives!

Couney is overwhelmed by her enthusiasm. He considers, but -

COUNEY

If I could I would but -

JUST THEN Alma, who is tending to baby Joe, yells out -

ALMA

(panicked)

¡Doctor! ¡Joe no está respirando!

Couney, alarmed, runs to Joe's incubator. Alma points to Joe's chest to indicate breathing. Alice jumps in to help -

ALICE

(to Couney, alarmed)

What's wrong with Joe??

Couney checks the tubing but his hand cramps again, slowing him down half a second.

COUNEY

(struggling)

Alma - We need to get oxygen to him now! Necesario -

Alma looks at him confused - the language barrier coming to a head. As Couney tries hard to get his hand moving, he starts to panic. Alice's heart pounds as she watches.

COUNEY (CONT'D)

(desperate, confused)

The tubing is fine, Alma -

Alice pushes her way in, starts checking the incubator, then Joe's pulse, listening for his breathing. She searches her mind for an idea, and suddenly, THROUGH ALICE'S POV, we -

INT. WAR ZONE TENT - FLASHBACK

- are back in the same "PTSD dream" Alice was having with the gas mask fiasco. REVEAL THAT the panicked soldier has partially removed ALICE'S gas mask. She's choking on a mild dose of the gas. Her vision, highly limited. Alice can't breathe, she needs a solution, fast, but time is running out -

Alice uses one hand to hold the gas mask in place, and searches with her other hand. She finds a bottle labeled CHLOROFORM - BINGO! She smashes the bottle over the head of the soldier and quickly reseals her mask as he is knocked unconscious. SHE CAN BREATHE. But she takes less than half a second to help the soldier anyway.

Alice drags the soldier up to his cot, then searches. Her hand finally finds a gas mask, but the front tubing is detached from the mask, broken. She feels around for something to fix this - finding the bottle she just smashed over the soldier's head, and then we FLASH TO -

INT. HATCHERY - PRESENT

Alice comes to - she has an idea, and runs out the door -

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NATHAN'S HOT DOGS - CONTINUOUS

Alice runs to Nathan, who has his back turned at the counter.

ALICE

(urgent)

Hey! I'll take that nickel deal -

Nathan turns around, recognizes her and smiles -

NATHAN

I remember you -

Alice throws a NICKEL at Nathan, hitting him in the chest.

ALICE

NOW!

Alice reaches over the counter, grabs a SODA POP BOTTLE, then sprints back to the Hatchery.

INT. HATCHERY - CONTINUOUS

Alice runs in carrying the SODA POP BOTTLE and rushes to a back counter with a basin and basic medical supplies.

ALICE
 (to Couney, Alma)
 Move -

He sees the soda pop bottle in her hand and is alarmed -

Alice dumps the soda, SMASHES the bottle, cutting it in half. Couney is fuming, Alma is startled and a bit scared.

COUNEY
 What in God's name are you doing??

She drowns the bottle in alcohol to disinfect it. She grabs gauze, then runs to the baby, pushing Couney out of the way.

ALICE
 Saving this baby's life!

Couney steps back, his hand still not completely mobile. Alice rips some piping out of the wall, and pulls out a handful of the filtering. She puts some in the broken bottle, then puts the drinking end of the bottle over baby Joe's mouth and nose, it's small enough to cover both and create a seal! Alice wraps the other end with gauze, then starts to BREATHE INTO IT, administering mouth to mouth.

After some breaths, baby Joe's chest finally starts to rise and fall. Moments later, Alice carefully steps back - and we see the baby is breathing on its own! Couney and Alma are astounded by what they just saw. Alice places baby Joe back in the incubator - Couney trying to process what happened -

ALICE (CONT'D)
 (whispering to Joe)
 You are a strong one.

COUNEY
 How did you know how to do that? Do they teach that in nursing school?

Alice gathers herself -

ALICE
 I didn't go to nursing school. I was in the army - a volunteer for The American Red Cross. Two years, stationed in France.

- and leaves.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - DUNLAP'S OFFICE - DAY

A large, expensively decorated room with a fully stocked wet bar - an office fit for a doctor who thinks he's God. Dunlap sits behind the desk. Al Stanley is there for a meeting -

DUNLAP

I've been waiting days to hear from you, I thought the public health office would take these kinds of complaints more seriously.

Stanley shifts in his chair.

STANLEY

Listen, I agree the guy is kind of a crackpot, but as far as I can see, his operation is up to code.

DUNLAP

(astounded)
Even if that were true -
(disgusted)
These things he calls babies.

STANLEY

- He's even got a nurse on staff. She's Spanish, but that's not illegal. He wants to save lives, much like you.

Dunlap is speechless, lets out a disgusted sigh.

DUNLAP

Freakshow.

STANLEY

That's what Coney calls "normal," doc. Lorna the Largest Woman in the World, Francis the Four Legged Woman... Freaks or not, what they do for a living ain't our business.

DUNLAP

Why anyone would pay to see such filth...

STANLEY

What do you care?

Dunlap sneers at Al, then gets up and calmly walks to his bookshelf.

He scans the shelves, and finds what he needs (we don't see what it is yet) and as he's pulling the book from the shelf, we clock a few book titles right next to it - one being, "THE PASSING OF THE GREAT RACE" by Madison Grant.

DUNLAP

(re: book)

This is why I care. Why we should all care.

CLOSE ON the book - "HEREDITY IN RELATION TO EUGENICS" by Charles Davenport. A famous Eugenics book. Stanley doesn't get what Dunlap's saying, nor does he really care.

STANLEY

Uh, I'm not exactly sure what you're implying with all this.

DUNLAP

Of course you wouldn't. You're just as wicked as the rest.

STANLEY

Look, you don't know the boardwalk. It has a mind of its own. It's its own world. I don't make the rules and no one else does either. And that's the way they like it there. I wouldn't get involved if I were you. There are powerful men over there who make it their job to keep men like you out.

Dunlap does not like being lectured to.

DUNLAP

And there are powerful men like me who keep men like you in their place.

They stare each other down. After a few heated beats, Al grabs his hat and coat and heads toward the door.

STANLEY

I'll see myself out.

Dunlap fumes as he watches Stanley leave his office.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**EXT. HATCHERY - NIGHT**

Archie approaches Couney -

ARCHIE

Hey Doc - I've been barkin' my guts
out, people can barely afford to
pay four nickels let alone five.

Couney sighs, nods, accepting. Then Couney notices a few PATRONS give Alma the side eye. They whisper to each other, turn and leave the Hatchery.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

So should we take it back down to
four? Doc?

Couney is processing all of this, conflicted over what to do.

INT./EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The doorbell rings. Frieda answers and sees Dr. Couney standing there. She looks confused, guarded.

FRIEDA

(classic Frieda)
Who the hell are you?

COUNEY

I apologize for the hour, ma'am. I
am here to see Miss Kelley.

FRIEDA

(calling out to Alice)
Alice, some old guy's here for you!

FRIEDA (CONT'D)

(to Couney)
Your accent. Luxembourg?

COUNEY

Munich.

Frieda makes a confused face -

FRIEDA

Oh -

- But is interrupted when Alice pokes her head in.

ALICE

Dr. Couney?

Frieda gives Alice a concerned face.

ALICE (CONT'D)

It's okay.

Frieda keeps a cautious eye as she leaves them be.

COUNEY

Miss Kelley, hello. Forgive the intrusion - I got your address from the records office at Bellevue.

ALICE

What can I do for you?

COUNEY

The Hatchery is in trouble. Raising the cost of admission is not working and my head nurse, Alma. She is a wonderful person, but some patrons are turned off by her...

(trying to clarify)

She's trying desperately to learn English but I'm afraid she is behind.

Alice signals for him to cut to the chase.

COUNEY (CONT'D)

I want you to come work for me. I've never met a nurse as talented and as promising as you. My babies need you. Please.

Alice smiles, shocked by this new opportunity.

INT. HATCHERY - MAIN ROOM - NEXT DAY

Alice, dressed in a Hatchery nurse uniform, places her war nurse cap on her head, catching a glimpse of the words embroidered inside it, giving her inner confidence.

Couney leads Alice through the room, giving her the tour.

COUNEY

(arms wide, showman-like)

The people pay for babies, so give them babies!

JUST THEN Alma enters, and stops dead when she sees Alice dressed in a Hatchery Nurse Uniform. She scowls, confused.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
 Nurse Kelley, this is Nurse Alma
 Romo.
 (then, to Alma)
 Es Nurse Alice Kelley.

Alice nods politely. Alma is guarded. As they move off, Alma looks on, confused. Coney turns into the nursery.

INT. HATCHERY - NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

A quiet, peaceful room. Mattie and four other WET NURSES are seated in a row, breast-feeding babies.

COUNEY
 (whispering)
 My wet nurses. Ladies, this is
 Nurse Kelley - make her feel at
 home.

The women smile quietly, Alice waves back.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
 (pointing as he goes)
 Scales. Weigh the babies daily,
 patrons love to see the stats.
 Diapers. Cloths. Powder.

The two of them keep moving into -

INT. HATCHERY - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

COUNEY
 Coney's renowned Chef Collins!

LONNIE COLLINS (20s, African American) nods at Alice.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
 Lonnie cooks for the wet nurses.
 Only the best food from the best
 chef for the babies.

Collins nods proudly -

COLLINS
 Yes, sir! No tinned beef here!

He winks as he plates a meal.

ALICE
 Hi, I'm Nurse Kelley.

COLLINS
 (smiles, polite)
 How do you do, Miss?

Alice and Couney exit out and land in -

INT. HATCHERY - COUNEY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Alice immediately heads towards Couney's collection of medical books, many in French. She takes one down. "Maladies de l'enfance," by Elias Werner.

ALICE
 (translating to English)
 Diseases of Infancy by Elias
 Werner.

Couney enters and sees the book Alice is looking over.

COUNEY
 (re: book)
 That's a good one.

ALICE
 Why are all of these in French? I
 thought you were German.

COUNEY
 I studied there.

ALICE
 Where? With who?

Couney avoids her questioning, protective of his past.

COUNEY
 (re: books)
 Please borrow anything you'd like.

Alice smiles and continues to page through books on shelf.

COUNEY (CONT'D)
 So you mentioned you knew people,
 or nurses, that could help us...

Alice turns to Couney, ready to talk business.

EXT. EUGENICS RECORDS OFFICE - LONG ISLAND - DAY

An unassuming stucco house standing atop a grassy hill overlooking the Long Island Sound. It looks like a quaint private residence, not a scientific research facility.

A PLACARD on the door: "EUGENICS RECORDS OFFICE Est. October 1, 1910". Dunlap opens the FRONT DOOR and enters. As he walks in, CAMERA HOLDS ON -

The "BOARD OF SCIENTIFIC DIRECTORS" are displayed on the same placard. Amidst a dozen names, CAMERA FOCUSES on "ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL," "CHARLES DAVENPORT" and "DR. BENJAMIN DUNLAP."

INT. EUGENICS RECORDS OFFICE - LONG ISLAND - DAY

A small research institute that gathers data on the ancestry of people living in America, to produce propoganda that was made to fuel the eugenics movement, and "race-betterment."

Dunlap walks by a **MALE SCIENTIST** (30s, focused, but gentle) measuring the head circumferences of an ASIAN IMMIGRANT FAMILY: two KIDS (3 and 5 years), a MOTHER and FATHER (20s).

The family is awkward, unsure why they are here, but they comply nonetheless - as if they are doing a duty to science.

MALE SCIENTIST
(to the youngest child)
Now face forward -

The Scientist measures the length/width of the child's eye lids, nose and brow, then records it in a CHART - a family tree with descriptions outlining their "undesirable traits."

Nearby, there are various HEREDITARY CHARTS and GRAPHICS hanging on the walls that say things like, "THE BURDEN OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED" and "PEDIGREE OF EYE COLOR INHERITANCE."

INT. EUGENICS RECORDS OFFICE - BOARDROOM - LATER

Seated around a table is a gathering of the board members - **ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL** (72), **LOTHROP STODDARD** (36) and **CHARLES DAVENPORT** (53) are among them, looking scholarly, astute. Dunlap is at the head of the table, addressing the men.

DUNLAP
Gentlemen, we live in perilous times. Immorality, miscegenation, and degeneracy threaten the very existence of our society and our race. We must redouble our efforts to identify, classify and eliminate the genetic defects which grow more common with each passing day.

The men at table nod and make agreeable noises.

INT. HATCHERY - NIGHT

The lights are dim. Alice places baby Joe in an incubator.

ALICE
Good night, dearest Joe.

She closes the incubator door, and takes in how special he is. As she stares at him lovingly, her mind wanders, and we -

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

A house we haven't seen yet. Alice (wearing a wedding band) is on the floor, holding her stomach, in pain. She winces, then screams. BLOOD starts to run down her thigh and she's even more alarmed.

ALICE
William!

Alice screams again. Her husband WILLIAM (20) runs in.

WILLIAM
Alice -

He sees the blood and knows something's not right -

INT. HATCHERY - NIGHT - PRESENT

- James (Joe's father) taps Alice's shoulder, who comes to.

JAMES
Nurse Kelley?

ALICE
(surprised to see him)
Mr. Conway -

JAMES
What are you doing here?

ALICE
I work here now.
(re: baby Joe)
He grows stronger by the hour.

JAMES
(re: Jo)
I wish she could have been here.

James' eyes well-up, Alice places a hand on his -

ALICE
 (comforting)
 I know how it feels to lose someone
 you love.

A beat as this moment sinks in for both of them. Just before it looks like he's going to ask her for more details, little Joe wiggles his legs - a sign of life. James is overjoyed.

JAMES
 Nurse Kelley, look!

Alice looks on at James touching his son's incubator, like a proud father. Alice takes in her work, and off her smile -

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - WHIRL OF THE WHIRL - NIGHT

Alice and Viola step up into a gondola on the WHIRL OF THE WHIRL, a high flying round-a-bout ride. As the gondola lifts -

ALICE
 Thank you for meeting me -

VIOLA
 Of course - not every day I get to
 be part of the circus.

ALICE
 Working here does have its strange
 perks.

VIOLA
 You're gonna do great things Alice.
 I know it.

Alice smiles, feeling the warmth of Viola's faith in her.

ALICE
 I've got a favor to ask you...

Viola's interest is piqued. She's listening...

INT. HATCHERY - NEXT DAY

Couney meets a man, **CARL BAKER** (40s, a rep from an orphanage) at the front of the building.

COUNEY
 Mr. Baker, thank you for coming.

Couney leads Baker over to the bassinet Lucille is in. Alma enters.

MR. BAKER

We'll try to find her a good home.

Couney nods, this is killing him - but he can no longer afford Lucille. Couney goes to take her out when -

ALMA

¡Doctor! ¡Por favor no!

COUNEY

(trying to calm her)
Nurse Romo -

Alma knows exactly what is happening, and panics -

ALMA

(in tears, rapid)
No puedes hacer esto - ella
necesita una familia. Una mamá. Un
padre. Un orfanato no le dará esas
cosas. Su vida será difícil.
¡Créeme!

Couney can't translate - neither can we. She keeps going.

JUST THEN Alice enters to start her shift. Lucille is crying, and so is Alma. Alice observes, clocking Mr. Baker -

ALICE

What's going on?

Couney is distraught, doesn't want to answer.

COUNEY

Lucille. Her parents never came.

Couney is struggling, he doesn't know how to calm Alma, who is still rambling in Spanish.

COUNEY (CONT'D)

(to Alma, sincere)
I'm sorry - Lo siento.

Alice, overcome with emotion, steps up -

ALICE

Dr. Couney, I agree with Nurse
Romo! Lucille can't go to an
orphanage - it's no environment for
a child to grow up! Her life...
Please. She's just one baby.

Couney then shifts, his emotions welling up - everything is coming to a head... him owing money to Stanley, the lives of these babies, the broken incubator -

COUNEY

But she's not just one baby, don't you understand!?

(points to Frederick)

Frederick is having a hard time with breast milk and needs formula. Do you know how much that costs?

(points to Mary)

Mary has a health condition that requires round the clock care, and the mother can't afford it.

(then)

Nobody cares for these babies more than me, but our help can only go so far.

Alice takes that in and Alma fingers her Rosary beads, not fully knowing what is happening. In this moment Alice realizes that even a magical place like the Hatchery will come with obstacles, but she's fared far worse.

ALICE

(pleading)

One more week. Let the baby stay one more week. So that we can look for her parents. Or any parents! I sent her here. This is on me too! I'll pay for her care out of my own pocket!

Alma is overcome with suspense.

COUNEY

It is not that easy -

ALICE

There's always a way. There are women who lose their babies in childbirth and then can't have their own! Just think if one of those couples could adopt this baby? Please, Doctor Couney.

Couney is conflicted. Alice comes in closer to Couney and really makes her words land with him -

ALICE (CONT'D)

(to Couney, desperate)

If you don't save them, who will?

Couney knows she is right. He's frozen. Finally -

COUNEY

(to Baker)

I'm sorry to have wasted your time,
Mr. Baker.

Couney escorts Mr. Baker out. Alma breathes a sigh of relief, and goes over to Lucille's bassinet, saying a prayer. Alice smiles, also relieved.

CAMERA PANS slowly over all the premature babies, each having their own story, and we -

SMASH TO BLACK.

END PILOT