

BIOHAZARD

THE
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FRESH BLOOD EDITION



THE FIGURE

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FADE IN:

INT. WAREHOUSE

Hands skim over smooth, flawless skin. Fingertips tracing up an arm. They keep going...and going...

Until they stop at the shoulder of this very long arm.

Except there's no shoulder.

It's just an arm. Bloodless. Detached from a body.

Hands grasp the skin of this arm, and begin to peel the skin away.

Revealing intricate, beautiful wires on this large mechanical arm.

VICTORIA (O.S.)

Ugh. Every goddamn time...

The hands go in, targeting a silver wire--thin as a strand of hair--and pick up the wire with a pair of tweezers. Delicate.

The wire is re-hooked into a bundle of other wires at the elbow.

VICTORIA MUNG (Asian, early 30s, serious type) leans back in her chair, breathing out a sigh.

She's in a lab coat, plastic goggles slung around her neck. Black hair done up in a greasy, messy bun.

On her workspace: a myriad of tools, wires, and papers.

She is alone in a large, empty room. Concrete floors, bare walls, a metal table.

She goes in with the tweezers again, plucking at the wire she just reattached.

A finger on the hand of the mechanical arm twitches in reflex.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Finally.

She leans back in her chair, breathing out a giddy laugh.

We see behind her: **A GIANT FIGURE, covered by a sheet.** It's nearly 10 feet tall, lying still and motionless.

She takes the goggles off her neck, leans back in her chair.

She doesn't see it...but we do. The Figure TWITCHES underneath the sheet.

ESTABLISHING

Towering, evergreen trees. A serene blue sky.

The large, concrete warehouse sits in a large clearing in this forest. Middle of nowhere. Maybe somewhere in the woods of Washington state.

Not too far in the distance, we see the three tall spires of REALTECH LABS.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - EARLY DAWN

Victoria shuts the heavy gray door of the warehouse, clicking a padlock into place.

A watery sunrise breaks across the sky.

Victoria takes a deep breath, letting the new day wash over her.

We follow Victoria as she gets into her car and drives off...

INT./EXT. CAR

The forest whizzes by, a blur of green outside the tinted windows.

The car is all dark leather, glass panels. Tesla, but make it futuristic.

VICTORIA
Call Henry.

The car display panel flashes.

CALLING HENRY...

It rings twice.

HENRY (O.S.)
Please tell me you're not driving.

VICTORIA
Hey, good morning to you, too.

Henry's voice is husky with sleep. The dash console screen lights up--there he is.

Henry Clear: 30s, tall, soft-spoken, handsome, prematurely grey haired. The camera wavers, like he's on FaceTime.

HENRY (O.S.)
My God...it's six in the morning.

VICTORIA
I had to finish some things up at the lab.

HENRY
Mmm...did you? Finish things up?

VICTORIA
Eh.

HENRY
Sounds promising.

VICTORIA
You're a jerk. I'll be home soon.

HENRY
Alright. Love you.

She smiles.

VICTORIA
Bye.

HENRY
'I love you too, Henry.'

She rolls her eyes, hangs up. Keeps driving...past a BEAUTIFUL GLITTERING LAKE. This is Lake Elisi.

The water shimmers gold from the sunrise. It's huge, an oasis in the forest.

EXT. TOWNHOUSES

Victoria pulls into a space in front of a plain townhouse.

It is one among row after row of townhouses, meant to house the scientists working at RealTech Labs Inc.

All of the townhouses are cookie cutter identical.

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - MORNING

Victoria digs around in her backpack for her keys.

She knocks on the front door quietly, then continues rooting around in her bag.

The door opens.

HENRY (O.S.)

At this point I should just leave
my door unlocked for you.

Henry answers the door in sweatpants, yawning.

VICTORIA

I know, I know, I know, I'm sorry.

He leans down and gives her a quick peck, then steps aside so she can slink into his apartment.

INT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE

It's small, rustic, and neat. A coffee pot gurgles on the counter.

Henry glances towards the clock over the kitchen sink. 6:30am

HENRY

There's leftovers in the fridge? I
can make eggs, too, if you want.

VICTORIA

I'm okay.

HENRY

Did you eat in the cafeteria?

VICTORIA

It closed at 9pm.

He looks at her disapprovingly.

She drops her backpack off near the couch and collapses into the sofa, making herself comfortable. Kicking off her shoes.

He comes over to the couch. Leans over the back of it, so he can give her a quick kiss.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Mmf. Spicy.

HENRY

Hm?

VICTORIA

Your aftershave.

HENRY

Oh.

He leans away, rubbing his chin.

She stretches out on the couch. Henry meanders his way back over to the kitchen.

VICTORIA

Can you pour me a cup of coffee?

HENRY

Nope.

VICTORIA

Seriously?

HENRY

You don't need caffeine right now.

She grumbles. He grabs two cups from the cabinet.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Hey, I meant to ask you before you left yesterday. The gold filaments you wanted to order...

She stiffens.

VICTORIA

Yeah?

HENRY

Can they be 43% instead of 72%?

VICTORIA

Why?

HENRY

The efficiency of having the higher density metal is negligible...but the price is not negligible.

VICTORIA

I need the higher grade one.

HENRY

You sure?

VICTORIA

Yes.

Henry comes back over and sets a mug down on the coffee table in front of her.

HENRY

Chamomile. I added honey.

VICTORIA

(sarcastic)

Thanks.

She drinks it anyway.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

The fast twitch cords need the higher density. Softer metal, more flexibility. Faster twitch.

He hums, thinking.

HENRY

Wouldn't a plastic wire be more efficient if you want something soft?

She looks at him like he's nuts.

VICTORIA

Durability against heat? Plastic would melt.

HENRY

Not if it's mixed with silicone.

VICTORIA

Too soft. It would be like putty.

He considers this.

HENRY

Fair enough.

Victoria is still palpably nervous.

VICTORIA

Has Bend asked about it?

HENRY

No, but I just don't want to make it seem like I'm letting my team be cavalier with resources and money.

VICTORIA
(teasing)
Wouldn't want anyone to think their
lead is a cavalier man.

HENRY
Especially because he's already
cavalier in his personal
relationships.

She laughs.

She settles in deeper to the couch. Exhaustion setting in. He goes to the opposite end and lifts her feet up so he can sit down, placing her feet in his lap.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I'm always happy to take a look at
the cords, if you need me to.

VICTORIA
Nah, I don't need you to.

HENRY
You sure?

VICTORIA
Yes. Feels like cheating on my
homework.

HENRY
Collaboration isn't cheating.

VICTORIA
Considering you're technically my
boss...and you're in charge of
reviewing my performance...

HENRY
Don't say it like that...

VICTORIA
It's true.

HENRY
It sounds skeevy when you say it
like that.

His phone alarm rings.

VICTORIA
You're going to be late.

HENRY
I'll be fine.

But he sets his mug down and grabs his bag, gently standing so as to not jostle her.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I'll leave my keys with you. Lock
the door after me?

VICTORIA
Mmhmm.

He closes the front door gently behind him.

Victoria's eyes slip closed...as she dozes off.

DREAMSCAPE

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The forest is dark, moonlight turning everything silver.

It is eerily silent. No crickets chirping, no rustling leaves. A void of sound.

Except a low, thrumming pulse.

We drift closer to the sound, and a gentle yellow light.

In the center of the forest clearing, a squirming, embryonic sac floats in mid air.

It's large, and there is a gigantic FIGURE in there. Curled in the fetal position like an infant. Except it is HUGE.

INT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE

Victoria wakes with a breathy gasp, hair glued to her face and neck with sweat.

The silence of the apartment seems to close in around her, warping from anxiety.

She makes a grab for her cell phone on the coffee table.
Checks the time.

VICTORIA
Shit.

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE

Victoria gets into her car and tries to start it.

It shudders and whines.

VICTORIA
What the fuck.

She turns it off, then back on. The screen glitches, all of the panel lights glowing for a few moments, before finally starting.

EXT. REALTECH LABS - AFTERNOON

Three beautiful, monolithic buildings of glass and chrome stand on acres of secluded land. Like pale mammoth bones rising out of the earth.

The sleek buildings look out of place, nestled in this green valley.

On a large plaque near the front entrance is the name of this place in stone onyx letters: **REALTECH LABS INC.**

This place is Google's wet dream.

INT. REALTECH LABS - RECEPTION AREA

The inside: imported Italian marble floors, dark modernist furniture. Clinical, clean, upscale.

Victoria, backpack slung over her shoulder, jogs in.

The well dressed RECEPTIONIST throws a disgruntled look at her.

INT. REALTECH LABS - ELEVATOR

Victoria goes into the elevator and spams the "close doors" button impatiently. Hits "5th floor".

The elevator is modern and sleek. On one of the walls of the elevator, a video plays.

On screen: a WOMAN (30s, nondescript, pretty) in a lab coat smiles as she addresses the camera.

WOMAN

Welcome to RealTech Laboratories.
Here, above all else, we believe in
community and family first--

VICTORIA

Mute.

The video message plays on, but without sound.

INT. REALTECH LABS - CYBERNETICS WING

She fast walks down the Cybernetics Wing of these labs.

All the doors are labelled with various warnings (high
voltage area, biohazard, etc).

A door at the end of the hallway swings open.

Henry emerges, followed by DR. ALAN BEND (late 50s, white,
with a neatly trimmed white beard). He is the HEAD OF THE
DEPARTMENT.

DR. BEND

--excited to see your team's
progress.

HENRY

Thank you. Oh, and I'll send you
the--

They both pause when they sees Victoria walking towards them.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Hi!

VICTORIA

Hey! Sorry, didn't mean to
interrupt.

Both of them are awkward outside the privacy of his
apartment. They act as if they're just co-workers.

HENRY

No problem! I was just heading out.

Victoria turns to Dr. Bend.

VICTORIA

Sorry I'm late. Traffic.

DR. BEND

That's alright. Come on in.

Dr. Bend waves her into his office, leaving Henry outside.

DR. BEND (CONT'D)
(to Henry)
Thank you for the updates.

HENRY
Of course!

Victoria is intrigued by this exchange.

Dr. Bend closes the door.

INT. DR. BEND'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Bend's office: the office of a professor. The entire back wall is filled with books.

A massive desk in the center of the room. Clean, tidy, lots of paper work stacked to one side.

He takes a seat in his leather chair behind the desk.

DR. BEND
Very unusual that there's traffic
at this hour.

VICTORIA
Well, that, and I had some car
troubles this morning, too. Think
there might be something wrong with
the computer in the dashboard.

DR. BEND
Really?

VICTORIA
It's an old car. I've had it since
college.

DR. BEND
Maybe you can have one of the guys
here check it out.

Victoria tries not to flinch.

VICTORIA
Actually, I was going to try and
take a look at it myself.

DR. BEND
Right. Of course, I'm sure it's not
too difficult of a fix.

They both chuckle, a bit awkwardly.

VICTORIA

Um. So, did you get a chance to look at the email I sent?

DR. BEND

I did. I apologize that I haven't had a chance to respond.

VICTORIA

Oh no, it's okay, I understand.

DR. BEND

We're not sure yet if it's going to be an internal candidate, or if we'll hire externally. It's still early in the process.

VICTORIA

I just wanted to toss my hat in the ring. And...maybe see if you knew anything about the proposed project.

Dr. Bend leans back in his chair.

DR. BEND

The project is going to be heavily focused on bio-mech. Not really as much design and material science work. Our lab is purely R&D.

VICTORIA

Right...what kind of bio-mech, if you don't mind me asking?

DR. BEND

Purely testing. And focused on integration.

VICTORIA

Really? That's...that's perfect, actually. I've done a ton of my own studies into the applications of organics integration.

Dr. Bend raises a brow.

DR. BEND

Oh?

VICTORIA

Obviously, I'm still focused on the arm, and my project. But, what we do is such a small part of what our department does. An important part! But still, just a small part.

Dr. Bend hums.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Our lab is mainly focused on just designing mechanical limbs. But integration with the human body? That's what I'm more interested in. Am I mistaken in thinking that's what this new project is going to be?

DR. BEND

Well, it's pretty close, actually. Maybe not exactly integration with humans, but definitely studying the potential for it.

A beat.

DR. BEND (CONT'D)

How much of your own research have you conducted?

A double-edged sword of a question. Victoria hesitates.

VICTORIA

It's all just theoretical, of course. But, I'm fascinated with the line between synthetic versus organic. At what point does an organic creature become synthetic, or the other way around?

DR. BEND

Sounds like a philosophical question. What makes a human a human?

VICTORIA

Right. But I'm less interested in the linguistics and philosophies of sentience. I'm a bit more interested in just making something that walks and talks like a human.

Off Dr. Bend's surprised laugh, she beams. She's passed some unspoken test.

DR. BEND

Can't argue with that. So, what.
You've written a paper about it?
About your theory, of how we can
integrate mechanics with organics?

VICTORIA

Sort of. It's half a model, and the
beginnings of a proposal. Just
something I've been tinkering with
in my down time.

DR. BEND

I'd like to see it, when you're
done.

Victoria is surprised.

VICTORIA

Oh! Okay. Yes. Definitely.

He smiles. An awkward beat.

Then, he claps his hands together.

DR. BEND

Well...

VICTORIA

Right, I'll let you go.

She stands as he goes to open his door.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Thank you, again. And, I'd love to
know when you guys are further
along in the process for hiring a
lead.

DR. BEND

Of course.

She looks like she wants to say more, but he's hasty to
escort her back to the hallway, and closes the door in her
face.

INT. REALTECH LABS - CONTINUOUS

Victoria steps into the hallway, where Henry is leaned
against the wall.

VICTORIA

Eavesdropping?

HENRY

Nope, just waiting for you.

They both head in the direction of the exit.

VICTORIA

I didn't know you had a meeting with him today.

HENRY

I didn't know *you* had one. What were you in there meeting about?

VICTORIA

It was just about the arm. And you?

He shrugs.

HENRY

He pulled me into his office, I didn't plan a meeting. It was about my eval, since I missed it last week.

VICTORIA

We didn't have an eval with him last week...

HENRY

Team leads do.

Victoria rolls her eyes a little.

VICTORIA

Right. I forget about the weekly boy's club meeting.

HENRY

Hey, now.

She nudges him in the side.

VICTORIA

I'm kidding.

HENRY

So what'd he say about the arm?

VICTORIA

The what?

HENRY

...what you went in to talk to him about? The arm?

Victoria shrugs.

VICTORIA
He just said that I should keep
doing what I'm doing.

HENRY
That's it?

VICTORIA
Yeah. Hey, listen. I should
probably stay. Try and get some
work done.

Henry glances at his watch.

HENRY
It's late.

VICTORIA
Exactly. It's when I work best.

HENRY
Want me to stay with you?

VICTORIA
No. I know how grumpy you get when
you have to work past five.

She turns to him as if asking for a kiss--and then remembers
where they are and takes a quick step back.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I'll see you later.

HENRY
See you.

VICTORIA
Oh! If you're not going to be
coming back until the morning, I'll
be back at the apartment before
then. Do you think I could borrow
your badge? I forgot mine...

HENRY
Oh. Yeah, sure.

He unclips his badge and hands it to her.

VICTORIA
Thanks. I'll see you later.

She turns and heads back towards the labs.

INT. REALTECH LABS - CYBERNETICS LAB

The lab is all chrome and glass surfaces.

There are already several other people in the lab when Victoria enters.

They glance up, give her a friendly nod, which she returns. She puts her backpack away into a locker.

On the far side of the lab, three other team members are gathered, testing out a synthetic leg.

CONOR (30s, buff), LOUIS (40s, outgoing, loud), ANNE (30s, blonde, charming) tinker with it.

The synthetic leg KICKS a bit when they compress the knee.

ANNE

This is like when Nico tries to kick me in the face when I change his diaper.

CONOR

Has he *actually* kicked you in the face before??

ANNE

Not yet. My face doesn't get close enough for him to kick.

LOUIS

My sister told me that her kid peed on her once when she was changing his diaper.

ANNE

I haven't been peed on yet, but I dunno, now that I've said it I'm probably jinxing myself.

Louis flashes a peace sign.

LOUIS

Happy to say, I can't relate.

CONOR

That day is coming. You laugh now, but one day it's gonna be you.

LOUIS

Not if I never get married.

ANNE

That's what Paul said. Two years later, we got married.

LOUIS

Paul says a lot of things.

CONOR

(teasing)

Paul *does* say a lot of things. Especially when it comes to Fantasy Football.

ANNE

Leave me out of it. I'm just here to drink. I missed drinking *so much* while I was pregnant.

CONOR

Are moms allowed to say that? I don't think moms are allowed that.

ANNE

Moms are people too!!!!

They're laughing, having a good time. If someone took a photo of these three people, they'd look like a Stock photo.

By comparison, Victoria doesn't know how to interact.

She sits down. Tinkers with the arm in front of her. Similar to the one we saw at the beginning, but scaled down. It looks skeletal, completely mechanical.

If anything, it looks like a simplified version of what she's already built.

CONOR

Any fun plans for the weekend, Victoria?

Victoria glances up.

VICTORIA

Oh. Um--

She clears her throat.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

My boyfriend and I are going to spend the weekend relaxing.

ANNE

Aw, that's sweet.

LOUIS

You guys have been together a while.

ANNE

Yeah, when do we get to meet him? You should bring him in to the office some time.

CONOR

What does he do, again? Finance?

VICTORIA

He works in IT.

CONOR

Here??

VICTORIA

Oh, no. He's--it's sort of a long distance kind of thing.

CONOR

Ah. Well, whenever he comes to visit, bring him in.

ANNE

Or maybe don't, he'll be scared off.

CONOR

What?! No he won't. We're friendly.

Victoria offers a dry smile, as they go back to chatting amongst themselves.

EXT. REALTECH LABS - NIGHT

Darkness falls. The night comes alive.

The hushed roar of locusts in the trees. The yap of a coyote.

The forest is buzzing, teeming with energy.

A fingernail moon shines down onto the trees.

INT. REALTECH LABS - CYBERNETICS LAB

Victoria is hunched over her project. She is completely alone in the lab now.

She checks the digital clock over the doorway: 1:00am.

Her pen taps against the table as she thinks. She stares down at the mechanical hand in front of her.

VICTORIA
(to herself)
Fuck it...

Quietly, she packs up her things.

INT. REALTECH LABS - HALLWAY

Down the empty hallway, the fluorescent lights are harsh and bright, making the floor gleam.

She heads towards two heavy doors. Above the doors, a large sign reads: MOLECULAR LAB.

She reaches the doors--there's a black scanner off to the side.

She digs into her pockets and pulls out Henry's badge--it's a different color than hers. Higher clearance.

She glances around--anxious. Is she really going to do this?

Here goes nothing.

She presses his badge against the scanner--to her surprise, it blips green.

INT. REALTECH LABS - MOLECULAR WING

These labs are also empty. Lots of lab stations with beakers and test tubes, samples in jars.

Victoria walks quickly, taking it all in--obviously, she's not familiar with this lab.

She heads towards the back, where there's a large FUME HOOD, and peeks in. No samples have been left over, everything clean.

Shit.

But to the right, there is a SMALL METAL FREEZER. The outside of it labelled BIO SAMPLES, with hazard stickers on the outside.

She glances around. Nobody else in the lab. Now or never.

She pulls out Henry's badge and presses it against the scanner next to the freezer door.

It blips red.

She stares down at it. Tries again. Red again.

VICTORIA
(sotto voce)
Fuck.

She pockets the badge.

She walks among the vials and beakers, searching. Lifting samples and reading the scrawled writing on the labels.

None of what she's looking for.

Desperate, she heads towards a large RED container labelled:

BIOHAZARD WASTE. DO NOT OPEN. FOR INCINERATION.

She takes a deep breath, wrestling with what she's about to do.

She opens the container.

Inside: blood samples. **Bits of flesh.** Viscous brown sludge. Everything disgusting thing that could possibly come out of a human body is in this bin.

Victoria GAGS, eyes watering.

It's a goddamn nightmare in there. It looks like a human has been juiced into pulp, and this is what remains.

With her ungloved hand, she reaches in. She's about to cry or vomit, maybe both.

Squelch. Schick.

She roots through, hands trembling as she digs through the soupy contents.

Finally, her fingers find a small chunk of something grey and spongy, almost jello-like in consistency.

A sliver/biospy of a brain, thin as a slice of salami.

Her hands are oily black, coated with human slime.

She closes the red biohazard container and hightails it out of the lab.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
What makes us human?

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Back at the warehouse we saw her in at the beginning.
She's cleaning off the brain sample gently, reverently.
Delicately, she places it in a large glass machine.
There are a few beeps, and a hum as the machine warms up.
Then, right before our eyes, we see the sample grow just a little bit. The machine is a 3D bio-printer.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
Is it pre-written into our DNA?

While that is happening, she sits next to the Figure, reading to it from a book. Like a bedtime story.

We get the sense that the Figure is listening, even though it is lifeless.

VICTORIA
(reading from the book)
Or is our humanity something that
we are taught?

Out of the corner of her eye, she spots a tiny movement. She startles.

Did the Figure just twitch, or was it just her imagination?

She closes the book and stands.

Carefully tugs the sheet off the Figure.

For the first time, we see it in its entirety.

The Female Figure is naked, 100% synthetic. And she is gigantic.

Notably: the Figure *does not have eyes*. The sockets are empty, filled with wiring and circuitry.

Victoria lets out a deep breath.

Then: she goes over to the work bench.

Retrieves a smooth, black, rectangular object. It is a very slim remote.

She presses something on the screen of this remote.

The noise is SUDDEN.

The Figure on the table JOLTS like it's been shocked with electricity!

For a few moments, the limbs twitch and jerk. No coordinated movement. Unnatural to watch. It almost looks like it's in pain--

--suddenly the movements stop.

The Figure is still.

And then, it begins to *sit up*.

Slowly, jerkily.

Victoria watches, shocked.

It jerkily brings its hand up. As if marveling at its own functioning limb.

Its sightless head turns towards Victoria.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
(breathless)
Hi.

The hand of the Figure reaches out. As if to touch her.

She takes a step back. The Figure tilts its head, curious. It cannot see, but the strange filaments in its eye sockets wiggle. Like it's trying to sense movement in the air.

She fumbles with the remote. Turning it off.

With a hard THUNK, the Figure falls back onto the table.

Victoria lets out a breath. Shaky with adrenaline. Scared, but excited.

She sits back down at her workbench, and starts making adjustments to the blueprints on her table.

Her eyes flick over to the glass 3D printer--as it slowly prints a grey, spongy mass. Something that's supposed to be a brain.

Her phone buzzes with a text from Henry. It's 2:30am.

HENRY: are you still at the office?

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - MORNING

Outside the sky is slate grey, and raining.

Trees shiver in the wind.

The sun valiantly tries to shine through the dense clouds.

INT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - MORNING

Henry checks his watch--6:30am.

He opens his phone, sends off another text to Victoria.

HENRY: Are you ok???

We see that there's at least five other texts he's sent, but no reply from Victoria.

Disgruntled, he pulls on his rain jacket before stepping outside.

INT. REALTECH LABS - LOBBY

Henry walks up to the receptionist.

HENRY

Hi, good morning. I forgot my badge at home.

RECEPTIONIST

No problem. Driver's license?

He pulls out his wallet and hands it over. She issues him a GUEST PASS.

INT. REALTECH LABS - MORNING

Henry walks towards the labs, but he's stopped in the hallway by ARTHUR (30s, bespectacled, smart and sharp).

ARTHUR

Hey, how are you?

HENRY

Hey, good thanks!

Henry tries to keep walking, but Arthur stops him.

ARTHUR

Hey, uh. Kind of a weird question but. Were you trying to get into our biofreezer last night?

Henry stares at him blankly.

HENRY

What?

ARTHUR

The freezer we've got in the back for samples. I got a notification on my phone at like one in the morning about it. It was asking me to grant you permission to open it.

HENRY

Oh. No, I didn't. That's strange.

ARTHUR

You didn't lose your badge, did you?

HENRY

No...

Arthur looks at the GUEST PASS pinned on Henry's coat.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I left it at home this morning.

ARTHUR

Huh.

HENRY

I'm sure it's fine. Security might have been doing some testing overnight.

Arthur shrugs.

ARTHUR

Yeah. Last week our computers updated overnight and we lost a ton of documents that weren't saved to the right server.

HENRY

Ugh. Terrible. IT constantly does these security updates without warning us about it first.

ARTHUR

It's the worst. Seriously, they're scared about hackers, but they should be more scared about losing all our data themselves. And auto-save doesn't save shit!

They keep chatting as they head down the corridor, but Henry is perturbed.

DREAMSCAPE

EXT./INT. CAR

The sound of rain.

Victoria blinks awake, her head resting on the windowpane in the backseat of a car.

Rivulets of rain streak the window.

Outside is a blur of trees, the world grey and stormy.

The car pulls to a halt.

Confused, she opens the door and steps outside--

--and almost falls into an open grave. She gasps.

In the grave: a coffin, splattered dark with rain (and is that blood?)

The lid of the coffin lifts.

And the person resting inside is *herself*.

Her corpse sits up.

It stares up at Victoria with milky eyes.

Suddenly, we are the corpse, sitting in the rain-filled coffin--

The water is dark red with blood.

Our dead-hands reach down into the water--find a pale, bloody cord. Looks like a small intestine...no, an *umbilical cord*.

We pull the cord, hands slippery with blood...

...we are pulling the cord towards us.

An infant bobs out of the water, attached to the cord.

But the infant is synthetic. Like the Figure. A doll.

The roar of rain water fills our ears as we begin to scream...

INT. WAREHOUSE

Victoria wakes with a jolt, to the sound of her phone buzzing on the table.

She answers it blearily.

VICTORIA
Hello?

HENRY
Where are you??

VICTORIA
What time is it.

HENRY
It's nearly 5pm.

VICTORIA
Shit.

She gets up. Starts gathering things up in her backpack.

HENRY
You didn't come back last night.
You weren't at the lab. You didn't
pick up your phone. You were gone
for an entire day.

VICTORIA
I'm fine, I'll see you soon, okay?

She hangs up.

He calls again.

She lets it go to voicemail as she heads out the door.

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - EVENING

A watery sunset. Rain drips from the trees.

Victoria knocks on his door.

Henry answers, his face pinched with annoyance and anger.

VICTORIA
(exhausted)
Hi. I'm sorry.

He steps aside to let her in.

INT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE

He busies himself in her kitchen, putting dishes away.
Avoiding her eyes.

She watches this.

VICTORIA

I was working late. I started
driving home, and almost fell
asleep at the wheel. I pulled over.
Took a nap for a few hours, and
then woke up when you called me.

Henry slams her kitchen cabinet a little too hard.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Jesus, I'm sorry, okay? I just
didn't wanna drive when I was
literally falling asleep at the
wheel.

HENRY

You shouldn't have put yourself in
that position. You shouldn't have
been there at all.

VICTORIA

I know, I know...

He closes the dishwasher.

HENRY

I ran into Arthur this morning. He
said that my badge was used to try
and get into the molecular lab's
biofreezer last night.

Victoria is silent.

HENRY (CONT'D)

He asked me if I needed some bio
samples. He got a ping about it on
his phone at one in the morning.

She's staring at the floor.

VICTORIA

Henry...I...

He lets her sit in the uncomfortable silence. Waiting for her
to offer an explanation.

When she doesn't--

HENRY

What the hell were you doing?

When she looks up, her eyes are shining with tears.

VICTORIA

I'm sorry.

His anger is slowly dissipating.

HENRY

(softer)

What were you doing with my badge?

VICTORIA

I--nothing. It was nothing.

HENRY

Does it have to do with why you came back so late last night?

He still looks angry.

VICTORIA

I...wait.

She wipes at her eyes, a hysteric laugh bubbling up in her throat.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Do you think I'm cheating on you or something? With someone in the bio lab?

HENRY

(defensive)

No.

He does.

VICTORIA

I just wanted to see something in the lab. Get a sense of tissue density, and how it might effect movement. And then I left. And on the drive back, I fell asleep.

Henry is suspicious, but what she says seems to make sense.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I had a dream about my mom's funeral...but then it turned into something else. Something awful.

He softens, anger set aside for now. He uncrosses his arms, offers a hug.

She moves into it, breathing him in.

HENRY
Are you okay?

VICTORIA
Yeah.

She pulls out of his arms, but stays close wiping away a few stray tears.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I haven't thought about her in a long time.

HENRY
You've been stressed. You haven't been sleeping...or eating.

VICTORIA
Not any more or less than usual.

Silence for a few moments as she tries to gather herself.

HENRY
Why don't you go to bed. I'll join you in a sec.

VICTORIA
Okay.

She slinks into--

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

--the bedroom. She draws the blinds and clambers into bed.

The room is dark, and cozy.

She shivers a little, still emotional.

Henry comes in, climbs into bed. Their faces close in the dark. Lips almost brushing. It's intimate.

VICTORIA
Sometimes I forget, and think she's still alive. The last time I saw her, I was so angry at her. We were fighting about me having kids. I kind of just...lost it on her.

Henry hugs her.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
She was a shit mom. But she was
still my mom. And my last relative.

He nods.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I don't think about it a lot...but
sometimes it just hits me. I don't
have *anyone*. And sometimes it
sounds so impossible, right? I have
to have a cousin somewhere, or an
uncle, or something. But it's just
me.

HENRY
You have me.

VICTORIA
You're not family.

HENRY
I'm not?

He looks at her.

VICTORIA
Not by blood. Or marriage.

HENRY
...we could, if you want. Be
married.

She doesn't answer for a quiet moment. Then, she kisses his
jaw. He kisses her back. She sighs into it, needing the
closeness...

Their kisses turn hot, her hands twining in his hair...

Their bodies move together in the dark, sensual and slow.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

It's dark out. The half-moon is bright outside his window.

The microwave hums, heating up leftovers.

Victoria, in a big sweater, sits at the table while Henry
putters around the kitchen.

She yawns, scrubbing a hand down her face.

He grabs plates and forks. Sets the table, then sits across from her. For a few peaceful moments, neither of them say anything. Content to just be together.

VICTORIA
Sometimes I wonder, you know?

HENRY
Hm?

VICTORIA
If she was right. If I'd be happier
if I'd been less focused on my
career, more focused on other
things. Like starting a family.

Henry is quiet.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I keep having these dreams--
nightmares--about it. I don't know
what my head is trying to tell me.

She glances up at him.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
What are you thinking?

HENRY
(gently)
Do you want a family?

VICTORIA
(immediate, knee-jerk)
No.

Henry spreads his hands, as if to say "well, there you go."

HENRY
Then the dreams will go away on
their own. Sometimes our brains do
strange things.

VICTORIA
Maybe. I don't know. What if I do?

HENRY
Then we can talk about that, too.

Victoria shakes her head.

VICTORIA
But I don't.

A beat.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
(quietly)
And I know it bothers you.

HENRY
Victoria, don't.

VICTORIA
No, I know it does--

HENRY
I said *don't*.

It's the first time we've truly heard him snap at her.
She quiets.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Don't project your feelings onto
me.

VICTORIA
Then tell me what you're thinking.
Talk to me. What are you thinking,
right now. Be honest.

He takes a moment to think about what he wants to say.

HENRY
Tonight was nice. *Really* nice. It
makes me happy, when you trust me
with things. Especially because I
feel like you've been distant in
the last few weeks.

VICTORIA
Distant.

HENRY
You close yourself off. Sometimes
it's like you're not even there. I
know you're working, but I never
see you. We keep missing each
other. I want us to get back on the
same page.

He goes over to her, lays a kiss on her neck.

VICTORIA
You know my work important to me.

HENRY
I know it is.

His hands move on her body.

VICTORIA
You'd never get it. You haven't had
to work on three projects over five
years and never get a promotion.
Even after *begging* for one.

This gives him pause.

He takes a moment to rethink whatever it is he's about to
say. The microwave DINGS.

He goes to retrieve their TV dinners.

HENRY
What is it that you're struggling
with? Let me help. I don't like
seeing you like this. Frustrated
and tired all the time.

This moment of vulnerability is unexpected, to her.

She considers this. Something changing in her expression. She
wants him to know.

Maybe he's right. Maybe she doesn't have to be alone.

Should she tell him?

She glances up--catches his gaze. Which seems earnest as
ever, soft in the dim light of the kitchen.

VICTORIA
I've been working on a project.

She bites her lip as he appraises her.

HENRY
The arm?

VICTORIA
Something else.

Off his confusion--

INT./EXT. CAR

Victoria's car winds through the forest and the hilly,
twisting roads.

She glances over at him anxiously. His expression unreadable.

VICTORIA
You have to trust me on this, okay?

HENRY
I do.

VICTORIA
And you can't freak out about it.

He glances towards her; half her face in shadow, the other half lit up by the eerie glow of her dashboard.

HENRY
Should I have good reason to be
freaked out?

Off her look--

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Victoria unlocks the door.

Inside: the makeshift lab she's set up for herself.

HENRY
Hooooooly shit...

He takes it in. It takes him a second, but then he spots **the Figure** in the corner.

Recoils.

HENRY (CONT'D)
What the hell is that.

VICTORIA
What I've been working on.

Victoria grabs one edge of the sheet and YANKS it up and off.

The FIGURE is the same as we saw it last time, but the arms have been removed.

The head is not attached to the rest of the body--the top of the skull has been sliced away, and is open.

It's empty, save for some wiring ends that are not connected to anything.

Henry is between fascinated and horrified.

HENRY
What is this...

VICTORIA
I've been working on her for a
while. She's not perfect, but...

Victoria's eyes are bright with excitement.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
She works.

Henry is speechless for a moment.

The Figure is beautiful, but flawless in a way that is eerie.
Almost alien-like.

Complete uncanny valley.

Victoria watches his reaction. Waiting.

HENRY
It's a?...

VICTORIA
A synthetic person. She's not
perfect yet, or done, by any means.
I've been tinkering with her for a
long time.

He takes his glasses off, scrubbing a hand down his face.

HENRY
How long?

VICTORIA
(hedging)
A while. But things have changed
recently, and I really want to
finish her. Get her up, and
working.

He falls silent again. Sitting with the information. Not
knowing what to do with it.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Say something.

HENRY
I'm trying to figure out what to
say.

He looks at her. Eyes flicking up and down the Figure, taking
her in.

HENRY (CONT'D)

It's not going to work. All of the limbs might be functional in theory, but they're meant to connect with neural pathways from the spinal cord. Commanded by a control center. The individual synthetic limbs are powered by a lithium core. But there's not a strong enough energy source for the limbs to be able to continually power themselves in any meaningful way.

VICTORIA

You're right. I had to build one.

HENRY

One *what*.

VICTORIA

Energy converter. With a power supply.

She goes over to the figure, kneels down by the torso, and peels back the skin there, revealing complex circuitry inside.

With a practiced hand, she reaches in and extracts a small, clear orb--it looks like a child's toy.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

It's a condensed uranium core.

HENRY

You built a *bomb*??

VICTORIA

It's not a bomb, it's a battery. It's safe, it's got a coolant casing. This amount of uranium wouldn't even be enough to melt iron.

She replaces the orb.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

This is just a prototype, anyway.

A beat. As Henry thinks about everything, and it sinks in.

HENRY

But you're missing a control center. Something to give the limbs commands. A "brain."

She nods. He glances around the lab. Spots the 3D bio printer. And the sliver of grey matter inside.

She's growing a brain.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(horrificed)

My badge. The molecular lab...

VICTORIA

It's not what you think. Don't freak out.

HENRY

You...oh my god.

VICTORIA

No, no. No. I just needed the blueprints. The brain biospy I took was going to be incinerated, anyway.

He shakes his head.

HENRY

This is insane.

Victoria busies herself replacing the orb back into the Figure's chest.

VICTORIA

The brain isn't going to be functional, at least, not in a traditional way. It's going to act as an impulse conductor. Somewhere for all the system reactions to go. Like most animals that aren't conscious.

Despite himself, Henry is fascinated, too. He edges closer, looking at where she's sealing the orb back into the Figure's chest.

HENRY

(quietly)

You did all this yourself?

VICTORIA
No one else has seen her except
you.

He watches her work.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I'm using the same learning system
that the Boston Dynamics team used
for Atlas.

Victoria sits back.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
At some point, I'll need to run
some preliminary tests on the bio
sample that I printed.

Henry stares at Victoria.

HENRY
But...why? Why did you do all this?

Victoria wipes her hands against a rag on the table. They
come away dark with machine oil.

VICTORIA
I built her because I wanted to
prove to myself that I could. That
I wasn't just a machine, assembling
parts to build another machine.
I wanted to have something that was
mine.

She stands back up, going back over to her workstation to
retrieve the remote for the Figure.

HENRY
What are you going to do with her?

Victoria shrugs.

VICTORIA
I wasn't sure, when I first
started. Now, I think I know.

It clicks.

HENRY
You heard about the new project
lead position.

His eyes catch on her hands, which tremble from as she
fiddles with the small black REMOTE--palm sized, and sleek.

VICTORIA

Yeah. I could use this as leverage,
as a showcase of my skill. Sort of
like a preliminary proposal.

She presses the same buttons as we saw earlier.

The Figure's limbs twitch in place.

It's a *miracle*. Henry's eyes are wide. A moment of wonder,
and fear. Like seeing someone from the dead coming to life.

He takes a hesitant, unconscious step back. Away from the
thing.

HENRY

It's moving...

The Figure sits up. Its head turns to look at Henry.

And then it does something we haven't seen it do before.

It tries to climb off the table.

The motions are there, but not synchronized in any way that
is purposeful.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(whispered)

It's too big.

The Figure tries to take a step off the table, and can't.

It falls onto the ground.

Attempts to stand.

Can't.

Henry and Victoria are left in the silence of it.

For a very long moment, neither of them move.

Victoria powers the Figure off.

It lies in a heap on the floor.

VICTORIA

...she's never tried to do that
before.

She swallows, hard, trying to find the words. She's stressed.
All of her hard work, and the Figure still doesn't quite
function properly.

HENRY
(quickly)
It's fixable.

She looks at him.

HENRY (CONT'D)
It worked. You built something *that*
worked. It was just too heavy. But
you got everything else right.

VICTORIA
I don't. I don't have the time...I
don't have the things I need...

She looks frayed. Henry takes a breath.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
(small)
Do you...do you think you could
help?

He looks unsure.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I need more supplies. I need, I
need another set of eyes to check
my work. I don't know. I've gotten
so close to getting her to go so
many times, and I just...I need
someone else to help me.

HENRY
I don't know if I can.

That hits her like a slap in the face.

VICTORIA
Why not??

HENRY
I--other than the fact that I'd be
risking my job? I wouldn't know
where to start.

VICTORIA
You offered five changes to make in
the last minute before I started
her.

He doesn't have a rebuttal to that.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Please...

HENRY

I need to think about it. I need to think about it, okay?

She nods. Better than nothing.

VICTORIA

Okay. I understand.

A beat.

And then, bizarrely, she starts laughing.

Henry's bewildered, but breaks into chuckles when she keeps going. Crashing from adrenaline.

HENRY

Are you okay?

VICTORIA

Yeah...yes.

But between the insomnia and this, he can practically see the hairline cracks in her sanity.

INT. REALTECH LABS

Henry walks down the hallway, headed into the lab.

DR. BEND (O.S.)

Good morning, Henry.

Henry turns around to see Dr. Bend.

HENRY

'morning!

DR. BEND

Do you mind stepping into my office for a moment?

HENRY

Sure. No problem.

Off his look--

INT. DR. BEND'S OFFICE

Dr. Bend sits behind his desk, motioning for Henry to take a seat across.

DR. BEND
How is everything going?

HENRY
Good! I think by the end of the quarter, we'll have plenty done for showcase.

DR. BEND
That's good! I know I haven't been checking in with your team as regularly. I'm sorry about that.

HENRY
It's no problem. Really.

Dr. Bend smiles.

DR. BEND
Obviously, I trust you to handle everything. But, I figured it wouldn't hurt to chat. Haven't seen you around these past few days.

HENRY
Yeah.

Henry shifts a little in his seat.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Some personal things came up.

DR. BEND
Oh. Everything okay?

HENRY
Everything's alright. Just had to be away for a bit.

DR. BEND
Well, I won't take up too much of your time. I wanted to talk to you about what we spoke about the other day.

Dr. Bend pinches his glasses off his face. Polishes them on a small square of cloth.

HENRY
(anxious)
Yeah?

Dr. Bend sighs heavily.

DR. BEND
You're the strongest candidate. By
far, by far...

HENRY
But?...

DR. BEND
We can't get around the politics on
this one.

He puts his glasses back on.

Henry is deflated. Trying not to look as disappointed as he
feels.

DR. BEND (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. If it were up to me, the
choice would have been clear. I
would have hired you onto the
project the instant I heard about
the opening. But the HR committee
has the final say on everything.

HENRY
I figured as much. I appreciate it.

DR. BEND
Trust me when I say, I feel bad
about it.

HENRY
(wry)
Am I allowed to know who I lost out
to? Since I'm not in the running
anymore?

DR. BEND
The committee hasn't made a
decision yet. All the final
candidates are, actually, on your
team. You should be proud of that.
You've led a strong, talented group
of people.

HENRY
Hm. Ironic.

DR. BEND
This is confidential, of course.

HENRY
Absolutely.

DR. BEND
Conor Zefer, and Victoria Mung are
two of three.

Henry blows out a breath.

DR. BEND (CONT'D)
If it means anything, I pushed hard
for you. But you know, things are
different these days. No longer a
meritocracy.

Dr. Bend shakes his head.

DR. BEND (CONT'D)
I'm aging myself, but we used to
hire blind. Purely on skill. Now?
That's unheard of.

HENRY
Hm.

Henry nods, but from the way his lips thin out, he doesn't
quite agree with Dr. Bend's sentiment.

DR. BEND
I would like someone with stronger
leadership skills. Victoria is
talented, but a little too quiet,
and shy.

Henry bites the inside of his cheek to keep from saying
anything. After a moment:

HENRY
Conor's an interesting choice.

DR. BEND
I think so too. But I want to hear
why you think so.

Henry shrugs.

HENRY
He's qualified, but I wouldn't have
expected the committee to choose
him. He's very. I don't know. Very
buddy-buddy.

DR. BEND
So, the opposite of Victoria?

HENRY
Well, no...

DR. BEND

It's alright. You don't have to watch what you say around me.

HENRY

I think she's great. Hard-working. Smart. I just mean that when you referred to the politics around this, I'm surprised that Conor's still in consideration.

DR. BEND

Conor's the closest one to being next in line for some kind of promotion.

HENRY

I did my thesis in bio-regeneration and synapse functions. I've been interested in...in topics of integration of mechanics with synthetics.

DR. BEND

Well, that would make you and Victoria both. She spoke with me about the project position earlier this week. Had a similar proposal.

Henry leans forward in his seat. Considering.

HENRY

...do you think, maybe, there's a world in which a project can have two leads?

Dr. Bend considers.

DR. BEND

You know...it's not that uncommon to have two people running one project. Especially if it's someone more experienced such as yourself paired with someone more junior. The company's been talking about expanding our department for a while now. Perhaps this is the push they need.

HENRY

So, Victoria and I. We could potentially be leading the project, together.

DR. BEND

That is contingent on Victoria getting the position, of course. For all we know, it could just go to Conor.

HENRY

Right. Is there a date set for the decision?

DR. BEND

A loose proposal and interviews will probably be requested a week, maybe two, from now.

HENRY

Hm. Well, thank you for sitting down with me.

DR. BEND

Of course. I'll keep you posted about anything I hear.

HENRY

Thank you.

Off his look--

INT. REALTECH LABS - CYBERNETICS LAB

Henry, alone in the lab, coils thin wires and snaps them into small plastic storage boxes, before shoving them into his backpack.

Doesn't even look anxious while he's doing it--no one's going to question him in his own lab.

INT. WAREHOUSE

A knock at the door.

Victoria has music on loud while she's working, something like Sisters of Mercy.

She's completely engrossed in blueprints and her laptop.

A second knock. Louder.

Victoria startles. Cuts the music.

HENRY (O.S.)

It's me!

She stands up, opening the door to let him in.

VICTORIA
Hey? I wasn't expecting you.
Thought you were at the lab still.

HENRY
I just left. Can I come in?

VICTORIA
Yeah, yeah sure.

He steps in and shrugs his backpack off his shoulders.

HENRY
I brought some things that I think
will help.

For a moment, she's totally blank.

He shrugs his backpack off and hands it to her--she unzips it.

Inside: Coils of wires. Cutting tools. Mechanical parts and tiny minuscule gears and sockets.

Her eyes widen. Holy shit.

VICTORIA
Oh my god...*oh my god...*

HENRY
Well?

She flings her arms around him.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

Henry deftly sorts and catalogues their supplies.

HENRY
So. The gold filaments I ordered
three weeks ago.

VICTORIA
Hm?

She looks up from where she's working.

Underneath a glass dome, the newly printed BRAIN sits in a tight enclosure.

The brain has several very thin NEEDLES sticking out of it. Almost like acupuncture. Extremely unsettling to look at.

She's testing the speed of electrical currents through the brain.

Henry holds up the thin gold filaments.

HENRY
Weren't for the arm.

VICTORIA
Well, technically, they were. Just,
not for the one in the office.

He sighs good-naturedly.

HENRY
What would you do without me?

VICTORIA
Not commit company theft, I guess.

He smiles ruefully.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
(softer)
Thank you.

HENRY
Of course.

He picks up the wires he needs and heads over to the Figure on the table to begin his work.

MONTAGE OF:

--snipping wires and soldering in new ones

--Henry testing the strength and flexibility of the structure in the leg. It's much sturdier

--Victoria handling the brain, setting it in a "soup" of agar (nutrient) gel

--the top of the skull is reattached to the Figure's head

--Henry points out a few structural integrities on the leg that were causing it to fail earlier. Victoria nods, eager to learn

--Victoria hastily eats a sandwich while Henry flattens circuits into the hip of the Figure

HENRY (CONT'D)
Oh, and I got these.

Victoria glances over from where she's working, as Henry pulls two fiber-glass palm-sized discs from his backpack.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Fractrolite glass, for her eyes.
More for decoration, but I thought
maybe they would look nice..

He hands them to her sheepishly. She's grateful, and just a bit emotional.

VICTORIA
Thank you.

They go back to working quietly.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I meant to ask...

HENRY
Hm?

VICTORIA
What made you change your mind?

HENRY
Change my mind about what?

VICTORIA
About wanting to help me.

He stiffens a little.

HENRY
It's a worthy project.

This gives her a bit of pause.

VICTORIA
And you came to the conclusion,
just like that?

HENRY
Pretty much. And...

VICTORIA
And?

For a moment, he hesitates. Should he tell her, that if she gets promoted, he will too?

HENRY

(hedging)

I think it's interesting. I think it'll give you a good shot, if you present it as a proposal. For the project lead position.

VICTORIA

Oh. You haven't heard anything more about it, have you? About who they're going to pick.

HENRY

No. But if anyone deserves it, it's you.

It's easy to tell that he's lying, but she decides not to push it.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

VICTORIA (O.S.)

It is the secrets of heaven and earth that we desired to learn; and whether it is the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupies us...

Henry blinks awake.

He's fallen asleep on two chairs pushed together into a tiny makeshift bed. His feet dangle over the edge of the second chair.

He grabs for his glasses--spots Victoria sitting close to the Figure. Reading to it, like she's reading to a child.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

...still our inquiries are directed to the metaphysical.

Not wanting to disturb her, he quietly gets up.

She closes the book when she hears him move.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Hi.

HENRY

Hey.

He stretches, back popping. Comes over and kisses the top of her head.

He sits down next to her, observing the Figure on the table before them.

HENRY (CONT'D)
You can keep reading, if you'd like.

VICTORIA
It's more for me than it is for her. Helps me focus.

The Figure is a mix of human synthetic skin and exposed mechanical parts...but she is **finished**.

Notably: the eyes have now been covered by the fractolite glass. Behind them is a faint artificial red glow.

And we get the uncanny sense that somehow, though she is not moving, *she is alive*.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I think...she's done.

A long beat.

It almost looks like they're observing a child in NICU. Quiet, and somber.

HENRY
Yeah?

Victoria nods.

He blows out a breath.

HENRY (CONT'D)
You do the honors, then?

He grabs the sleek black remote off the work table next to them and hands it to her.

Moment of truth.

With a shaky, hesitant breath, she stands up.

Turns the remote over in her hands, and *powers the Figure on*.

A low, steady hum fills the room. Louder than we've ever heard it before. It seems to sap the energy out of the room.

Both Henry and Victoria unconsciously stand closer together, frightened.

The Figure begins to come to life once more.

In jerking, unsteady, nearly violent movements, it's limbs uncoordinated.

Victoria and Henry both startle back, as the Figure continues to thrash.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Turn her off.

VICTORIA
Just give her a minute--

HENRY
Turn her off--

He reaches for the remote in her hand.

VICTORIA
No, don't!!

The Figure turns to them, movements still jerky.

It *stands*, its two heavy feet THUDDING hard against the concrete floor.

The sound shocks them both into silence.

The Figure is staring at them. Silent.

At full height, it's nearly ten feet tall. Heart-stopping, frightening.

It begins to walk towards them in a straight line.
Crushing/knocking over everything in its path.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)	HENRY
Stop!	Stop!

It halts in its tracks.

For a moment, it seems like it's going to stay put.

But then it starts moving towards them again.

Victoria and Henry both DIVE away from it, scrambling to get away.

It looks between Victoria and Henry, and **chooses** to go after Henry.

Equipment is crushed/shoved out of the way as the Figure cuts a straight path towards him.

The steel table is knocked to the side like a toy. This thing is *powerful*.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Victoria, turn it off!

She fumbles with the remote in her hands, but even as she tries to, nothing happens.

Henry glances around him, looking for something, *anything* to stop the Figure.

He throws a heavy metal wrench.

It hits the Figure square in the chest. The Figure pauses.

Then continues forward, completely unaffected.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Victoria!!

VICTORIA
I'm trying!

As he's scrambling backwards, trying to get away, his hands land on a tangle of raw, copper wires.

Thinking fast, he takes the coil, and ties one end of it into a circle, like a lasso.

He leaves the loop on the ground, takes another end of the wire.

His eyes scan the room--

--there! An outlet.

The Figure steps into the loop.

Henry pulls--just hard enough for the loop to close around its ankle.

He dives for the outlet.

Victoria sees what he's trying to do.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Henry NO!!!

Everything seems to happen in slow motion:

Henry grabs for a pair of rubber-tipped clamps...sticks the copper wires between...shoves the wires into the socket.

The Figure's chest EXPLODES.

The sound is deafening, knocking both Victoria and Henry onto the ground.

The entire room goes BLACK. The lights blown out.

Victoria peels herself off the floor, ears ringing, trying to get her bearings.

The only light in the room is the strange artificial red glow from the Figure's eyes.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Henry?...

Her voice sounds like it's underwater.

She crawls over to him.

Other than a nasty cut on his face from a spare piece of flying metal, he's alright, just dazed.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

He nods--touches the cut, fingers coming away wet with blood.

HENRY

You?

VICTORIA

I'm fine...

They both look towards the Figure, which is miraculously still standing, though there is a gigantic hole in its chest. In the hole, a mess of wires and melted parts.

The inside is still sparking.

The whole room is hazy with smoke.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

The core...

HENRY

We need to get out of here.

Ears ringing, still.

Victoria scoots herself over to the Figure. Grabs a pair of pliers off the ground and snips the copper that's still in the socket.

The room goes BLACK.

EXT. ELISI LAKE - EARLY DAWN

Same day. Both of them in the same clothes sit at the edge of the lake, watching the sun try and rise through the depressing grey clouds.

Victoria munches on a protein bar. Henry nurses an ice pack against his bruised face.

VICTORIA

The catalyst is probably what melted, not the core.

HENRY

It could have killed us.

VICTORIA

She wasn't going to.

HENRY

It was coming straight for me. *It could have killed me.*

VICTORIA

No, no. It was instinct. She isn't capable of higher thought processes, it was just a reflex.

HENRY

What are you talking about.

VICTORIA

Like a Venus fly trap. They can't recognize if something is a danger to them, so they treat everything like it's a threat, or food.

She clambers to her feet. Sore, tired. Not giving up.

HENRY

Victoria...

VICTORIA

I'm going back.

He meets her eyes. We see what he sees: Victoria, crazed with determination. Ready to risk life and limb.

HENRY
We almost *died*.

VICTORIA
We almost died because *you* fried
her circuitry!

HENRY
It's *my* fault?

VICTORIA
If you hadn't panicked and made the
decision to loop a live wire around
her--

HENRY
You didn't see the way it was
coming after me. It was going to
CRUSH me.

VICTORIA
She's not capable of thought! She's
a--a robot! A zombie! She's dead!
She's fucking dead!

Silence.

Overhead, a bird cackles.

HENRY
You don't know what you're doing.

Victoria almost physically flinches away. That hurts. A lot.

VICTORIA
Fuck you.

HENRY
Something was wrong with her. There
was no other way we could have
avoided what happened. One, or both
of us, would have ended up dead.

Victoria turns to leave. She doesn't want to listen to him
anymore.

But she pauses, before she does.

VICTORIA
You promised you would help me.

Off that, she leaves Henry at the edge of the lake. Walks
back towards the concrete slab of warehouses, off in the near
distance.

Henry goes back to staring out over the lake. Lost in thought.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Victoria surveys the damage, holding her cell phone flashlight up to see.

The lab looks like a tornado just tore through it. Bits and pieces scattered everywhere.

In the center of the room, the Figure stands, still smoking and burnt.

Victoria nudges at some of the papers on the floor. Doesn't even know where to begin sorting through this mess.

VICTORIA
God. What the fuck.

She bursts into tears. Years of work, destroyed. Smoldering in front of her.

She goes to stand in front of the Figure. Reaches out, strokes a hand down its synthetic skin.

Behind her, the door to the warehouse opens, and Henry shuffles in.

From here, things look bizarre--Victoria, eyes red-rimmed from exhaustion and crying, standing in front of a giant smoking robot, trying to coax it back to life.

He doesn't know whether or not to go and comfort her.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I can't do this without you.

HENRY
Victoria...

VICTORIA
She's *everything* to me.

HENRY
There's no way we can fix everything in time.

VICTORIA

We can. The reason it took so long in the first place was because we weren't sure yet what we were doing, but we have all the blueprints now. It wouldn't be hard to put her back together.

HENRY

We wouldn't be able to get replacement parts quick enough.

VICTORIA

We can sacrifice some of the other parts of her. There's enough that can be salvaged.

She finally turns to look at him.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You don't have anything to lose from this, but I do.

HENRY

That's not true.

VICTORIA

What do you have to lose, huh?
What????

He doesn't answer.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I worked on her for *years*. She was my one shot, my one chance. Without her, I won't get the project lead job.

HENRY

That's not true. You can just present your work with the arm.
It's good--

VICTORIA

No. You know as well as I do that I don't have a chance unless I go above and beyond. I've been working and completing projects for years, and been passed over every. single. time.

Henry paces away from her. Doesn't know how to tell her that it has nothing to do with her competency, and everything to do with the fact that she's volatile. Or perhaps, the science field just thinks that of all passionate women.

But he needs her, if he wants the promotion too.

HENRY

We need to think about our options.
Okay? We need to think about it.

VICTORIA

What is there to think about? It's
a yes or a no. Will you help me fix
this, or not.

HENRY

(firm)
I said, we need to think about it.

Victoria wants to fight it, but she's tired, and out of options.

HENRY (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's go home. You can start
again tomorrow. No use in staying
here overnight.

She reluctantly lets him pull her away.

In the complete darkness of the warehouse, the Figure's eyes still glow a dim strange red color.

It's been listening...and watching.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - EARLY EVENING

A pastel-like sunset of peach and orange as the sun sinks below the treetops.

INT. VICTORIA'S CAR

Henry tries to start up the car.

Like at the beginning, all of the emergency lights blip on.

HENRY

What's wrong with your car?

VICTORIA

I don't know. It's been doing that.

It takes another two tries before the car finally whines to life.

He pulls out onto the road.

Begins to drive, the street twisting and winding its way through the forest.

HENRY

Dr. Bend pulled me into his office
a few days ago.

She stays silent. Watching the trees whiz by.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Maybe I shouldn't be bringing this
up.

VICTORIA

What did he say?

HENRY

He mentioned the new project to me.

VICTORIA

Okay...and?

HENRY

And nothing. They're starting
interviews next week. For what it's
worth, I put in a good word for
you.

VICTORIA

Put in a good word for me? What
does that mean.

HENRY

Means, I recommended you as someone
who I think is qualified.

Victoria's expression twists.

VICTORIA

I didn't need you to do that for
me.

HENRY

I wanted to.

VICTORIA

Why? Why did you do that.

HENRY

(incredulous)

What do you mean, 'why'? You still want the project, right? I put in a good word, and you're in consideration now.

VICTORIA

So I wasn't before?

HENRY

No, you were. I figured it would only help your chances if I backed you up.

VICTORIA

No, I didn't ask you to put in a word for me. I didn't need you to do that, why would you do that?

She's growing agitated, frantic.

HENRY

Christ, I thought you'd be grateful that I did--

VICTORIA

No. Because now it's going to look like I'm *fucking* you to get a promotion, not that I deserve it--

He glances over at her.

She looks unwell. Hair greasy, dark bags underneath her eyes, lips chapped and dehydrated.

Her obsession with her work taking its toll.

HENRY

Jesus, Victoria, people don't even know we're seeing each other--

VICTORIA

Neither of us have been at work consistently for the last week, you think that people aren't going to know that we're together, that they haven't figured it out by now--

HENRY

What is your problem? Aren't you happy that you have me as a reference--

VICTORIA

My *problem* is that you're still technically my BOSS, but we're TOGETHER, and if I get the job and someone reports us, my career is fucking over!

HENRY

Well then mine is over too!

She slams her fist against the glovebox in anger.

VICTORIA

It doesn't work that way!!! It never works that way! You'll be fine, because you're YOU, and I'm ME, and everyone in the entire tech community will have my name on their shit list--

HENRY

That's not true, things are different now. It's not like that--

VICTORIA

Yes it is!

HENRY

Victoria, calm down--

VICTORIA

Pull the car over.

HENRY

What??

She reaches for the door handle.

He slams on the brakes just as she yanks the door open.

She tumbles out of the car and runs to the tree-line. And then, she SCREAMS. Primal, furious, searing.

Birds in the treetops take flight.

EXT. TOWNHOUSES

They pull up to the rows and rows of townhouses. Honey-colored streetlights stretching as far as the eye can see.

INT. VICTORIA'S CAR

The atmosphere in the car is icy between them.

VICTORIA
Can you drop me off at my place.

HENRY
Your apartment?

VICTORIA
Yeah.

He pulls up outside of her unit. From the outside, it looks exactly the same as his.

They sit in the car, neither of them talking for a little while. And then she gets out.

EXT. VICTORIA'S TOWNHOUSE

She watches as Henry drives off, then goes up the steps to her own townhouse.

INT. VICTORIA'S TOWNHOUSE

For the first time, we see the inside of her apartment.

It lacks all the warmth of Henry's. It's cold, and dark. Looks barely lived in.

INT. BEDROOM

Few photographs, and a bookshelf that's only partly filled. Clearly, Victoria doesn't spend most of her time here.

Victoria climbs into bed.

The darkness is crushing.

INT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Henry takes his coat off, just as there's a buzz from his cell phone.

He answers the call.

DR. BEND (O.S.)
Hey, did I catch you at a bad time?

HENRY
No, no. Not at all.

DR. BEND (O.S.)
Oh, good, good. Hey listen, I spoke
with the hiring committee just now.

HENRY
And?

DR. BEND (O.S.)
They're exploring the possibility
of two leads. You...and Conor.

HENRY
Oh...

DR. BEND (O.S.)
I know, I'm surprised as well.
Pretty groundbreaking. I made a
strong case for both of you.

Henry leans against the counter.

DR. BEND (CONT'D)
Hello?

HENRY
Hi! Yes, sorry. I'm...I'm a little
lost for words. I don't know what
to say.

DR. BEND (O.S.)
Well, nothing's set in stone yet.
However, once the committee has
made their final decision, the
interviews will be more of a
formality, than anything serious.
This could still go either way.

HENRY
What about the proposal?

He realizes he's played his hand a bit.

DR. BEND
If you have anything you'd like to
turn in, it'll have to be by the
end of this week. The committee
wants to make their final decision
at the top of next week.

HENRY

Well, thank you. This is...it's
great news.

DR. BEND

You're welcome. Have a good night!

HENRY

You too.

Henry hangs up. Lost in thought.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. BEDROOM

Victoria is lying in bed on her side.

There's a strange red, blinking light in the darkness.

Victoria opens her eyes. The blinking light is shining in
through a crack in the blinds.

She gets out of bed.

She parts the blinds a little to try and see what it is, but
the light is coming from the street.

INT. VICTORIA'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She walks out of the bedroom through the short hallway
leading to the front door.

She opens the door.

EXT. VICTORIA'S TOWNHOUSE

The cookie-cutter identical townhouses seem to stretch on
into eternity, never-ending row after row.

The blinking red light is coming down the street, closer and
closer.

She begins to walk towards it, trying to meet it halfway.

As it approaches, we see--

--a naked woman, walking down the street, headed towards
Victoria.

As it gets closer, we see it's the Figure, except human. Only the eyes are still the same, flat and red, blinking on and off.

In the middle of her chest is a giant hole, but instead of seeing machine parts, it's bloody and pulpy.

Victoria is horrified.

She sprints towards the Figure, but even as she runs, the stretch of townhouses gets longer and longer. As if the street itself keeps growing.

She stops running, out of breath. She gets an idea.

She runs to the townhouse on her right--Henry's townhouse.

She knocks on the door, tries to turn the knob. It's locked.

She goes and peeks in through the living room window.

In the dining room, Dr. Bend, Henry, Conor, and all the other lab members on their team are having a potluck.

She raps on the window.

VICTORIA

Henry, open the door! Open the door!

He can't hear her.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Open the door!!!!

She pounds her fist against the glass, and it SHATTERS--

INT. BEDROOM

Victoria wakes up from the dream completely disoriented. Shivering, she gets out of bed.

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE

She comes up the steps to Henry's townhouse.

Goes to knock, but tries the door handle instead.

It's unlocked.

She quietly eases the door open, and steps into Henry's townhouse.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Henry is in bed when Victoria comes in. She takes off her clothes, crawls into bed.

She gets underneath the covers and wraps herself around him, burying her face in between his shoulder blades.

HENRY

Your hands are freezing.

VICTORIA

You left the door unlocked.

HENRY

I know.

A few quiet beats.

Victoria turns in his arms, to face him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Start from the beginning. Tell me how you started building her.

VICTORIA

When I started working on the arm in the lab, on the fingers, I started thinking about...about everything. The idea that we were creating miracles. People never thought that this kind of science was possible, even ten years ago. And I guess...I wanted to see how far I could take it.

HENRY

You wanted to create life?

VICTORIA

Not exactly. I just wanted to create *something*. Something that I could call my own.

She considers.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I started building her before I met you. At first, it was almost...in a weird way, it was almost like I was building an imaginary friend. It sounds dumb when I say it out loud...

HENRY

You started building her before you met me?

VICTORIA

Yeah. And then after I met you, it was more of a side project that I liked tinkering with. But, when I heard about this project...I saw a chance. But, it doesn't change the way I feel about her.

HENRY

How so?

Victoria sighs.

VICTORIA

She feels like a part of me. And I guess, a part of you, too.

HENRY

Me?

VICTORIA

Yeah. You've helped more than you know. We built her together.

Tears well up in her eyes.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry that I got so angry with you. I know I'm not an easy person to be with.

HENRY

It's alright.

VICTORIA

But I want you to know...I do love you.

Henry's surprised into silence. Obviously, something she's never said before.

HENRY

Love you, too.

She settles in.

He can't sleep...his mind racing.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Sunlight streams in through the blinds. The first the sun's been out this entire time.

Victoria finishes washing her face just as Henry comes into the bathroom.

The bruise on his face looks worse than yesterday--it's just started to heal.

She winces when she sees it.

HENRY

What? Oh.

He reaches up to touch his cheek.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Looks worse than it feels.

She motions at the bathtub.

VICTORIA

Sit.

Henry takes a seat on the edge of the bathtub while Victoria goes digging underneath the bathroom cupboard for the first aid kit.

She pulls it out and rips open an antiseptic pad.

HENRY

It's fine...

She dabs at the cut on his face with it.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Ow...

He winces as she puts ointment on the cut.

VICTORIA

Sorry.

He waves a hand.

She pulls back a little to look. The bruise looks darker than before, but at least the cut isn't oozing blood anymore.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

It's not deep, but it might scar.

HENRY
Think I'll look roguish and
handsome with a scar?

The thing is, he *does* look roguish and handsome. Despite
herself, she laughs a little.

VICTORIA
Maybe. But I hope it won't scar.
I'd feel bad.

HENRY
Wasn't your fault.

VICTORIA
(softly)
Kinda was.

HENRY
Well then, it was kind of mine too.

She glances at him. Despite their fight earlier, things are
better now.

A tentative truce.

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - MORNING

Early. The sun is just starting to rise.

Clouds hang low, the sky a flat grey slate.

Henry locks up behind them.

VICTORIA
I can drive.

HENRY
I think we should drive separately.

VICTORIA
Oh...okay?

HENRY
I've got some things I need to wrap
up at the office.

VICTORIA
I'll see you later, then?

HENRY
See you.

Off her look--

INT. REALTECH LABS

Henry throws on his lab coat, putting things away in his locker.

From across the room, Conor, working on a hand model with Louis, spots Henry.

CONOR
Hey, Clear!

HENRY
Hey.

CONOR
Good to see you back!

HENRY
I wasn't gone for that long, was I?

CONOR
Long enough for us to figure out
the retinaculum.

HENRY
Guess that's pretty long then.

Conor laughs.

CONOR
Come take a look.

Henry goes over to their lab station to see their progress. He's very much part of the team, and obviously well-liked.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Victoria has begun the slow work of cleaning everything up. Salvaging whatever bits and pieces she can, and throwing junk into a huge plastic garbage bag.

The Figure is still standing in the middle of the room, heavily leaning sideways. Like a broken Barbie doll.

Victoria takes a moment to sit down in one of the rolling office chairs, and take a break.

She looks up at the Figure.

VICTORIA

You're going to work. People are
going to be fucking *amazed* by you.

There is the uncanny sense that the Figure can *hear* what she
is saying.

But there is no response.

Victoria chews her lip.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I don't know what's worse. Henry
helping me because he feels
obligated to...or because he feels
bad for me.

She ties her hair up into a ponytail.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Maybe he *does* believe in this. I
can't tell...he didn't used to be
so difficult to read.

She sighs.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

It's weird...I think you know more
about me than he does. He never
just listens. Whenever something is
wrong, he tries to solve it. Any
problem you have, and he'll come up
with a three-step solution of how
you can fix the problem.

The Figure remains silent.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Some things are not so easily
fixed.

Victoria surveys the mess remaining. Gets back to work.

INT. REALTECH LABS - CAFETERIA

A buffet-style self-service cafeteria. Round tables situated
in a well-lit open floor plan space.

Dozens of scientists mill about and chat over lunch.

As Henry grabs two sandwiches to go, he spots Conor at the
drinks bar, making himself a smoothie.

Henry heads over.

HENRY

Hey.

CONOR

Hey, dude. Heading out already?

HENRY

I've got some errands to run. But, do you have a sec?

CONOR

Yeah.

Henry glances around self-consciously, but the sound of the blender is loud enough to cover up their conversation.

HENRY

I heard you were up for the new project. I wanted to say congrats.

Conor grins.

CONOR

Thanks, man! I'm trying to keep it hush hush for now, on the off-change it doesn't actually go to me. But, they reached out to me this morning about an interview, so I feel like it's gotta be close to a done deal? Right?

HENRY

Oh, wow. This morning?

CONOR

Yeah. I'm going to set it up for next week. 's been a while since I've had to interview for anything, so I guess I should study up.

HENRY

Let me know if I can help with anything, or be a reference.

CONOR

Yeah? Thanks, boss.

Conor takes his smoothie cup from the blender, pours it into a cup.

INT. WAREHOUSE

The warehouse is cleaned up, the remaining parts laid out neatly on one of the work benches.

Victoria glances up as Henry walks in.

VICTORIA
I kind of thought maybe you weren't
going to come back at all.

HENRY
Sorry, sorry. A lot of work piled
up at the office while I was gone.
Brought you this.

He grabs one of the sandwiches from his bag, hands it to her.

VICTORIA
Thanks.

The Figure is flat on its back off to the side. Like a patient on the operating table.

Victoria leans away from her laptop rubbing at her eyes.

HENRY
Hey, I was thinking on the drive
here just now...

VICTORIA
Hm?

HENRY
I think we need to build a fail
safe.

VICTORIA
I already have one. Had, one.

HENRY
We need one that's more complete.

Victoria stares at him.

HENRY (CONT'D)
She exploded last time--

VICTORIA
I don't want to have this argument
again.

Henry holds up his hands.

HENRY

I'm not trying to start an argument. I just think, we need to have something that will safely shut off all functions to her limbs without destroying her completely. And also, maybe an alternate power source that's safer.

Victoria leans back in her seat.

VICTORIA

You say this like it's easy. Have you thought of solutions?

HENRY

I've got some ideas. I know it's going to be difficult...

VICTORIA

Difficult, as in. Not able to be finished in the next week, difficult.

HENRY

Probably not.

VICTORIA

Then, no.

HENRY

Then we focus on the fail safe. Keep the power source.

VICTORIA

Why are you so adamant about building an off switch in her.

HENRY

You're being paranoid. Don't you think Bend, or whoever you present to, will want to know that you have an emergency stop button?

Victoria is silent. Henry's right, and she knows it.

HENRY (CONT'D)

We'll get done what we can. I'll work on the new failsafe, and you just focus on fixing the core and components.

VICTORIA
(quietly)
I think that maybe if we remove the
organic component, she won't
malfunction.

HENRY
I still think we should have a
total shut down sequence built in.

This is the most he's ever pushed on something before.

VICTORIA
Alright.

HENRY
You should eat. I'll get started.

Her eyes track him as he opens his laptop. Suspicious.

Something in his demeanor has changed.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

The Figure is stripped down, parts swapped out. She's missing
an entire arm, the parts repurposed.

Notably: her skull cavity has been cut open again, and
Victoria is busy peering down into it.

Somehow, this version of the Figure looks more frightening.
Less human.

Henry, meanwhile, has built an additional unit next to the
core, that looks like an ugly motherboard.

It's too large to seal inside her chest cavity, so they've
left it open and gaping.

Henry's watch beeps.

HENRY
Christ. We should get some air.

VICTORIA
I'm almost done here.

HENRY
I am too. We'll need to test
everything, make sure it all works.

VICTORIA
I can do that, if you want to head
out.

He shakes his head.

HENRY
No, I want to be there for that.

VICTORIA
Okay.

He stares at her.

She's completely engrossed. Not for the first time, Henry
(and we) realize that Victoria is obsessed to an unhealthy
level.

She looks thin, frayed, her eyes bright with sleeplessness.

HENRY
I'll be right back.

She hears the door click shut as he leaves.

EXT. ELISI LAKE - AFTERNOON

Henry stands at the edge of the lake, looking out over the
dense trees, the three tall spires of RealTech Labs in the
far distance.

Pensive.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

When he comes back, Victoria is dozing, head pillowed on her
arms in front of the Figure.

HENRY
(gently)
Hey.

She wakes quickly.

VICTORIA
Hi.

HENRY
We should go. You're tired...We can
come back tomorrow to test it.

She stands up. Reaches for the control remote. Toying with it in her hands.

He senses her indecision.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Victoria?...

VICTORIA
You're right...we shouldn't.

He is relieved.

HENRY
Let's go.

VICTORIA
You go on ahead. I just need a few more minutes.

HENRY
I can wait.

VICTORIA
No, go on. I'll be right behind you. Promise.

She can't see the disappointment on his face, but we can. Something shifts in his expression.

He leaves.

And then it's just her and the Figure.

Her creation.

Victoria stares down at her.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
He doesn't think you're going to work. Even if you turn out to be a hunk of metal...it'll be alright. At least we tried, right?

Victoria holds the palm remote in her hand.

She activates it.

There is no humming or whirring like the first few times we've seen the Figure come to life.

Instead, there is nearly complete silence as it sits up.

It is so eerie that Victoria physically takes a step back. Scared, suddenly.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Oh my god...

The Figure turns towards her voice.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Oh...

The Figure stands once more, the motions unbalanced because of the missing arm. It overcompensates and nearly falls to the other side.

Victoria steps back, giving her space.

The Figure stays still. Docile. Doesn't make any motions to attack or hurt Victoria.

Victoria reaches out a hand--touches the Figure's arm. The arm that she built, where it all started.

A moment passes.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
My god...

Victoria is crying. Unsure even of what her own emotions are: relief? Fear? Elation?

The Figure patiently stays standing.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Victoria closes up the warehouse behind her, and gets into her car.

She's manic with excitement.

There's just one heavy duty lock keeping it in place.

Victoria cannot see from her car, but we do.

The lock shudders against the door, from the force of someone on the other side pushing against it. Trying to get out.

INT. VICTORIA'S CAR

It's dark out. The dense trees swallowing up any light offered by the moon.

Victoria turns on her headlights, and drives off.

As her car takes off, we follow.

EXT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Henry is pacing on the small patio in the back of his apartment.

He's on his phone.

HENRY

Hey, sorry to call so late. I
wanted to see if you've heard
anything from the hiring committee.
No rush, give me a call back when
you can.

He hangs up.

Seconds later, his phone rings.

He nearly drops it--but the caller ID is Victoria.

He picks up.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Hey.

VICTORIA

(cheerful)

Hey, I'm on my way back. I didn't
wake you, did I?

HENRY

No, you're fine.

VICTORIA

Alright, I'll be there soon.

HENRY

See you.

He hangs up.

Guilt written all over his face.

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Victoria comes up the steps to his apartment--tries the front door.

Unlocked, as always, for her.

We watch her enter his apartment from afar--observing from a distance.

As if...we are hidden in the trees.

INT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

She steps in, shuts the door behind her.

Henry's already in the kitchen, grabbing two wine glasses from the cupboard.

VICTORIA

Hey.

She's in a much more jovial mood than the last time he saw her.

HENRY

Hey?

Through the window in the kitchen, we see Henry hand her a glass of the red wine.

VICTORIA

Thanks.

She takes it--they clink glasses, sip.

HENRY

I didn't think you were actually going to come back tonight.

VICTORIA

Well, here I am.

He stares down at his glass. Debating, whether or not he should tell her about why it likely isn't going to matter whether or not the Figure works.

HENRY

You seem...cheerful.

VICTORIA

I just have a good feeling about everything.

She notices his reticence.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I know you're worried about the
failsafe. But it's going to be
fine. If I'm not worried, you
shouldn't be either.

The clock above the sink reads 8pm.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Have you had dinner yet?

HENRY
I was going to go to bed soon...

VICTORIA
At 8pm??

HENRY
We have to be up early tomorrow.

VICTORIA
Let tomorrow worry about itself.
There's nothing we can do tonight
to change it. And I'm craving
noodles.

HENRY
...okay. You're right.

VICTORIA
You pick the place. Mind if I take
a shower?

He waves a hand. Go for it. She heads deeper into his
apartment.

He stares after her...confused at the shift in her mood.

EXT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - PORCH - NIGHT

Henry and Victoria are wine-drunk on his porch. Empty take-
out boxes littered between them.

Victoria's hair is wet.

Both of them are sat on his long porch chair. Cozy.

HENRY
So what's going to happen after?

VICTORIA
Assuming she works?

HENRY
Yes. Or no. Whichever.

Victoria shifts in her seat.

VICTORIA
I don't want to jinx anything.

HENRY
Alright then. Let's pre-emptively
assume that she's going to work.

VICTORIA
That's jinxing.

HENRY
It's willing it into reality.

Victoria hums.

VICTORIA
You know, the thing is. I had it
all planned out in my head, how it
was going to go. I'd walk into Dr.
Bend's office, with her behind me.
He'd make me a project lead.

HENRY
Hm.

VICTORIA
I thought that's what I wanted.

HENRY
It's not anymore?

VICTORIA
I don't know. I've spent so much
time dreaming about what could
happen. But now that it's all
happening, I feel like I'll just
have to watch it all play out.

Henry chews this over.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Should I want for more?

HENRY

You know, even if you don't get this project lead position, there are other good companies out there who would kill to have someone like you on their team. Or, leading a team.

She shifts in her seat.

VICTORIA

But I don't want to work at those companies. Why should I have to leave and go somewhere where I have to fight all over again for what I want?

HENRY

Just seems like. You're doing all this, but you don't even like working at RealTech.

She turns to look at him.

VICTORIA

You think I don't like working there?

HENRY

Do you?

She stares up at the small, dim stars in the sky.

VICTORIA

It's like. When you're in elementary school, and the girls' toy bin is filled with barbies and coloring books. But the boys' bin is filled with cool stuff. Science kits and hot wheels. You finally get the teacher to let you play with the science kits, but then none of the boys, or the girls, want to play with you.

HENRY

So what do you do then?

VICTORIA

I never figured that part out.

From over their shoulders, we glance movement in the kitchen. Their backs are to the door, so they don't see anything.

Henry's phone--which he had previously discarded on the kitchen counter--lights up.

But we can see a giant silhouette in there.

Neither of them are aware that anything is remiss.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Thank you. For helping me.

HENRY
(uncomfortable)
Don't thank me yet.

VICTORIA
Even if she doesn't work. It means a lot. I know I don't say this a lot. But I do love you. I'm sorry these past few days have been so hard.

Henry clears his throat.

HENRY
Victoria...

She glances over at him. She's expecting him to say something sweet.

For a moment, we think he's going to tell her everything.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I...think it's time to get you to bed. It's late.

The moment is broken.

HENRY (CONT'D)
We should go to the warehouse early tomorrow. Pack it up, if everything's good. And if not, then we'll have some time to troubleshoot.

VICTORIA
Can't argue with that.

HENRY
C'mon, let's get you up.

He helps Victoria stand on wobbly feet.

VICTORIA
Phew. This red is *strong*.

HENRY
I'll mix you some Pedialyte.

VICTORIA
I'm fine. You clean up out here. I
have to pee.

He laughs.

HENRY
Alright.

The shadow disappears into the darkness of the hallway next
to Henry's kitchen.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT

Victoria stumbles her way into the kitchen, reaching into the
cupboards to grab a glass.

She fills it at the sink, drinks.

Wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

Buzz.

She glances towards the counter--both her and Henry's cell
phones are there.

One of the screens lights up.

She tries to read the text upside-down. Can't.

Turns the phone so that she can see the screen.

Her eyes flick over the words. And again.

And again.

Henry comes in from outside, carrying empty boxes for trash.
Sees his phone in her hand, and her expression.

And puts two and two together.

HENRY
Victoria...

VICTORIA
(reading)
"I got your voicemail. This is
unofficial news, but I spoke with
the committee earlier today.
(MORE)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I should have news for you by end
of day tomorrow at the latest. I
think that you will be pleased to
hear their decision. Signed, Dr.
Bend."

She glances up to look at him.

He doesn't have an excuse to give.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Who is it. Who are they choosing.

There's no use in lying anymore.

HENRY
Conor.

VICTORIA
You knew...and you didn't tell me?

HENRY
And...and me.

Silence.

VICTORIA
You. As in...two leads. You and
Conor.

HENRY
Victoria...

Victoria is biting back tears.

VICTORIA
Was this a joke to you? Watch me
struggle, try and put something
together for a job that I never
even had a shot at?

HENRY
You were one of the final two. It
was you and Conor.

VICTORIA
So, then, how did you end up in the
mix?

HENRY
Dr. Bend said he needed someone
more senior assigned with a junior
to lead the project, and they'd
already picked Conor.

Victoria stares at him. Searching his expression.

VICTORIA
You've always been a shit liar.

She tosses his phone at him--drops the glass of water in the sink, where it SHATTERS.

HENRY
Victoria--

She heads for the door. He grabs her arm.

VICTORIA
Let go of me.

HENRY
Just let me explain--

VICTORIA
LET GO OF ME!!

She tries to shake her arm out of his grip--and spots movement, behind him in the hallway.

THE FIGURE emerges from the dark.

She's too stunned to say anything. Henry is oblivious.

HENRY
You need to understand, I didn't do
this on purpose. I didn't know
until a few days ago that you were
no longer in the running...

He finally catches on that she's not listening. Staring at something behind him.

HENRY (CONT'D)
What.

Fast and violent, the Figure seizes Henry by an arm and
THROWS him across the room!

He slams into the sink, the wind completely knocked out of
him.

Victoria screams!

Henry struggles to get his feet underneath him. Disoriented.

The Figure pauses for one moment. It's still lop-sided, and
top heavy.

Its hesitation is long enough for Henry to pick up the nearest thing--a large pot from the cabinet next to his hip--and hurl it at her.

CLUNK.

It hits the Figure full on in the chest, denting her chest cavity. Right where the exposed shut down panel is.

For a moment, the Figure glitches, her limbs twitching and not seeming to flex as smoothly. When she turns towards Henry, the motions are choppy.

He's damaged her, but she's still functioning.

Henry goes for another pot, and hits the Figure's skull.

Another THUNK. It dents her head, caving in the right side of her face.

VICTORIA

STOP!!

The Figure walks towards Henry with Terminator-esque efficiency.

HENRY

The remote. Where is it?!

VICTORIA

The warehouse!

He scrambles to his feet and barrels out the door. The Figure follows after. So large that she physically breaks the doorframe on the way out.

Victoria stumbles to her feet--the world spins. She's still drunk. Trying to wake up from this nightmare.

EXT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE

Henry pats down his pockets--finds his key fob.

Unlocks his car door, gets in, and drives.

Headlights cutting through the dark. Headed back towards the warehouse.

By the time Victoria stumbles down the steps and outside, Henry and the Figure are nowhere to be seen.

She gets into her own car--drunkenly starts it up. She careens out onto the road, tires screeching.

INT. HENRY'S CAR

Henry's driving fast, reckless, hands white knuckled around the steering wheel.

THUNK.

The heavy noise is right above Henry's head in the car. He looks up--and suddenly the ceiling is dented *inwards*. Like someone is pounding it with a sledgehammer from the outside, rapidly.

THUNK. THUNK. THUNK. THUNK. THUNK.

Henry yanks on the bright red EMERGENCY BRAKE handle.

The car SCREECHES to a stop, tires skidding along the ground.

Henry flings the door open and bails, YELLING as he lands hard on his shoulder on asphalt.

EXT. WOODS

We are in the woods on the way to the warehouses. We have only seen this area in passing, whenever they have been in a car.

Henry scrambles through the brush, one hand gripping onto his dislocated shoulder. Agony.

Running for his life.

INT. CAR/EXT. ROAD

Taking a hard turn, Victoria winds down the immensely dark road.

On a sharp right, she spots Henry's crashed car stopped in the middle of the road.

She HITS THE BRAKES, nearly losing control, trying to avoid hitting it as she continues driving towards the warehouse.

EXT. WOODS

Henry crashes through the woods, stumbling and nearly tripping on tree roots several times.

His foot catches on something metal that rustles and he almost hits the ground, catching himself at the last moment. Chains. Rusted metal chains.

He doubles back and sees an old, rusted bear trap on the forest floor. Hasn't been touched in decades. But the hinges are intact, and it looks dangerous.

He grabs the trap by the chain and drags it to a spot between two trees. Then covers the trap up with leaves, dirt, debris.

There's rustling in the woods behind him.

Henry quickly ducks behind a tree, pinching his nose shut, holding his breath. Holding as still as possible.

The Figure pauses where she is. Lost. Her head swivels this way and that, trying to make a guess as to where Henry is.

Henry picks up a stick near his foot and tosses it in the direction of the trap.

Her attention snaps over to the noise.

She walks towards the sound, her foot edging closer and closer to the trap--

--SNAP!

The spring in the trap releases and the teeth in the trap go through her shin, completely sinking into the mechanical parts of the leg.

Confused, she tries to take a step, the chain dragging behind her.

Henry sees his opportunity and runs in the opposite direction.

The Figure's attention immediately snaps to the movement. She tries to move, but the trap on her leg is cumbersome, getting caught in leaves and underbrush as she tries to walk.

She reaches down, and with one hand, begins to bend the trap, snapping it at the hinge.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Victoria makes it to the warehouse, on the opposite side of the lake where the woods are.

Early dawn is just beginning to break. Treetops silhouetted against the purple sky.

The door to the warehouse is busted open.

The inside is TRASHED. Equipment destroyed, things scattered all over the floor.

Victoria sidesteps around the mess, searching frantically in the debris for--

--THERE! The remote.

Victoria takes this and runs back out the door.

EXT. LAKE

The forest is silent until Henry, covered in grime, worse for wear, stumbles out, gasping and out of breath.

The lake glimmers, beckoning.

He makes his way towards the water.

Glances behind him--he sees that the Figure is almost upon him.

Just as he is about to reach the water's edge he *trips* over something.

He hits the ground hard with a grunt.

On the ground: a titanium, long pole net.

He grabs it and flips onto his back, right as the Figure barrels towards him.

HENRY

STOP!!

The Figure keeps coming towards him--

--with a scream, he closes his eyes and SPEARS HER THROUGH HER CORE.

For a moment she freezes. The pole has gone straight through where her core is. She should be dead.

His breath trembles.

She grasps onto the pole and inch by inch, pulls it out of her chest.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No...

She discards the pole and pins him to the ground.

After trawling through the woods, most of the synthetic skin on her body has fallen off. She is more machine than human, and somehow it's worse, seeing her like this.

Henry braces himself.

And then all of a sudden, she freezes completely. Halted, like someone's pressed pause.

Victoria, out of breath, finally runs up to where they are at the lake's edge.

Overwhelmed with adrenaline, Victoria hunches over, hands on her knees, and vomits into the dirt.

In her hands--the remote.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Victoria--please--

He's still trapped underneath the crushing weight of the Figure.

Unable to move.

Victoria finishes throwing up, spitting on the ground.

Shuddering.

VICTORIA
You didn't tell me. Were you ever going to tell me?

HENRY
Victoria help me. Get her off me.

VICTORIA
Or were you going to keep letting me think that I had a chance.

She wipes her face with the back of her sleeve.

He looks at her like she's fucking crazy. Maybe she is. Her eyes are bright and shining.

She's drunk, and angry. A dangerous combo.

HENRY
I was going to call tomorrow morning and turn the job down--

VICTORIA

Were you going to call before or after you finished building the failsafe? Before or after you made sure she'd never work.

HENRY

I wouldn't--Victoria, you're drunk.

VICTORIA

I *trusted* you.

HENRY

She's dangerous. You have to see that. Look at what she's done to me--to *both* of us.

VICTORIA

You were never going to let me have this, were you.

There is something iron in her expression, and it is deadly. She has made up her mind, and he sees this too.

HENRY

(pleading)

Victoria, *I love you*. Please...

Victoria chokes out a sob, and then, disturbingly, quiets, seeming to regain herself.

VICTORIA

I'm sorry.

HENRY

No, no, no--

VICTORIA

I didn't want to have to choose.

HENRY

VICTORIA!!

VICTORIA

But, nobody gets to choose for me anymore.

Victoria touches the remote...

From afar, we watch as the Figure crushes Henry's skull.

Victoria watches this all happen, refusing to look away.

Victoria is splattered gore.

As it happens--

SHOCK, on her face. Like she's just realizing what's happened.

She STOPS the Figure.

For several moments, Victoria doesn't say anything.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Oh fuck...oh fuck...

Panicking, her soberness sets in at what she's just done.

Victoria walks into the waters of the lake, letting the rush and pull of the gentle waves clean her.

Scrubbing at the blood that's splattered on her.

She stares out, as the sun begins to rise over the tops of the trees. Birdsong flowing, dragonflies skimming the water.

It's going to be a beautiful day.

EXT. WOODS

Henry's car is still on, skidded off the road where he escaped from it.

INT. CAR

Victoria situates Henry's dead body in the car. Presses what's left of his forehead against the steering wheel.

EXT. CAR

Victoria controls the Figure, making her push the car towards an old, towering oak tree.

The hood of the car begins to crunch under the strain--

--the Figure keeps pushing.

It looks like the scene of a gruesome--but totally believable--car accident.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Everything has been packed up in the warehouse. It's totally empty.

EXT. ELISI LAKE

Victoria presses on the remote with a shaking hand.

The Figure begins to walk into the lake.

And it keeps walking...and walking...and walking...

Its heavy weight naturally dragging it down to the bottom of the lake. Until it fully disappears underneath the surface.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT

Victoria lets herself in through Henry's unlocked front door.

Methodically, she cleans up the mess in Henry's apartment. Putting the pots and pans that were damaged into a large, heavy duty trash bag.

She leaves the takeout boxes and wine on the counter.

INT. SHOWER

She stands in the shower, letting the water run over her body. Her face expressionless. Still in shock.

A loud KNOCK startles her into awareness.

OFFICER (O.S.)

Hello?

INT. HENRY'S TOWNHOUSE

She sits at the kitchen table. Two police officers there. Both of them with their hats off, looking somber.

OFFICER

A few loggers were driving through the area and reported it. I'm so sorry...

Victoria covers her mouth with a hand, tears streaming down her face. Or is that water from the shower?

She's devastated, or so it seems.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Do you know where he was going?

VICTORIA

No...I...oh my god...

The officers are sympathetic.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

We had a fight tonight, but nothing major. Just...silly things. We were drinking...he said he needed to get some air, but I didn't think...oh my god...

Off her loud crying--

EXT. GRAVEYARD

A sequence strangely similar to Victoria's first nightmare plays out...

It's raining out. The sky choked with thick clouds.

A casket being lowered into the wet, muddy earth.

Mourners dressed in black. Victoria dabs at her eyes.

We recognize several mourners...many people from the lab.

INT. REALTECH LABS - VICTORIA'S OFFICE - DAY

A beautiful office. Floor to ceiling window that looks out over the lush green forest.

CHYRON: ONE YEAR LATER

Victoria stands facing the window, dressed immaculately in a powerful lady-suit.

As the sound of applause fades in--

DR. BEND (PRE-LAP)

Thank you, thank you everybody.

INT. STAGE

Dozens of scientists in business wear applaud politely.

We're in a grand auditorium, a red-curtained stage up front. Dr. Bend addresses the crowd.

DR. BEND

Victoria Mung has been with RealTech labs for six, going on seven years.

(MORE)

DR. BEND (CONT'D)

A rising scientist, she caught our eye over a year ago when she brought in blueprints for a full synthetic design that we didn't think would be achievable. Through hard work and unwavering dedication, she lead a team over the past year to achieve something that, as you are about to see, is one of the most incredible designs I think this company has ever seen.

Victoria listens to this, backstage.

DR. BEND (CONT'D)

I'll let her speak more about it herself. Without further ado, please welcome her to the stage.

The stage lights are searingly bright as Victoria walks out onto stage.

Already on stage is the Figure.

Except she is INCREDIBLY different.

All of her skin is stripped away. Anything that made her look human is gone.

She is simply machinery in the rough shape of a person.

Victoria smiles at the crowd.

This is everything she's ever wanted.

But there is something empty in her eyes.

As the applause grows to a deafening volume we--

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END