

"Dark Angel: Ascendant"

by

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based on characters created by James Cameron & Charles Eglee

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EXT. MERCYDYNE GENETICS - NIGHT

The embossed sign is strobed by the lights of a passing car.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Torchlight efficiently strokes the sterile rows of microscopes through the glass windows on either side of the hall.

The GUARD pauses. Was that a noise?

Shines the torch over a desk. Sees nothing. Moves on.

DESK

A gloved hand sticks a pack of explosives to the desk.

HALLWAY

The guard does another torch sweep at the end of the hall. The hall stares back at him, empty and ominous.

The guard reaches up and clicks his radio.

GUARD

Dispatch. Grid 9 is clear. Over.

DISPATCH

(over radio)

Roger that Bob. Come on back. Lyo finally brought the damn donuts.

The guard smiles at that, but it turns into a strangled grimace as a thin wire wraps around his neck from behind.

Gloved hands yank hard, lifting the guard abruptly off his feet. The guard struggles, gasps, twitches-

The guard drops to the floor, eyes wide open.

A pair of boots step over the body.

INT. DISPATCH - SAME

A donut with a huge bite taken out of it is hemorrhaging jelly over the desk.

The steady sound of DRIPPING comes, not from the donut, but from the fingers of the man lying dead next to it. Another body is slumped in a chair next to the radio.

Blood splatters decorate the black and white monitors that flicker on the front wall. On top of one, is a little BLACK BOX.

A little black box with a tiny red light.

A light that BLINKS on and off.

Faster and faster.

BOOM

HALLWAY

Windows implode and shatter as the fireball juggernauts through the building.

EXT. MERCYDYNE LABS - NIGHT

The building blazes in the night like Guy Fawkes' last appointment.

A car speeds out of the driveway, past the sign.

INT. CAR - SAME

Four black-clad passengers sit perfectly still and unaffected. The nearest, a man whose nature mimics the destruction around him, pulls off his mask.

AMES WHITE stares at the reflection of the flames on the window.

EXT. SEATTLE - NIGHT

Seattle. A city at rest under a cloud of quiet. Even the lights lazily flutter on and off. The space needle stands a lone soldier in the eerie night-time glow.

No one stirs or even cares to - no one human that is.

MAX

(v.o.)

Normal.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

A girl hugs herself as she stares out, perhaps towards a discarded memory.

MAX

(v.o)

For the longest time, that's all
I wanted to be.

Closer still, the girl is really a woman, burdened under the responsibilities that role often entails.

MAX

(v.o)

But I guess when you are a
genetically-engineered
superfreak...

A barcode peaks out from behind dark hair.

MAX

(v.o)

Normal needs a new definition.
It's only taken me twelve years
to figure it all out.

This is MAX.

Her eyes are dark. They close heavily.

MAX

(v.o)

Ten years on the run from my
makers when I should have been
running back. To them. The ones
like me. The ones I left behind.

She holds a piece of metal in her hands. All around her on
the roof is litter: cans, sticks, stones, shattered bottles,
anything that is an efficient projectile.

MAX

(v.o)

The freedom I finally gave them
came at a price.

On the streets below, huddled around a fire, a small group
of people still cherish their signs and placards emblazoned
with touching 'KILL THE FREAKS' motifs.

One hefts a similar metal shard over the wall, not aiming
for anything in particular.

MAX

(v.o)

The world wasn't ready for us. We
weren't ready for it.

The shard kluncks close to Max. She does not look, appears
not to react.

But her hand easily CRUSHES THE METAL within it.

MAX

(v.o)

We made our own world. Here, our
city.

She tosses the metal aside and stands up.

MAX

(v.o)

It'd be great to be out there.
With them. Normal.

The fire escapes lowers as Max gracefully descends the building.

MAX

(v.o)

But sometimes, being a freak...

INT. UPPER PARKADE - NIGHT

Freaks crowd on the upper floor.

They are everywhere. Crouching on the balconies, standing in rows together. Some laughing, some betting, some merely soaking in the atmosphere.

It is the height of match fever and all eyes are on the events unfolding on the lower parkade, now a makeshift ARENA.

MAX

(v.o)

...is so much more interesting.

WOOP. WOOP. WOOP.

ARENA

A boot connects with a face. The face connects with the ground

UPPER PARKADE

The crowd CHEERS.

Max weaves her way through the mass of people.

She's curious, but can't quite see over and around the push of bodies looking down over the edges.

In her search, she spies something else that warrants a change in direction.

ARENA

Two X5 MALES, APE and RHINO, early twenties with physiques to fear, stand across one another, panting and tired.

They move forward and attack each other.

UPPER PARKADE

Max approaches JOSHUA, a dog-man, and STUFF, an impish woman in her early twenties, with more pockets in her clothes than years. The pixie is comfortably perched atop a pillar, staring down at the events and playing with a black T-shirt in her lap.

Max nods at her, but gives a special smile to the girl's huge canine companion.

MAX

Hey big fella. What's--

Max finally catches sight of the action in the makeshift arena.

ARENA

An unconscious X5 male flies through the interlocked bodies of Ape and Rhino, breaking apart their fight.

The two combatants look at each other; to their fallen comrade; back to each other.

Nodding, a silent truce is made.

They both step back.

UPPER PARKADE

Max takes a moment to find the correct thought: wonder, amusement, confusion - ah there it is - anger.

MAX

What the hell does he think he's doing?

ARENA

ALEC, proof that Manticore knew how to make 'em pretty, is completely relaxed. He seems to be enjoying this. He barely glances between Rhino and Ape as they circle him, but winks at MONA sitting on the steel staircase.

She wraps a slender hand around the metal, smiles - practically purring - leans forward and displays an impressive amount of... motivation.

UPPER PARCADE

Joshua smiles affably at Max.

JOSHUA

Alec kickin' ass.

ARENA

Fists come from both sides.

None connect.

Alec ducks and spins, grabbing both fists and locking them together as he kicks ahead at a chest and batters the one behind him with an elbow.

A twist of the torso and he careens one goon into the other.

UPPER PARKADE

Max the watches battle and, despite herself, seems impressed with Alec's moves

MAX

(shakes herself
back to sanity)

What is his- why is the idiot fighting? Like we don't have enough bad guys to worry about, now he wants to beat up our own kind too?

STUFF

(winces at something
in the arena)

Heat fight. Gotta love feline DNA.

ARENA

Mona grips the metal railing more tightly. Her lips are wet. Her eyes are almost black, tinged with an eerie feline yellow.

Alec punches Ape down. Looks up at Mona. His eyes are dilated, more lion than man.

His smile is all tomcat.

He gets punched in the face.

UPPER PARKADE

Max frowns.

STUFF

(cont.)

So I figure, hey, he's been working really hard and is looking a little rundown. Three days of mind-numbing pheromone-driven sex should do the trick. It'll be like a refreshing spa.

Max finally whips her eyes away from the fight. Glowers matter-of-factly.

MAX

Well, That's just too damn bad. I'm afraid he has a prior appointment.

She somehow manages to petulantly sashay away. Stuff and Joshua smile at each other - perhaps they'd been expecting this.

ARENA

Alec moves quickly but not in time to avoid the fist to his side. He is quicker with his retaliation.

This is not a place for graceful acrobatics. This is a pure show of brute force and speed. Each blow is like a swing from Thor's hammer.

Alec pushes Ape away, then whups Rhino's head so hard the joker twists and crumples to the floor. Down for the count.

Mona's grin is carnal... and short-lived.

Max lands in a crouch in front of her. Standing up, eyes blazing, she thunders over to the two fighters.

MAX

A'right pretty boy. Time to end this-

FHWAP.

She is tackled by Mona. Caught completely by surprise, Max hits the ground hard. Her groan turns to a growl of anger as Mona grabs her hair.

Alec ducks a fist, rams one straight back. Ape makes a grab for him, tries to lock Alec's arms to his side. Alec uses his legs and pushes back.

The momentum flings him against the wall. He lands next to Max who is pinned down by crazy lady Mona. He doesn't even look at Max. Eyes focused solely on his last opponent.

They both push back against their opponents. And then in a synchronized battle-dance, criss-cross each others path as they move back into their own fighting circles.

Mona gets Max to the ground again. Max is barely fending off the woman's claws. She twists her body and suddenly the positions are reversed. Max has the upperhand and she plays it well.

She headbutts Mona.

Alec lands on his back. But he quickly launches himself up, spinning his torso and knocking the legs out from under Ape. One final cracking hit and Ape's eyes close.

Alec stands, the victor.

The crowds CHEER. He takes a moment to smile up at them, then his grin becomes carnal as he turns around to-

MAX

Alec blinks surprised. Looks around for Mona.

Max yanks his ear.

MAX

Idiot.

ALEC

(probably should
pay attention to
her)

Uh hi Max.

MAX

Idiot.

ALEC

Hey, easy with the ear. It was
expecting something a little more
(really has to
think about it)
nibbling-like.

MAX

Nibbling-like? That's not a word.
(another jerk of
the ear)

Idiot.

ALEC

Why are your panties in a bunch?
It's not like you can't live
without me for a few...
(glazed donut eyes)
long, long days and those longer,
longer nights.

Seemingly of its own volition, his body cranes back around Max, going in the direction of Mona who is shaking herself awake.

Max pulls him to the stairs, finally lets go of his ear and thumps him on the chest.

MAX

What's today Alec?

His eyes and mind, everything else are more interested in the woman on the other end of the room.

Max glares when he winks once more at Mona.

MAX

Wednesday Alec! It's Wednesday.

She shoves herself up in his face.

He's still not in her zipcode yet.

She grabs his face and makes him look at her.

MAX

Pay attention. What happens on
Wednesday? Alec? Alec!?

ALEC

Uhh... Ah! Ohhhh.
(grimaces)
It's cyber-journalist
extraordinaire Eyes Only's weekly
rundown on all the hobbies,
hijinks and harrying of the
worlds funniest bad guys.

MAX

(matter settled)
So let's go.

He pauses, lowers his shoulders like a husband trying to
avoid Christmas shopping with the girls.

ALEC

But Max. He's your boyfriend. I
don't really need to be there, do
I? Tell him... tell him I got
sick and uh... am laid up in bed.
(leans in, puts on
the charm)
Come on. Do it for your old pal
Alec.

She leans closer, her lips are close to his.

MAX

(whispers)
He's not my boyfriend anymore.
(thumps him back to
reality)

ALEC

Aw don't be like that Maxie. Luke
Skywalker's gotta get the girl
sometime.

Max doesn't dignify that with a response. She still leads
the way.

MAX

Dream on pretty boy. If I can't
get out of it, you can't get out
of it.

Alec stares at Mona, pouts, follows Max. A black T-shirt
from above hits him in the face. He half-heatedly waves up
at Stuff and Joshua.

APE

stands up, shell-shocked. He has no clue what just happened. Looks around blindly.

Notices Alec's walking up the stairs behind Max.

Has a moment to look to his side before-

BAM

Mona passionately knocks him sideways.

The crowds LAUGH, CHEER, WHISTLE.

Then turn away faster than an X5 can undo a zipper.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Various spectators from the fight excitedly rush on past in different directions.

Alec pulls his T-shirt over his head.

Max glares at him from the corners of her eyes.

They walk silently, but Alec is fidgety.

MAX

Would you stop that?

She gnashes her jaw as it becomes increasingly obvious that he is physically unable to, though he is trying to subdue it.

Alec sees something and heads for it.

Max opens her mouth. Her face would launch a thousand arrows.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

Alec dunks his head in a metal barrel filled with Seattle's finest rainwater.

He comes up spluttering from the cold. Looks around, down, back up. Shrugs.

ALEC

(considers)

Better.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Max taps her fingers on her crossed arms as she waits. He falls in beside her as she starts to walk away.

MAX

Male.

ALEC

Thanks. Female.

MAX

Not a compliment. You're like a dog with a boner.

ALEC

Don't you mean cat with some-

MAX

Don't you dare!

He smiles.

She glowers.

He raises his eyebrows.

She glares.

He winks.

She shakes her head. The smile is unavoidable as he bumps her shoulder with his.

MAX

Urgh you're so... so

ALEC

Male.

MAX

Exactly.

ALEC

Face it Maxie, that's why you can't live without me.

(off her look)

You'll admit it one day.

MAX

Care to bet your ass on that?

ALEC

Maxie. What kind of fool plays all or nothing odds?

Before she can say the retort already happily forming in her mouth-

ALEC
 (licks his lip,
 smiling)
 Besides, you're always such a
 sore loser.

She stops, scowls at him, about to give him a piece of her mind, but he continues walking, leaving her behind.

She hurries to catch up when she realizes he's gone.

His laughter carries them into-

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Various 'mutants' look extremely busy bustling around equipment and chatting in small groups.

A militant lizard with a cigar drooping from his mouth and a rifle under his arm stops in front of Alec and Max.

MOLE
 You're late.

MAX
 Hot rod here was looking for a
 place to put his cylinder.

ALEC
 And guess who was the muffler.

Ow. He rubs the back of his head.

MOLE
 (doesn't care)
 Fascinating. Eyes Only decided it
 couldn't hurt to give me a very
detailed report in case you two
 didn't make it. I'm now going for
 some shut-eye.

ALEC
 Sweet dreams buttercup.

Mole exits. Alec sighs as they traverse up the stairs.

ALEC
 You know, I could have been near
 a bed right now. Or probably not,
 but I would definitely be
 horizontal. Eh maybe vertical.

MAX
 Get over it.

ALEC
 You have no understanding of the
 hardships of men.

He sits on a desk.

Max sits on another and hits a button on a console.

MAX

Hard ships? Being a little over-enthusiastic about yourself there, huh seaman?

She grins; stirring the waters. He accepts the bait.

ALEC

Rather a sailor than a landlubber. Come on Maxie. You can't tell me you really prefer someone who doesn't already know how to handle the uh... motions.

LOGAN

(o.s)

Ahem.

Busted.

ALEC

Logan buddy. So what's new in the world of

(hand points to the wide blue yonder)

'out there'.

Logan, thirtyish with tired eyes, peers down from a video screen like an adult stoically forbearing the errant child of an old friend.

Alec is a bundle of restless energy. Sitting still and paying attention is an unholy mission set to him by the fiery goddess staring at him.

Max hides the smallest of smiles at Alec's attempts at compliance, but pays apt attention to Logan as he starts to talk.

LOGAN

Three more medical and genetics labs were hit last night. Twelve fatalities in total, including some doctors off site. They had no protection.

MAX

We've been over this. We need our people here, ready to mobilize. We can't split our forces so that we can babysit every doctor in North America.

LOGAN

(quietly)

I know you're doing all you can, but it's the police and other agencies. They aren't moving nearly fast enough and they still think- they still believe-

ALEC

(rehashing an old tale)

At best, that its the work of militant mutie-haters that are trying to undo man's foray into playing God. At worst, the work of man-hating muties getting back at their creators. My favorite is that it's a wacky thousands year old cult that plans to wipe out all other beings on the planet so they can divvy up all those tasty beachfront properties without having to give Uncle Sam his due. Personally, I don't know why no one believes that one.

LOGAN

Alec.

ALEC

Alright. Alright. The end of the world is no laughing matter... which is why we all need to pack our bags and head off to Fiji for one last roll in the surf. Whaddaya say? Come on Logan. You're looking a little peaky. You been taking your vitamins?

LOGAN

Alec-

MAX

Logan. Did you get the list?

LOGAN

Yeah, the doctors we have in safety didn't quite believe Eyes Only but they gave me a list of the supplies we need anyway. I gave it to Dix.

ALEC

(standing up)

Sounds like a job for me.

MAX

Take backup this time.

ALEC

The supplier war is over. This one'll be a piece of cake.

MAX

(general mode)

It wasn't a request soldier.

Alec nods without complaint. He leaves the beauty and the computer screen man alone.

LOGAN

Does he have to be so flippant?

MAX

He's not... he's had a tough time trying to get everything ready. It's just his way of coping with... all of this.

LOGAN

And what about you?

MAX

Oh I just smack him until he shuts up. Or his jokes get better.

LOGAN

I meant about-

MAX

I know what you meant. And I don't have an answer. I didn't have an answer when all this started, I certainly don't have one now that it's-

LOGAN

(quietly)

Ending?

MAX

I hope not. I was kinda hoping I'd get the chance to figure out the answer. Maybe even, have the chance to tell you what it is.

They share a look; perhaps a memory; a relic of a possibility that has past and will never come again.

LOGAN

(unflinching)

You'll make it.

MAX

Because everyone lives happily ever after?

LOGAN

No. Because you do.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A plastic castle, very macho looking, with all sorts of imaginary beasties and heros sits on a cardboard box. The room is a haven for unpacked boxes. In thick black ink, a few of them say "RAY'S ROOM".

A boy in pajamas hops into bed. His father follows and helps tuck him in.

RAY

Are we really not moving anymore?

WHITE

Yep kiddo. We're home to stay.

Ray smiles and relaxes into the covers.

WHITE

Did you say your prayers?

Ray looks guilty, White smiles. Ray sits up and holds his hands in a pose.

WHITE

When we walk...

RAY

The ground will tremble.

WHITE

When we breathe...

RAY

The wind will carry it.

WHITE

When we are strong...

RAY

The meek will fade.

WHITE

Fenostol.

RAY

Fenostol.

White reaches for the lamp.

RAY

Can you leave it on?

White frowns, but instead reaches over and roughs up Ray's hair.

WHITE
 Okay kiddo. Just for tonight.
 (leans over,
 whispers)
 We won't tell anyone.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

A blade slices through tape.

Alec opens the box. Looks inside.

ALEC
 Another one for the Hope building.

A mutant takes it.

Alec puts the knife back in its sheath, holstered around his leg.

ALEC
 Those two need to go to the North Gate armory, and that's for the infirmary.

As soldiers move the huge crates and boxes around, Alec senses something else.

OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

Max stares in. Notices Alec looking at her. Turns and walks away.

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

Alec grabs his jacket, waves to another X5 to continue.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Alec zips up his jacket and watches Max for a moment before walking over.

Max stares out into Seattle, she doesn't acknowledge he's there, but doesn't seem to mind when he sits beside her.

ALEC
 That's a really strong wind.

She nods absently.

ALEC
 Hey look. There's less people at the gates now. Guess they finally got bored of waving banners at the freaks.

MAX

Or maybe they finally figured out
what's important.

(finally looks at
him)

Home.

He nods and loses his eyes in the darkening horizon.

MAX

That was a big shipment. I've
never seen you bring in something
that big all at once before.

ALEC

Yeah, well I figure it's the last.

She studies his profile with the same intensity she'd
afforded the city.

He is unaffected by both her gaze and his words.

She nods slowly. Accepting.

MAX

Do you think any of us will make
it?

ALEC

I doubt they can cook up anything
toxic enough to get us.

MAX

That's what bullets are for.

ALEC

(chuckles dryly)

Such a cynical girl. You in that
much of a hurry to get rid of me?

MAX

Is that all it's gonna take?

He mulls it over, shrugs.

ALEC

Mmm nope. Sorry. You're just
gonna have to get used to keeping
me around.

She smiles. Something tells us she really doesn't mind.

They both wince as though listening to nails on a
chalkboard.

ALEC
 Urgh. Don'tcha just miss that old
 alarm.
 (stands up)
 Who cares if the Ordinaries could
 hear it too?

He reaches inside his jacket and brings out an earpiece,
 which he places in his ear. Max does the same.

ALEC	MAX
(unison)	(unison)
Command?	Command?

They both smile at that. Alec shrugs an apology, motions
 for her to continue.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Stuff types on a computer, she has on a communications
 headset.

Mole stands beside her.

MOLE
 Where you at?

MAX
 (filter)
 North-west perimeter.

MOLE
 Heads up. You got company.

EXT. ROOF - SAME

Max and Alec leave the roof.

MAX
 Human?

STUFF
 (filter)
 Hold for confirmation.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

The computer screen is divided into segments. Various
 renditions of the same activity are shown in each: infra-
 red, real-time video feed, 3D animation, 2D animation.

A handful of figures stalk towards the perimeter fencing,
 rifles looking around. With amazing agility the small
 platoon summit the fence; their actions could only be
 considered superhuman.

Mole looks at Stuff.

MOLE

Negative. We have thirteen snakes
and it looks like they're packing
extra bags of venom.

EXT. ROOF - SAME

Alec holds a moment with Max before they rapidly descend
the fire escape.

STUFF

(filter)

I've got your locale. They're at
five o'clock. Less than a click.
Coming in behind the Barclay
warehouse. Unit thirteen is on
route. The rest are reporting to
their stations. Need more?

MAX

Got it covered. Keep the city safe.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Max reaches the ground before Alec does. .

ALEC

Look at the bright side, at least
the wait is over. Question, are
we allowed to kill them yet?

(off her look)

Of course not.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Mole stares at the screen as an aerial view of the area
shows over a dozen transgenic heat spikes moving towards
the 13 lighter hues of the Familiar platoon.

EXT. SQUARE - SAME

Max and Alec are running low and running fast.

Alec removes his jacket and tosses it aside, before ducking
behind an abandoned car.

Max sidles into an alley and flattens against the wall.

They wait.

Alec looks up, knowing what he'll see.

A transgenic soldier has arrived on the roof.

Max signals another new arrival behind an adjacent building.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Like rats sniffing through a gutter, the Familiars enter the square.

They are Phalanx. Mammoth warriors in size and skill.

EXT. SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

The transgenics hold. Steady. Steady. No fear. They are granite chameleons blending with the shadows.

MAX

(to herself)

Get ready.

The Familiars have fully entered square.

Now!

Like a black shower of mercury, the transgenics rain down from walls, windows and alleys. The Familiars are surrounded.

The RAT-TAT-TAT of the Familiar's guns is merely an annoying sound-effect.

They are up against the finest Manticore had to offer, X5s.

The bullets miss each of their targets.

With ruthless efficiency, the transgenic forces render the Familiars weapons useless. Ploughing into each opponent, the guns are ditched and cruder methods are adopted.

Hand to hand.

Each transgenic and Familiar is occupied in his or her own private battle.

Some more than most.

Max has her hands full with JOSIAH and DAMASCUS. Formidable and determined, these two are the most powerful and skilled of the Phalanx there.

Speed is Max's only advantage. She uses it when she can. She isn't allowed the luxury.

ALEC

No fair Max. Don't hog all the bad guys.

WHOMP

Alec takes a 2 by 4 to Josiah. The Familiar heavy sails through the air and lands on his ass.

Max swipes at Damascus.

MAX

You know how I hate sharing.

Alec moves to Josiah.

ALEC

Oops. Sorry. Did I interrupt something?

Josiah snarls.

ALEC

Looked like you three needed a room. I could arrange that. You seem like a guy in the mood for some tasteful leather and handcuffs?

Josiah leaps, hands like claws. Alec sidesteps. Easily smacks the hands that are aimed for him.

ALEC

I'm a go-two kinda guy. Go-three maybe.

(dodges)

Fours are good, but your gal is a little too butch for my tastes.

Josiah has had enough.

He pulls out the mothership of knives.

Alec smiles and reaches down to the straps around his legs.

He pulls out two daggers from each sheath.

He twirls one into a reverse grip, the other into a hammer.

Josiah launches himself at the X5.

Alec has become all business. The arrogant veneer gives way to fact. He is a killer. Deadly, efficient, damn good.

Alec's smaller blades block each one of the other man's slashes. Licking skin with much more ease.

The Familiar, perhaps for the first time, knows he is outclassed.

Alec backs the Familiar into a corner.

The Familiar weapon is useless against such an onslaught.

Alec pins the Familiar's throat against the wall with his arm, then spins and hammers with his elbow.

The Familiar's head connects spectacularly with the wall.

As Josiah slides down the wall, Alec sheathes his own knives and bends down to take Josiah's, admires it. Looks up.

The rest of the transgenics have had mixed success. An X5 lies open-eyed in the alley, blood pooling around his throat. Another is collapsed across an abandoned car. Slumped beside, is a wheezing Familiar.

Alec takes in the deaths. He is not pleased. He looks at Josiah, holds up the blade he pilfered from the man, then steadily walks away.

He uses the butt end of the knife to knock another familiar unconscious and just keeps on walking.

MAX

is held by two Familiars, ARMS and LEGS.

Damascus approaches with a

SYRINGE

filled with a clear liquid.

ALEC

doesn't hesitate. He rushes forward, slashes the blade upward.

The contents of the syringe splatter over his BARE ARM.

His follow-through is halted before his knife can reach Damascus's body. She retaliates quickly, anger a stronger blade than steel.

Alec reels back, the blade is knocked from his hand.

They circle each other. Fist to fist is how this will play.

Alec looks out of the corner of his eye, Max is still struggling to free herself from the two Familiars.

ALEC

Max?

MAX

I got it.

She twists lose from Legs, Kicks him in the face and ramps up his body. Somersaulting over Arms and landing with catlike ease, she shoves him into Legs.

She sees a dead transgenic, snarls, attacks.

Her anger gives her an edge the emotion would normally rob from others.

Legs loses consciousness first. Arms hangs on, barely.

There are only two battles left, and the two circle each other like a beautiful storm.

One is meant to be an easy slam-dunk. Alec has the superior moves. But something is wrong. His blows don't connect like they should. They are weaker, less focused.

Damascus notices and is pleased.

DAMASCUS

What's the matter freak? Feeling
a little sick?

Alec looks at his arm which is out of focus. Sweat beads his face. He wipes a hand over his brow and brings back his fingers, shocked. He is shivering.

DAMASCUS

kicks him in the chest. He spirals onto the abandoned car, where

THE EYES OF A DEAD TRANSGENIC

stare up at him. The sight is unnaturally close in his perspective.

It panics Alec.

He tries to push himself up.

Damascus grabs him by the shoulder and tosses him to the ground like a limp child.

DAMASCUS

Tut-tut. Fear in the face of death.

Alec staggers as he gets up. He blocks one punch, is almost floored by the next.

DAMASCUS

So weak.

Alec's defense is feeble, offense non-existent.

A blow finally sends him to the floor; he is too weak and in too much pain to make it up, though he doesn't stop trying.

DAMASCUS

(straddles him)

You should have let her have it.

(keeps punching him
in the face)

You've died for nothing. You lose.

We've already won.

The Familiar doesn't lands another blow.

Her neck is broken in one quick, crackling twist.

Max barely looks at the body she pushes aside. Probably doesn't even realize what she has done.

She falls on her knees beside Alec.

His face is blanketed in perspiration, seems hot, but the shivers contradict it.

MAX

Alec? Alec! Look at me.

(clasps his face)

Look at me.

She grabs his hand firmly.

MAX

Just ride it out soldier. Superior genetics remember. They can't touch us. Alec. They can't touch us.

The tremors make holding his hand difficult, but she holds on as if his life depends on it.

He focuses on her hand, her face, her eyes, until he can't focus on anything at all.

MAX

(grabs his shoulders,
shaking him)

No.

(to the soldiers)

Help me!

INT. INFIRMARY - DAY

The door crashes open. Alec is strapped to a gurney.

His arms jerk of their own volition against the restraints.

Max runs alongside.

The gurney docks in a crude ER. Medics are working on the others. Quickly and efficiently. They don't hesitate in the face of battle wounds, but when Alec reaches them, they falter.

SAR checks Alec's vitals.

SAR
 Jesus, look at his temperature...
 (to Max)
 What happened?

MAX
 I don't know! They had...
 something. What could do this so
 quickly?

SAR
 I've never heard of anything that
 could dent our immunity. This
 shouldn't be happening.

She has a thought, turns and opens a cabinet, pulls out some bags.

Max looks back at Alec. His face is pale and clammy. The tremors are weakening, his breathing is becoming shallower.

Sar finds a vein, inserts a drip.

MAX
 What is that?

SAR
 Liquids to keep him hydrated.
 Something for the pain. Human
 antibiotics in case it's bacterial.
 (looks at Max)
 It's all we have.

MAX
 Will it work?
 (off the silence)
 Will it work?

SAR
 (looks down at
 Alec)
 We never get sick.

Max looks around the room. The soldiers and medics stand still and won't look at her.

Max shakes her head, silently defying them and whatever fate has decided.

MAX
 Transfuse him.

SAR
 Wha-

Max holds out her arm.

MAX

Just do it.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

A computer BEEPS.

A tiny screwdriver drops and rolls across a steel table. A dark hand stops it, retrieves it, takes it back.

Stuff turns away, tries to discreetly wipe her eye.

Mole places a hand on her shoulder. Grimly staring ahead as Stuff takes the screwdriver to her work.

The computer BEEPS.

INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

Max zones out at the white sheets. Her too-dark eyes travel up Alec's sleeping body.

The drip is still connected to his arm. Wires are taped to his chest and at some point, he has been given a breathing aid.

Max rubs the bandage on her forearm absently.

His fingers spasm and Max is at his side before the candle can flicker at the sudden movement.

She clasps his fingers, stares into his face.

Waits.

Waits.

Waits.

Harsh light floods the room.

Max squints against it.

Sar creases her lips in apology, checks Alec's vitals and the readouts from the monitors.

Max watches silently.

SAR

He hasn't deteriorated.

MAX

But he hasn't improved either.

Max starts to the door.

MAX

I have to go.

SAR

But-

Sar stares at an empty doorframe.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

DOCTOR SHANKAR walks out, waves at one of the guards, and crosses into the parking lot.

She is tired; fumbles to get her car keys. She reaches her car and briefly looks around her as though she'd heard something.

No one is there.

Just a few empty cars.

She puts her bag on the roof and inserts the key for the door.

A hand comes down and grabs her, breaking the key in the lock.

Shankar startles and turns in time to see

THE KNIFE

She ducks and tries to run. She is held fast by the strong grip, but she stumbles and it breaks her free.

She falls to the ground, scrambles back, twists into a crouch and gets up.

She runs to where the guard should be, but the man is crawling to the hospital entrance; blood escaping from his fingers as they clutch his neck.

A SCREAM comes from within the building.

SHANKAR

Oh my God!

Wide-eyed with terror, Shankar watches as the two assailants head toward her.

Panic gives her wings. It is a desperate run, she doesn't know where she's going, she just runs.

Sees a hole in the fence of the parking lot that just might be too small for them to get through.

She squeezes through and keeps on running.

She does not see that the men merely leap the fence behind her.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

Shankar hides behind a dumpster.

She peers out. The alley is empty.

Her breath is shaky.

She waits. Still nothing. Slowly, she starts to move out from her hiding place-

She is thrown across the alley.

She lands rolling. The shadow is upon her.

She cannot get up; she scrambles backward until her back is against the wall.

This is the end.

SSSST

Both attackers fall to their faces.

Shankar stares open-mouthed at her rescuer.

Decked in combat garb, JED, early twentish, pretty in black, swirls his cattle-prods and holsters them like a long ago cowboy.

He helps Shankar to his feet.

JED

Sorry ma'am. We had to get past some of their friends.

SHANKAR

We?

She looks around and startles.

A small contingent of similarly clad people surround her in the alley.

SHANKAR

You're... you're-

JED

Trangenics ma'am. X5s. Eagle unit seven. We were assigned to protect you.

Shankar looks down at the downed men.

SHANKAR

But who? Why?

MAX

(o.s.)

I think it's better you let me
take it from here Jed.

Max is breathing hard from a fast run.

She is flanked by two other X5s.

SHANKAR

Max?

Max walks slowly to Shankar, her breathing already
returning to normal.

MAX

My people, they've been watching
you, protecting you, for weeks.
We never thought they'd attack
like this, but I guess time's run
out. That's why I'm here.

Max is humble in the grace of the doctor.

MAX

I need your help. Please.

INT. INFIRMARY - NIGHT

Shankar, the only one in a bio-hazard suit, pads to Alec's
bed.

Unexpectedly to Max, she sits on the edge next to him, and
strokes his hair away from his closed, still eyes.

She turns and takes Sar's reports, studying them.

SHANKAR

I thought you were all immune to
biological agents.

She reaches inside her doctor's bag.

MAX

(still staring at
Alec)

'Supposed to be. Me more than
most. But I guess my blood isn't
that special.

SHANKAR

(disagrees)

He seems stable. Your people have
done a good job.

MAX

That's not good enough. He
shouldn't be sick at all.

SHANKAR

I'm not even sure what I can do here. The CDC-

MAX

Has lost most of its best people and almost all of its resources. The doctors we've kept safe are too far away to be any help to me. To him. You're all I have.

Max moves closer to the window.

MAX

We're soldiers. We know many ways of dying. But we don't know this one. It's not right.

SHANKAR

(looks at Alec)

No. It's not. I'll need blood. His. Yours. The hospital's lab isn't good enough-

MAX

Got it covered.

SHANKAR

(surprised)

Okay.

Shankar walks over to the supply tray and takes a needle.

She taps it and sets about drawing blood from Alec.

ALEC

(weakly)

I hope I get a lollipop after this.

Max is beside him before he can crank his eyes open.

Shankar finishes up the blood sample.

SHANKAR

Guess your blood is special after all.

She smiles at the two friends and silently leaves the room.

MAX

Hey soldier.

ALEC

Hey.

MAX

How you feeling?

ALEC

Rested.

MAX

You look like you could use some more.

ALEC

Nah.

He starts to shake his head but he's out cold before his head reaches the other side of the pillow.

Max smiles.

INT. HOPE BUILDING - NIGHT

The lights strobe on. Shankar, still in her biohazard suit, stares out in amazement.

Rows and rows of laboratory equipment, set up and waiting. Computers, microscopes, vials and beakers of anything and everything Doctor Science could ask for.

MAX

We...

(amends)

Alec began setting this up as soon as we were hip to their plan.

SHANKAR

Who exactly is they? And why were they after me?

Shankar puts Alec's blood in a container. Readies another needle for Max.

MAX

I'm not sure we'll ever fully know who 'they' are. What I do know is that they've been the ones blowing away labs, medical supplies and doctors. I also know that they've spent millennia selectively breeding to produce a race of people stronger, faster and smarter than most Bob Normal's out there.

Max hops on the table and gives Shankar her arm.

SHANKAR

So they're like transgenics?

MAX

It's more like we're the instant coffee version of them. See, we might have been created by the government as expendable super-soldiers, but the head doctor had another plan. He made us to stop them.

Shankar labels the new vial of blood.

SHANKAR

Stop them from what?

MAX

Erasing the meek so that the strong inherit the earth.

Max springs off the ledge.

MAX

Look. We were never trained to be independent of the Manticore doctors or generals, but we're a quick study. Some of our guys have been reading up on genetics. If you want any help-

SHANKAR

(still processing)

Yes. That would be great.

Max tries to offer comfort with her smile, but it doesn't help Shankar digest the facts any faster. Max leaves the good doctor to think.

INT. SITE RED - NIGHT

On the screen, a MAP of Seattle.

White stares at it without much interest. He looks at his watch.

FAMILIAR

He's doing well.

White lazily looks up the TV.

SENATOR MCKINLEY

(on screen)

If these creatures are the creations and therefore the property of the United States, then as such, we should be allowed the right to recall these products and dispose of them as you would any other faulty good not deemed safe for public consumption.

WHITE

(doesn't care)

Yeah. He's really going both barrels.

Looks down at a glove, ball and bat lying on a desk. There is a photo of Ray next to the computer and phone. White looks back at his watch.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

CLAPS are raised by McKinley's hateful passion. His point made.

SENATOR BROWDER

And by what standards do we define them as faulty? Tomorrow morning sees the release of the Manticore mission files to the public. And I wonder if you will still see them the same way as you do now. To see the transgenic nation as nothing more than a den or soulless murderers and twisted monsters.

Browder is a charismatic tower in caparison to the zealous McKinley.

SENATOR BROWDER

Or will you see what I see? I see a nation of soldiers. A nation that has chosen not to attack when attacked. Not to kill when killed. A nation ordered to kill in secrecy, but chose peace and life when known. I am proud. I am proud of them. I am proud to have had these soldiers protecting my country; my home. But. I cannot find pride for my own nation's actions. I vote for transgenic equality.

INT. INFIRMARY - SAME

The support for Browder is tremendous, but still marred by BOOS and HISSES from the opposition's supporters. The CREDITS ROLL.

A medic watches impassively.

The TV screen melts to snow. The pixelated eyes of the cyber journalist EYES ONLY tunes in amid the flowing banners of red, white and blue.

EYES ONLY

(on screen)

Do not attempt to adjust your set.
This is an Eyes Only streaming
video bulletin. The cable hack
will last exactly sixty seconds.
It cannot be traced, it cannot be
stopped, and it is the only free
voice left in this city...

Max walks in and the medic quickly switches the TV off.
Max smiles at him, waves for him to carry on.

She moves past the curtain into Alec's section.

MAX

And just what do you think you're
doing?

ALEC

I have a hankering for a cheese
burger.

Alec, bare to the waist and still worse for wear, is
pulling the taped wires off his chest, the drip from his
arm and the tubing under his nose.

He swivels his feet off the bed.

Max ushers him back. A little more forcefully than Florence
Nightingale might have, but it gets the job done.

He feebly smacks her interfering hands away.

ALEC

Max, now is not the time to get
nurturing. Did you not get the
memo. They came after us. Means
they don't think we're a problem
any more.

Holds shoulders then holds him down, has to sit on the bed
and lean closely over him to do this.

MAX

Mole's got it covered. Just go
back to sleep. You used to be
good at that, remember?

ALEC

I didn't really have anything
important to do back then.

MAX

(smiles)

Back then? It's not so long ago.

ALEC

Sure feels like it.

MAX

Feels like yesterday to me.
 Though I suppose the lack of
 television,
 (laughs)
 artificial pork products,
 (rolls her eyes)
 and blonde lapdancers proves it
 isn't.
 (reflects)
 Though, the guy I met wasn't
 wearing a shirt back then either.

Sees that he isn't about to bolt, so leans back, still
 sitting on the bed.

ALEC

That's because he was a real idiot.

MAX

I don't know. He had his moments.

She smiles at him, looks at his arm and notices that some
 blood trickles from where he removed the drip. She reaches
 over and grabs some gauze to dab it with.

MAX

 (shakes her head)
 You're not invincible you know.

ALEC

I've always known that. So do you
 remember? Always saving my ass.

MAX

Not always.

She finishes with his wound.

MAX

It seemed too real today.

She creases her brow. What does that mean to her?

MAX

Go back to sleep. A few more
 hours should do it.

ALEC

I don't think I can sleep.

MAX

Well you have to. And not for
yourself. Some of us need you.
(she realizes what
she's said)
You know for like weapons and
stuff.

That gets her a wry chuckle.

ALEC

Still don't want to admit how
much you need my manly ass?

She looks at the IV and the heart monitor beside his bed.

He follows her line of vision back to her own eyes. A
sober moment; he knows what she's thinking.

She snaps her fingers at him; ending the spell.

MAX

No more talking. Get some sleep.

He lies back. She pulls up the covers.

ALEC

Fine. Just as long as you remember
to follow your own orders.

She thinks about it, then nods, and to his very great
surprise, climbs into bed next to him. She smooshes in
comfortably, hands to herself, and closes her eyes.

It isn't long after before he follows suit. His breathing
steadies.

She opens her eyes, she brings up her hand and softly
places it across his chest. Closing her eyes again, they
both sleep.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Stuff types at the computer.

Mole shuffles over to her with two cups. Places one on the
table.

Stuff doesn't notice.

MOLE

City secure?

STUFF

Still at full alert. No hostile
activity reported.

Nods and sips; looks around.

MOLE

Luke helping the good doctor?

Stuff nods, not moving her eyes away from the monitor.

Mole peers at the murky depths that hold her interest.

MOLE

What is that?

STUFF

Either it's a string of unrelated,
but amazingly convenient
coincidences.

MOLE

Or?

STUFF

We're about to have a very bad
day..

INT. HOPE BUILDING - DAY

Blood. Magnified and alive.

Shankar concentrates into the microscope. Still in her
bio-suit.

MAX

(o.s.)

Hey.

Shankar looks up. LUKE, another transhuman, waves at Max
from across the room.

MAX

Have you been working all night?

SHANKAR

No, Luke here convinced me to get
some sleep.

She smiles fondly at Luke. He ducks his head, embarrassed.

SHANKAR

I heard the patient is feeling
better.

MAX

Yeah. He was even awake before me.

Shankar cocks an eyebrow.

MAX

I was at the infirmary, just in
case, you know, they needed my
blood.

Shankar merely smiles.

Max looks around.

SHANKAR
Speaking of...

She nods down at the microscope.

SHANKAR
Your blood's reaction to this
virus is fascinating.

She moves over to Luke on the computer.

Max follows.

SHANKAR
See, this is Alec's blood. I
think eventually he could have
fought off the virus on his own,
but it was moving too fast. This
is one nasty little bug. Luke, is
the virus mapped yet?

LUKE
(nods)
I'll bring it up in a second.

Shankar turns to Max, not looking at the screen.

SHANKAR
Your blood is not that different
from his, but yours reacts faster.
Even faster than the virus. You
kill it before it even has a
chance to replicate. It's almost
as though each cell has its own
artificial intelligence allowing
it to bend and adapt to anything
we can throw at it.

MAX
Great. Then how can I be a carrier
for a genetically-engineered
virus targeted specifically to
Eyes Only?

SHANKAR
(shakes her head)
It'd all be speculation at this
point. The resources here are
better than most medical labs I know.
I might be able to look into it
(MORE)

SHANKAR (CONT'D)

later.
 (looks at the
 computer)
 This supercomputer you have is
 amazing.
 (stops)
 Oh god.

Shankar stares at the image of the virus.

SHANKAR

(whispers)
 I know this.

MAX

What?

SHANKAR

(begins to panic)
 It's a flu. A harmless flu. Half
 the city has come into the
 hospital with it in the last few
 months. I've even had it. It goes
 away with antibiotics.
 (calms down)
 It must be a mistake.

LUKE

It's the only foreign object in
 Alec's blood.

MAX

(pats Shankar's
 shoulder)
 Maybe you'd better run the tests
 on yourself doc. Just to make
 sure. Because if it is the same
 virus then that means-

SHANKAR

Everyone in Seattle is already
 infected.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Alec walks in; displaying no weakness or emotion.

That is, until a small human cannonball plasters herself
 to his side.

Alec smiles and hugs Stuff back. She moves to his side,
 arm still around him, and peeks out from below his shoulder.

MOLE

Gave us quite a scare, princess.
 Why do you keep letting girls
 beat you up?

ALEC

Because I'm cuter when I'm
vulnerable. Where are our guests?

They all walk up to the command deck.

MOLE

Locked down at the west end. Two
more died last night. They'd
rather kill themselves than let
our medics help them. Can't say I
care much. We took three
fatalities and five soldiers
still not fit for duty. We keep
this up we'll be extinct before
they mobilize. Are we ever going
to be allowed to kill them?

Alec doesn't say anything. He holds a beat with Mole. They
share an understanding.

ALEC

Any movement?

No one answers. They are at the main computer.

Stuff tips her head at the monitor.

Alec stares at the screen.

ALEC

(no emotion)

Shit.

INT. HOPE BUILDING - DAY

Max sits on a table, swinging her legs back and forth,
staring thoughtfully at the wall.

Shankar walks in from the computer section and pulls off
her bio-suit's mask.

SHANKAR

I won't be needing this anymore.

Max nods; she isn't surprised.

MAX

But we can still cure it right?
That's what my blood is for.

SHANKAR

(tired)

I can isolate the antibodies.

MAX

Okay. Good. So why do you look
like the world is still ending?

SHANKAR

Luke.

Luke shuffles in.

Shankar drops into a chair; stares at the floor.

LUKE

We figured out why Alec was knocked down by this straight away. The virus is asleep until it reacts with a catalyst. Alec was given an active virus. A souped-up version.

SHANKER

They did their homework. Somehow they knew how to attack normal transgenic DNA, but I'm thinking their plan was to inject you then kill you before you could produce the antibodies for everyone else.

MAX

Guess that was a big ol' failure and now they know it. Okay, so we need to stop them from releasing the catalyst. That'll be their next step. We've just gotta figure out where-

SHANKAR

(small)

There's no point.

MAX

(too afraid to ask)

Why?

SHANKAR

Because the catalyst is already in my system.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Shankar sits in the center of the command deck; around her, the voices of the city:

Max sitting on a desk; Alec straddling a chair; Mole, DIX, Luke, and Joshua standing; Stuff at the computer with Logan on the screen.

SHANKAR

The virus was probably in the drinking water. The catalyst is airborne. From the computer model of my blood, it looks like it was released last night.

(Alec and Max share
a look)

I guess this cult, whoever they are, figured a two pronged attack would be the best way to sneak it past you. A harmless case of the sniffles. It never even registered any alarms.

Images of destroyed bio-companies like Cyberdyne are brought onscreen. .

LOGAN

(on screen)

Not that it would have. The CDC and other medical organizations have been taking heavy hits from the Familiar's front group, Pure. We've been keeping half a dozen doctors in the surrounding areas under our protection.

MAX

(to Logan)

We're bringing them in now. The first should start arriving within the hour.

ALEC

I just hope to some God that they can create a miracle, because you might be doing it alone.

Alec nods to Stuff. She clicks on a keyboard, on another screen opposite Logan a map of Seattle and its outskirts appear.

Opaque clouds move across the map very quickly, as do red lines of animation that circle move in and out from one concentrated area outside of the city.

ALEC

So months ago we smuggled in a Manticore prototype. A computer that was designed to do everything but kiss the kids goodnight. Stuffie?

STUFF

Okay, so once we stepped up the alert it collated all the satellite imagery it had already been monitoring. See this red concentration here? The past seventy-two hours has seen increased activity to this site.

She touches the keypad. The image zooms into the site.

STUFF

Notice how the vehicles come in at specific intervals. The same cars come in at the same times on eight hour rotation.

Taps a key. The map zooms out and follows on car.

STUFF

The docks.

Hits another key, the map zooms forward in time.

STUFF

Train station.

Presses the keypad, once again the map zooms forward in time.

STUFF

Airport.

Returns the map to the original site. Switches the image to infra-red.

The site is heavily blanketed in a misty red.

STUFF

It's a drop-off point.

The transgenics soberly digest the facts.

SHANKAR

I'm sorry, but what does this mean?

ALEC

It means... that even if we know they're coming, even if we have the cure,

(tries to soften
the blow)

they outnumber us seven to one.

(locks eyes with
Max)

We're not going to war; it's coming to us.

INT. HOPE BUILDING - DAY

Shankar and Luke inject blood into a couple of older doctors.

Max, pale, leans against the doorway, rubbing the bandage on her arm.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Alec and Mole lean over a large monitor sunk into a table.

The map of Seattle is on it, gridded by concentric circles.

Alec is studying it and seems to be talking to himself without opening his mouth.

MOLE

Hey sunshine! You awake? Impending doom here. Was asking your opinion on the troop deployment.

Alec blinks up from the map. Holds a hand up.

ALEC

Stuffie, you gonna transmit this to Sweet Valley?

(she nods)

Good, get them on the line for me.

(reflects)

Oh and where'd Logan go?

STUFF

Line's dropped. I'll get him back.

MOLE

What is going on in that noodle of yours?

ALEC

I dunno yet.

MOLE

Ookay. But is it a good thing? because I'm getting a little worried here. There's a packet of pork rinds right next to you that you haven't emptied yet.

Alec looks down and sees that it is true. He shrugs.

ALEC

They don't have any birds.

Mole stands befuddled at the map; chomping on his cigar.

MOLE

Birds?

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

An ambulance screeches to a stop outside the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A woman is pushed along in a gurney; feverish and convulsing. A man, her husband, and a LITTLE BOY, run alongside. They are sweating.

LITTLE BOY
(crying hysterically)
Mommie! Mommie!

The gurney halts outside the door of the ER.

Through the doors, at least a dozen people in various degrees of illness are strapped to beds and leaning against the walls, coughing, shivering, convulsing.

A doctor stands for a moment; almost lost at sea, then rushes into the ER.

The little boy, still screaming, takes his mother's limp hand.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Stuff is frowning. Typing furiously. She types in: BYPASS
Frowns. Keeps trying.

ALEC

pulls a headset off; studies the monitor, which is now showing an image of the Familiar's site in real-time. He motions at a tech guy.

The screen changes to an aerial view the entire city of Seattle.

ALEC
(asking Mole)
Okay, can we have an eagle team here, here and here?

MOLE
(gives up, shrugs)
Why the hell not? I assume you're going to tell me why eventually.

ALEC
The Familiars have no air support. If they're coming for us, they're coming through the city.

MOLE

That's dumb. Why not just napalm us? Not like their worried about killing civilians.

ALEC

Guess they think Seattle is pretty.

Alec bites his lip, studies the activity on the map.

ALEC

I'm betting that's the entire Familiar militia; not just the ones from America.

MOLE

(proud)

They're not taking any chances this time.

ALEC

Neither are we. When they move, we need to get the humans off the street before we can-

DIX

(subdued)

Doesn't look like you need to worry about that.

He turns up the volume of the TV.

NEWSCASTER

(on screen)

-has claimed eleven lives so far in the few hours since the first case was reported.

Max walks in and threads her way up the stairs to the command deck.

She stands next to Alec.

NEWSCASTER

(cont.)

I repeat the CDC's earlier statement. If you exhibit any of the following symptoms...

The news fades away.

Max reaches out for Alec's hand. He squeezes her hand almost without noticing.

Stuff clears her throat. Her eyes go to Max, though she is addressing Alec.

STUFF

(in a rush)

I keep trying. The line dropped.
I checked. It's fine. There's
just no answer. And I know he
wouldn't leave, he would have
said... I'm sorry. I can't get
hold of Logan.

Alec turns to Max.

Her eyes are wide. She looks around the room; at the maps;
the soldiers; the weapons.

ALEC

Go.

She stares at him, uncomprehending.

ALEC

Go. To him. We'll keep the city
safe for you.

Max is torn.

ALEC

I promise.

Max squeezes his hand in return, nods, then runs from the
room.

Alec stares at the door; he lowers his eyes; looks up at
the map.

ALEC

(to Stuff)

Get me Eagle Seven.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The little boy is lying on a bed. He is gazing across from
him.

His dad is staring at the ceiling.

The boy keeps watching.

His dad doesn't blink.

A nurse closes the father's eyes. She looks at the little
boy and tries to smile.

Her lips are shivering.

INT. HOPE BUILDING - DAY

Four doctors, sans Shankar, hurriedly working with and
around the equipment.

They do not wear biohazard suits but all have small bandages on their inner-arm.

A small contingent of armed guards are in and around the room, out of the way but watchful.

One doctor reaches out blindly towards a vial, her entire focus is caught within the sights of the microscope.

Luke grabs a vial before it crashes to the floor.

The doctor tries to hide her surprise.

Luke smiles and hands her the vial.

She looks at it, nods her head and genuinely smiles back.

The work continues.

INT. SANDEMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Max, gloved and covered from neck to toe, enters the house.

The computer desk is empty; the monitor looks busy.

A pair of spectacles is next to the keyboard. A coffee mug lies in the coffee split over the desk.

The brown liquid drip, drip, drips over the edge of the desk.

Max holds her hand up, stopping two transgenic guards from moving up the stairs - she wants to do this herself.

Shankar hefts a doctor's bag behind Max as they both slowly move up the stairs.

Shankar flips a light switch, the stairs remain dark.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Max reaches a door at the end of the dark hallway.

MAX

(almost a whisper)

Logan.

Her hand poises at the handle. She hesitates.

MAX

Logan?

Her hand moves closer. She can almost touch the handle-

The door opens.

Logan stands on the other side; sweating; a complete wreck.

He falls;

Max catches him.

MAX

Logan!

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

The computer BEEPS.

All eyes turn toward it.

EXT. SITE RED - NIGHT

Through rifle sights: AN ARMY DRESSED IN BLACK STAND IN FORMATION.

FAMILIAR COMMANDER

barks in front of the crowd. White is there. He seems bored.

FAMILIAR

When we walk...

CROWD

(shouting)

The ground will tremble.

FAMILIAR

When we breathe...

CROWD

The wind will carry it.

FAMILIAR

When we are strong...

CROWD

The meek will fade.

FAMILIAR

Fenostol.

The crowd race, weapons ready to the canvas trucks suddenly purring to life.

White stands to the side on his phone. Nodding without answer, he slips the phone back in a breast pocket of his black fatigues. It clunks against something. He takes out the picture frame of Ray.

He looks up at his fellow Familiars, and seems tired.

Suddenly he senses something, looks up at the trees across the road.

Stares.

Nothing.

Turns around slowly and gets into a car.

TREES

A small army in soldier fatigues hide next to the road, watching the trucks leave.

From behind, one could almost be mistaken for Alec. Almost.

The leader of the band signals to the others and they crouch lower and crawl off.

EXT. TERMINAL CITY - NIGHT

Troops stand at the perimeter, staring out into the empty city. They are also fully decked in soldier fatigues and armed to the teeth.

INT. ARMORY - SAME

More transgenics ready themselves for battle. Transhumans, adult X5s, teenage X6s, even children no older than eight, take their guns and strap on their kevlar.

Alec watches a little girl test the sights of her M16.

He holds there, perhaps upset by this.

He looks up, catches Mole's eye.

The transhuman chomps impassively on his cigar, snaps his shotgun shut.

INT. SANDEMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Logan is lying under the covers.

Max sits beside him, clutching his hand.

Shankar works around him, she too is gloved.

LOGAN

(slurring)

I'm sorry. It came so fast. So fast.

He gazes flutter-eyed at Max.

LOGAN

So good to see you. So good.

MAX

(soothing)

Shooosh. It's okay now. I'm here.

She looks at Shankar. Shankar can't quite seem to meet her eyes.

LOGAN

There was time... more time. The dream was almost real. It almost made sense.

He mumbles on as if no one else is there.

LOGAN

But it never did. An illusion is so real. It could have been tomorrow.

His words become more incoherent and tired.

Max doesn't know what to do. Her glove grasps his hand.

EXT. TERMINAL CITY - NIGHT

Hundreds of transgenics of all sizes, ages and genome are in formation in a quad.

Mole, Alec, Joshua and six or so troop leaders stand on a walkway above the quad. All suited in full body armor, even the mammoth dog-man.

Alec stares, not at his fellow soldiers, but at the sky.

The wind whips the transgenic flag in a whirlwind frenzy. Lightning throws shadows on the black clouds lost in the darkness. The light remains in the eyes of the transgenics; cat's eyes.

Alec looks back down at them all; they all stand impassively.

ALEC

(to Mole)

Aren't you going to say something?

Mole thinks, steps forward.

MOLE

(commander)

You're all good soldiers.

(ponders some more)

Don't die.

He steps back into formation.

ALEC

(whispers)

Don't die? That's the best you could do?

MOLE

Alright wise-ass.
 (motion in front of
 him)
 Let's see what you have.

ALEC

I'm not the speechmaker, that's
 Max's job.

Mole looks around them; searching for a person conspicuous
 by her absence. Cocks an eyebrow at Alec.

MOLE

(when Alec does
 nothing)
 Well, it's not like we need a big
 rousing farewell anyways.

Mole is stopped mid-barking of orders by Alec's hand.

Alec frowns at Mole; frowns at the crowd.

First drops then straightens his shoulders and walks
 forward to address the troops.

They all stare at him. He stares right back at them. He
 speaks as though they were right there next to him; with
 their hearing, it's almost as if they are.

ALEC

(unsure, but strong)
 I know I'm not the one meant to
 be standing here. I'm just a
 soldier like you. The person up
 here is meant to be a leader.
 Someone born to make orders. I
 was born to take them.

He gets some nods from the transhumans in the crowd. The X
 series remain at attention.

ALEC

But maybe that's okay, because a
 leader would ask you to lay down
 your lives for strangers. For
 people who don't know us enough
 to see us, but blind enough to
 hate us.

(shakes his head)

I can't order you to do that. But
 I don't think anyone would need to.

He rubs his jaw. Looks down at his hands, flexes them,
 looks back to the crowd.

ALEC

Choice.

(he lets the word
sink in)

Something I never thought we'd
have, but I see it here everyday.
When the world turned on us, you
chose to stay here and be a part
of it. When everyone attacked us,
you chose to lay down your arms.
When our enemies let us know what
was coming, you chose to become a
wall and stop it.

(no crowd could be
more rapt)

Will you make that choice again?
Will you chose to fight today,
here, not for this city of glass
and stone, but for each other, a
family,

(looks at his
friends behind him;
pointedly stares at
the Max-sized gap
next to Joshua)

a home, without borders?

The CLAPPING from the soldiers is his answer, all but the
X5s raise noise in salute.

A flash of lighting shows the crowd.

Their APPLAUSE drowns out the thunder.

The X5s bring their weapons to their chests. This is their
answer.

Alec smiles at Mole.

INT. LOGAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Logan lies - still as a ghost.

Shankar places a vial of blood in her bag, stands up.

MAX

We need to get him back to
Terminal City.

Shankar still won't look at Max.

Max refuses to notice.

She gets up and begins moving his covers down, stops, goes
to his dressing table.

Opens a drawer, shuts it, opens it again.

MAX
 I can't find a bag.
 (reasons with
 herself)
 That's okay, we can come back for
 clothes later. Right now, we have
 to go.

Max moves back to Logan.

Shankar doesn't move; her eyes are downcast.

MAX
 We have to go! We have to-

SHANKAR
 I'm sorry Max.

MAX
 No! You don't get to say you're
 sorry. We have the cure. It's so
 easy. All we need to do is go.
 (Logan groans; Max
 realizes)
 Alec-

SHANKAR
 Is now carrying the same
 genetically targeted virus as you.
 (lets it sink in)
 So am I. And the other doctors.
 We have a cure. But not for him.

MAX
 (from a kitten)
 No...
 (to a cat)
 No! This isn't how it's meant to
 be. I'm meant to save the world,
 why can't I be allowed to save
 him? There's a way. You said
 yourself Alec would have fought
 off the virus by himself, we just
 use another transgenic.

SHANKAR
 (calmly)
 Max, if he had more time-

MAX
 (sits on the bed
 next to him)
 He has time!
 (softer)
 He has time.
 (gasps)
 No!

She looks down at Logan.

He has reached up and touched her face with his bare hand.

She grabs it with her gloved one and tries to move it away.

LOGAN

No. I'd rather it was this way.

Shankar leaves the room, fading away from the events unfolding.

Logan curls his fingers in Max's hair and pulls her slowly down to meet him. He touches his lips to hers, a chaste and tender farewell is all they have time for.

LOGAN

I never stopped loving you.

MAX

I...

His eyes wait for her.

MAX

I...

She cannot find the words.

His eyes stare. Waiting. Empty.

Max closes his eyes and stares down with her own.

Max mourns in darkness besides the man who loved her. More than just his frail body has died; but she cannot shed a tear.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Alec looks over the computer screens quickly. Nods. Looks down at Stuff. Slowly checks his rifle. Looks to the side, lowers his voice.

ALEC

Look, if we lose and the Familiars hit the city, they're gonna come here first. If that happens-

She brandishes a small gun from within her dungarees.

STUFF

I'll shoot at their asses and beat their limping skulls with my tiny fists until I can breath no more.

ALEC

Actually. I was thinking you use one of the escape tunnels, and if they're blocked, you get down to the computer housing. It's a bomb shelter, you should be safe there until someone comes to get you out.

STUFF

Someone like you?

ALEC

(shrugs)

I'm sure it will be someone like me.

She mulls it over. Smiles widely and shakes her head.

STUFF

Nah. I think I'll stay here. I don't want to miss any of the fun.

ALEC

Stuffie-

STUFF

Choices bro. I choose to be here.

Alec groans.

ALEC

Bitten in the ass by my own words.

MOLE

(o.s)

You should be used to it by now.

Mole stands next to them; cigar ever-present.

MOLE

Teams deployed?

ALEC

Just about. There are no humans outside the gates.

They each reflect on the reasons behind the streets' emptiness.

Almost as though unable to bear the thoughts the silence brings, Alec reaffirms the grip on his weapon. Smiles, perhaps in his mind, for the last time at his family.

MOLE

Off somewhere soldier?

Alec stops walking away.

ALEC

(tries to keep it
light)

Well I figure you need a decent
general in the field. You know,
just in case you actually plan on
giving any more motivational
speeches to the troops.

MOLE

You get promoted?

ALEC

Yeah, it was that whole party
with that hot blonde in the
Wonderwoman outfit. She drew the
stripes real straight.

Mole merely stares at him.

Alec's facade slips.

ALEC

I'm fit for duty.

MOLE

Never said you weren't.

(chomps on the
cigar)

But I don't need a general.

Takes Alec's rifle from him. Chambers it.

MOLE

I need a commander.

(waves over the
city)

Here.

Mole grips Alec's shoulder. Alec shakes his head, about to
argue.

MOLE

(interrupts)

You are a leader brother. Have
been for a while.

Mole has taken Alec's rifle as his own.

MOLE

(cont.)

And, way I figure it, you and Max
are the only two that ever really
pissed these guys off and lived
to tell the tale. I don't know
what you two do, but just keep
doing it.

(MORE)

MOLE (CONT'D)

As for me,
 (walking away)
 I'm just a guy that likes to blow
 shit up.

Alec looks down at Stuff. She shrugs and looks back at the computer.

Alec stares at the moving colors on the computer screen.

The entire weight of the city, perhaps the world, has just been placed on his shoulders.

EXT. SANDEMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shoulder's hunched, Max walks out the door. She betrays no emotion; no evidence of breaking down; nothing more than a subdued, but present, strength. Her boots automatically take her down the steps.

Shankar hurries beside her as though expecting a breakdown. The two guard X5s follow.

Max looks out into the sky. The wind whips her hair around her face.

MALE

(o.s.)
 4. 5. 2. Oh how I've missed you.
 I can't count the number of
 nights I've dreamt of putting my
 hands on you.

Max turns around. Her eyes are dark and hooded.

Shankar and the two X5s stop in their tracks.

WHITE

(cont.)
 You have such a pretty neck.

MAX

Some things never change. It
 doesn't matter how many times I
 smack down Wiley Coyote, he's
 always stupid enough to come back
 for more.

White smiles.

Familiars rush forward and surround them.

WHITE

I'd say my plans are improving.

Max looks from side to side; seemingly unconcerned, shakes her head at the two X5s - they stop moving towards her, and instead go to Shankar and stand defensively in around her.

White notices this.

Max moves into fighting position. Licks her lips.

MAX

Meep meep.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tires crunch the litter beneath their tread. They roll to a stop on top of a child's plastic car lying in the road.

A pair of boots land beside the shattered toy, followed by another and another.

The Familiars pile out of the canvas trucks. Their weapons already trained around them.

A spark of light rips at the sky.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Dix and Stuff sit on opposite consoles, each with multiple screens. Stuff has multiple keyboards, set up almost like a harpsichord.

Alec stares at the screen. Staggered lines of red move toward the epicenter.

ALEC

(to himself)

Here they come.

Twiddles with his mike.

Stuff keeps her attention on her screen, typing in commands.

Dix looks up at Alec.

The small groups of blue on the grid are sorely outnumbered by the red.

ALEC

(grinning like he
thinks he means it)

It's okay. We're just going to
do... what Max would do.

EXT. SANDEMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

White cheesegrins like the CHeshire; he can almost smell the vengeance.

A flash of lightning. The thunder follows on its heels-
But the roaring doesn't stop.

The familiars look around, suddenly-

A motorbike soars in the air.

BAWM

It lands in front of Max, skidding to a stop beside her.

White rushes forward, but it is too late.

Max helps Shankar onto the bike, and it speeds off.

Out of darkness, a healthy number of X5s fade forward.

JED

Eagle seven at your service, ma'am.

Max turns back to White.

And smiles.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

The air is electric. Everyone is on the move. The battles are about to begin.

Alec looks up from the console.

ALEC

(into headpiece)

Flash in the pan people. Make
like guys in skirts. In. Out. No
heroics.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rain is coming down in blankets.

Mole's cigar manages to stay lit only because it is under his helmet.

He and his unit are straight-backed against an alley wall, looking into an empty street.

MOLE

(mumbles)

No risk o' any o' that.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Alec stares at the screen without blinking.

ALEC

I heard that.

Stuff holds a thumb up.

Alec nods. Speaks into headpiece again.

ALEC
They've passed the first marker.
Unit 1 going in.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A rumbling begins. Something rises up from the darkness.

Machines?

Hoverdrones.

Over a dozen of them.

They are the first wave, and they are heading out.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Stuff has the feeds and paths of each of the hoverdrones on her monitors.

She is typing quickly across all the keyboards. Very sure in what she is doing.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The drones have split up and are racing through the city streets.

Over a building, the first platoon of Familiars are unaware of what is about to get the drop on them.

A hoverdrone dips steeply.

It moves above the Familiars. The bottom drops open and releases multiple barrels.

FFFTTTT

Tiny darts, dozens of them, shoot out from the barrels, nailing the familiars through their body armor.

The retaliation is swift.

Buckshot rips open the innards of the hoverdrone.

It spirals and crashes into a wall, EXPLODING spectacularly, a contrast to the dismal rain.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

One portion of the screen goes red.

Flashes: TERMINATED.

One by one, each portion follows suit.

Neither Alec or Stuff appear perturbed. They've been expecting this.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Familiars pull out the darts, toss them aside, seem unaffected.

Then start dropping to the floor.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Alec and Stuff smile at each other. Alec looks at Dix.

ALEC
And you thought Elephant Tranks
wouldn't work.

The totals tally on the screen.

ALEC
(to head piece)
Six to one odds. Getting better.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Mole shoulders his rifle.

The rest of his unit do likewise with their own weapons. They are ready and dangerous.

Mole has a thought.

MOLE
Are we allowed to kill them yet?

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Alec breathes deeply. Struggles with the choice. Stands firm with his final choice.

ALEC
Don't die.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Mole's unit moves as one.

MOLE
(to himself)
Not such a bad speech after all.

He drops to a street level below.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Dix looks at Stuff.

DIX

You know, I don't think Max would
have done that.

EXT. SANDEMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max hits dirt. She pushes herself up, twisting to her feet.

She blocks a punch from White, drops down and knocks his
knees out from under him.

White launches back. They circle one another.

The other transgenics and Familiars are similarly engaged.

They rain punches on one another while the rain applauds
around them.

Max and White's fight is taking them further away from the
others, until it seems as though they are alone in their
world.

White's punches are like landfalls, Max's blows are like
storms.

White gains the advantage, he tosses her into a parked car.
Reaches out and with great strength, grabs the pole from a
road sign. He hefts it effortlessly. Wallops her with it
as she staggers up.

She lands on the road and rolls, narrowly missing the pole
as it comes down where he head was. She rolls again and
again as he keeps trying to skewer her with the pole.

He finally succeeds and hits her in the side.

She squeezes her eyes shut and makes no noise of pain.

White is confident in his success. He lofts the pole to
finish the job.

Max grabs it as it descends. Turns it against him, hitting
him in the nose.

Blood spurts out, his eyes can't see through the onslaught
of the liquid in his eyes.

This is Max's moment. She takes the pole from him and
twirls it around and hits, again and again, until his legs
collapse and he falls to the road.

He doesn't feel the blood on his face, but it washes in
the street around him.

Max stalks closer to him, pole raised, it seems she is willing to strike the final blow.

Her foot kicks something. She looks down.

There in the rain is the photograph of Ray, happy with his father.

MAX

Get up.

(louder)

Get up.

(quavers slightly)

Then get the hell out of my town.

White looks up sharply.

MAX

You have a son. And he's the only reason I'm not going to kill you.

White stumbles to his feet.

WHITE

452. I'm touched.

MAX

Turn around right now or you will be.

WHITE

You're still going to die.

MAX

(smiles)

No. I won't.

(tilts her head
back)

They will. Your choice. Live for your son, or die for your religion.

He looks past her. All his Familiars are down. Only the transgenics remain standing. They stare at the exchange.

Max turns her back on him and strides toward the fight. She looks like she is ready for flight, but she carries steadily on.

White stares at her back, then at the downed Familiars and the victorious transgenics. He bends down.

She hears him pick up the photograph frame, turn and walk away.

She smiles.

INT. HOPE BUILDING - NIGHT

Shankar enters, a bit shaken but no worse for wear.

SHANKAR
Get me Max's blood.

LUKE
What is it?

SHANKAR
I'll let you know. It might be
hope.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

It's absolute chaos.

The computer controllers are relaying Alec's every order.

Alec is leaning over one's shoulder.

ALEC
Get Thirteen in there to backup
Six before they get hedged in.

He quickly looks over another screen.

ALEC
Move Nine to West Flank. The
Ploughs need more cover-fire.

Stuff's concentration is completely on her screens. Rapid key strokes and roller movement herald the next wave. A DISPLAY reads: Unit 2.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Mole tosses a concussion grenade and ducks behind a car next to DALTON, a sweet boy in his teens.

The blow knocks out several Familiars, who retaliate with a waterfall of bullets.

The rest of Mole's unit returns fire from their points of safety, but Mole and Dalton are trapped.

As silent as a well-fed mosquito, a hoverdrone sneaks up behind the Familiar unit. Sleeker in design, with a black, angular casing, the Unit 2 drone's front panels open. Two small silver 'tuning rods' emerge from either side.

FZZZWOOOOM

Two web-like trails of lightning streak across the rain and put a fair chunk of the Familiars to sleep.

The hoverdrone salutes belly-up as Mole and Dalton run for cover.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

The computer beeps.

On the screen: SCENARIO LIKELIHOOD 92.7%.

DIX

Alec.

Alec comes over.

The monitor shows an animation of two red paths splitting and converging on two points.

The heavier line is heading right for the center of the grid - Terminal City.

ALEC

Oops. Looks like they have the same plan as us. How embarrassing.
(into headpiece)
Butterflies. You ready to play king of the castle.

EXT. SITE RED - NIGHT

The unit from earlier are once again hidden behind the hub of Familiar activity.

CAL inserts a wire into a switch controlled fuse.

CAL

Flag's in the sights sir.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Alec almost looks as though he's enjoying this.

ALEC

Then go get it.

INT. SITE RED - SAME

Suits stand with their arms crossed, watching over hi-tech screens with the Familiars units' movements on it.

Rows of controllers with headsets issue orders and pass along information to the Familiars on the outside.

EXT. SITE RED - SAME

Cal flicks the switches.

Punches down on a button.

BWAOOOOOMM

The site goes up in a fiery ball of flames.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Alec turns to Stuff.

ALEC
Open all channels.

Stuff nods.

ALEC
(into headpiece)
Second target is the hospital.
All the closest units are under
heavy fire. Is anyone clear to
assist?

EXT. SANDEMAN'S HOUSE - SAME

Max looks at the unconscious, dying or dead bodies of the Familiars around her.

She still has soldiers standing.

MAX
I'm on it.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

Alec smiles thinly, but his attention is swallowed by the fighting around him on the pixelated battlefield.

STUFF
(surprise)
Oh.
(like ordering
breakfast)
Crap.

Alec whips his head around.

STUFF
We've got birds.

Alec stares at the sheer number of helicopters, rendered in cutesy icon format, moving across the screen.

ALEC
Has all the data transferred to
the secondary base yet?

DIX
Just about.

Alec nods. He's made a decision, the difficult kind.

ALEC
Send out the signal. Escape and
Evade. Fall back to secondary base.

Stuff follows his orders instantly.

The others allow their shock and confusion to hold their hands steady for a moment. They carry on but Dix still stares at Alec in wonder.

Alec does not look at anyone at all.

ALEC
(quiet)
I love Seattle as much as the
next guy. But we can't save the
world if we're dead.

Alec finally turns to Dix, unsure. Dix merely nods and smiles. He understands, and, as Alec looks around, so do the others.

Alec turns.

And runs.

DIX
You know, Max definitely wouldn't
have done that.

EXT. TERMINAL CITY - CONTINUOUS

Alec runs through the street as though the snakes of hell are after him.

INT. HOPE BUILDING - NIGHT

Alec runs through the door.

The doctors all look up.

Shankar is leaning over Luke, nodding happily.

Joshua stands to attention as Alec enters.

ALEC
Sorry docs. Time's up. The Ploughs
have cleared the road and you're
now the cure.
(picks up a
dohickey - no clue
what it does - puts
it back)
We need to get you somewhere safe
before twenty angry birds get
here and turn this place into a
worm heaven.

The troops follow Alec's order and begin to usher the doctors out. Shankar refuses to move.

Alec notices, walks over.

ALEC

(softly)

Doc. We gave it our best shot. We just need to make sure we all live long enough to make the world a better place tomorrow.

SHANKAR

I'm not leaving.

ALEC

Doc-

SHANKAR

No. Look at this.

Alec looks at the monitor. The DNA WORKUP is all ancient Babylonian to him.

SOLDIER

Sir?

Alec nods at the last soldier at the door. Not waiting for Shankar, the soldiers finally shepherd the other doctors away.

Joshua, Luke, Alec and Shankar are all that is left.

SHANKAR

Max's virus gave me the idea. I couldn't figure out how she was able to carry a virus when her immunity adapted to everything else that was thrown at it. So I looked at the rest of your genetic work-ups. Did you know more of you were implanted with viruses?

Alec shrugs.

SHANKAR

It's a map.

(excited)

It's like somebody knew this was going to happen and showed us how to stop it. They did the work for us.

Alec exchanges a look with Joshua, they both lean forward, rapt.

SHANKAR

Max may be the cure, but she's
just a piece in a bigger puzzle.
Without the knowledge contained
in the rest of your genes, I
wouldn't know how to do this.

ALEC

(he already
suspects)

Do what?

SHANKAR

A virus. Airborn. Fast replicating.
(smiles widely)
The cure. You're the carriers.
The only ones.

ALEC

Score one for the Father of the
chimera nation.

JOSHUA

Father was good.

ALEC

So it seems.
(nods)
You sure you can do this?

SHANKAR

Absolutely.

ALEC

(to Luke)

Think you can handle staying here?

Luke nods enthusiastically, happy to help.

ALEC

(to Joshua)

Max will sling my ass if anything
happens to you big fella. Let's
get you out of here.

JOSHUA

No. Joshua staying. Joshua first.

Alec opens his mouth to argue, but slowly begins to smile.

ALEC

Hey doc. Looks like you've got
your patient zero.

(MORE)

ALEC (CONT'D)

Well, patient Fido.
 (pats Joshua on the
 shoulder)
 You keep safe, big guy.
 (to Shankar)
 How much time do you need?

SHANKAR

How much can you give me?

Alec doesn't answer, and stares at the trio that will save the world.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The rain has stopped.

The hospital sign flickers in a puddle.

A police officer is thrown to the ground under the force of a shower of bullets.

The Familiars stomp forward, guns firing at all movement.

The cops hiding behind cars and the hospital doors are barely getting a shot off.

The Familiars advance undeterred, an army to be feared. And they are.

KLUNK

The Familiars drop to the ground unconscious.

The transgenics drop their fire extinguishers, rocks, poles other blunt, heavy weapons. They barely look at the downed Familiars, their attention is on the humans in front of them.

Max humbly holds eyes with the officers. They are all in various stages of the sickness. It seems incredible that they are even able to hold their weapons.

They regard the transgenics in turn.

One officer does it first-

-then one by one they all follow suit.

They lower their weapons.

Max walks toward the hospital.

INT. ARMORY - NIGHT

Alec attaches a M203 grenade launcher to his M16 rifle. He slings it over his shoulder and then latches grenades to his belt. Snaps another pistol to his side, makes sure he has enough ammo.

He's going Rambo.

STUFF

(o.s.)

Since when did you become an all or nothing kind of guy?

ALEC

(not surprised)

I thought I gave an order to leave.

STUFF

No. You told me to send out the signal, didn't say I had to follow it.

She chooses herself a lightweight rifle.

Alec shakes his head.

ALEC

At least everyone else left. Right?

He takes the gun from her.

STUFF

Well, Dix is holed up with the mainframe coordinating the retreat. We also figure it's time to test run the city's automated defenses.

Alec crudely tries to fit her into a bullet-proof vest.

She begrudgingly allows him his little foible.

ALEC

Think they'll work?

Puts a helmet on her head.

MOLE

(o.s.)

Who knows? It's not like Max ever let us try it on the humans.

Mole puts an arm around Stuff as she is taking the helmet off and dumping it on the table..

Dalton and the rest of the unit stand behind him, smiling and ready for battle.

ALEC

Didn't anyone follow the signal?

MOLE

I'm sure the Familiars are about to.

(looks down at Stuff)

Oh and dear. I'm sure I don't have to remind you again. But we soldiers don't retreat. We fall back.

ALEC

(with Mole)

We fall back.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The light is surreal and too bright.

Max is like a dark angel walking through the white light of death. All through the corridors people are lying on stretchers, benches, the floor. Dead and dying, Max walks through them all.

No one is immune. Doctors, nurses, children, gangsters, cops. No one.

Max falls to her knees beside the little boy. His eyes are wide. His hand is stiff. She slowly reaches over and shuts his eyes.

JED

(o.s.)

Ma'am.

Max looks up.

Behind the X5 the human protectors of the hospital stumble through the doors, held upright by the rest of Max's team.

JED

We know our blood isn't like yours, but... we figure, maybe it can still help those that are left. Give 'em... time?

Max gazes around her. There are so few left. She nods, and as if shaking off the demons of grief, squares her shoulders and stands.

MAX

Let's get started.

EXT. HOPE BUILDING - NIGHT

Alec is perched on the flat roof, looking through the scopes of a tripod mounted M60. Nothing is in his sights yet.

Three other soldiers are on each side of the roof, similarly waiting.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Mole and a couple of soldiers, look into the streets from behind a wall.

They look across. A few more soldiers are on the other side.

They are forming a tight perimeter around the Hope building..

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

The warehouse is empty, long abandoned.

Stuff and Dalton sit in total darkness except for the soft glow of a small portable computer in Stuff's lap.

On the screen: Automated security online.

Smaller type: Running diagnostics.

EXT. TERMINAL CITY - NIGHT

A large tripod mounted machine gun moves its barrel up and down. The entire tripod swivels from side to side.

There are smaller tripods on the wall alongside it, more limited in movement to up and down. Further along is another "Big Daddy" canon.

All along the perimeter is a network of these smaller and bigger weapons.

INT. BUILDING - SAME

On Stuff's screen: FAILURE.

It flashes bright red. She stands up. Dalton makes to grab her.

DALTON

Where you going?

STUFF

One of the Daddies is down. It won't take me a sec.

DALTON
We can do without. I'm under
orders to keep you-

STUFF
It's the one nearest the labs.

Dalton's shoulders slump. Of course it had to be that gun.

DALTON
A sec right?

STUFF
(all smiles)
Right.

EXT. TERMINAL CITY - NIGHT

A Big Daddy swivels on its base. Swivels. Focuses.

KWABOOM

It fires. Again and again. The babies follow suit. All dip down, firing relentlessly. The bullet feeder moving as fast as they spit out the shells.

EXT. SOUTH WALL - SAME

Dalton looks in the direction of the sounds of gunfire. Clutches his rifle to his chest and keeps scanning the area. He is on a manmade landing just below a brick, perimeter wall, most likely an old relic of the former occupants of Terminal City.

Health Hazard signs are plastered all over it.

DALTON
(worried)
You said this would take a sec.

Stuff is behind the arms of the Big Daddy.

STUFF
A sec. An hour. It's all semantics
anyway.

DALTON
What!?

She joins two wires. Sparkage. She holds her face away and reattaches the wires. Closing the panel with a loud snap. She steps back.

STUFF
There. See. I don't know what you
were worried about.

The gun immediately fires. All the others follow.

Stuff looks around.

Familiars are getting mowed down, but their numbers are dividing the Big Daddies' attention, allowing some to sneak through. Two dangerously too close for comfort.

STUFF

Oh.

EXT. HOPE BUILDING - NIGHT

Alec snaps the bolt. Fires again. He stares unmoving through the sights. Picking off Familiars coming over the wall that is far beyond the range of the sights.

EXT. ROOF - SAME

Closer to the walls, Mole and his crew do not need sights. They merely aim and fire. They move positions.

EXT. SOUTH WALL - SAME

Stuff and Dalton are running on the landing behind the cacophony of firing guns.

Two Familiars are lukewarm on their trail.

Dalton is behind Stuff, running sideways so he can fire at them.

Stuff stops abruptly. The landing has a huge gap in it over an alley.

Dalton almost careens into Stuff but stops in time.

DALTON

We can jump it.

STUFF

You can.

Dalton thinks about it.

DALTON

I can throw you.

Stuff glares at him. As if.

A bullet tears through Dalton's leg, rendering the point moot. He loses balance and falls off the landing.

Stuff races to the edge. She can't see him.

The Familiars stop and leisurely click their weapons. They smile, enjoying their little mind game.

Stuff turns fully to glare at them, unimpressed.

They take aim. One's eyes almost twitch from the excitement-

Two Unit 2 hoverdrones rise on either side of Stuff.

Their weapons flick out. The high-pitched WHINE of electricity breaks the Familiars' concentration. The two Familiars glaze uncertainly at the machines..

STUFF

Sorry. I'm their mama.

FWWWZZZZZ

The electricity, fragmented in the rain, becomes Zeus' bolts without.

Stuff throws herself to the ground while the flailing body of one Familiar fires wildly around before taking a plunge off the landing.

A dozen more drones fly over Stuff's head, firing at the ascending Familiars.

STUFF

(proud)

Go babies.

DALTON

(o.s.)

Uhm Stuff.

Stuff crawls to the edge of the landing.

Dalton hangs onto a support by one hand, gun still ready in the other.

Stuff laughs.

EXT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME

KABOOM

The side of the building erupts in flame.

STUFF

looks up, sees the cause.

STUFF

(taps comms)

We have a problem.

INT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Alec shadows quietly behind pillars. He peeks out. His eyes dart around the rest of the area. Sees nothing. Takes a breath, moves on. He has a pistol in each hand.

Mole takes another pillar.

Two other soldiers dart forward.

Silent as death they all move up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS - SAME

Mole ducks behind the staircase. Alec behind him.

They crane around it.

Three Familiars. Two standing, one kneeling with the rocket launcher. Another rocket fires into the Command center.

Alec and Mole exchange a quick look, shrug, then surge forward, guns blazing.

Mole takes out a Familiar with his shotgun. He falls aside, letting Alec aim for the Familiar in the process of reloading the rocket launcher for his companion.

Seeing the danger, the Familiar holding the rocket dashes behind a pillar. Comes out a moment later, sans rocket but not unarmed.

The machine gun splatters the walls with holes, but it cannot hit the fast-moving X5 transgenics.

Mole leaps behind a pillar, not quite as fast as his X5 counterparts.

He chomps his cigar as he reloads his shotgun.

Alec ignores the machine-gun splattering Familiar and heads for the one kneeling with the rocket launcher, BLACK.

As Alec nears, Black pulls himself to full height. He is mammoth. Larger even than Josiah. It's enough to make even Alec pause. He stares up at 'Mister Ugly'.

ALEC

Woah Frankenstein. You by chance
the poster child for why
inbreeding is bad?

WHOMP

Alec sails through the air, crashing straight through a partition, losing both pistols on his travels.

INT. OFFICE - SAME

Alec rolls to a stop in an empty, abandoned office.

INT. UPSTAIRS - SAME

Mole steps out from the pillar and guns down the machine-gun toting Familiar without breaking a sweat. Lizards are cold-blooded and damn cool. He smiles at his 'skill'.

But-

Like a bad horror movie, Black comes out of nowhere and yanks Mole's shotgun from him, turns it around and baseballs Mole with it.

The strength of the hit sends Mole tumbling towards the stairs and crashing down the staircase.

As one, the other two X5s charge.

INT. OFFICE - SAME

Alec shakes himself back to consciousness. Stumbles up.

INT. UPSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the room.

One X5 is down, maybe dead. The other is being lofted by his neck against a pillar by Black.

Alec rushes Black from behind-

-and is swatted away like a fly.

Alec lands next to one of his pistols. He grabs it, twists, fires.

A bullet hits Black, but it is a mosquito bite to him. He drops the unconscious X and ambles in Alec's direction.

It's just down to Alec and him now.

Alec shoots again, aiming for the butt-ugly head.

The gun jams.

ALEC

Oh perfect.

Alec rolls his eyes, just as Black grabs him by the foot and careens him against a pillar.

Alec drops, rolls, is back on his feet. Throws a punch, a kick, another punch. He might as well be hitting a brick wall-

He soon does.

The force of the impact brings him to the floor. Vision blurry and face bloody, he can only watch as the big, blurry shape of Black lumbers away.

He HEARS the hollow slide as the rocket is loaded into the launcher.

He gets up, determined. Stares through angry eyes as Black takes aim.

THROUGH THE SIGHTS

Black sees the snipers on the roof of the Hope building taking out the Familiars as they come over the wall. Lower down, Shankar rushes past a window.

BLACK

Looks up. Smiles. Lowers the launcher. He doesn't notice-

ALEC

Charges. Faster and faster. He is a nonhuman bullet.

He leaps-

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Black, the rocket launcher and Alec crash through the window.

Black land on the road and broken glass with a sickening CRUNCH. Alec is somewhat cushioned by Black, simply because the larger man's squishy bulk covers enough of the planet in Alec's immediate vicinity to become a safe landing.

The rocket launcher skids along the gravel behind Alec.

Groaning, Alec rolls off the body of Black. He coughs in pain, but as he looks at the prone form of the behemoth, he sighs his relief. That was close. Too close.

Slowly, he stutters to an upright position, then to his feet. Staggeres back toward the entrance of the building.

He doesn't get very far.

Alec winces in pain as his face hits the hard road.

Black grips Alec's calf in a steel trap.

Alec contorts around and lashes out with his other leg. He kicks head and hand repeatedly, trying to crawl backwards with his hands through the broken glass.

ALEC

Back off, ugly.

Black shows no sign of letting go. Alec grits his teeth, trying to twist his leg out of the grip. He pours all his energy into one final wrench.

Free!

He cartwheels over his head and comes up standing, his arms behind his back.

Black rises up, ugly mug sneering, gun in hand.

Alec tilts his head, brings up the rocket launcher from behind, winks-

The rocket clouds out.

Flames hide Black as the glass on the surrounding buildings shatter and Alec is tossed back by the force of the explosion.

EXT. HOPE BUILDING - NIGHT

Joshua, Luke and Shankar come outside, medical cases in hand. They are immediately flanked by the more of Mole's unit and are escorted away.

EXT. BUILDING = NIGHT

Through the buildings, Alec can see the doctor and his friends being rushed to safety. He smiles as much as his aching body allows. Looks up at the empty sky.

The sky is clear. The stars can still be seen, despite the lightening in the east. There is beauty in the silence-

-suddenly shattered by the underbellies of military helicopter, armed to the teeth, as they fly overhead.

Alec sees them, starts to laugh, coughing with each breath. He shuts his eyes, still laughing.

FADE OUT.

TELEVISION SCREEN

Snow melts to the pixelated eyes of EYES ONLY.

EYES ONLY

(on screen)

Do not attempt to adjust your set. This is an Eyes Only streaming video bulletin. The cable hack will last exactly sixty seconds. It cannot be traced, it cannot be stopped, and it is the only free voice left in this city.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

In the morning light, the X5s pile covered bodies on top of the others.

Finished, they stand back and wait. Max walks forward and lights the pyre.

Her dry eyes stares into the flames as it carries away the dead.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

We lost thousands. Friends.
Family. Empty death stole the
ones we loved. From Africa to
America. We were all unprepared.

INT. LAB - DAY

Shankar and Luke administer injections to transgenics - human and non-human series alike.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

And yet. There was a cure. A cure
almost lost. Almost destroyed by
our own hatred.

EXT. STREET - DAY

In the cabin of the helicopter, human soldiers take aim with their guns as the bird lands.

The Familiar and transgenic troops stand fast with their weapons against each other.

SOLDIER

Put your weapons down!

Neither side budges.

SOLDIER

Now!

The rifles of the human soldiers CLICK.

The Familiars smirk at the transgenics, self-assured of their victory.

The human soldiers aim their barrels at the Familiars.

There isn't a face on that street able to hide surprise.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

A nation of orphans, used up and
tossed aside, ascended their
creators and chose a better path.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY

A battered Alec props himself in front of a landing
helicopter.

His equally beaten troops stand behind him.

Mole leaning on Joshua, Dalton is supported by Stuff.

Behind them are the rest of the ragged handful of the
surviving defenders of Terminal City, weapons lowered by
watchful.

The helicopter door opens. In full military attire, Senator
Browder steps out with his soldiers flanking him.

He looks at this ragtag team of the creatures that saved
the city-

And salutes.

Without hesitation, the rest of the humans salute.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

They chose life. For us and for
them.

To the transgenics, this is new and amazing. Some smile,
some stare in awe. All are surprised.

EXT. TERMINAL CITY - DAY

All trace of the war is gone.

Masses of people are once more outside the gates of
Terminal city. They hold signs.

The gates open.

Transgenics step out. X5s first, some X6s, and as brave as
they are, they look as though they will bolt back to
Terminal City at any instant.

When the first 'nomalie' steps out, the crowds go wild.
They shake their banners and-

CLAP

Dozens of clapping people. All colors and creed, applauding
the "freaks".

The banners read "Thank you", "Trannies rock", "Welcome to Earth" and the like.

Three enthusiastic supporters smile widely and clap the most in the front row, OC, SKETCHY and NORMAL.

But beneath the joviality, there is still the underlying thread of 'humanity'. Held back by police in the back rows, the patented Trannie Haters with their painted words of hatred and death.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

Life. A gift.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Stuff sits cross-legged on a desk next to Dalton and Joshua. Mole leans on the other side of Dix as he reads from a letter into a microphone.

On the computer, the DISPLAY reads: Reconstructing voice print.

DIX

Like love. Something we can-

EXT. SPACE NEEDLE - DAY

Max stares out into the cloudy city, wind blowing on a face that doesn't feel it. Her eyes are dry, her face is empty.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

-all learn. All learn and share.

Alec walks toward Max.

She doesn't acknowledge he is there, but doesn't protest when he quietly sits beside her and stares into the gray.

He waits.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

Life and love. If we could give those freely, the world would be a place of beauty. A place of hope.

Max breaks against Alec. The tears finally crashing free, she clings to him like a safe harbor in the storm.

He holds her safe as she rocks in his arms.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

I'd love to see that place.

FADE OUT.

EYES ONLY

(v.o)

Peace. Out.

END.