

DANDELION PILOT

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ACT ONE

OVER BLACK.

We hear pouring rain. It DRUMS on asphalt, THUNDERS over metal, then grows muffled.

We hear metallic THUNKS--boots on a ladder.

FADE IN:

INT. SEWERS - MORNING

It's dark. Red light washes the walls. Knee-deep water covers the ground. The floor has a CHANNEL cut into it covered by a GRATE. HYDROELECTRIC TURBINES spin lazily in the channel, continuing through the length of the tunnel.

The rain above is a dull ROAR. More immediate are sounds of water DRIPPING and SLOSHING, which echo through the tunnels. It's barely wide enough for two people side by side.

SPLASH. LEX HAN (22) jumps down the last few rungs of a ladder into the sewer proper. She's reserved--a fly on the wall, or perhaps just biding her time. She wears a wetsuit, an red light HEADLAMP, a UTILITY BELT, an EARPIECE, and a RESPIRATOR around her neck.

She clicks on her headlamp, adding to the red glow. CLEANER 1, CLEANER 2, and KAT MIKHAYLOV (23) are already there, all wearing the same gear. Kat is rebelliously friendly--idealistic but not at all naive.

KAT
Still here?

LEX
Still here.

KAT
You know what tomorrow is?

We hear metallic FOOTSTEPS start quietly.

LEX
...Tuesday?

Two more SPLASHES. SAITO (40s), the no-nonsense team lead, drops down from the ladder, followed by RICHARDSON (18). He tries and fails to maintain an air of superiority wearing a too-small wetsuit.

SAITO
Attention!

Lex, Kat, and the two other cleaners line up.

SAITO (CONT'D)
Forecast is clear. Water shouldn't
get higher than waist level.

KAT
If Gates do their jobs.

A grim chuckle from the Cleaners 1 and 2.

SAITO
Weather's better than Saturday.
Quit complaining.

He slaps Richardson on the back.

SAITO (CONT'D)
We got a new kid. Han, he's all
yours.

He pushes Richardson, who stumbles, toward Lex.

LEX
I got the last one.

SAITO
Shouldn't have done such a
competent job. Let's go. Gates say
there's a blockage in thirteen-two.

Saito SLOSHES through the tunnel, followed by the two
cleaners. Lex, Kat, and Richardson take up the rear.

LEX
Been briefed yet?

RICHARDSON
Sort of.

LEX
City's segmented in a grid.
Somewhere in thirteen-two, water's
can't flow. Our job's to find it
and clear it out.

RICHARDSON
You can save it. I won't be here
long.

Lex and Kat exchange a look.

LEX

Fine. Stick close, keep your head above water. If you can't, whatever you do, don't swallow any.

They trudge onward. As the group's red glow travels down the sewer, darkness follows.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 13-2 - MORNING

Rain drums overhead. We hear distant mechanical CLANGING. The group continues through the tunnels until they reach an intersection.

KAT

You're lucky. Good weather for your first day--not everyone gets that.

RICHARDSON

This is good?

A CLANK echoes through the tunnels.

KAT

Relatively.

Water rushes through the tunnel, raising the water level. The cleaners STUMBLE. Lex reaches out to steady Kat. All recover quickly except Richardson.

RICHARDSON

Shit!

They stop walking. After the initial rush of water, it calms, now chest high. Saito presses his earpiece.

KAT

So much for waist level.

SAITO

The fuck are you doing? Trying to kill us?

GATES OPERATOR (V.O.)

(over earpieces)

Hurry it up. You should've been done.

SAITO

We're done when I say we're clear. Don't touch those fucking gates.

He releases the earpiece.

SAITO (CONT'D)
Useless pieces of shit.

GATES OPERATOR (V.O.)
Received.

Saito smacks the earpiece again.

SAITO
(to himself)
Ten more years... Only ten more.
Fuck's sake.
(to all)
Pair off and find the blockage--
we'll meet back here. Report any
electronic waste. Mikhaylov, you're
with me. Han, don't lose the new
kid.

Kat waves.

KAT
Good luck.

LEX
You too.

The cleaners disperse, two to a tunnel. Red lights fade away.

INT. GATES CONTROL ROOM - MORNING

There are no windows. The rain outside is WHITE NOISE set too high. Fluorescent light make the room starkly bright, a painful contrast from the sewers.

There are rows and rows of screens with no dividers. Dozens of GATES OPERATORS, including MORGAN SILVA (25), wearing headsets and identical polos, sit and stare. Morgan is a social chameleon--connections are power. Not at work, though.

Their LINKS, phone-like devices that act as universal controllers, rest underneath the screens. There's a dull hubbub of voices.

GATES OPERATOR 2
Blockage in five-eight.

GATES OPERATOR 3
You're two minutes over.

GATES OPERATOR 4
Closing gate two-ten charlie.

The screens display maps of the sewer layout segmented by a grid. Blinking GREEN and RED dots indicate where gates are. Each grid segment has a PERCENTAGE indicating volume of water. Most hover around 20-30%. All creep upward.

Morgan leans his head back on his chair. The Gates Operator next to him, NOSY OPERATOR, adjusts his mic.

NOSY OPERATOR
Closing gate twenty-three bravo.

Morgan closes his eyes.

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)
(over headset)
Your full attention is required.

Morgan sighs, sits up, and leans on the desk. On the screen, blinking gates switch from GREEN to RED and vice versa.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
We need to get some water flow in one through three. I keep getting Blue Forge jackasses on the line complaining about the generators not making the quota. What do they expect? It's one, two, three.

Morgan looks around then swipes on his link. He taps his earpiece.

MORGAN
Closing gate six-one-alpha.

On the screen, a green dot near the top of the grid turns red. Several more follow suit, leaving dots to the left of them green.

NOSY OPERATOR
Silva!

MORGAN
What?

NOSY OPERATOR
Did you close six-one-alpha?

MORGAN
Check the history.

NOSY OPERATOR
I did. Six-one-alpha should be open.

Morgan rubs his temple.

MORGAN
Then open it.

NOSY OPERATOR
You're a--

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)
Please stay on task.

NOSY OPERATOR
Opening six-one-alpha.

A red dot turns green.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
Just got another call from Blue
Forge. Why aren't we diverting from
six and seven?

Morgan smiles, pained.

MORGAN
Closing six-two-alpha. Closing
seven-one-echo.

Two more green dots turn red. In segment 16-7, the percentage
is 60% and climbing. Its neighbors sit around 35%.

Morgan taps his earpiece.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Blockage in sixteen-seven.

ANGRY TEAM LEAD (V.O.)
Heard.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
Water pooling in the Stilts is
unacceptable. Never mind six and
seven--get those gates open. If
Blue Forge has an issue with that,
I'll redirect them to Eden.

Morgan swipes on his link.

MORGAN
Opening six-two-alpha.

NOSY OPERATOR
Told you.

MORGAN

You didn't tell me shit. You--

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)

Inflammatory language may result in a referral to HR.

Morgan seethes.

ANGRY TEAM LEAD (V.O.)

Found your blockage. These gates are closed. Dumbass.

MORGAN

Did you clear any overgrowth?

ANGRY TEAM LEAD (V.O.)

I know how to do my job. Just mark them for maintenance. They won't budge.

MORGAN

I also know how to do my job.

An alarm BLARES. Displays on all screens FREEZE and a flashing "WARNING: SECURITY BREACH" pops up. Morgan WINCES. There's a collective GROAN from the room.

ANGRY TEAM LEAD (V.O.)

Oh, yeah? Is that so? Button pusher knows how to push buttons, is that it? Good for you.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

Who the fuck is connecting unauthorized peripherals? Get that shit off the network, stat! And you will be reprimanded!

MORGAN

Let's clear the channel.

The alarm CUTS OUT. The warning signs DISAPPEAR off all screens, and the displays unfreeze.

ANGRY TEAM LEAD (V.O.)

What, did I push your buttons? Fuck you, Gates.

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)

Inflammatory language may result in-

-

Morgan tugs the headset off.

ARTIFICIAL VOICE

Please be receptive to any and all communications.

Morgan SLAMS the headset back on.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 13-2 - LATER

Lex leads Richardson down a tunnel, single-file. Richardson has to duck to avoid STALACTITES here and there.

RICHARDSON
Do people get lost down here?

LEX
Stick close and you'll be fine.

She leads him down the remaining hallway at a brisk pace, scanning rippling water. After a moment, Richardson scampers to catch up.

RICHARDSON
I think the water's getting higher.

LEX
That's because it is.

RICHARDSON
Then why are we still here?

LEX
That's why we're here. We find the blockage, clear it, water goes down.

Richardson stops.

RICHARDSON
That's insane. This is insane. I'm done. How do I get out of here?

Lex keeps walking.

LEX
Good luck finding a place to live, then. Aegis housing is as good as it gets.

RICHARDSON
It'll only be for a little while. I'm not like you. Forty years down here for a pension? That's not gonna be my life.

LEX
I don't care if you think you're not gonna be a cleaner for long.

(MORE)

LEX (CONT'D)

If you're here now, you'll probably be here for a while. But either way, you don't want to give up that shitty apartment. The first day sucks, I get it. It'll suck less if you listen to me.

Richardson starts to follow again.

RICHARDSON

I'm not gonna lose Aegis housing. I'm moving up.

LEX

Sure, kid.

RICHARDSON

Don't patronize me.

LEX

Got it.

RICHARDSON

And I'm not a kid. Are you even older than me?

LEX

Whatever you say.

Lex turns into a new tunnel. Distantly, metal CLANGS.

RICHARDSON

I'm getting a sponsor! I'm in the last round of the application process!

Lex STOPS. Richardson rounds the corner and bumps into her.

RICHARDSON (CONT'D)

What? Did something happen?

LEX

An Aegis sponsorship? With who?

Richardson scoffs.

RICHARDSON

What, are you jealous? I told you I'm getting out of here.

Lex turns toward him fully. He shields his eyes from the red light.

LEX

With who?

RICHARDSON

Newport.

Lex starts walking again, slowly.

LEX

Newport? I didn't know he was still taking mentees. Wasn't there some kind of scandal a few years back?

RICHARDSON

The self-defense thing? He got over it.

LEX

He killed a mentee, didn't he? That doesn't concern you?

RICHARDSON

Yeah, one who attacked him. I'm not an idiot, so I'm not gonna do that.

Lex sets her jaw. Ahead of them, red light reveals a vertically sliding GATE. CALCIUM DEPOSITS and LIMESTONE cover the edges. They stop. Lex touches her earpiece.

LEX

Gates, is this supposed to be open?

GATES OPERATOR (V.O.)

It's open on my screen.

LEX

Okay. It's closed in real life.

She taps the earpiece again.

LEX (CONT'D)

It's just an overgrown gate. You can start heading back.

SAITO (V.O.)

Received. Of course it is.

Lex pulls a CHISEL out of her utility belt.

LEX

You have one too. Let's get this clear.

She SLAMS the chisel into the growths, loud as a gunshot.
Richardson JUMPS.

LEX (CONT'D)
Hurry up. And brace yourself.

BANG! BANG! BANG! The two hack away at the growths, crowding each other in the cramped tunnel. With a SCREECH, the gate slides upward with a jolt. Lex steadies herself with a hand on the wall as water starts rushing underneath.

The water level starts to drop. Lex chisels away. With another SCREECH, the gate goes up a little further. Halfway.

Richardson keeps slamming the limestone. Lex shakes her head.

LEX (CONT'D)
There's probably something in the mechanism. We'll lift from the bottom.

They grab the bottom of the gate and strain upward. No dice.

LEX (CONT'D)
Keep doing that.

She puts the respirator in her mouth.

RICHARDSON
What are you doing?

LEX
Getting us out of here.

Lex PLUNGES under the water, eyes squeezed shut. Feeling for the gate and floor, she squeezes in the gap, pressing her back against the ground. She presses her feet against bottom of the gate and SHOVES.

After a moment, the gate shifts, the sound muffled by water. She kicks at it a few times--it lurches up an inch, another inch, half a foot.

Water sweeps Lex through the gate.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 13-3 - CONTINUOUS

She grabs the edge as she goes under, and finds her footing on the other side, jerking her head above water and spitting out the respirator.

The gate still isn't all the way open. Water fills the gap between the bottom and the ground.

RICHARDSON (O.S.)

Han?

LEX

I'm fine.

She rubs her eyes and squints.

LEX (CONT'D)

Shit.

She rubs her eyes again, blinking rapidly. Tears mix with the runoff.

RICHARDSON (O.S.)

Should I... come over there?

LEX

No. I'll be back in a minute. Once the water slows.

She rubs her eyes again then scans the water. Debris rushes by--calcium, limestone, bits of rust.

Something GLINTS in the water. Lex SNATCHES it--it's a LINK. The screen, a clear piece of glass that extends from the base, is shattered.

She examines jagged edges of the broken screen and taps an undamaged section. The screen FLICKERS to life. Between the cracks and glitched out display, nothing is legible.

Lex takes the chisel and HAMMERS the side of the base a couple times until it CRACKS open.

RICHARDSON (O.S.)

Do you hear that?

LEX

It's just a gate opening. Relax.

She wedges the chisel inside and pops the back of the base off. Inside is the link's CIRCUITRY, including a CHIP.

Lex takes off a glove and pries the chip out with her nails. She pulls the glove back on over the chip and tucks the link in her utility belt.

Lex wades back to the gate. She takes a deep breath, closes her eyes, and ducks under.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 13-2 - CONTINUOUS

Lex stands back up. She shakes water out of her ears and rubs her eyes.

RICHARDSON
Do you have to do that a lot?

LEX
No.

She presses her earpiece.

LEX (CONT'D)
We're clear. It's as good as it's gonna get. Reporting a link--not sure if it's even good for recycling. It's pretty smashed up.
(to Richardson)
Look, a sponsorship isn't gonna solve all your problems. You think they'll accept you in the Stilts? You'll always be gutter trash to them.

SAITO (V.O.)
Received. We're waiting at the rendezvous point. Got another call--six-twenty. Hurry up.

RICHARDSON
You don't know that.

Lex wrings water out of her ponytail.

LEX
I guess I don't.

She wades against the current, leading them back the way they came.

SUPER: DANDELION

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. AEGIS DEPLOYMENT POINT - NIGHT

The sound of rain is louder--less muffled.

Mounted hooks line barren walls. Some have wetsuits hanging from them. Black mold flourishes on the walls and floor. Despite drains on the floor, it's perpetually wet. A metal bin, partially filled with electronic junk, sits in the middle of the room. A metal detector stands by the door.

A ladder leads underground. Saito comes up the ladder into the room, followed by the two other cleaners, Kat, Lex, and Richardson, all dripping.

SAITO

Collections. Junk in the bin.

Lex pulls the broken link out of her utility belt and tosses it in the bin. Kat does the same with SCRAP of her own.

SAITO (CONT'D)

Get changed. Inspections in fifteen.

Cleaner 1 drops a link screen in the bin.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dimly lit, grungy with communal showers barely separate from the lockers. The mold is worse here.

Lex stands at her locker. A TOWEL hangs from the door. Inside is a change of clothes, including a BELT, a clear PONCHO, BOOTS, and a LINK. She glances at Kat--she's taking off her wetsuit.

Lex takes off her glove and tucks the chip in a hidden pocket in her belt just behind the buckle.

She takes off the other glove and wetsuit. We hear a SHOWER turn on.

Lex turns on her link and opens her texts.

Text reads: "Still on for that date?" Received six days ago.

Lex sends a response: "tonight works"

She puts the link back in the locker.

Lex joins Kat in the showers, turning her own on. Lex recoils when the water hits her.

LEX
No hot water?

KAT
If you let it run for a while, it
might reach lukewarm.

Lex sighs and stands under the stream.

KAT (CONT'D)
Tomorrow isn't just Tuesday, by the
way.

LEX
What is it?

KAT
It's our one month anniversary!

Lex finger combs through her hair.

LEX
It's been that long?

KAT
I know, right? I haven't worked
with the same person for longer
than three weeks before. Someone
always gets reassigned. Anyway, we
should celebrate. Go out for drinks
or something.

LEX
I don't know about that. The sewers
are shitty enough without being
hungover.

KAT
One drink, then. Or dinner. Or just
a snack.

Lex scrubs her hair.

KAT (CONT'D)
Come on. It's momentous. We can
talk about all the dreams we had
before we grew up and signed with
Aegis.

Lex laughs.

LEX
I'll go if you promise not to talk
about that.

KAT
Yes! It's a date.

LEX
It's not a date yet, Mikhaylov.

She shuts off the water.

LEX (CONT'D)
One of us could get reassigned. You
never know.

KAT
On a Tuesday? I doubt it. Besides,
we can celebrate a month minus one
day. That's close enough.

LEX
I guess.

Lex dries off with the towel and gets dressed. Kat, wrapped
in her own towel, comes next to her and holds her hand out.

KAT
Can I see your link?

Lex frowns.

LEX
Why?

KAT
Nothing bad, I promise.

Lex hesitates before handing over her link. Kat takes it and
taps the screen a few times before handing it back. Lex looks
down at the link, which displays the text: NEW CONTACT: KAT
MIKHAYLOV.

LEX
Kat?

KAT
Yeah, that's me. I figure we can be
on a first-name basis now, you
know?

Lex tucks the link in a pocket and buckles her belt. She
smiles.

LEX

Lex.

She grabs her link and wetsuit and leaves the locker room.

INT. AEGIS DEPLOYMENT POINT - LATER

The cleaners, wearing normal clothes and ponchos, line up at the metal detector. Richardson passes through. Saito stands just beyond it holding a metal detector WAND.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! The indicator turns red.

SAITO

Where's your link?

Richardson takes his link out of his pocket and hands it to Saito.

SAITO (CONT'D)

Go through again.

Richardson passes through. The indicator stays green.

SAITO (CONT'D)

See you in twelve hours.

Richardson scoffs and leaves.

Cleaner 1 hands Saito his link and passes through without incident.

Kat does the same then waits at the side.

Lex hands Saito her link and steps through. BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! The light turns red.

Lex sighs and lifts her arms to her sides. Saito waves the wand over her--it BEEPS around her waist.

Lex tugs her shirt up, revealing the belt.

SAITO (CONT'D)

New fashion statement?

LEX

I lost weight. Cornucopia's been jacking up prices.

SAITO

Don't remind me. Get out of here.

She lowers her arms and steps past him.

BZZ. Lex takes out her link and reads a new text.

Text: "You're lucky I finished my classic literature. See you."

KAT
Should I wait?

LEX
Go ahead. I've got an errand to run.

Behind her, Cleaner 2 hands Saito his link.

KAT
See you tomorrow, then.

Kat steps out into the deluge outside.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

Lex turns around. The indicator flashes red.

Cleaner 2 raises his arms. Saito waves his wand, which beeps around Cleaner 2's pocket.

CLEANER 2
Wait--

Saito reaches in his pocket and pulls out a link wrapped with aluminum foil.

SAITO
What the hell is this?

He unwraps it, revealing a BROKEN LINK.

CLEANER 2
It's not what it looks like.

SAITO
You fucking moron. What the fuck was your plan, huh? Wrap a piece of metal with more metal so the metal detector doesn't detect it?

CLEANER 2
I thought it was supposed to block--

SAITO
If it's an x-ray machine, maybe!

CLEANER 2

Please, I need it! You don't understand! Please, just let it go!

SAITO

It's too late. They already know. You idiot. This isn't worth termination!

He shakes the broken link.

CLEANER 2

No, no, no, you don't understand. You can't--

Lex opens the door, drowning out his words, and steps into the rain.

EXT. THE GUTTER - NIGHT

It's pouring rain. Water rushes down the sloped streets and into storm drains. Dense fog limits visibility to a few feet. Streetlamps, neon signs, and holographic advertisements paint the fog in flashing teal and orange.

Skyscrapers, showing signs of wear and tear, tower overhead. One is cordoned off with yellow caution tape. Between skyscrapers are smaller establishments--hole in the wall restaurants, shops, etc.

The only greenery is weeds growing in cracks on the sides of buildings. Yellow spots of DANDELIONS are barely visible.

Street carts line the sidewalks, raised on stilts, with sturdy canopies overhead.

The streets bustle with passersby, all covered in ponchos and wearing rain boots. No umbrellas. Lex blends in with them, just another plastic-wrapped figure in a crowd.

As Lex walks through holographic advertisements, we hear snippets of ads.

AD 1

...free installation, guaranteed to reduce humidity by...

AD 2

...legal and affordable. Leave reality behind with Cloud...

AD 3

Forty years until retirement
guaranteed with Aegis. Apply
today...

She pushes through a hologram of a smiling, uniformed Aegis employee, Aegis's shield logo proudly emblazoned on her polo and hat.

Lex turns into a dimly lit alley. There's a set of stairs leading to a basement suite.

She descends. The door is unmarked and has a sliding peephole. She knocks a pattern: BANG--BANG BANG--BANG.

The peephole slides open, revealing REYNA'S (30s) eyes. She's the bouncer--tatted, pierced, and built.

REYNA

Password?

LEX

Classic literature.

The peephole slams shut, and the door opens.

REYNA

Welcome to The Cage.

Lex steps in.

INT. THE CAGE - MOMENTS LATER

A crowded, grimy speakeasy. The rain is muted, but the roar of water fills the air. The floor is a grate--underneath, water rushes freely.

Chairs, furniture, the bar itself--everything hangs from the ceiling, another grate, by chains or sturdy bars. A BARTENDER pours drinks for PATRONS at the bar.

Morgan sits at the bar, still wearing an Aegis-branded polo. Somehow, it looks casual on him.

He toys with his drink as Lex sits next to him.

MORGAN

Are you high?

Lex rubs her still-red eyes.

LEX

Perks of the job. Not that you'd know anything about that.

MORGAN

No, ma'am. No sewers for me. I have sensitive skin.

LEX

You're why everyone hates Gates.

MORGAN

Yeah, well. Can't be friends with everyone. Let's get down to it. I have another meeting after this.

Lex slides the chip out of her belt and places it on the table.

Morgan reaches for it, and Lex covers it with her hand.

LEX

I hear Newport's taking mentees again.

Morgan takes a sip from his drink.

MORGAN

Is he, now?

LEX

What's the point of doing business with you if you can't keep up your end?

MORGAN

Relax. I only found out a few days ago. His office reached out to potentials directly. It wasn't public.

LEX

Why would I need you to feed me public information? You're supposed to tell me things I can't find out myself, Silva.

Morgan grimaces.

MORGAN

Alright, alright. I get it. I do have something for you, you know. Do you want a drink?

LEX
With you? No.

MORGAN
Fine. I made a new friend. Turns out, Newport is one of his regulars. He works at a club in the Stilts--The Overhang.

Lex takes her hand off the chip, which Morgan picks up.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
You should just make someone pay for this stuff. I mean, what's your plan? You won't make it two steps in the Stilts. You're Gutter trash.

LEX
I'm working on it. What's your friend's name?

MORGAN
Not for sale.

He examines the chip.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Water damage?

LEX
No shit. It worked when I found it, though.

MORGAN
You're lucky I like you.

He pockets the chip.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Is there anything else I should keep an eye out for? For next time.

LEX
Just Newport. Or a better job.

MORGAN
I have some friends who are hiring.

Lex scoffs.

LEX
I mean a job that won't get me arrested or killed.

MORGAN

Funny. I thought that's what your vendetta against Newport was gonna do.

Lex stands up.

LEX

Tell your coworkers to wait before rerouting the runoff. I don't want to be a statistic.

MORGAN

Keep your respirator handy. You'll be fine.

LEX

Easy for you to say. They get stuck in the gates, you know? The bodies. And it's my job to clear them out.

MORGAN

...I'll mention it.

Lex leaves, pulling the hood of her poncho over her head.

EXT. THE GUTTER - EDGE - NIGHT

Beyond the edge of the crowded, run-down Gutter is the Stilts. Buildings are shorter and rest on STILTS. SKYWALKS and SKY TRAINS form a labyrinth in the sky--people who live there never need to touch the ground.

Morgan looks up at the Stilts and ducks into a different alley, very much still in the Gutter. The only light is a flickering blue streetlight on one end. He leans against the wall and stares at a manhole cover.

With a mechanical clicking, it lifts, and NADIA (18) pops out. She's small with short hair, perfect for going unnoticed and weaving through crowds. Getting underestimated is her biggest strength. She wears WADERS but no poncho.

MORGAN

I've got an SoC for you.

NADIA

Let me see?

Morgan digs the chip out of his pocket and hands it over. Nadia peers at it.

NADIA (CONT'D)
Hm. Water damage?

MORGAN
No shit. It's still usable.

NADIA
Maybe.

MORGAN
Do you have the dex or not?

Nadia pulls a bag out of her pocket filled with five PILLS.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Five? You're joking.

NADIA
We're not running a charity here.
Actually--yeah, we are, because
this chip might be worthless, but
I'll give you these anyway.

She puts the bag in Morgan's hand.

MORGAN
Everything's water damaged. Look,
it's... sleep medication. Is that
really all there is?

Nadia shrugs.

NADIA
That's one way to put it. Drink
coffee or something. Look, if you
want priority, you gotta give us
something. Dandelion gets first
dibs, and we profit off rich kids
in the Stilts.

MORGAN
I told you I can't join, Nadia.

NADIA
Yeah, yeah. Just--throw us a tip
every now and then. Flash floods in
the sewer aren't exactly fun. It's
hard to get people out when there's
no warning.

MORGAN
I have an Aegis-issued link. You
really want me to contact you with
that?

NADIA

No way.

Nadia procures a beat-up CONTRABAND LINK from another pocket.

NADIA (CONT'D)

My contact's in there already.

Morgan folds his arms.

MORGAN

I'm serious. I can't get more involved.

NADIA

Oh, grow up. Meeting with me? Illegal. Those drugs? Illegal. This chip?

She holds up the chip.

NADIA (CONT'D)

Illegal. You don't want to join Dandelion, fine. But don't act like you don't want to be involved. It's embarrassing to watch.

She extends the contraband link toward him again.

MORGAN

Real great recruitment strategy you got there. I feel so wanted.

Nadia holds up her hands in surrender.

NADIA

Hey, I just say it like I see it. If you don't like it, look in the mirror.

MORGAN

Fine.

He takes the link and tucks it and the pills under his poncho.

NADIA

It's been a pleasure. I'll let you know when there's more.

She starts to climb back into the sewer.

MORGAN

How often do people drown down
there?

Nadia pokes her head out.

NADIA

Us? Never. It's mostly cleaners--
sometimes we'll find a whole team
of them. Usually the older ones,
too. That forty-year pension thing?
Not worth the risk.

MORGAN

You don't have to tell me twice.

Nadia disappears in the sewer. The manhole cover GRINDS shut.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. LEX'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

It's quiet. Lex lies on a mattress in the corner, a screen displaying the time on the wall: 6:29 AM. Blinds are shut over the window; black mold flourishes on the windowsill. There's a towel stuffed in the crack of the window.

An alarm BLARES. Lex stares at the ceiling.

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)

Good morning! It's going to be another great day at Aegis. You are currently thirty-five years, ten months, and twelve days away from your early retirement.

(beat)

Good morning! It's going to be--

Lex grabs her link and swipes on the screen. The alarm falls silent and the screen goes dark.

INT. LEX'S APARTMENT - MAIN - LATER

The kitchen, dining room, and living room share the same space. One table, one chair. A small cooking area. A screen on one wall.

Lex opens the fridge. There are a few near-empty jars of PICKLED VEGETABLES and an EGG. She sighs and shuts the fridge.

Lex walks across the room. On the other side, there's a single window with the blinds drawn. BUTTON MUSHROOMS sprout on the ground underneath it, and there's a towel stuffed in the crack.

Lex grabs the towel and opens the window. It's dark--storm clouds block the sun, and the rain is a light mist.

On the outside of the building, patches of DANDELIONS bloom. A RAINWATER COLLECTOR hangs from the window. She WRINGS the towel out and picks a handful of flowers, gathering them in the towel.

She closes the window and breaks off a few mushrooms, adding them to her pile. She sets them on the kitchen corner and hangs the towel on a RACK.

She returns to the window, grabs the rainwater collector, shuts the window, and returns to the kitchen area. She pours the water into a WATER FILTER that sits atop an ELECTRIC KETTLE.

Lex grabs a fresh towel from a rack and takes the rain collector back to the window. She sets it back outside, closes the window, and stuffs the towel in the crack.

INT. LEX'S APARTMENT - MAIN - LATER

Lex sits at the table with an OMELETTE speckled with dandelion greens, mushrooms, and pickled veggies. She swipes on her link; the screen across the room comes to life with a WEATHER REPORT. A REPORTER gestures toward a map.

REPORTER

--rare bit of respite. If you have any business to take care of today, get it done now. Right now in Oasis, it's a cool seventy-five, seventy-six. It might drop a few degrees as we get deeper into December--

Another swipe. It's a PSA--images of lights, cars, and air condition flash across the screen with prohibition symbols over them. Lex stabs her omelette with chopsticks.

ANNOUNCER

--turn your lights off when not in use. Refrain from driving gas cars. Keeping the planet green is your responsibility!

Lex swipes again. A game show--a HOST gestures toward pictures of men and women, some crossed out.

HOST

--thirteen remain. Who has what it takes to survive in the Stilts? Who's gonna win that one-year sponsorship? The next task--

Another swipe, and the screen mutes.

LEX

How's my schedule?

The screen dims.

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)
 There have been no changes nor
 reassignments through the next two
 weeks. Please report for duty in a
 timely manner.

Lex frowns.

LEX
 Through next week, too?

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)
 There have been no changes nor
 reassignments through--

LEX
 Got it. Show schedule.

A calendar pops up on the screen. Weeks are highlighted in
 different color, never in blocks more than two or three,
 except the current stretch, which has five weeks in PINK.

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)
 Schedule irregularities may be
 contributed to changes in expected
 availability. If you have concerns--

LEX
 No concerns. Text Mikhay--Text Kat,
 'There's a club I've been wanting
 to check out. Interested?'

She swipes on her link, and the screen goes dark.

INT. AEGIS DEPLOYMENT POINT - MORNING

Lex exits the locker room into the main room, tugging her
 gloves on and zipping up her suit, and stops in her tracks.

Four other OLDER CLEANERS and GRAVES, the team lead, wait for
 her, ready to go. They're all in their late fifties, early
 sixties. One of the cleaners is GRANT, a jaded woman.

LEX
 Did I miss reassignment?

GRAVES
 Are you Han?

LEX
 Yeah.

GRAVES

You're my fifth. Let's go.

LEX

I need to text someone first.

GRAVES

After the shift, no problem.

Lex looks back toward the locker room, sighs, and joins the line of cleaners descending into the sewers.

INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - MAIN - MORNING

The same layout as Lex's. There are two mismatched chairs at the table. A DEHUMIDIFIER hums in the corner.

Morgan's bag of pills lie on the table. Morgan spoons equal portions of OATMEAL from a pot into two bowls. He sets the pot down.

MORGAN

Isaac? Breakfast.

ISAAC (O.S.)

Just a minute.

Morgan sits and scrapes some more oatmeal into the bowl set opposite his.

A door shuts. ISAAC TORRES (26) enters. He's a quiet, serious guy with an undercurrent of resentment, excellent with tech and tedium. He has severe CATARACTS, recently developed.

He feels for the back of the chair and sits. He lifts the side of his bowl with one finger.

MORGAN

Any update on the arbitration?

ISAAC

No.

Isaac reaches across the table and lifts the edge of Morgan's bowl. He spoons some of his oatmeal into Morgan's bowl to even them out.

MORGAN

Well, this kind of thing takes time.

Isaac sighs.

ISAAC

I've been going through the forms they had us sign again. It's pretty airtight. I mean, maybe I get enough to cover a pair of glasses. It won't make a difference.

MORGAN

That's bullshit. It's Cornucopia's fault.

ISAAC

Not on paper.

MORGAN

I'm not talking about on paper!
It's--

ISAAC

Well, I am! Don't you think I know it's bullshit?

Isaac takes a deep breath. Morgan looks down.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I get it, okay? And I appreciate the concern. It is really not helpful.

MORGAN

Sorry.

They eat in silence.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Getting a loan is still an option.

ISAAC

I won't qualify, and you don't need to be saddled with my debt. You can't even afford your own meds.

MORGAN

I don't really need them.

ISAAC

Yeah. You only need them for your broken dopamine receptors to work.

MORGAN

If you can work again, we can pay it off.

ISAAC

Not fast enough. I'm not trying to be some kind of self-sacrificial martyr, Morgan. I'm being pragmatic. However bad all this is--

He waves broadly at the room.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

--it's better than debt bondage. You never think things through. What happens if you lose the apartment? Your job? I'm not even supposed to be here. If you get fucked, so do I. It's not worth it.

A heavy silence falls, broken only by DRIPS of water. Morgan scrapes out the bottom of his bowl and stands, picking up his bowl.

Isaac sighs.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I'll get the dishes.

MORGAN

Thanks.

He sets the bowl back down and takes a pill out of the bag. He rolls it between his fingers. Outside, thunder RUMBLES.

INT. SEWERS - AT THE SAME TIME

The water is only knee deep. Thunder RUMBLES. Lex looks up. The rest of the cleaners ignore it.

LEX

What's the forecast?

GRAVES

Scared of a little storm? You got a ways to go, girlie.

The cleaners laugh.

LEX

I'm not scared of a storm. I'm scared of drowning.

GRAVES

Then let's make sure those gates are clear.

(beat)

(MORE)

GRAVES (CONT'D)

Gates says we're due in ten-eighteen. Let's get a move on.

The group SLOSHES through the tunnel.

BOOM! Another crack of thunder shakes the tunnels. This time, all the cleaners stop. Some look up, including Lex. Water ripples extend from the walls and collapse on one another.

OLDER CLEANER 1

Wouldn't want to be out in that.

We hear rain POUND the pavement above. Distantly, the sound of rushing water grows louder.

GRAVES

We're not calling out. I get early retirement in a month. A little storm's not going to delay that.

OLDER CLEANER 2

Seconded. Three months here.

They resume wading through the tunnels. The water level creeps upward.

LEX

Any tips for making it that long?

OLDER CLEANER 3

Work hard and don't complain when it rains a little extra.

The older cleaners laugh. Lex tugs on her respirator and follows.

INT. GATES CONTROL ROOM - MORNING

Rain crashes against the walls in rhythmic sheets punctuated by rumbling THUNDER.

Same seating. Morgan stares at his screen. Nosy Operator stares at Morgan's screen, too.

Most gates blink green. Percentages creep up across the board.

MORGAN

Opening gate eight-fifteen-alpha.

NOSY OPERATOR

Is ten-eighteen clear yet? Chop chop.

A red dot turns green.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

We don't want water in the Stilts. Let's get these gates open. Except twelve, ten and below--We're still renegotiating the hydroelectricity contract with Page. Everyone else has paid up.

MORGAN

Closing gate twelve-ten-alpha.

Morgan reaches in his pocket and turns the contraband link toward him, keeping it out of sight. The time displays on the screen: 9:10 AM.

Around sector 12-10, water percentages increase. Green lights in 12-10, 12-11, and 12-12 start blinking to red.

Percentages grow to 50%, 55%, 60% toward the bottom of the grid.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Blockage in three-sixteen.

NOSY OPERATOR

Blockage in eight-twenty.

GATES OPERATOR 3

Blockage in fifteen-seventeen.

The percentages continue to grow. Morgan taps his link.

MORGAN

It's gonna take time to clear these blockages. When can we route through twelve?

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

They tell me when they tell me. Could be all day. Now worry about your job and let me do mine.

Morgan sneaks a look at his contraband link. The time reads: 9:12 AM.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

Okay, scratch that. We've got water in the Stilts. Let's get twelve-ten and below open.

Morgan sighs.

MORGAN
Opening gate twelve-ten-alpha.

He checks the link again. 9:13 AM.

INT. GATES CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan sneaks a look at the contraband link. The time reads:
11:21 PM.

Almost all the gates blink GREEN on the screen. A few above
16-7 are still RED. Some sectors are all the way around 90%
and higher. The lowest sectors are toward the top, hovering
in the 40s.

Another gate blinks to RED. The red gates make a U shape
above sector 16-7; the sectors' water levels increase
rapidly.

Another gate blinks RED. Morgan taps his link.

MORGAN
Opening gate eighteen-five-alpha.

That same gate blinks back to GREEN.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
We need that closed, Silva.

The gate blinks back to RED.

MORGAN
That's a lot of closed gates.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
They'll be open in a sec. Just
clearing the way for a team to get
to sixteen-seven.

Morgan frowns.

MORGAN
Sixteen-seven is a mech issue. Did
maintenance get to it already?

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
What do you think?

MORGAN
Then--

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

It looks like a blockage, so we send a team. Probably have to do it tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. Who knows. Maybe the mechanism magically repaired itself overnight.

Red gates in the U shape blink obnoxiously RED. Morgan frowns at the screen.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 5-14 - NIGHT

Lex and Grant rip METAL SHEETS and WOOD PLANKS off an open gate in SHOULDER-HEIGHT water. They lurch forward, bracing themselves on the edge of the gate, as water floods through. The level lowers slowly.

LEX

Eden must have done a sweep. This is the third cart today.

GRANT

That's the job.

LEX

I know it's the job. I just think if they're gonna smash unlicensed carts, they shouldn't leave the remnants in the street to get swept down here.

GRANT

You're not wrong, but I'm not gonna raise a stink with a few months to go. Complainers always wash out.

She touches her earpiece.

GRANT (CONT'D)

We got it. We're gonna have to take the debris to a deployment point.

GRAVES (V.O.)

(over earpiece)

Heard.

Lex sorts through the debris. Metal sheets--wooden stilts--plastic tarp. Something glints in the water--a shard of GLASS. She grabs it, turns it over, and drops it back in the water with a PLOP.

GRANT

The fuck are you doing?

Lex STARTS. Grant LOOMS behind her.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Think you're so smart, do you? Sell scrap on the side?

LEX

What are you talking about? There's nothing here.

GRANT

You might get away with it once. Twice. Five--ten times, even. But you'll get caught eventually. You think your life is shit now?

GRAVES (V.O.)

Next stop is sixteen-seven.

Grant GLARES at Lex before touching her earpiece. Lex releases a breath and kicks at the debris.

GRANT

I thought this was the last one.

GRAVES (V.O.)

They keep saying that. Storm's still going. Mandatory overtime.

GRANT

How's the pay?

GRAVES (V.O.)

Very funny, Grant. Get that trash upside. It's gonna be a long night.

They start to gather the debris.

GRANT

You're lucky it's just a cart. If you'd found something--

LEX

Worry about yourself.

Grant stands up and pulls Lex close by the respirator.

GRANT

Shut up and listen! Because it's not just you who gets terminated if you get caught!

(MORE)

GRANT (CONT'D)

If I told them I had no idea you were scrapping--even if it were true! Do you think they'd believe me? Your selfishness isn't just gonna screw you over.

Lex is silent. Contrite. Grant lets go.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Tell me. Now. Is there anything else? I'm not gonna report you if we call it in now.

Lex hesitates. She tugs her glove off, revealing a CHIP, and pulls a fractured pair of GLASSES from her utility belt. The lenses FLICKER with colorful static.

GRANT (CONT'D)

Throw that chip away. It's too suspicious.

(to earpiece)

Got a set of HUDs here.

GRAVES (V.O.)

Heard.

Lex turns the chip over in her fingers and tosses it away. It disappears instantly in black water.

GRANT

Don't test me. I didn't make it this long by being stupid.

LEX

Sorry.

The two of them gather the largest chunks of debris and fight upward through the current, barely making any headway.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 16-7 - NIGHT

The six-person crew forges through, single-file. A couple duck under OUTCROPPINGS in the tunnel ceiling. The water level is slightly lower than before.

The tunnel branches three ways, each leading into pitch darkness barely penetrated by red headlamps.

GRAVES

Same partners. Let's get this done.
Haven't heard about any backlog yet-
-if we finish before they give us
another blockage, we can go home.

A few halfhearted CHEERS. Lex abstains.

GRAVES (CONT'D)

Maybe. Don't quote me on that.

Rushing water grows LOUDER. The team SWAYS as a rush of water hits them.

GRAVES (CONT'D)

Let's make it fast.

The team splits. Lex and Grant take the rightmost tunnel.

Instead of walking, they HOP and let the water carry them forward, gliding forward in bounding steps.

The water level creeps to Lex's chest and inches further upward.

LEX

We might need to abort. Where's the
nearest deployment point?

GRANT

Fifteen-seven. If you want to
backtrack, there's also sixteen-
four.

LEX

Guess we better find this blockage,
then.

Water covers Lex's chest, touches her shoulders. They continue BOUNDING forward.

Their headlamps shine red on a closed GATE. They drift to a stop.

GRANT
(to earpiece)
Is this a joke? It's closed.

GRAVES (V.O.)
Same here. Any overgrowth?

Lex and Grant get closer, shining their headlamps around the edges of the gate. Oxidized, but clear.

GRANT
Not that I can see.

There's SILENCE on the line.

GRAVES (V.O.)
Alright, respirators at the ready.
If we can't crack these gates in
five minutes, we're aborting.

Lex and Grant set their respirators between their teeth and pull heavy-duty CHISELS out of their belts. They PLUNGE underwater and SLAM their chisels into the crack between the gate and the floor.

INT. GATES CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

On the screen, red dots in the U shape blink GREEN. Sector 16-7's percentage grows steadily. Morgan frowns.

GRAVES (V.O.)
Gates, we found mech issues with
all three gates. We're--

There's a burst of STATIC over the line. Morgan frowns.

MORGAN
Message not received.

No response.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Hello?

Morgan smacks his headset a couple times.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Closing gate sixteen-five-bravo.

The light turns RED. 16-7's percentage growth slows. A moment later, the gate turns GREEN again, and the percentage growth ACCELERATES. 80%... 85%... 87%...

Morgan reaches in his pocket. 90%...

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
Sixteen-seven's a dud. Looks like a mech issue. Let's close it off.

MORGAN
There's a team down there.

92%...

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
Not according to the logs. They aborted before they got there. Make it happen. Orders from above.

95%... Morgan stands.

MORGAN
Gotta piss.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
Get that--

He RIPS the headset off and STALKS past rows of screens to the door. They share the same display-- 98%... 99%... 100%.

One single green gate blinks RED at the bottom of sector 16-6, just above sector 16-7.

INT. GATES BATHROOM - LATER

Morgan BURSTS into the bathroom, passes the urinals, BARGES into a stall, LOCKS the door, and WHIPS the contraband link out.

There's only one contact--Nadia. He texts her: "16-7 sealed off. Cleaners inside."

He flushes the toilet. Water SWIRLS down the drain.

INT. SEWERS - 16-7 - NIGHT

Lex and Grant continue SMASHING at the gate, both fully submerged. Bubbles ascend from their respirators in regular intervals. No luck.

GRAVES (V.O.)

I called it in. Let's get out. If you're going against the current, you're going the right way.

Lex and Grant POP out of the water. Lex spits her respirator out and takes a breath--she TREADS WATER to keep her head above water.

LEX

Are you--

A wave SLAMS both of them forward into the closed gate. Grant's headlamp SHATTERS against the gate and goes dark. A jagged PIECE OF WOOD narrowly misses Lex's side and THUDS on the gate.

Lex BRACES her impact but still hits face-first. Her nose BLEEDS. A PUFF of air EXPLODES from her respirator--a stream of tiny BUBBLES follows.

Lex SHOVES off and BURSTS into the tiny pocket of air above. She SPITS out water, COUGHS, and RAMS the respirator back in her mouth. She ducks back down as the pocket disappears. Bubbles continue to stream out.

Underwater, the loudest sounds are Lex's HEART POUNDING, BLOOD RUSHING, and RESPIRATOR HISSING--a soft, persistent HISS.

There's almost no visibility. Her headlamp FLICKERS, PLUNGING them into complete darkness before returning with weak red light.

Grant is suspended in the water, unresponsive. BLOOD, darker than the surrounding water, BLOOMS from a HEAD WOUND. The current carries it toward the gate.

Lex SHAKES her. She comes to in a daze, turning this way and that.

Lex GESTURES back the way they came emphatically. Grant touches her forehead and picks a GLASS SLIVER out of the wound.

Lex TUGS on her arm, startling her to attention. She nods and gives a THUMBS UP. Lex lets go and starts swimming upstream. Using the walls and STALACTITES, she PULLS herself forward while kicking. Progress is slow.

She looks back. Grant has barely moved. She swims back to her side and grabs her arm again.

We hear a DISTORTED, DISTANT RUMBLE. Lex and Grant LURCH toward the way they came. Lex PULLS herself and Grant along with the stalactites.

Blood streaming from Grant's wound leaves a TRAIL in the water.

Her headlamp FLICKERS once, twice. It stays dark for several pregnant seconds.

The heartbeat THROBS louder, faster.

The light flicks back on. Lex takes the headlamp off--there's a CRACK in the glass. Red light HIGHLIGHTS the bubbles escaping her respirator.

Lex covers the crack with her thumb and DRAGS Grant along.

The sound of the respirator grows THINNER. Lex KICKS desperately, pulling the two forward. She reaches for the ceiling--water all the way to the top.

Grant pats her arm. She turns back--Grant is upright, not making an effort to swim. She shakes her head and holds a hand up.

The stream of bubbles from Lex's respirator THINS, SLOWS.

Lex makes a back and forth motion--miming KICKING--with her free arm, making the light waver wildly. She turns the light back on her--Grant's pulling the RESPIRATOR STRAP over her head.

Lex pulls her respirator out.

LEX (CONT'D)
(muddled)
KICK!

Bubbles EXPLODE from her mouth and disperse in an instant. A high-pitched DRONE starts quietly, gradually increasing in volume.

Grant WRENCHES her arm out of Lex's grip and spits out her respirator. She SHOVES it in Lex's hand and closes her fingers around it. The HISS from her own respirator trails into silence.

Lex shakes her head, shoving it back at her. Grant PUSHES her forward. The drone continues to CRESCENDO, competing with the heartbeat. We see dark spots SPROUT, and the scene grows dark at the edges.

Grant drifts backward, quickly fading out of view.

The drone comes to a PEAK. Her heart POUNDS.

Lex BITES down on the new respirator and takes a DEEP BREATH. The drone, dark spots, and dark edges DISSIPATE, replaced by regular HISSING of the new respirator. Bubbles float up only as she EXHALES.

Grant is gone.

INT. GATES CONTROL ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME

Morgan sits back at his screen. Sector 16-7 is at 100%.

BZZ. He checks the contraband link. He glances at Nosy Operator, who stares at his own screen. Morgan slides the link halfway out of his pocket.

A text from Nadia reads: "Can't get in."

He looks around, then behind him. Nobody's watching.

He taps on his link. The RED gate at the top of 16-7 blinks GREEN.

Then back to RED.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 16-7 - NIGHT

Lex swims through the tunnel, much faster than before. The darkness in front of her is unchanging, each section indistinguishable from the last.

A BROKEN WHEEL, exposed metal SPOKES pointing out, comes into view. Lex DIVES underneath, turning to watch it pass by.

Lex shakes her head--centers herself--swims forward.

The tunnel ahead transforms into the INTERSECTION from before. Two of the tunnels are dark. The third--to Lex's right--has a distant, unmoving RED GLOW.

Lex looks toward the tunnel to her left, then to the right. Back to the left.

She swims toward the right's red glow.

It grows larger, more intense. There's a DARK SILHOUETTE and bits of DEBRIS. Her own headlamp FLICKERS OFF.

As she gets closer, the silhouette grows clearer--a person. A CLEANER.

Lex redoubles her efforts, nearly THRASHING through the water. The cleaner hovers in the water, unmoving.

She reaches the cleaner and rotates them to face her. Their headlamp FLARES red light in her eyes.

Lex shades her eyes and squints. Her own headlamp FLICKERS ON.

It's Graves, eyes open and unseeing. His respirator floats nearby, its strap still around his neck.

He's BISECTED by a torn METAL SHEET. Blood OOZES out and disperses into the water.

Lex SHOUTS, the sound MUTED, and RECOILS, jolting back with a jellyfish-like movement. Frantic, she looks left--right. She's alone. Her heartbeat is rapid, ERRATIC. The HISS of her respirator is too fast.

She starts to swim backwards then STOPS.

Haltingly, she reaches for Graves. Trying not to touch him, she tugs his headlamp off with one hand. It comes off.

Shuddering, she puts it on her forehead. She GRASPS for his respirator--tugs it over his head--it gets CAUGHT on his features, and he's PULLED toward her.

His too-wide eyes ACCUSE her. Lex JERKS back.

She releases her own cracked headlamp. It glows for just a moment before going dark. With both hands, she gets the respirator over his head. She puts it over her own head.

Lex backs away before fully turning and swimming back the way she came.

The journey back is FRAGMENTED, STUTTERED--we see frantic bits of it pieced together.

Continuing in the fragmented fashion, Lex reaches the intersection. She spares a glance to her right-hand tunnel then goes straight.

Darkness YAWNS before her. She speeds up.

Red light dawns on the CLOSED GATE. Lex swims straight into it, hands first, and presses herself on the gate.

She SCREAMS at it, pounding it with her fists. She DIVES, wedging her FINGERNAILS in the crack to no avail. One of her nails BREAKS--a piece of it floats away.

The HISS of the respirator grows thinner. She takes a deep breath and JABS her chisel at the base of the gate. No effect.

She takes one more deep breath and spits her respirator out. She touches her earpiece.

LEX
(muffled)
Open the gate! Sixteen-seven, OPEN
THE GATE!

She waits. And keeps waiting.

She presses the respirator back in her mouth and INHALES. The HISS cuts out.

LEX (CONT'D)
GATES!

She waits for NOTHING.

Lex pulls the EMPTY RESPIRATOR over her head and lets it drift away. She SCRAMBLES to put Graves's respirator in her mouth. Its HISS is weak already. Behind her, a red glow builds.

She SLAMS her fist into the gate one last time and turns around. Older Cleaner 1 emerges from the dark--the empty respirator hangs between them.

Lex points to the closed gate and shakes her head.

Older Cleaner 1 grabs the empty respirator. Lex shakes her head, exaggerated, and forms an X over her chest.

Older Cleaner 1 swaps the empty respirator for his own and tries to breathe. His eyes BULGE out--he THROWS the empty respirator away and replaces his own.

Older Cleaner 1 LOCKS his eyes on Lex--her respirator. Lex slowly reaches up and wraps her fingers around a stalactite.

Older Cleaner 1 SHOOTS toward her. Lex YANKS herself forward and toward the ceiling, going over Older Cleaner 1. His hand SNAKES up--CLOSES on her leg.

Lex KICKS wildly. Older Cleaner 1 gets a second hand on the same leg. Lex looks back--STOMPS at Older Cleaner 1's face. Older Cleaner 1 ducks the first kick--second. The third connects. Glass--his headlamp--CRUNCHES. The light goes out.

Still, Older Cleaner 1 hangs on. Lex STOMPS one more time-- his respirator CRACKS. Barely any bubbles escape. Older Cleaner 1 SCREAMS and releases her.

She swims away, dragging herself along by stalactites. She looks back.

Older Cleaner 1 is nowhere to be seen.

INT. GATES CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Morgan checks behind him. The coast is clear.

Morgan taps his link. The screen in front of him goes BLANK. The same display comes to life on his LINK.

He slides his work link into the pocket with the contraband link. There's a soft CLINK as they touch.

He takes his work link out. There's a popup--"LINK UNRECOGNIZED DEVICE? YES / NO"

Morgan slides the popup to the top of the link's screen. He PRESSES and HOLDS on the one RED GATE above 16-7.

It turns green. The instant it does, he taps "YES" on the popup.

An alarm SCREECHES. "WARNING: SECURITY BREACH" flashes on all screens. The displays FREEZE. The gate remains GREEN.

In a fluid motion, he slides the work link back on his desk, and the display returns to his screen. To his side, Nosy Operator finishes turning his head to his own screen.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)

Can we not go a single day without
an incident? NO UNAUTHORIZED
PERIPHERALS!

Morgan glances at him. Nosy Operator stares too hard at his own screen.

The alarm continues to BLARE.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 16-7 - AT THE SAME TIME

Lex swims slowly through the tunnel, pressing her hands against the ceiling. The HISS of the respirator is thin and shallow.

There's a RUMBLE--a GRINDING sound. Lex freezes--WHIPS AROUND.

She pulls herself toward the gate by the stalactites, KICKING as she goes. She takes quick, THREADY breaths on her respirator.

The respirator's hiss TRAILS OFF into silence. Lex holds her breath and continues.

INT. GATES CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The SCREECH of the alarm continues. Morgan shrinks down in his seat.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)
This should not still be going.
Whoever it is, you know who you
are, or you're really fucking
stupid.

Nosy Operator glances at Morgan. The moment their eyes meet, Nosy Operator looks away.

MORGAN
Bet it's the same guy as yesterday.

NOSY OPERATOR
Uh-huh.

MORGAN
(silently)
Shit.

Morgan stands.

NOSY OPERATOR
Where are you going?

MORGAN
Bathroom. It's not like we're
getting anything done.

A HAND falls on Morgan's shoulder. He FLINCHES and looks back. Two AEGIS GUARDS stand behind him. Aegis Guard 2 holds a STUN BATON.

Nosy Operator SIGHS in relief.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
You're a real dick, you know that?

ARTIFICIAL VOICE (V.O.)
Inflammatory language may result in
a referral to HR.

AEGIS GUARD 1
Why don't you go ahead and
disconnect that peripheral?

MORGAN
Let's just go, man.

AEGIS GUARD 1
Have it your way.

He releases Morgan's shoulder. We hear an electric CRACKLE.

MORGAN
There's no need for--

Morgan's body LOCKS UP and SEIZES. Aegis Guard 2 draws the
stun baton away from Morgan's back, and Morgan starts to
COLLAPSE.

The guards grab him by the arms and drag him away.

INT. SEWERS - SECTOR 16-7 - NIGHT

Lex's heart POUNDS. Bubbles escape her lips.

She swims forward. More bubbles--then none at all. A high-
pitched DRONE begins, barely audible, and CRESCENDOS
gradually.

She continues forward. As she swims, she reaches to her neck--
grabs the respirator--SHAKES it. She puts it to her lips.
Silence--no air flow.

She lets it go.

The edges of the scene grow DARK. Shadows WEAVE around the
edges of the red glow.

Her heartbeat SLOWS and QUIETS. The drone eclipses her
heartbeat.

Lex's movements grow lethargic. Her eyes FLUTTER.

The scene grows darker and darker. The red glow begins to
lose its color.

ETHAN HAN (V.O.)
(dreamlike)
Looks like we both died for
nothing.

Lex drifts forward, then to a stop. The drone drowns out
every other sound.

ETHAN HAN (V.O.)
You should have known better.

As her eyes close, the scene grows dark. In the last vestige
of light, a DARK FIGURE appears, coming toward Lex.

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT