

FADE IN:

1 INT. LAMBDA CORP - RESTRICTED ARCHIVE ROOM - NIGHT 1

Dim, cold fluorescent lights hum quietly. The camera moves slowly down a narrow hallway lined with locked doors, each marked with a number and a small "Authorized Personnel Only" sign. A faint beeping echoes from behind one of the doors. The door has a high-security biometric scanner next to it, silently blinking.

CUT TO:

2 INT. RESTRICTED ARCHIVE ROOM - NIGHT 2

The camera glides into the room. Stacks of boxes, files, and computers line the walls, organized meticulously. Redacted documents lie scattered across a central metal table, along with eerie, grainy footage of a missing person's last known whereabouts displayed on a flickering monitor.

A security guard enters, his face hidden, seeming tense, as if he isn't supposed to be here. He checks his surroundings nervously and begins rummaging through files labeled with random numbers and codenames. As he flips through the files, he pulls out a thin, metallic folder labeled "Subject 7: Classified - Terminated." His hands shake as he opens it, revealing a photo: the missing person from Episode 1, John Vaughn.

The guard's face contorts in confusion and fear as he scans the details. Suddenly, footsteps echo in the hallway. He freezes, quickly shoving the file back into place and securing the folder, his movements rushed. The footsteps grow louder, closer. The guard grabs a few documents at random, stuffs them into his jacket, and exits swiftly.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. MEADOWBROOK - NIGHT 3

The guard exits Lambda Corp, glancing nervously over his shoulder. He disappears down a dark alley, leaving Lambda's high-security building looming in the background, cold and foreboding.

CUT TO:

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - TEACHER'S RESTROOM - DAY

Bella stands in a narrow stall in the teacher's restroom, the faint hum of fluorescent lights overhead. She sits on the toilet, staring at her phone, hands trembling slightly as she scrolls through messages on a dating app. A new notification pops up: a message from Zane, her date for later.

ON SCREEN

Zane: Hey, looking forward to tonight! You good? :)

Bella smiles faintly, biting her lip. Her fingers hesitate before typing a reply.

ON SCREEN (CONT'D)

Bella: Me too! Just a busy day at school. Can't wait. :)

She hits send and takes a deep breath, pocketing her phone and standing up. As she unlocks the stall door and steps out, her pale face catches in the mirror above the sink, revealing tired eyes and a forced smile. Another teacher, MS. CARSON, slightly older and composed, stands at the adjacent sink, washing her hands. She glances at Bella in the mirror, raising an eyebrow in gentle concern.

MS. CARSON

(softly)

Bella, you look... pale. Are you alright?

Bella musters a smile, gripping the edge of the sink to steady herself.

BELLA

(slightly breathless)

Oh, I'm fine. Just... a busy day. You know how it is.

Ms. Carson gives her a lingering look, clearly unconvinced, but she lets it slide, drying her hands with a paper towel. Bella's phone buzzes again, breaking the brief silence. She tries to ignore it, moving to dry her hands quickly.

As she reaches for the paper towels, her tote bag slips off her shoulder, tumbling to the ground. Items spill out: pens, lipstick, a crumpled planner—and a prescription bottle of Xanax.

Bella's face flushes as she quickly crouches to gather her things, stuffing them back into her bag. Ms. Carson bends down to help, her hand hovering briefly over the Xanax bottle before looking up at Bella with a questioning expression.

MS. CARSON
(concerned, quiet)
Bella...

Bella freezes her face a mixture of embarrassment and defensiveness. She grabs the pill bottle quickly, shoving it into her bag, avoiding Ms. Carson's eyes.

BELLA
(stammering)
I-I have to go. I have a class
waiting.

Without another word, Bella stands, clutching her bag tightly against her chest. She darts out of the restroom, leaving Ms. Carson standing alone, her face filled with a mix of worry and pity as she watches Bella's retreating figure.

CUT TO:

EXT. FREDERICK ADAMS BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON

Kira parks her bike beside the shop entrance, locking it securely. She glances at the modest sign overhead, "Adam's Books," before pushing open the door.

INT. FREDERICK ADAMS BOOKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

The doorbell chimes softly as she steps inside. The shop is dimly lit, exuding a faint, warm scent of old books and polished wood. Stacks of novels and vintage leather-bound volumes line the shelves. FREDERICK ADAMS, a quirky man in his mid-50s, with large, round glasses and a colorful but slightly worn suit, stands behind the counter. For a fleeting moment, his gaze lingers on Kira, almost as if he recognizes her.

FREDERICK ADAMS
(smiling, with an air of
mystery)
Welcome to Adam's Books. It's
always nice to see young faces
browsing the classics. Need any
help finding something special?

Kira takes in his curious appearance, noting the ink-stained fingertips and a faint bruise on his wrist peeking out from under his sleeve, a peculiar detail that she quickly brushes off.

KIRA FREY
 (chuckling lightly)
 Thanks. Actually... yeah. I'm
 looking for something on birds.

FREDERICK ADAMS
 (gesturing)
 Down the hall, to your right. The
 bottom shelf... on the left side.

Kira nods, offering a polite smile as she follows his direction. She walks down the narrow aisle, glancing at the shelves as she goes, her fingers brushing the spines of books until she finds the bird section. She picks out a book on sparrows, inspecting it thoughtfully. As she lifts it, she notices a woman on the other side of the shelf, watching her through a gap.

Their eyes meet, and the woman quickly averts her gaze, a subtle tension hanging in the air.

KIRA FREY
 (to herself)
 Well... that'll do.

She clutches the book and heads back to the counter, stealing another glance toward the woman, who now seems fixated on either her or Frederick.

As Kira hands over the book, Frederick's eyes linger on it, a hint of nostalgia or recognition flickering in his gaze.

FREDERICK ADAMS
 (softly)
 Sparrows... a fascinating choice.

KIRA FREY
 (smiling)
 It's for my grandmother.

FREDERICK ADAMS
 (nods thoughtfully)
 How thoughtful. She'll appreciate
 it, I'm sure.

He rings up the book, the faint sound of a receipt printing. Kira notices a faint smear of dirt on Frederick's cuff, just above that bruise on his wrist—a detail almost out of place in the cozy bookshop. She frowns, her mind briefly flashing to the story of the Lambda break-in she'd overheard recently, then dismisses the thought.

KIRA FREY
(awkwardly)
Thanks... that's all.

FREDERICK ADAMS
(watching her intently)
Take care, K-- and do come
back--anytime.

There's something strange in his tone, a subtle warmth mingled with a hint of... concern? Kira offers a polite nod, feeling an inexplicable unease that she shakes off as she exits. Behind her, Frederick watches with a thoughtful expression, his gaze lingering long after she's gone.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCER'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

The camera zooms through a security monitor onto a sleek computer screen in a minimalist, all-black office. A tall figure, MERCER, sits behind a metallic, pristine desk, his face obscured by shadows, only his sharp profile partially visible in the dim lighting. He sits in a black leather chair, fingers tracing the armrest as he surveys multiple live feeds of his company's activities on a wall of screens. A thick cigar rests between his fingers, smoke coiling around him, casting faint, eerie shapes in the air.

His fingers, adorned with a glinting WTE ring on his smallest finger, reach for a phone. He scrolls through the contacts, landing on W.T., and taps to call.

A deep, resonant voice answers on the other end, its owner equally concealed in mystery. VOICE = Winston Toner, K.C.'s father.

VOICE (O.S.)
(smoothly)
Everything proceeding as expected?

MERCER exhales slowly, releasing a plume of smoke that twists and disperses in the dark air.

MERCER
(coolly)
The microchip rollout is scheduled
for ten days from now.

A soft chuckle echoes from the phone, dark and calculating.

VOICE (O.S.)

Perfect. I'll see to it that every publication has its eyes on it. Make no mistake... everyone will be watching.

Mercer's lips curl into a hint of a smile, cold and controlled, as he adjusts the ring on his finger.

MERCER

(in a low voice)

It's finally happening.

A pause follows, the weight of their words hanging ominously. The man on the other end breaks the silence.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ten days. Where it all began.

Without another word, they disconnect. Mercer's expression remains hidden as he leans back, fingers still tracing the cigar, a faint smirk lingering as the camera pans over his profile, catching only smoke and shadows. His face stays entirely unrevealed, leaving his identity and intentions shrouded in darkness.

The camera drifts backward, slipping out of Mercer's office and down the darkened halls of the company building, the unsettling conversation echoing faintly as the screen fades to black.

CUT TO:

INT. LAMBDA CORP MAIN LOBBY - HOURS LATER

Samantha sits at her desk in the dimly lit office, stacks of folders surrounding her. Her eyes are weary, and she checks her watch, realizing she's late for her debate club meeting. She glances back at the disorganized pile Dr. Simons had given her, frustration flickering across her face. With a reluctant sigh, she stands up, gathering her things, her hand hesitating as it brushes over a particular folder she slipped into her bag earlier. Guilt tugs at her, but she steels herself, shoulders tense.

She nods briskly to the other scientists before heading out, each step laced with unease. As she exits the lab and approaches the HR desk, the receptionist gives her a pointed, unsmiling look.

SAMANTHA WILSON

(clearing her throat)

Hey, uh... I have to head out.

(MORE)

SAMANTHA WILSON (CONT'D)

Could you please let Dr. Simons
know I'm leaving?

The HR REPRESENTATIVE eyes her bag, her gaze sharp and unwelcoming, as though assessing Samantha's every move.

HR REPRESENTATIVE

(flatly)

Sure. I'll let her know.

Her tone is clipped, and suspicious, and she doesn't bother hiding it. Samantha shifts her bag uncomfortably, feeling the weight of the stolen folder pressing against her side.

Without another word, Samantha heads toward the exit, adjusting her bag and casting a quick, guilty glance over her shoulder. The HR Representative watches her with narrowed eyes, a slight smirk of contempt tugging at her lips.

INT. DR. SIMONS' OBSERVATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In a hidden office, DR. SIMONS observes Samantha through a discreet surveillance monitor, a satisfied smile curling across her lips. She leans back in her chair, fingers drumming lightly on the desk, her expression one of dark amusement.

DR. SIMONS

(murmuring to herself)

Perfect... Just perfect.

She watches as Samantha exits the building, carrying the stolen folder exactly as planned.

EXT. LAMBDA CORP BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Samantha steps outside into the cool evening air, hesitating as she looks up at the massive Lambda logo looming above the entrance, her mind racing with unease. She knows she's crossed a line, and the thrill of rebellion is tainted with a deep, unsettling guilt.

SAMANTHA WILSON

(whispering to herself)

What are you doing, Sam...?

She shakes her head, pushing down her unease as she turns to hail a cab, glancing back one last time at the Lambda building, feeling a strange mix of apprehension and determination.

She waves down the cab and climbs inside, casting one last uneasy look at the building as it fades in the rearview mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLA'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Bella opens the front door, stepping into the quiet apartment. She lets out a long, tired breath, kicking off her shoes by the entrance and setting down her bag on the nearby chair.

BELLA
(calling out)
Sam? You home yet?

Silence answers her. She glances around the apartment, hoping to see a light on or hear some sign of her sister. She checks her phone, realizing there's no message from Sam.

Bella sighs, glancing at the clock on the wall. There's still a bit of time before her date tonight, just enough for a quick shower. She considers it, hesitating slightly, then heads to the bathroom, running her fingers through her hair, as if mentally preparing herself.

As she walks down the hallway, she tosses her keys onto the counter and picks up a stray sweater from the sofa, tidying absentmindedly as she goes.

BELLA (CONT'D)
(softly to herself)
Alright, a quick shower... then get
it together for tonight.

She enters the bathroom, closing the door gently behind her as the apartment falls back into silence.

INT. BELLA'S BATHROOM - EVENING

Bella stands alone in the dimly lit bathroom, her fingers gently grazing the edge of the sink. The only sound is the faint drip of a faucet and her own quiet breathing. She catches her reflection in the mirror, her gaze sweeping slowly over herself.

She tugs at her t-shirt, reluctantly pulling it over her head, her expression shifting from neutral to pained as she studies herself with an unforgiving eye. She turns slightly, inspecting her body from different angles, each movement revealing a flicker of self-doubt.

Her hands move to her stomach, then to her arms, where she pinches at her skin as if assessing imperfections only she can see. She leans closer to the mirror, her eyes focusing on faint lines and small blemishes, her face tense with frustration.

BELLA
(whispering to herself)
How did I get here...?

Her fingers trail to her collarbone, brushing over the prominent bones, her lips pressed into a thin line. She pulls her hair back, twisting it into a makeshift bun to examine her profile, but the act only seems to amplify her dissatisfaction. She sighs, turning the faucet on and splashing cold water over her face as if trying to wash away the insecurities simmering inside.

Her hand moves to the bottle of prescription pills sitting on the counter. She picks it up, staring at the label with a hint of resentment, then sets it back down with a shaky breath.

Finally, Bella reaches into the shower to turn on the water, watching the steam rise as it fills the room. She looks at herself one last time, her face a mixture of sadness and determination. She steps away from the mirror and into the shower, disappearing behind the curtain.

CUT TO:

INT. LAMBDA RETIREMENT HOME - EVENING

Kira approaches the looming Lambda retirement home, its sleek exterior dominated by a massive LED-lit sign: LAMBDA Nr. 1. She takes a deep breath, feeling a hint of apprehension, and steps inside.

INT. LAMBDA RETIREMENT HOME - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The lobby is pristine, almost sterile, with soft, artificial lighting casting a cold glow. RECEPTIONIST EVELYN, a petite woman with dark glasses, sleek brown hair, and pink lipstick, greets her with an overly bright smile. Her voice is smooth, practiced, and almost too friendly.

RECEPTIONIST EVELYN
(bubbly, almost rehearsed)
Good evening, Miss, and welcome to
Lambda's premier retirement
facility. How can I help you today?

Kira hesitates, feeling oddly scrutinized.

KIRA FREY
I'm here to visit my grandmother,
Nada Wilson.

The receptionist's smile tightens slightly, her eyes flickering with a hint of curiosity.

RECEPTIONIST EVELYN
(leaning forward, voice
softening)
And you are?

Kira pauses before answering, almost instinctively cautious.

KIRA FREY
Kira... Wilson.

The receptionist studies her for a moment, then turns to the computer, typing slowly. The screen reflects off her glasses as she scrolls, her expression unreadable. With a soft ding, a room number and location appear on the screen.

RECEPTIONIST EVELYN
(sweetly, but with an odd
edge)
Ah, there she is. Right this way,
Miss Wilson.

Evelyn's smile falters momentarily as she motions for Kira to follow, almost as if there's something more behind her expression.

EXT. LAMBDA RETIREMENT HOME - INDOOR GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Kira follows Evelyn outside to a small garden area. Under a large tree, GRANDMA NADA, a gentlewoman in her 80s, sits in a wheelchair, watching the birds flit from branch to branch. Kira spots her first.

KIRA FREY
Thank you.

RECEPTIONIST EVELYN
(with an unsettling tone)
You're welcome. Take your... time.

Evelyn's words linger, her gaze unblinking before she walks away. Kira shakes off the strange feeling and hurries over to her grandmother.

KIRA FREY
(calling out)
Nadaaaa!

GRANDMA NADA turns, her face lighting up with warmth as Kira leans in for a hug, wrapping her arms around her.

GRANDMA NADA
(holding Kira close)
Kira, my girl! Oh, look at you.
Have you eaten? You look thin. I've missed you so much.

Kira laughs softly, pulling back.

KIRA FREY
(smiling)
I missed you too, Granny. Are they treating you well here?

Nada hesitates, her eyes shifting slightly.

GRANDMA NADA
(sighing)
They do what they must. I'm just an old woman, who cares about us anyway?

Kira frowns, but before she can respond, she pulls a book from her bag.

KIRA FREY
I brought you something. Thought you might like it.

She hands her the book on sparrows. Nada's face softens as she runs her fingers over the cover, her expression growing reflective.

GRANDMA NADA
(in a hushed tone)
The sparrow... in ancient times, they believed it was watched over by something greater, a creature under God's protection. Such a beautiful bird.

Kira watches her grandmother, her concern deepening.

KIRA FREY
I'm glad you like it.

Nada places the book in her lap, then gently clasps Kira's hands in her own, her hands soft yet trembling slightly.

GRANDMA NADA
 (tenderly)
 How's our Sam? Did she survive her
 first day at Lambda?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL - DEBATE CLUB ROOM - EVENING

Samantha steps into the debate club room, her face drawn with exhaustion and a hint of guilt lurking in her eyes. The room is filled with her peers, who are gathered around tables, preparing notes, and discussing animatedly. She hesitates in the doorway, feeling out of place before she slips into her usual seat at the back.

Her friends notice her arrival, a few casting curious glances her way. JULIE, her close friend and teammate, leans over with a concerned expression.

BACK TO:

INT. LAMBDA RETIREMENT HOME - CONTINUOUS

Kira takes in the surroundings, noticing other elderly residents slowly walking or sitting quietly. The scene feels peaceful, but there's an underlying heaviness.

KIRA FREY
 Have you found any friends here?

GRANDMA NADA
 (a shadow crossing her
 face)
 I did... but they're gone now.
 People seem to disappear often
 around here.

Kira's attention sharpens.

KIRA FREY
 Disappear?

GRANDMA NADA
 (lowering her voice)
 Some say it's their hearts giving
 out. I suppose... it's natural at
 our age. But it seems strange,
 doesn't it? Three of the friends I
 made here vanished overnight.
 Just... gone.

Kira feels a chill run down her spine, her unease growing.

KIRA FREY
 (slightly alarmed)
 And you believe that? That it's
 natural?

Grandma Nada sighs, her voice barely above a whisper.

GRANDMA NADA
 My mind wants to believe it, but my
 heart... well, the heart knows
 things long before the mind ever
 does, Kira.

They sit in silence, Kira's mind racing as she takes in her grandmother's words. The serene garden feels darker, the peace tainted with a sense of foreboding.

CUT TO:

INT. MEADOWBROOK DEBATE CLUB - EARLY EVENING

Fifteen high school students sit in a semi-circle, eyes focused on SAMANTHA WILSON, who stands at the podium, poised and confident. Behind her, two adult volunteers stand by, keeping an eye on the room. A small buffet with sodas sits in the back. The atmosphere is tense as Samantha wraps up her speech for today's topic: "Is it morally acceptable to genetically modify humans?"

SAMANTHA WILSON
 (steady, thoughtful)
 Genetic modifications carry
 potential risks—some of which we
 can't even begin to foresee. This
 affects not just individuals but
 future generations, raising serious
 concerns about safety and the long-
 term impact of our choices.

The students exchange glances, intrigued. Samantha continues, her voice gaining momentum.

SAMANTHA WILSON (CONT'D)
 And what about consent? When we
 alter the genes of embryos or
 future generations, we're making
 changes on behalf of those who have
 no voice in the matter. Can we
 really claim to respect autonomy if
 we deny them an unaltered genetic
 identity?

A ripple of murmurs spreads through the room. Samantha looks around, feeling the weight of her words.

SAMANTHA WILSON (CONT'D)

(firmly)

The truth is, we have to ask ourselves if humanity is even ready—morally responsible enough—to wield this kind of power. Are we prepared for the ethical consequences? Because in the wrong hands, ... genetic modification could lead to something far darker than we can imagine.

The students fall silent, the gravity of her statement hanging heavily in the air. Some lean back, processing her words, while others shift uncomfortably.

SAMANTHA WILSON (CONT'D)

And beyond that, altering human genes could mean 'playing God,' disrupting the natural order in ways we may never fully understand. This isn't just about science; it's about safeguarding humanity from potential abuses, discrimination, and unintended disasters.

Samantha pauses, looking out at her fellow students, each of them captivated by her speech. She takes a deep breath, then gathers her papers, offering a small, humble smile.

SAMANTHA WILSON (CONT'D)

Thank you for listening.

There's a beat of silence as she steps off the podium. Then, slowly, a few students start clapping, the applause growing louder.

LISA

(enthusiastically)

Great work, Sam!

SAMANTHA WILSON

(smiling, modest)

Thank you.

She heads back to her seat, a mix of pride and contemplation on her face as the club members reflect on the powerful questions she's raised. Her eyes wander to her bag, the stolen folders hidden inside.

CUT TO:

INT. RETIREMENT HOME - SUNSET

Kira and Grandma Nada share a warm moment as the evening sun casts a golden glow over the garden. Suddenly, RECEPTIONIST EVELYN appears, her posture stiff and her expression indifferent.

RECEPTIONIST EVELYN
(flatly)
Visiting hours are over. It's time
for you to leave.

Grandma Nada raises a hand gently, her voice soft but firm.

GRANDMA NADA
Just one more minute, please.

The receptionist pauses, clearly displeased but biting back her response. She nods curtly and walks away, muttering something under her breath that Kira can't quite make out.

KIRA FREY
(lowering her voice,
concerned)
I don't want to leave you, Grandma.
Something about this place feels...
off.

Grandma Nada gives Kira a reassuring smile, squeezing her hand.

GRANDMA NADA
(softly)
"It's alright, my love. Don't worry
about me. Thank you for coming, and
please say hello to Bella and Sam.
Maybe you could all visit next
week?"

Kira nods, her heart heavy.

KIRA FREY
"We'll be back, I promise."

She leans down to kiss her grandmother goodbye, feeling an inexplicable weight in her chest. As Grandma Nada rolls herself back toward the building, she glances over her shoulder with a final, loving look.

GRANDMA NADA

(gently)

"Take care, Kira. All three of
you."

Kira watches her disappear inside, her heart pounding with an unfamiliar unease. She briefly considers asking a nearby attendant about the missing residents, but a gnawing sense of caution stops her. She glances back at RECEPTIONIST EVELYN, who's watching her with an icy gaze.

Shaking off her discomfort, Kira heads out, unlocking her bike and riding away into the evening.

EXT. SAM'S DEBATE CLUB - EVENING

The debate club has ended, and SAM walks out with a sense of lingering intensity from her earlier speech. She heads over to the nearby bus stop, clutching her bag close.

EXT. BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

At the bus stop, Sam's attention is caught by a large, glowing ad on the shelter wall. It announces an upcoming free trial for "Revolutionary Pain and Addiction-Free Living," complete with a payment offer of 2,000 euros in cryptocurrency for the first 200 test patients.

The ad's sleek design and alluring promises stir a chill through Sam's spine. She stares at it, her intuition flaring up—something about this is deeply unsettling.

Just then, the bus pulls up with a hiss. She shakes off her unease, adjusts her bag, and steps inside, glancing back one last time at the ad as the bus pulls away.

CUT TO:

INT. LAMBDA LABORATORY - UNDERGROUND TESTING FACILITY -
EVENING

The lab is vast, sterile, and eerily silent except for the faint hum of machinery and the rhythmic beeping of medical monitors. Rows of young test subjects, barely adults, are lined up in reclining metal chairs, each one hooked up to an array of wires, IVs, and machines. Their eyes are wide open, pupils dilated in terror, yet their mouths are covered by tight-fitting suction devices that muffle their voices, allowing only faint, agonized gasps to escape.

The sound of slow, clicking footsteps echoes through the room. DR. SARAH SIMONS strides in, her heels tapping against the polished floor, her white coat pristine and sleeves rolled to the elbows. She hums softly, an almost serene melody, as her cold gaze scans over each terrified face.

One young woman, barely out of her teens, meets Dr. Simons' gaze. Tears stream down her face, her eyes pleading, filled with helpless terror. She tries to scream, her body straining against the restraints, but the machine over her mouth holds firm, sucking away any sound she might make.

Simons walks up to her, tilting her head with a curious smile.

DR. SIMONS

(mocking sweetness)

Oh, don't look so distressed, darling. This is all for progress, you see. Soon, you'll be a part of something... much greater.

She taps the screen next to the young woman, observing the readings with clinical precision, showing heart rates spiking in fear. The data on the monitors lights up, feeding her information about brain activity, emotional responses, and physiological changes.

She presses a button, causing a low current of electricity to pulse through the girl's system. The young woman jolts, her eyes widening even more, tears streaming as the pain courses through her.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)

(humming her tune, with satisfaction)

Such promise. Imagine, in just nine days, the world will be filled with people who no longer need to think, to feel... to resist. Perfectly obedient, perfectly productive.

Dr. Simons turns to a nearby assistant, who watches her with a mixture of awe and unease.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)

(in a chillingly calm tone)

When the chip is released, these 'troublesome' human impulses—pain, addiction, hesitation—will be wiped away. We're giving them the gift of peace.

(MORE)

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)

An end to suffering, to the messy complications of emotion. They should be grateful.

She turns back to her subjects, their eyes fixed on her in horror. Her gaze lingers on each of them, savoring their silent terror, their absolute helplessness.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)

(to the room, softly)

But in the meantime, we must ensure every little detail is perfected.

With that, she presses another button, increasing the machine's output. The suction devices tighten, and the subjects' muffled cries grow more desperate, their eyes brimming with horror as their bodies shudder and twitch.

Simons smiles, and her satisfaction is evident. She closes her eyes for a moment, reveling in the sight, the power, and the promise of absolute control.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)

(whispering to herself,
savoring)

Nine more days... and humanity will finally be mine."

She hums her eerie tune again as she walks through the rows, leaving her subjects trapped in their silent nightmare, knowing that she holds their fate and the future of the world in her hands.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Soft jazz music fills Bella's room, a warm contrast to the cool evening outside. Bella sits cross-legged on her bedroom floor, wrapped in a towel and robe, her face lit by the mirror as she applies her makeup. The front door opens and closes as SAM arrives home from her first day at LAMBDA and her debate club.

INT. BELLA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam, looking exhausted, wanders into Bella's room, dropping herself heavily onto Bella's bed.

BELLA WILSON

(turning to Sam, smiling)

Sam, I'm here. How was it?

Sam sighs, glancing up at the ceiling.

SAMANTHA WILSON
The debate club? Great as always...

BELLA WILSON
(giving her a knowing
look)
You know what I mean. How was
Lambda?

Sam pauses, her expression uncertain.

SAMANTHA WILSON
Different than I expected.

Bella stops applying her eyeliner, curious.

BELLA WILSON
How do you mean? ... What happened?

SAMANTHA WILSON
(slightly distant)
I don't know, it was just... weird.
Like they have a public face and
then something entirely different
behind closed doors.

Bella frowns slightly, concerned but attempting to keep things light.

BELLA WILSON
It's only your first day... maybe
it just takes some getting used to.

Sam looks unconvinced but nods, accepting Bella's words for now. She watches as Bella carefully lines her eyes, preparing for her evening.

SAMANTHA WILSON
(sighing, changing the
subject)
So... what's all this for?

Bella grins, cheeks flushing a little.

BELLA WILSON
My date.

Sam raises her eyebrows, surprised but trying to mask her protective instincts. She watches Bella closely.

SAMANTHA WILSON
Ah ja, true. Who's the lucky guy?"

BELLA WILSON
 (half-smiling)
 Someone I met online... before you
 say anything, he seems nice."

Sam's expression softens for a moment, but her eyes flicker with a hint of concern. A silence settles between them as Bella goes back to her makeup. Both sisters' eyes drift to a photograph on Bella's dresser—a picture of their parents, smiling brightly, forever frozen in a happier time.

For a brief moment, a flashback overtakes them both—

FLASHBACK TO: INT. FAMILY CAR - NIGHT - YEARS EARLIER

Young Bella and Sam, are strapped into the backseat, laughing as their parents sing along to the radio, voices blending in warm harmony. The laughter fades as headlights suddenly flash into view, too close. The sound of screeching tires and breaking glass. A final, haunting silence.

Back in the present, Bella blinks, shaking herself out of the memory. Sam watches her, sadness and understanding in her gaze.

SAMANTHA WILSON
 (speaking softly)
 Sometimes, when you dress up like
 this... you look just like her. Not
 that I remember exactly, but...
 from the photos.

Bella's hand stills, her face softening. She sets down her makeup brush and reaches for Sam's hand.

BELLA WILSON
 (whispering)
 Me too. Every time.

Sam gives her a faint smile, brushing away the sorrow with a light squeeze of Bella's hand.

SAMANTHA WILSON
 (quietly)
 I just... I miss them so much.

BELLA WILSON
 (slightly forcing a smile)
 Me too. More than anything.

The sisters share a long, deep look. Bella breaks it first, turning back to finish her makeup, now more thoughtful than before.

Her phone buzzes with a message, and her face lights up, a glimmer of hope breaking through. She moves from the mirror to the closet, finding her outfit for the evening. Sam sits up, her tone more playful now.

SAMANTHA WILSON

(jokingly)

Well, if you're ready to risk
getting your heart broken again...

Bella pauses, a brief look of hurt passing over her face before she forces a smile.

BELLA WILSON

It's okay. Maybe... maybe he's
different. You never know.

Sam sighs, trying to hold her tongue, but there's a flicker of protective skepticism in her eyes.

SAMANTHA WILSON

Just... be careful, okay?

BELLA WILSON

(smiling gently)

I will. I'll be home by eleven.
I'll text you. Don't stay up too
late, there are leftovers in the
fridge.

Sam manages a small smile, watching Bella gather her things to leave.

SAMANTHA WILSON

Love you.

BELLA WILSON

(softly)

Love you too.

Bella leaves the room, and Sam's gaze drifts to her bag on the bed. The corner of the stolen Lambda file is visible. She reaches out, fingers trembling slightly, and pulls the folder out, looking at it with a mix of guilt and curiosity.

INT. BELLA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam sits up on Bella's bed, absentmindedly playing with a strand of her hair. Her eyes drift to her bag, and suddenly she remembers.

SAMANTHA WILSON
 (whispering to herself)
 I almost forgot.

She quickly reaches for her bag, pulling out the Lambda folder she snuck out. She opens it, her breath catching as she skims through the first few pages. Her eyes widen, disbelief and horror creeping onto her face.

SAMANTHA WILSON (CONT'D)
 (reading quietly)
 Winston Toner's son... Kaleb
 Charles Toner... responsible for
 developing Lambda's latest
 software... designed to rewire the
 human psyche through an artificial
 pineal gland implant...

Sam stares at the page, heart pounding. She whispers to herself, barely able to believe it.

SAMANTHA WILSON (CONT'D)
 "That... can't be true."

Suddenly, a memory surfaces—

FLASHBACK TO: INT. COFFEE SHOP - ONE YEAR AGO - DAY

Kira, Bella, and Sam sit around a small table in the cozy coffee shop. Kira is animated, sharing her experience from a tech conference she attended. Bella stirs her coffee absently, while Sam listens intently.

KIRA FREY
 (leaning in, voice low)
 So, one of the big speakers was
 Winston Toner. He's a huge deal in
 the tech world, apparently one of
 Lambda's lead minds behind all this
 neural tech.

Sam frowns, the name triggering something in her memory.

SAMANTHA WILSON
 Wait... Toner? Isn't that... isn't
 that your tutor's last name too?
 K.C. Toner?

Kira nods, leaning back in her chair thoughtfully.

KIRA FREY
 I know. I thought it was strange
 too.

(MORE)

KIRA FREY (CONT'D)

I don't know if they're related, but they could be. Winston Toner's a big shot, though. The way he talked about 'rewiring human consciousness' was honestly... unsettling.

Bella finally tunes in, glancing between Kira and Sam.

BELLA WILSON

What do you mean, unsettling?

Kira hesitates, searching for the right words.

KIRA FREY

Just... the way he spoke. Like he was so sure of it, you know? That tech could literally change who we are. Almost like he's... playing with fire.

Sam and Bella exchange a look, both uneasy.

SAMANTHA WILSON

(jokingly, but with a hint of discomfort)

Sounds like a science-fiction villain.

Kira nods slowly, a serious look in her eyes.

KIRA FREY

Yeah... honestly, that's exactly how it felt."

Back in the present, Sam blinks, snapping out of the memory. Her heart races as she realizes the implications of her discovery.

She grabs her phone, typing a quick, urgent message to Kira.

Text to Kira: "Remember Winston Toner? Just found something HUGE. Call me ASAP."

She hits send, her fingers shaking as she looks down at the file, the gravity of it settling over her.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - THE NEXT DAY

Kira sits at the counter, typing on her laptop, her textbooks and notes spread around her.

She sips from her coffee cup, her attention drifting between her code and her phone, where she reads Sam's message, her curiosity piqued. She quickly types a response.

KIRA'S RESPONSE:

"Hmm... interesting. I'll see what I can dig up. Call me after Lambda today. X, Kira."

As she hits send, a WAITRESS in her late 30s approaches, smiling as she refills Kira's coffee.

WAITRESS

Hey, Kira, where are the girls?
Left you to study solo today?

Kira looks up, smiling politely.

KIRA FREY

Yeah, Bella's at school, and Sam's got her internship at Lambda.

WAITRESS

I see. Well, enjoy the quiet.
You've got the focus I wish I'd had at your age. I spent my days hanging with the wrong crowd, doing... not-so-productive things.

Kira gives her a sympathetic nod, unsure how to respond.

KIRA FREY

Uh... thanks.

WAITRESS

But that's not your problem. I'll keep your cup full, don't let me distract you.

KIRA FREY

(laughs lightly)
Thanks. I appreciate it.

The waitress walks away, and Kira's attention returns to her screen. She opens a search tab, typing in "John Vaughn disappearance" and "Lambda." As she sifts through articles, another name catches her eye—Winston Toner. She pauses, then types "Winston Toner + Lambda," and an old article surfaces.

Kira's gaze sharpens as she reads, uncovering a faded image with the headline:

OLD ARTICLE:

"Lambda's Controversial Founders: Winston Toner, Mercer, and an Unnamed Partner."

In the photo, a younger Winston Toner stands beside an imposing man labeled "MERCER." A third figure, whose face is mostly shadowed, is visible in the background.

Kira squints, examining the partially visible face of the third man. A flashback strikes her memory as she recalls her visit to the bookshop the previous day...

BACK TO PRESENT: INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Kira's fingers hover over the trackpad, her eyes darting back and forth between the faded article and the names associated with Lambda Corp. She leans in, squinting at the grainy photo, her focus fixed on Winston Toner. The words "pioneering advancements" and "revolutionizing neural tech" jump out at her from the article's text.

In the image, Winston Toner stands tall beside a figure labeled "MERCER," his demeanor intense. A third shadowed figure hovers in the background, barely visible. For a split second, a flashback strikes her memory...

FLASHBACK TO: INT. FREDERICK ADAMS' BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON

Frederick Adams, mid-50s, grins with a hint of familiarity as he adjusts his oversized glasses. His quirky, colorful suit and watchful gaze leave an odd impression. Kira briefly notices his sharp, bird-like features as he watches her from behind a stack of books.

But it's only a second—a flicker. Kira shakes off the memory, unsure if she's overthinking it.

BACK TO PRESENT:

Kira refocuses, pushing Frederick from her mind. Her attention narrows on "Winston Toner."

KIRA FREY

(quietly, reading)

Winston Toner, one of Lambda's original pioneers in neuroscience and tech... with ties to the new microchip project...

She taps the name "Winston Toner," which brings up a few other results, and then finally, an old, archived school newspaper headline from Meadowbrook College. Her eyes widen as she reads:

HEADLINE:

Alumni Profile: Winston Toner, Founder and Innovator. His son, Kaleb Charles Toner 14 years old), followed in his footsteps as the youngest star pupil in tech advancements.

Kira's jaw tightens as she mutters to herself.

KIRA FREY (CONT'D)

K.C. Toner... he's Winston Toner's son.

Her mind races with possibilities, connecting her tutor to the core of Lambda's ominous tech empire. She leans back, staring at her laptop screen as the implications sink in.

KIRA FREY (CONT'D)

(whispering)

He is right in the middle of this...

CUT TO:

EXT. MEADOWBROOK HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

Bella steps out of her car, glancing at herself in the rearview mirror. She tilts her head, touching a small bruise peeking out from beneath her collar. Her eyes flicker with a mix of shame and discomfort, but she straightens up, adjusting her scarf to cover the mark. Her phone buzzes, and she pulls it out reluctantly, seeing a message from Zane.

TEXT FROM ZANE:

"You were great last night. Thanks for coming by. You should come more often... but only if you wear that red thong again."

Her hand tightens around the phone, her fingers trembling slightly. After a moment's hesitation, she types a response, her face neutral.

BELLA WILSON

(typing) Sure.

She closes her eyes, exhaling shakily. Her hand slips into her bag, pulling out a small orange pill bottle.

She quickly shakes out a pill and swallows it, sighing as the tension melts from her shoulders.

Clutching her bag tightly, Bella strides toward the school building, trying to shake off the unease. She doesn't notice PRINCIPAL CHURCHON, in his 60s, standing in the window above, his gaze fixed on her with a calculating glint.

INT. SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Principal Churchon, impeccably dressed, stands by the window, watching Bella disappear into the school. He lifts his phone, his eyes never leaving the parking lot below.

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON
(on phone, low and smooth)
Yes, I saw her take the pills again. Next time she's in, make the swap. She doesn't need to remember anything.

He listens for a moment, a cruel smirk tugging at his lips.

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON (CONT'D)
With pleasure. Let's keep her right where we need her.

INT. LAMBDA PHARMACY - MORNING

The elderly pharmacy clerk, the same woman who handed Bella her last prescription, hangs up the phone. Her lipstick, a garish red, is smeared slightly across her teeth. Humming contentedly, she reaches under the counter and pulls out a vial marked "Special Memory Blend." Placing it aside, she runs a finger over the label, her eyes gleaming with satisfaction.

CUT TO:

INT. LAMBDA SMALL MEETING ROOM - MORNING

Dr. Sarah Simons leads Sam into a small, isolated meeting room, far removed from the bustle of the main lab. This time, her demeanor is icier, her eyes calculating. She carries a large, ominous-looking folder packed with files, and places it on the table in front of Sam with a heavy thud.

DR. SIMONS
(smiling thinly)
Today, after your...
(MORE)

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)
successful organizational efforts
yesterday, I have a new task for
you. It's essential, foundational
work.

She lifts the folder's lid, and inside is a thick stack of
paper files, each labeled with a code rather than a name. She
hands Sam the entire stack.

SAMANTHA WILSON
(eyes widening)
Uff!

She barely catches them, almost dropping the heavy files to
the floor. Dr. Simons's eyes glint as she watches Sam
struggle.

DR. SIMONS
These are health reports. Each one
is assigned a different code. The
names are all changed, naturally.
Privacy is our utmost concern.

SAMANTHA WILSON
So... no name matches the original?

Dr. Simons gives a perfectly measured pause, then a slight
smile.

DR. SIMONS
Of course not. That would be...
unethical.

Sam nods slowly, absorbing the weight of the task. Dr. Simons
eyes her carefully, leaning in ever so slightly, her gaze
penetrating.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)
Your assignment is to read each
report and diagnose the likely
illnesses, then suggest potential
treatments. Take note, Samantha,
this is important. Accuracy is
everything.

Her tone is subtly condescending as if daring Sam to make a
mistake. Sam frowns, flipping through the files, each filled
with jargon and odd details that feel unsettling.

SAMANTHA WILSON
Wow. That's a lot...

Dr. Simons tilts her head, her lips curving into a humorless
smile.

DR. SIMONS
(challenging)
I'm sure you'll manage. You're here
to learn, aren't you?

Sam nods hesitantly, a little thrown by Dr. Simons's sudden intensity.

SAMANTHA WILSON
Yes... of course.

DR. SIMONS
(smiling coldly)
Excellent.

She claps her hands once, the sound sharp in the quiet room. Sam flinches as Dr. Simons gestures toward a small door in the corner.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)
That's a bathroom. Feel free to use
it if you need to. But don't leave
this room. I want you to stay
focused.

As Sam looks over, she notices a faint smudge of dried blood on the door handle. Her gaze shifts back to Dr. Simons, who's already watching her reaction with a hint of satisfaction.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)
Any questions?

Sam opens her mouth but falters, unsure of what to ask in the face of Dr. Simons's scrutiny.

SAMANTHA WILSON
No, I think... I think I'm good.

DR. SIMONS
Perfect. I have important work to
attend to. I'll check on your
progress later.

With a final cold smile, Dr. Simons strides out, leaving Sam alone in the silence. The door shuts with an unsettling click, and Sam sits down heavily at the table. The clock reads 9:00 AM. She exhales, eyeing the towering stack of files warily.

Opening the first file, she scans the details: "Patient ID: E.D. Case Notes: Constant pressure between the eyes, onset in March 1921..." She shudders, flipping to the next page and feeling a creeping unease as she reads further.

The camera slowly zooms out, capturing Sam in the cold, quiet isolation of the room. She's trapped, surrounded by files that feel like they're closing in on her, and under the watchful, manipulative eye of Dr. Simons.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Bella sits at her desk, flipping through her notes for her next class, her fingers tapping nervously against the pages. A firm knock on her door jolts her out of her thoughts. She glances up and sees the school principal, MR. CHURCHON, standing in the doorway, his face unreadable.

BELLA WILSON
 (surprised, slightly
 uneasy)
 Principal Churchon. Please, come
 in.

Churchon steps inside, his movements deliberate as he closes the door behind him. Bella shifts nervously in her chair.

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON
 Miss Wilson, I need a word with
 you.

Bella straightens, her unease growing.

BELLA WILSON
 Of course. What's this about?

Churchon takes a seat across from her, folding his hands over his knee as he regards her with a faint, disapproving frown.

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON
 (slowly, with emphasis)
 I received a call this morning from
 Nick's mother. She expressed...
 concerns about the content you
 discussed in your philosophy class
 yesterday.

BELLA WILSON
 (confused)
 Concerns? About consciousness?

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON
 (voice hardening)
 Exactly. Miss Wilson, I cannot
 allow such...
 (MORE)

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON (CONT'D)

provocative and, frankly,
inappropriate discussions in this
institution. This is a Lambda-
certified school. I trust you
understand the weight of that.

Bella's mouth opens to respond, but he cuts her off with a
raised hand, his tone growing colder.

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON (CONT'D)

You are here to teach by the
materials Lambda has so generously
provided. I won't have my students
subjected to your... personal,
emotional theories about
"spiritual" matters. Leave those
notions outside these walls. Is
that clear?

Bella swallows, feeling her cheeks heat up with embarrassment
and frustration.

BELLA WILSON

(carefully controlled)
Crystal clear, sir.

PRINCIPAL CHURCHON

Good.

Without another word, he stands, his eyes holding hers for a
second longer before he turns on his heel and exits, leaving
Bella alone, her chest tightening with a mixture of shame and
anger.

As the door clicks shut, Bella leans back in her chair, her
hands trembling slightly. She reaches into her bag, pulling
out a small box of Xanax, her fingers hesitating for just a
moment before she pops a pill and swallows it dry, her gaze
distant.

BELLA WILSON

(muttering to herself)
Why can't I get anything right...

She closes her eyes, waiting for the numbness to settle in.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE COMPUTER SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY

The hum of keyboards and the soft clicking of mice fill the
room as students work diligently at their computers. At the
front of the classroom, K.C.

TONER, scans the room, reviewing everyone's work on his tablet. His eyes stop at one empty seat near the middle of the class.

He frowns, looking closer to confirm that it is indeed KIRA's empty chair.

K.C. TONER
(softly, almost to
himself)
Kira?

A flash of concern crosses his face. He looks up, taking in the class as he calls out to them.

K.C. TONER (CONT'D)
(classroom, louder)
Hey, has anyone seen Kira today?

The students glance around at each other, sharing confused looks. A couple of them shrug, and one, AMY, pipes up.

AMY
Maybe she is sick or something?

K.C.'s jaw tightens, and a shadow of worry flickers across his expression as he nods, forcing a calm response.

K.C. TONER
I see... Alright, thank you. Just
keep me posted if anyone hears from
her, okay?

The students nod, looking back at their screens, and K.C. lets his gaze linger on Kira's empty chair for a beat too long. He presses his lips together, quickly moving to his computer as he pulls up her last logins, scrolling through the dates with a focused intensity, his worry deepening.

FLASHBACK:

Kira, excited and confident, is in this very seat, coding furiously as K.C. stops by her desk to check on her progress.

KIRA
(grinning)
Just wait till you see this,
Professor. Almost finished!

K.C. smiles, impressed by her energy and determination.

BACK TO PRESENT:

K.C. blinks, returning to the moment, his face hardening as the worry seeps in again. He glances at the empty seat once more, his mind racing, as if fearing that something more than an absence is at play.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Kira sits at a small table in the cozy, dimly lit coffee shop, her laptop screen glowing as she's deep into her own research. Her headphones are in, eyes laser-focused on the data scrolling by, oblivious to the flickering TV on the wall where a local news report begins.

ON TV:

The NEWS ANCHOR, mid-40s with a somber expression, addresses the viewers.

NEWS ANCHOR

In our noon report, we dive into a deeply unsettling trend in Meadowbrook, an alarming rise in missing persons. Over the past two months, hundreds of individuals have vanished without a trace. We go live to Nancy Rogers at the Meadowbrook police station. Nancy, what can you tell us?

Kira barely registers the news, lost in her own world, as the WAITRESS (40s), her face tense, comes over to refill Kira's coffee. She catches the newscast and pauses.

WAITRESS

(somberly, almost to herself)
It's just heartbreaking... all those people.

Kira glances up, noticing the waitress's troubled expression.

KIRA FREY

(frowning)
What's happening?

WAITRESS

(sighs)
People have been disappearing, dear.

(MORE)

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

It's the talk of the town, but it's not just strangers, regulars, friends, people we all know. Some from the retirement home, too.

Kira's expression changes, a flicker of recognition flashing across her face as the WAITRESS nods toward the TV.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Used to see them all the time in here. It's... eerie. More than a dozen just last week.

ON TV:

The camera cuts to NANCY ROGERS (mid-30s), standing outside the police station. She speaks in hushed tones as if something larger and darker lurks beneath the surface.

NANCY ROGERS

Thanks, Luther. I'm here in front of the Meadowbrook Police Station, where hundreds of missing persons reports have piled up in recent weeks. So far, there's no clear connection between these individuals, but families are desperate for answers.

A pre-recorded shot of a tearful woman, the WIFE OF A MISSING PERSON, fills the screen.

WIFE OF MISSING

(through tears)

My husband's been gone for three weeks. He was last seen heading to work at Lambda... They found his car in a park, but there's been nothing since. He'd never just... disappear. I just want him back.

The camera cuts back to NANCY outside the station, looking somber.

NANCY ROGERS

This string of disappearances has left Meadowbrook residents fearful and puzzled, with no explanation yet from officials. The only shared trait seems to be Lambda...

Kira's eyes narrow, her mind racing. She recalls her grandmother's words about missing friends at the retirement home, and the strange shift in the air there. A chill runs through her as she puts the pieces together.

WAITRESS

(sighs)

This place used to be packed with folks like them, here every Friday night. It's quieter now... almost feels haunted.

Kira stares at the TV, her unease building. She catches a commercial flashing on the screen—slick images of smiling faces, advanced brain-chip technology promising relief from pain and addiction, and a Lambda logo glowing like a beacon.

TV COMMERCIAL

The future is here. Transform your life. Register now for Lambda's revolutionary brain-chip technology, 6 days until release.

Kira feels her stomach tighten, an instinctive dread rising within her. She looks down at her coffee, her fingers absently tracing the rim of the cup as her mind spirals, connecting threads.

She opens her laptop again, her fingers flying over the keys as she begins searching for any connections between Lambda, the retirement home, and the missing people. The camera zooms out, the tension is heavy in the air, the screens flickering ominously with Lambda's emblem.

CUT TO:

INT. LAMBDA SMALL MEETING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sam sits at a cluttered table, surrounded by stacks of files and documents. It's almost 4 PM, and she hasn't eaten all day, too engrossed in the maze of information Dr. Simons left her to notice the hunger gnawing at her. Suddenly, her stomach growls, reminding her she's still human. She pauses, looking around the empty room.

SAMANTHA WILSON

(murmuring to herself)

Alright... humans have to eat. There must be something around here.

She stands, stretching, and cautiously exits the room, glancing down both ends of the deserted hallway.

INT. LAMBDA CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

As she walks, the sterile white walls and identical doors blur together. A few doors have narrow windows, and she catches glimpses of sterile equipment and strange devices inside. Curiosity piqued, she pauses at one window. Behind it, an eerie blue glow pulses from a machine with small metallic objects suspended inside, charged with flickering energy.

SAMANTHA WILSON

(whispers)

What... is that?

Footsteps echo in the hallway, and she jumps back, hiding behind a corner, holding her breath. Dr. Simons' voice drifts closer, sharp and controlled.

DR. SIMONS

(approaching, low voice)

We're nearly done. The silver cord is severed, and the artificial pineal gland is installed. If the transfer is stable this time—

Dr. Simons and a lab tech turn the corner, abruptly stopping when they spot Sam. Dr. Simons' expression hardens, her eyes cold as she assesses Sam.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)

(sternly)

Samantha, what are you doing out here?

SAMANTHA WILSON

(startled, stammering)

I... I was just... I got really hungry.

Dr. Simons studies her for a moment, her gaze calculating, before softening her tone, masking the irritation with forced warmth.

DR. SIMONS

(sighs) Of course. My apologies. You must be... starving. Come, let's get you some fresh donuts from the shop across the street. (reaches into her pocket, handing Sam some cash) Go ahead and treat yourself. I'll see you tomorrow at 8 then.

She gestures down the hallway, urging Sam forward. Sam hesitates, glancing back toward the glowing room.

SAMANTHA WILSON

(suspiciously)

I saw something... a blue liquid, glowing. It didn't look like a reflection.

Dr. Simons' smile falters, her eyes narrowing slightly, but she quickly regains her composure.

DR. SIMONS

(calmly dismissive)

Ah, just the way the glass reflects—happens all the time in these corridors. Now, go on. That'll be all for today, Samantha. See you tomorrow.

Without another word, Dr. Simons turns sharply, disappearing down another hallway, leaving Sam in the lobby with a strange tension hanging in the air. The receptionist gives her a quick, fleeting look before turning back to her work, avoiding Sam's gaze. Shaking off the unease, Sam leaves the building.

EXT. LAMBDA CORP BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Sam steps out of the building, pulling out her phone with hands that tremble slightly. She quickly types: "Pineal gland," scrolling through the results as her heart pounds.

ON SCREEN:

"In various spiritual traditions, the pineal gland is believed to connect humans to higher consciousness, offering access to elevated awareness and universal energies."

SAMANTHA WILSON

(murmurs, uneasy)

What are they doing in there?

She looks up, her gaze locking onto the glowing Lambda logo that looms above, its reflection casting an eerie glow across her face. For just a second, she catches a flicker of movement—a shadowy figure behind one of the upper windows. Her stomach twists with a sense of foreboding. Shaking it off, she flags down a cab and, as she slides into the back seat, she glances once more at the Lambda building, unable to shake the chill running through her.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. SIMONS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Simons stands at her office window, arms crossed, watching with narrowed eyes as Sam's cab pulls away. The glow of satisfaction touches her lips, but her eyes are sharp with annoyance as her fingers dig into her arms.

DR. SIMONS
 (murmurs to herself,
 coldly)
 That nosy little brat. Testing my
 patience...

A flash of anger crosses her face, and her satisfaction quickly morphs into something darker, more calculating. She taps her fingers against her arm, her mind churning through possibilities, each one more sinister than the last. Her smile returns—cold, restrained, as if savoring a particularly twisted plan.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)
 (smirking)
 She wants to play detective, does
 she? Well, let's see how far her
 curiosity takes her... before she
 wishes she'd never set foot in
 here.

Simons turns from the window, her expression hardening as she picks up her phone. Her thumb hovers over the screen, and then she presses a name in her contacts: SECURITY CONTROL.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)
 (whispering to herself,
 dangerously)
 Let's see how curious you are when
 there's nowhere left to hide.

CUT TO:

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - AFTERNOON

Kira steps out of the coffee shop, tightening the straps of her bag as she nods to the WAITRESS, JORDAN, who's wiping down a table nearby.

KIRA FREY

Thanks for the coffee, Jordan. Always feels like home here.

WAITRESS

Anytime, Kira. Say hi to Bella and Sam for me, alright?

KIRA FREY

Will do.

Kira hops on her bike, pedaling through the streets as dusk settles over Meadowbrook. The streetlights flicker on, casting a dim glow over the roads lined with the occasional flickering neon sign. As she rides, she catches glimpses of the city's strange quiet—empty sidewalks, missing person posters plastered to light posts and brick walls, and the haunted expressions of people who pass her, their faces etched with worry and loss.

She slows down when she spots a wall covered with faded, overlapping flyers. She approaches and starts scanning them: familiar faces, names, and ages—too many Lambda Corp. uniforms in each photo to be a coincidence. Her eyes narrow as she pulls one of the flyers from the wall, the face on it staring back at her: John Vaughn. She folds the paper carefully, tucking it into her backpack.

CUT TO:

INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kira enters her small, cluttered apartment, flipping on a lamp. She heads straight for her desk and pulls out her laptop, setting it next to the missing person flyer she'd taken earlier. She glances at the worn face in the photo, her mind racing with questions.

KIRA FREY

(whispering to herself)

John Vaughn... There's got to be a reason they're all disappearing.

She begins typing, searching through local news articles and forums, but every mention of the missing people is vague and inconclusive. Frustrated, she hesitates before heading to the Lambda Corp website, her fingers hovering over the keys.

The website opens to a slick homepage with Lambda's tagline, photos of smiling families, and charity initiatives. Scrolling down, she clicks on "Our Legacy," reading through polished descriptions of their research contributions. She sees a photo of Dr. Sarah Simons, Lambda's face for innovation, alongside articles on health, wellness, and human betterment projects.

Curious, Kira clicks on a link about "Historical Sites," and discovers a series of abandoned industrial buildings listed under "Former Research Facilities."

KIRA FREY (CONT'D)
(suspiciously)
These old labs... human testing?

She reads that a "series of unfortunate accidents" had forced them to shut down years ago. Her eyes narrow, and she pulls out her notebook, scrawling notes and connecting the dots.

KIRA FREY (CONT'D)
(slowly realizing)
They've been covering up something.
And whatever it is, they're getting
rid of the evidence... starting with
the people.

The camera zooms in on Kira's face as she sits back in her chair, the wheels turning in her mind, her jaw set with determination.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLA'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Bella steps inside, looking worn and emotionally drained. She locks the door, sighing as she drops her bag on the floor.

BELLA
(calling out)
Sam? You here?

She checks her phone and sees a message from Sam: "Will be home late, sis." Bella glances at the time, 5:30 PM, and frowns. She heads straight to the kitchen, opening the fridge and begins grabbing whatever food she can find—leftovers, snacks, anything within reach. She eats fast, almost frantically.

INT. BELLA'S BATHROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Bella is bent over the toilet, breathing heavily as she flushes it, wiping her mouth with a towel. She reaches for a glass of water on the sink and then takes a Xanax from a pill bottle, swallowing it with a shaky breath. She steadies herself, leaning on the counter, staring at her reflection, before heading downstairs.

INT. BELLA'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Samantha arrives, looking tired and disheveled, her bag hanging off her shoulder. She barely has a foot through the door before Bella pulls her into a hug.

BELLA

(relieved)

Hey, Sam. You good? How was your day?

SAM

(letting out a sigh)

Long. Sorry, didn't call on the way home. I'm starving. Is there anything to eat?

BELLA

(squeezing her tighter)

Nothing decent, I totally forgot to go to the store. How about pizza? We could use a girls' night, don't you think?

SAM

(smiling)

Absolutely. Been a while.

Bella smiles, pulling out her phone. She opens her messages and sees a new one from Zane: "I'm horny. Can I come over?" She rolls her eyes and hits delete, then calls for pizza.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The sisters sit together on the couch, surrounded by empty pizza boxes, each wrapped in her own thoughts. Bella seems more at ease, leaning back, when she notices Sam's restless expression.

BELLA

(softly)

You seem a little... off.

SAM

(Serious)

I don't know, Bella. There's... something about Lambda that doesn't feel right. It's hard to explain, but it's been gnawing at me since the first day.

Bella sits up, looking concerned but a bit skeptical.

BELLA

How do you mean? It's just an internship, Sam. A big company, sure, but you're only there to learn...

SAM

(sighs)

It's not just that. Some of the files they had me look at—they were strange, Bella. They weren't just research notes. They talked about people's minds and their... personalities. Like they were trying to control something fundamental inside them. It just doesn't feel right.

Bella raises an eyebrow, processing Sam's words but clearly struggling to believe.

BELLA

(containing her doubt)

Sam, maybe they just gave you some advanced research material to push you a bit, you know? Big companies like Lambda—they're bound to have cutting-edge ideas that seem... different.

SAM

(shaking her head)

This isn't just about 'cutting-edge.' They're experimenting with people's identities, Bella. I'm starting to think they're... manipulating people, maybe even trying to replace parts of them. Like with these microchips and the mind control stuff.

Bella looks at Sam with a mix of worry and disbelief, leaning forward to try to reason with her.

BELLA

(skeptical, but gently)

Sam, listen to yourself. Lambda is this massive, well-known company. Do you think they'd get away with something like that? Don't you think people would notice, would... care?

SAM

(passionately)

That's just it! They're hiding it in plain sight, behind these 'advances in healthcare.' I've read what they're doing—rewiring how people think, forcing control over their lives. The people they're testing on, some of them just disappear. This is bigger than it seems, Bella.

Bella sighs, shaking her head gently. She gives Sam a reassuring, almost pitying smile, her hand reaching out to touch Sam's.

BELLA

(supportive, but unconvicted)

I love that you care so much. I really do. But don't let your mind run away with it, okay? Lambda isn't some... evil empire. They're focused on making life better for people. And sometimes that involves weird experiments, sure, but nothing sinister. You're just letting your imagination get the best of you.

Sam's expression hardens, realizing Bella isn't taking her seriously. She leans back, pulling her hand away slightly.

SAM

(sighs, frustrated)

Maybe... Maybe I'm just overthinking it.

They sit in silence for a moment, the weight of the conversation hanging between them. Bella gives her an affectionate smile, brushing off the discomfort.

BELLA

(supportive)

Get some rest, Sam. Just try to see it as the opportunity it is. You're doing great things. Don't let paranoia ruin that.

Sam forces a weak smile but looks away, her eyes shadowed with doubt as Bella squeezes her hand lightly, oblivious to the depth of Sam's unease.

CUT TO:

INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Kira's eyes are red-rimmed from hours of research, her face illuminated by the blue glow of her laptop screen. She scrolls through pages, clicking links and reading intently.

KIRA FREY
(sighs, rubbing her eyes)
Come on... there's gotta be something
I'm missing...

She yawns, glancing at the time: 2:17 AM. With a tired sigh, she closes her laptop and crawls into bed, pulling the covers over herself. The room goes dark, save for the faint light from the street casting shadows through her blinds. Kira falls asleep almost instantly.

CUT TO:

INT. LAMBDA RETIREMENT HOME - NIGHT

The long, eerie hallway of the Lambda Retirement Home is cloaked in darkness, punctuated only by the occasional flicker of an old lightbulb. Shadows stretch and curl along the walls as a small figure, draped in shadows, glides down the hallway with silent, practiced movements.

The figure stops outside Grandma Nada's door and slowly places a gloved hand on the handle. With a slight creak, the door opens a crack, casting a thin line of dim light into the room, illuminating Nada's peaceful face as she sleeps.

INT. NADA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The figure enters, barely making a sound, and shuts the door softly behind her. Her dark silhouette blends with the shadows, creeping closer to the bed. A gloved hand reaches into a pocket, pulling out a small, white pill that glints faintly in the darkness.

She leans in close, hovering over Nada, whose breathing is soft and shallow. The figure's head tilts as if watching her, unfeeling, almost detached. For a moment, she stays still, the room silent except for the faint hum of the ventilation system. Then, with meticulous care, the figure pries open Nada's lips and slips the pill into her mouth. There's a pause—watching, waiting—until Nada reflexively swallows.

The figure steps back, her face still obscured in shadow, but a small, satisfied exhale escapes her. She melts back into the shadows, quietly slipping out of the room and vanishing down the hallway just as swiftly as she came.

INT. NADA'S ROOM - LATER

The room is still and silent, Nada lying motionless on the bed. Gradually, something unsettling begins to happen—a faint, white, viscous substance begins to seep from the corner of her mouth. It thickens, pooling slightly as it glistens in the dim light, a haunting indicator of her unnatural passing.

The camera lingers, drawing closer to her lifeless face and the eerie residue left behind, amplifying the eerie silence that has claimed the room.

INT. LAMBDA LAB - DR. SIMONS' OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is dimly lit, the shadows casting an eerie glow across Dr. Simons' meticulously organized desk. She leans back in her chair, her expression calm yet filled with a cold satisfaction, eyes glinting with malice. Her phone vibrates on the table. She picks it up, putting it on speaker as she glances toward the security screen displaying Samantha, sitting alone in the lab break room, her shoulders shaking with silent sobs.

INTERCUT - INT. RECEPTIONIST EVELYN'S DESK - LAMBDA RETIREMENT HOME - NIGHT

Receptionist EVELYN sits at her desk, eyes glinting in the dim light. Her tone is formal but laced with an unsettling glee.

RECEPTIONIST EVELYN

(in a soft, almost melodic voice)

Dr. Simons, I just wanted to inform you... the order has been executed perfectly. Nada Wilson is no longer... an inconvenience.

Dr. Simons leans forward, her lips curling into a wicked smile. She chuckles a low, sinister sound.

DR. SIMONS

(satisfied, relishing the control)

Well done, Evelyn. I knew I could count on you to handle things... discreetly.

Evelyn chuckles on the other end of the line, a syrupy yet malicious laugh.

RECEPTIONIST EVELYN

Indeed, Doctor. Shall I proceed with the rest of the arrangement, should any further...complications arise?

Dr. Simons' eyes narrow, her voice a whisper that drips with cruelty.

DR. SIMONS

(savoring each word)

Yes, Evelyn. Keep a close watch. And if anyone else... steps out of line, remind them that we have ways of making people... disappear.

As she ends the call, Dr. Simons leans back, her fingers steepled in front of her, relishing her twisted sense of control. Dr. Simons can't help but let out a small, sinister laugh that echoes through the empty office.

DR. SIMONS (CONT'D)

(whispering to herself)

They'll all learn... everyone falls in line under my watch.

She lets the silence settle around her, basking in the satisfaction of her power. The screen flickers, casting shadows on her cold, unfeeling face.

FADE TO BLACK.