

Mind Storms

TV pilot

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INT. UNKNOWN LABORATORY - NIGHT

A small pool of warm light spills from a single overhead fixture. Within it stands JAYNE WU, restrained upright against a sophisticated medical frame. Thick straps secure her wrists, arms, chest, waist and legs.

Her eyes slowly open. Whatever drug is in her system has wrapped her thoughts in cotton. She feels detached from her own fear, observing her situation with the vague curiosity of someone waking from a dream.

The laboratory beyond the light is dark. Machines blink quietly. Dormant holographic displays cast faint reflections across polished metal surfaces.

Jayne's eyes drift past a workbench. A discarded identification badge rests there. The photograph shows an old man. The name beneath it reads: Dr. Thurston.

Jayne cannot focus long enough to understand.

Her gaze drifts across the room and settles on a heavy door.

Her environmental suit hangs neatly from a hook mounted on its back. The Sergio Partelli insignia catches the light.

Jayne stares at it.

Normally she could move objects much heavier than the suit. She concentrates.

Nothing.

She focuses harder. A sleeve twitches.

The suit sways.

The sleeve rises several inches.

For a brief moment it appears as though the garment might leap from the hook.

Then it drops.

The effort drains her completely.

She croaks.

JAYNE
Professor Greenway.

Her eyes close.

A door opens.

WINTER BANCROFT enters first. She is ancient, thin, frail, and razor sharp.

THURSTON follows close behind in the body of a healthy young man.

For an instant, the discarded identification badge catches the light.

The photograph shows an old man.

The man walking beside Winter is decades younger.

Neither notices that Jayne had briefly awakened.

WINTER BANCROFT
Jayne.

JAYNE
Yes, pwease. I will have a
strawwberry one.

Her smile fades. Confusion replaces it.

WINTER BANCROFT
Jayne.

JAYNE
Two squoops, pwease.

He speaks softly.

DR. THURSTON
Miss Wu, listen.

JAYNE
I sorry.

Tears roll down her cheeks.

Bancroft turns abruptly to Thurston. Her withered finger pokes him in the chest.

WINTER BANCROFT
How much did you give her? She is
no good like this. I need her in
top form. God, you are an idiot.

DR. THURSTON

You saw what she can do. She destroyed three of your best agents with a wall of air conjured up from her mind. I have no intention of giving her the chance of making me a victim. She is one powerful little girl.

WINTER BANCROFT

That drug is designed to stop her from doing that. In large doses it turns her into this.

Winter gestures toward the sobbing girl.

Her hand begins to tremble violently. She clenches it into a fist. The shaking stops.

Thurston notices. Winter notices that he notices.

Neither comments.

WINTER BANCROFT (CONT'D)

I swear if you screw this up for me...

DR. THURSTON

You'll what?

WINTER BANCROFT

Just because you completed the takeover does not mean you can ignore my instructions.

DR. THURSTON

I can do anything I want. Look at me. I am eighteen.

He spreads his arms proudly.

DR. THURSTON (CONT'D)

Every person in this facility answers to me now.

WINTER BANCROFT

They answer to the body you are wearing. Do not confuse that with loyalty.

DR. THURSTON

They seem unable to tell the difference.

WINTER BANCROFT
Neither are you, apparently.

DR. THURSTON
Do not worry. You will be joining me soon. I would never leave you behind.

WINTER BANCROFT
You had better not. I can still do a great deal of damage with the time this body has left.

DR. THURSTON
That sounds suspiciously like a threat.

WINTER BANCROFT
It is a reminder.

DR. THURSTON
You always told me immortality would solve every problem.

WINTER BANCROFT
Immortality solves only one problem. It creates dozens of new ones.

DR. THURSTON
That sounds like something people say after they already have it.

Winter studies him for a long moment.

WINTER BANCROFT
You are becoming arrogant.

DR. THURSTON
I am becoming realistic. Tomorrow changes everything.

WINTER BANCROFT
Tomorrow succeeds only if she survives the transfer.

DR. THURSTON
She will survive. Your calculations always work.

WINTER BANCROFT
That statement demonstrates a profound misunderstanding of science.

Jayne's tears stop. Her breathing steadies. Awareness slowly returns.

Neither notices her fingers moving.

DR. THURSTON
Everything is prepared. Every
system has been tested twice.

WINTER BANCROFT
Then all that remains is courage.

DR. THURSTON
You are actually nervous.

WINTER BANCROFT
Even pioneers are entitled to
caution before stepping into
eternity.

Jayne's eyes open slightly.

The room comes into focus.

She recognizes the young man first.

The boy from the bean bag attraction. The face from the
Neuroscience Center advertisements.

Then another realization. He is DR. THURSTON.

Then she looks at the elderly woman.

A memory surfaces from her first day as an apprentice.

Winter Bancroft.

JAYNE
What are you doing to me?

Both figures turn sharply.

DR. THURSTON
That's impossible. The drugs
couldn't have cleared that fast.

He appears frightened. He checks her vitals on a nearby
monitor.

WINTER BANCROFT
Clearly you thought wrong.

Winter approaches until she stands directly before Jayne. She inspects her face. She wipes the tear stains from Jayne's cheek with her thumb. Jayne grimaces.

WINTER BANCROFT (CONT'D)
I am sorry, dearie, but releasing
you is no longer possible.

JAYNE
Why? What are you going to do to
me?

WINTER BANCROFT
Nothing that will harm your body.

Beat.

WINTER BANCROFT (CONT'D)
In fact, that's the entire point.

Winter studies Jayne. The smooth skin. The clear eyes. The healthy body. The things she lost decades ago.

She smiles. For a moment she looks almost affectionate.

WINTER BANCROFT (CONT'D)
Because by this time tomorrow...

She reaches out to Jayne's strapped hand and pats it.

WINTER BANCROFT (CONT'D)
I will be you.

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

SUPER: YEAR EARLIER

INT. NURSERY CUBICLE - MORNING

White light slowly brightens.

JAYNE ESTHER WU, thirteen today, lies awake in her narrow bed staring at the ceiling.

A smile creeps across her face.

Today is different.

She rolls onto her back and hugs a pillow to her chest. Beside the door sit a knapsack and two storage boxes containing everything she owns.

Jayne studies the row of nursery cubicles beyond her doorway. Children still sleep there. Children she no longer belongs with.

She throws back her blanket. The cool air raises goosebumps along her arms and sends a thrill through her.

Jayne wu

Ah. My last day.

INT. NURSERY CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Jayne kneels beside the boxes and removes a BOOK KEY. A holographic image springs to life, displaying mechanical diagrams, circuit pathways, and repair procedures.

The tools of a future TEM FIXER.

Nearby, a VID PAD rests on top of a box. Jayne picks it up and the screen illuminates.

INSERT - VID SCREEN:

ID-Wu F 302875106592253.

Name-Wu, Jayne Esther. Class-Fixer.

Sub Class-Technician-Electronic Mechanic Apprentice.

Exam Result-PASS.

Report to HUB 169 entrance M, Friday, January 13, 2113, at 13:00 hours.

Jayne reads it again, then again, as though the words might disappear. They do not.

She hugs the VID pad to her chest.

A cleaner assignment flashes across a nearby display.

Jayne grimaces.

Another display shows HELPERS tending elderly residents and infants.

She shudders.

Her eyes drift toward the corridor beyond the nursery. It leads to a world she has never seen and one she intends to change.

INT. NURSERY CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Jayne heads toward the showers. The corridor is empty and quiet.

She scans her palm at a sink array. A glass slides into position beneath the dispenser.

Water pours into the glass.

The standard fill line passes.

The dispenser keeps going.

Jayne frowns as the water rises nearly to the brim.

She glances around. Nobody is awake.

Jayne lifts the glass and takes a sip. The water is cold and perfect.

JAYNE

That has never happened before.

She splashes water onto her face and drinks the rest.

A soft flop of sandals echoes behind her.

Jayne turns. AJAX stands in the corridor in an oversized nightshirt. His eyes are red. His chin is trembling.

He is trying very hard not to cry.

Jayne's smile fades.

She already said goodbye last night. Ajax clearly wasn't ready.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Ajax, it is too early to be up.

AJAX

I gon'ta miss you, Jaywu. Please not go.

Jayne kneels beside him.

AJAX (CONT'D)

You gon'ta miss your cake.

Despite herself, Jayne laughs.

JAYNE

That's okay. I spoke to Matron and she promised me she would give you a piece of my cake because I know you were looking forward to it.

Ajax brightens slightly.

AJAX

Is it chocolate?

JAYNE

It is a surprise. I know you love surprises.

Ajax nods. His lower lip trembles.

Jayne gently spins him around and walks him back toward his cubicle.

INT. AJAX'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER

Ajax climbs into bed and Jayne pulls the blanket up around him.

AJAX

Do not forget me, Jaywu.

JAYNE

I could never forget you.

Jayne watches until his eyes close, then quietly leaves.

INT. SHOWER CHAMBER - LATER

Jayne steps into an automated shower and spreads her arms and legs. A high-pressure blast of soap and water hammers her from every direction.

She winces as a second blast rinses her clean. Gusting air follows, then ultraviolet light floods the chamber.

The cycle ends and the door opens.

INT. NURSERY CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jayne emerges clean and ready. She slips on her nightshirt and looks down the corridor leading toward the adult sectors.

Jayne looks back at the nursery.

The only home she has ever known.

A long beat.

She grabs her knapsack and heads toward the adult sectors.

This time she doesn't look back.

FADE OUT.

INT. HUB 169M - PUT STAGING AREA - DAY

A massive concrete and steel archway dominates the biome entrance. Three enormous roll-up doors stand across its face: RED, YELLOW and GREEN.

Freight transports roll through in a constant mechanical rhythm. Above everything looms a giant digital countdown clock reading 82 YEARS.

JAYNE ESTHER WU stands beneath it clutching a knapsack. Excited. Nervous. Ready.

She checks her VID, adjusts her position and finally receives a GREEN confirmation.

Nearby, a large awkward BOY struggles with his knapsack and checks a glowing red VID.

He looks up as she approaches. Jayne wiggles he fingers at him. He looks panicked.

BOY

It's red. It won't go green.

Jayne settles into position and checks her VID. It is green.

JAYNE

You sure the COORs match?

BOY

Yeah!

JAYNE

Sorry. I was just trying to help. Sometimes the sensors can be off by a few centimeters.

BOY

What? You sound like you're thirty. What are you, fifteen? Sixteen? There's no way a kid like you passed the TEM exam.

Jayne ignores the insult.

BOY (CONT'D)

Crap.

He waves his VID around as if that might fix the problem.

JAYNE

I think I can help.

She touches her mouth trying to suppress a giggle.

BOY

Yeah, right. If this doesn't go green, I have to go back to INTER and start over. I'd rather die.

JAYNE

Like this?

She flashes her green VID.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Give me your hand.

BOY

What are you going to do?

JAYNE

I don't bite. Hard enough to draw blood, anyway.

She grabs his hand and points at his feet.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Move them together.

He obeys and checks his VID. GREEN.

BOY

How did you do that?

JAYNE

PUT pads. You were hanging over the edge.

BOY

Thanks.

JAYNE

You're welcome. And don't ever call me stupid again.

BOY

Okay. Why did you want to hold my hand?

JAYNE

People listen better when they're connected to each other.

The boy blushes.

Lights begin flashing across the PUT pads. The crowd falls silent as the transport system begins to hum.

INT. HUB RESIDENTIAL CORRIDOR - DAY

The PUT deactivates. Jayne finds herself standing in a PUT alcove leading to a strangely curved corridor that bends away in both directions.

A circular section of wall becomes transparent and follows her movements as she explores. Delighted, she races alongside it before arriving at QUARTERS 2197.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - CONTINUOUS

The door slides open. Compared to the nursery, the room feels enormous.

Jayne spots the bathroom. Her own bathroom. She laughs and spins in a circle.

LUCKY (O.S.)

Good afternoon, Wu J
302875106592253. If you prefer, you may be addressed as Jayne Wu or simply Jayne. Please state your preference now.

JAYNE

You may address me as Jayne or, when you get to know me, as Thirteen. That's kind of my nickname. What should I call you?

LUCKY (O.S.)

What would you like to call me?

JAYNE

What did the last resident call you?

LUCKY (O.S.)

I came into being the moment you entered this residence. I will be thirteen minutes old in three... two... one... now.

JAYNE

That's funny. Well, thirteen is my lucky number, so I guess I'll call you Lucky.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - LATER

Jayne unpacks the few possessions she owns. Last of all she opens a small music box.

Pachelbel's Canon chimes softly.

LUCKY (O.S.)

Would you like a higher fidelity recording?

JAYNE

No. This music box belonged to my birth mother. It's the only thing I have left from her.

She closes the lid.

The music continues.

Jayne frowns and opens the box again.

A fine silver chain slides free from beneath the mechanism.

At the end hangs a simple flat silver star pendant.

Jayne studies it. The pendant grows warm in her hand.

Panels unfold. Edges rise. Hidden facets emerge.

The flat pendant transforms into a three-dimensional star with raised sides and razor-sharp points.

Fascinated, Jayne turns it in her fingers.

One sharp point catches her fingertip.

A bead of blood appears.

Jayne winces.

A sudden wave of nausea washes over her.

She steadies herself against the table.

Then it's gone.

The star grows warmer.

Its raised sides begin folding inward.

The object collapses back into a simple flat silver star pendant.

Jayne stares.

LUCKY (O.S.)
Is everything alright, Thirteen?

JAYNE
Fine. I think somebody gave me a birthday present.

LUCKY (O.S.)
That's nice. Happy birthday.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - NIGHT

Later, beneath her blanket, Jayne opens the music box one last time with a brief tinkle of music.

The silver star rests in her palm.

She should put it away.

Instead, she keeps staring at it.

A long beat.

Almost unconsciously, she lifts the chain and slips it over her head.

The pendant settles against her throat.

Warm.

Almost alive.

The tension leaves her face.

Jayne closes her eyes.

FADE OUT.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - MORNING

LUCKY (O.S.)
Thirteen. It's time to get up.
Thirteen. Thirteen, please get up.
It's time.

A much harsher tone.

System (O.S.)

Jayne Ester Wu get up now. You will be behind schedule if you do not get up.

Jayne opens her eyes. Fully rested.

JAYNE
Lucky, did your voice change?

LUCKY (O.S.)
It was not me. If SYSTEM feels I am being ignored, it will... intercede.

JAYNE
What next?

LUCKY (O.S.)
That is very simple. You use the facilities, eat breakfast, and then follow the green arrow and respond to the green prompts. You avoid anything red.

Jayne hops out of bed.

INT. HUB TRANSIT / APPRENTICE ROTUNDA - LATER

Twenty minutes later she is clean, dressed, fed and standing on a PUT pad.

The world blurs.

She rematerializes in a high-ceilinged rotunda.

Twenty apprentices are being arranged into four rows of five.

A flashing arrow directs Jayne to the third row. Third from the end.

Position THIRTEEN.

Jayne suppresses a smile. Again.

A small gray-haired man moves down the rows handing out rectangular ID markers.

Jayne spots the big-footed boy from the PUT station.

Even standing still, he somehow looks awkward.

He towers over everyone else.

He doesn't seem to notice her.

The man hands Jayne an orange badge marked 13.

INT. APPRENTICE ROTUNDA - CONTINUOUS

A stern woman steps to the front of the room, reading from an oversized VID.

FACILITATOR

Place the ID marker you received
into the small pocket on the left
breast of your clothing unit.

Nobody moves.

The woman finally looks up.

FACILITATOR (CONT'D)

Now!

A rustle passes through the room as badges disappear into uniform pockets.

Jayne's badge vanishes. A glowing 13 appears on her chest.

FACILITATOR (CONT'D)

I had hoped that this day would be
uneventful, but it appears I was
wrong.

Some VIP scientists from HUB Central are visiting today and requested to meet several of our newest fixer apprentices.

Why, I cannot imagine. But who am I to question scientists?

Her tone hardens.

FACILITATOR (CONT'D)

Stand sharp and answer all
questions clearly!

INT. APPRENTICE ROTUNDA - MOMENTS LATER

Five scientists emerge from a reserved PUT area.

Three men. Two women.

One elderly woman immediately heads toward Jayne.

White hair. Wrinkled skin.

But her eyes are startlingly young.

Brilliant green, sharp and alert.

She stops directly in front of Jayne and studies her.

The silence stretches.

The woman simply studies her.

Evaluating.

JAYNE

Hello.

No response.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

My name is Jayne Wu.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Yes, dear. I know who you are.

The woman lifts Jayne's braid.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)

You are very beautiful.

And so young. May I?

She reaches for the chain around Jayne's neck and lifts the silver star pendant into view. Something flashes behind her eyes. Recognition.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)

Yes. Good. Perfect.

JAYNE

Thank you. I don't underst...

A cramp twists through Jayne's stomach.

Nausea swells up.

Her face tightens and she covers her mouth.

The old woman's smile deepens slightly.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Maybe we'll meet again.

She turns and walks away without speaking to another apprentice.

Jayne watches her go, unsettled.

INT. APPRENTICE ROTUNDA - CONTINUOUS

FACILITATOR
I will now continue.

Each day you will be required to insert a new ID marker into the pocket of your clothing unit.

Once you have done this, follow the indicators displaying your assigned number.

The indicators will decrease in frequency as you learn your route.

They will increase if you go elsewhere.

I strongly recommend that you do not stray from the designated path very often.

Small green arrows appear at the feet of every apprentice.

Each arrow bears a different number.

The arrows rotate toward their assigned destinations.

Jayne looks down at the glowing 13 at her feet.

Then toward the reserved PUT area where the old woman disappeared.

The arrow flashes. Jayne hesitates.

One last look toward the reserved PUT area.

The old woman is gone.

The arrow flashes again.

FADE OUT.

FLASHBACK - INT. LABORATORY - UNKNOWN

A TODDLER stands in a crib placed in a transparent cage.

Banks of equipment blink beyond the enclosure.

Tears stream down her face.

She reaches through the air toward a STUFFED RABBIT sitting on a nearby table outside of the cage.

The child cries harder.

Tiny fingers grasp at empty space.

Then her eyes lock on the rabbit.

The crying stops.

A low RATTLE as her hands tighten around the crib rail.

The rabbit twitches.

Slides across the tabletop.

Slowly.

Then faster.

It launches into the air.

THUNK.

The stuffed rabbit slams against
the transparent wall of the cage.

The child stares.

Breathing hard.

The rabbit slides down the wall.

She pounds the crib rail with one hand.

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP (CONT'D)

The rabbit jumps up and squishes
onto the cage wall with each pound.

The toddler stares.

Mesmerized.

Then the rabbit drops.

The toddler bursts into tears.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. APPRENTICE CONCOURSE - DAY

FACILITATOR

Proceed.

The apprentices move.

Jayne doesn't.

A strange pressure begins in her earlobes.

It swells through her head and neck, then races down her spine.

The sensation leaves her with one overwhelming certainty.

Someone is watching her.

Instead of following her arrow, Jayne scans the room. Her eyes flick over the upper windows.

Nothing. She relaxes and watches the others.

Apprentices crisscross the concourse in awkward patterns as they chase their indicators.

Several bump shoulders.

One nearly walks into a column.

Jayne suppresses a laugh.

The newest fixer apprentices look ridiculous.

Beyond them, normal pedestrian traffic flows with purpose.

No one else stands still.

Her gaze rises to the row of observation windows high above the concourse.

Most are brightly lit.

Empty.

One window is darker.

Someone stands behind the glass.

Watching her.

Jayne's eyes focus.

Instantly, nausea slams into her.

She retches.

A hand flies to her mouth.

Her heart hammers.

She turns away.

A long beat.

The nausea begins to fade.

Jayne risks another glance.

The dark window is gone.

All the windows look the same.

Whoever was there has vanished.

Jayne stares at the windows.

Unnerved.

At her feet, a green arrow marked 13 pulses larger and larger.

Demanding movement.

INT. APPRENTICE CONCOURSE - MOMENTS LATER

Most apprentices have already disappeared down stairways leading into the HUB.

Only two remain.

Jayne.

And the giant boy from yesterday.

Jayne follows her arrow.

To her surprise, it leads directly toward him.

The boy stands trapped inside a spinning circle of arrows.

Every attempt to leave simply moves the circle with him like a cat trying to escape its own shadow.

JOSEPH
This is stupid.

JAYNE
What's wrong? Why aren't you following your arrow?

JOSEPH
Look.

He points at the floor.

The circle of arrows briefly straightens.

Joseph takes three giant strides.

The arrows circle him again.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Oh, for fracks sake!

The damn thing seems to want me to stand here while it makes up its mind.

INT. APPRENTICE CONCOURSE - CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH
Where is that woman? This thing must be broken.

He scans the concourse.

No sign of the facilitator.

Jayne walks past him.

JAYNE
See you around. Ha. Around. Get it?

She giggles.

JOSEPH
Finally!

His arrow points forward.

Then immediately begins circling again.

Joseph looks up.

Jayne is standing directly in front of him.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
I thought you were outta here.

JAYNE
I think I understand.

A beat.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
And I don't like it.

JOSEPH
Look, I don't need you. Just buzz
off, okay?

JAYNE
Look at me.

JOSEPH
I'm not holding your hand again.
You're just a baby anyway.

JAYNE
Don't be an idiot. Look at me, shut
up, watch and learn.

Jayne backs away three steps.

Joseph's arrow immediately points at her.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
Now follow me.

Joseph takes a cautious step.

The arrow behaves normally.

Another step. Then the circling starts again.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
Don't you get it?

JOSEPH
Get what?

JAYNE
I think you're supposed to go with
me.

JOSEPH
Turkey twattle.

INT. PUT ACCESS ROOM - LATER

Jayne runs across the room.

JAYNE
What direction is your arrow
pointing now?

JOSEPH
Towards you.

He shakes his head.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
I don't believe it.

JAYNE
Believe it. It appears you have to
go wherever I go.

JOSEPH
Frack.

JAYNE
Gee. That makes me feel good.

She follows her arrow through a doorway into a small room lit
by warmer yellow light.

Two PUT pads wait on the floor.

Both arrows point to them.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
I guess that's what we're supposed
to do.

What's your name anyway? Mine's Jayne Wu.

JOSEPH
Joseph Kane.

His eyes travel from her boots to the silver star pendant at
her throat.

Jayne flushes.

She quickly tucks the pendant beneath her jumpsuit.

Her braid flips over her shoulder.

JAYNE
Let's go.

They step onto their PUT pads.

Joseph keeps his feet tightly together.

The world dissolves.

FADE OUT.

INT. TRAINING WAITING ROOM - DAY

Jayne and Joseph materialize on PUT pads.

Windows line one wall. Beyond them, apprentices train in small groups.

Some sit at tables. Some work at counters. Some roll across mats. Others wear breathing masks.

Nothing resembles TechElecMech training.

Jayne tries to take it all in.

A green arrow marked 13 flashes at her feet.

She ignores it.

The arrow doubles in size.

JOSEPH

I think it wants you to move.

JAYNE

I think it can wait.

The arrow pulses again.

Jayne sighs and follows it. Joseph falls in behind her.

INT. CURVED CORRIDOR - LATER

The arrow leads them past a series of numbered doors.

Door Four slides open.

Jayne enters.

A KLAXON explodes behind her.

Joseph freezes.

His green arrow has become a flashing red stop symbol.

He steps back.

The alarm dies. The door seals between them.

INT. DECONTAMINATION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Jets of air hammer Jayne from every direction.

Her braid whips wildly.

Above the exit door sits a dark observation window.

Empty.

Yet she feels watched.

The memory of the dark window in the concourse returns.

Nausea stirs.

The door opens before it can overwhelm her.

INT. ASSESSMENT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Jayne stops.

A vast room stretches before her.

Silence prevails

Sound-dampening fields swallow every word.

Hundreds of apprentices occupy isolated stations.

A girl stacks colored blocks with surgical precision.

A boy balances on one foot while staring into a flashing light.

Three apprentices sit motionless staring at a brass pendulum.

Another wears a breathing mask connected to a wall unit.

People talk. Argue. Instruct.

Jayne hears none of it as her arrow weaves through the maze.

INT. CARD STATION - LATER

A burgundy felt table sits beneath a hanging light.

A DEALER shuffles cards with effortless precision.

DEALER
Come. Sit. You're the first so
let's play.

JAYNE
Play what?

DEALER
Simple game. High card wins.

He deals two cards.

Jayne flips her card immediately.

Three of Clubs.

The dealer reveals a Two.

DEALER (CONT'D)
You win.

A red-haired woman arrives and sits.

An overweight teenage boy arrives and sits.

The dealer checks his tablet. He looks up.

Dealer

Kieren 73 and Moss 124.

He looks at Jayne.

DEALER (CONT'D)
And the first winner is Wu 13. Good
we are all here.

He shuffles the cards expertly.

DEALER (CONT'D)
If my card beats yours, you leave
and follow your arrow.

JAYNE
Where does the arrow go?

DEALER
That depends.

JAYNE
On what?

DEALER

How many times you win.

The red-haired apprentice glances nervously at Jayne.

The overweight boy studies the cards as if they contain the answer.

The dealer deals a card to 73 and turns over a Jack.

The red-haired apprentice reveals a 10.

DEALER (CONT'D)

Goodbye, 73.

Relief crosses her face.

She follows her arrow out.

JAYNE

She looked happy to lose.

DEALER

Not everyone enjoys surprises.

The game continues.

Moss and Jayne survive the next round. Then two.

MOSS

How long does this usually take?

DEALER

Usually? Not long.

The both win again.

And again.

The dealer's smile begins to fade.

DEALER (CONT'D)

You ever play cards before?

JAYNE

No.

DEALER

Lucky, then.

Round five. Moss loses to a King.

His shoulders slump.

Moss

I hate tests anyway.

He follows his arrow away.

Jayne keeps winning.

Six hands.

Eight.

Ten.

Fifteen.

Nineteen.

DEALER (CONT'D)

This is impossible. No one is this
lucky.

A red alert flashes on his screen.

He reads it twice. His fingers stop shuffling the cards.

Looks at Jayne.

Looks away.

DEALER (CONT'D)

That's it. You're outta here. Go.

For the first time, he refuses to meet her eyes.

INT. NETTED TEST AREA - LATER

Jayne follows her arrow and arrives at a circular netted area
with faint bloodstain marks the floor.

Two boys occupy stools outside of the netting.

One blond. One dark-haired.

The dark-haired boy notices Jayne immediately.

A faint, amused smile appears.

INSTRUCTOR

Are you Wu 13?

JAYNE

That's me.

INSTRUCTOR
You came here directly from cards?

She checks her screen.

A beat.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
That's unusual.

Sit.

Jayne takes the empty stool between them.

A janitor wipes blood from the floor inside the circle.

JAYNE
What happened?

INSTRUCTOR
Testing.

JAYNE
Testing what?

INSTRUCTOR
You'll see.

INT. NETTED TEST CIRCLE - LATER

The boys stand, ready to take positions.

Jayne remains still on the stool.

INSTRUCTOR
Enter the circle.

JAYNE
Why?

INSTRUCTOR
It's a test.

JAYNE
A test of what?

The instructor checks her screen.

A pause.

INSTRUCTOR
You weren't briefed.

JAYNE

No.

INSTRUCTOR

Avoid the bean bags. Getting hit eliminates you.

Jayne

What bean bags?

The woman tossed a single bean bag up in the air and catches it.

Instructor

These bean bags.

She throws it at Jayne. Jayne steps aside and the bean bag hits the floor behind her.

JAYNE

That's the test?

The woman arches her eyebrows.

INSTRUCTOR

That's the test. Go into the circle and stand anywhere you want.

The two boys are in the netted circle. Jayne enters and simply stands off to the side.

InSTRUCTOR

First there is one and then two and then three, like that. They can come from anywhere and in any direction.

She points at Jayne.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

Get it?

JAYNE

What if I don't want to get hit at all?

INSTRUCTOR

Everyone gets hit sooner or later.

Jayne nods.

A timer appears at Jayne's feet with a "1" beside it.

The dark-haired boy moves.

The blond boy copies him.

Jayne watches.

POP.

A bean bag slices through empty
space and billows the netting. No
one is hit.

Jayne glances at the bloodstain.

Then at a red tinge on the bean bag.

She understands.

The dark-haired boy smirks.

Another round. The circle at her feet has a "2" and counts
down ten seconds.

POP

No one is hit.

Then three bags are pending.

One bag pops through the floor and hits the blond boy under
the chin.

He exits rubbing his face.

The dark-haired boy glances at Jayne.

Still smiling.

Four bags. Then five.

Neither is hit.

The dark-haired boy glances at Jayne.

Back to the circle.

Back to Jayne.

A bean bag whistles past his shoulder.

He barely notices.

He is trying to predict where she will move.

She hardly moves at all.

The timer reaches THIRTEEN.

A rush moves through Jayne's body.

The dark-haired boy stares.

His smirk disappears.

For the first time, he looks uncertain.

POP.
Thirteen bean bags explode into the
circle.

Two strike him at once.

Face and groin.

He collapses.

Orderlies rush in with a gurney.

As they wheel him past Jayne, he cannot stop staring.

His eyes are wide with fear.

Jayne watches him go.

The smile has vanished from her face.

INT. TEST AREA - LATER

A new round begins.

Two fresh apprentices enter.

Jayne barely notices them.

Jayne studies the steel toe of her boot.

The timer counts down.

She shuffles to the side and deliberately sticks out her
foot.

POP
A bean bag slams into the
reinforced toe.

The instructor looks up.

Surprised.

Jayne hides a smile.

Eliminated.

INT. HOLDING CORRIDOR - LATER

Joseph sits inside an amber holding circle.

Bored. Frustrated.

When he sees Jayne, he brightens.

JOSEPH

About time.

The amber circle transforms into a green arrow.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

What happened in there?

JAYNE

I played cards and ducked flying
bean bags.

JOSEPH

You're making that up.

JAYNE

I wish I was.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Eight apprentices already occupy desks.

JOSEPH

Kane 37, reporting.

JAYNE

Wu 13.

INSTRUCTOR

You're late. Read the posted notes
on your VID tonight. Sit down.

Jayne and Joseph take the final two seats.

VID screens glow to life.

For the first time all day, something feels normal.

Jayne opens her VID.

A flicker of nausea.

Gone.

She looks toward the classroom windows.

One pane reflects her face and a whisp of an image.

For an instant, she thinks someone is standing behind her.

She turns.

Nobody.

The instructor begins speaking.

Jayne forces herself to pay attention.

FADE OUT.

INT. EXAMINATION HALL - DAY

Rows of apprentices work in silence.

VID screens glow. Questions scroll.

Jayne answers without hesitation.

Circuit diagnostics. Mechanical failures. Power-routing calculations.

Her stylus never stops moving.

Around her, apprentices struggle.

Joseph frowns at his screen, rereading a question.

Jayne reaches the final page.

Done.

She glances at the clock. One hour remains.

Without celebration, she submits her exam and leaves.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - LATER

Jayne lies on her bed staring at the ceiling.

Waiting.

A SHARP BEEP breaks the silence.

LUCKY (O.S.)
Your examination has been scored.

Jayne sits bolt upright.

JAYNE
Just tell me.

A beat.

LUCKY (O.S.)
Pass.

Relief floods through her.

JAYNE
Thank the heavens.

LUCKY (O.S.)
There is a footnote message.

The relief vanishes.

JAYNE
What does it say?

A pause.

LUCKY (O.S.)
Always wear the Silver Star. Is
that your lucky talisman or
something?

Jayne stares ahead. Uneasy.

Slowly, she crosses to the music box.

Opens it.

Pachelbel's Canon plays softly.

The silver star rests inside. Waiting.

Jayne hesitates.

JAYNE
Or something.

Then lifts the chain and places it around her neck.

The pendant settles against her throat.

Warm.

Jayne closes the music box.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - NIGHT

Jayne lies awake in bed.

The Silver Star gleams against her skin.

Her eyes remain open.

She touches the pendant.

As if making sure it's still there.

The pendant settles against her throat.

Warm

FADE OUT.

INT. PRACTICAL TEM CORRIDOR - DAY

Jayne steps off a PUT pad and follows a flashing green arrow down a sterile corridor.

The arrow stops at a door marked: PROFESSOR GREENWAY.

No scanlock. No VID panel. Just an old-fashioned doorknob.

INT. PROFESSOR GREENWAY'S LAB - CONTINUOUS

Jayne opens the door.

The room is part laboratory, part museum.

Books everywhere. Shelves sag beneath them. Stacks cover desks, benches and corners.

Jayne stares in awe. She has seen pictures of books. Never this many. Never real ones.

At the far end of the room, PROFESSOR GREENWAY studies a MAGNAVID display. His back is to her.

JAYNE

Excuse me.

Nothing.

JAYNE (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Greenway finally touches a control behind his ear and turns.

GREENWAY

Oh.

JAYNE

Oh.

GREENWAY

Who are you?

JAYNE

Jayne Wu.

GREENWAY

No. Your birth number.

Jayne holds out her VID.

Greenway taps it against his own.

Data scrolls across his display.

He frowns.

GREENWAY (CONT'D)

That's odd.

JAYNE

What is?

GREENWAY

Nothing.

He gestures toward a chair.

GREENWAY (CONT'D)

Blood sample. Retinal scan. Skin biopsy. And a partial connectome scan.

JAYNE

What's a connectome scan?

GREENWAY

A map of your brain.

JAYNE

Why?

GREENWAY

Because somebody higher up than me wants one.

Jayne reluctantly drinks a foul pink liquid.

JAYNE
That's awful.

Greenway places a scanning band around her head.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
One of the thingies is caught in my hair.

Greenway reaches over.

The probe is tangled in the chain around Jayne's neck.

He lifts the chain.

The SILVER STAR slides into view.

Silence.

GREENWAY
...oh my.

The color drains from his face.

He drops the pendant as if it burned him.

JAYNE
What?

GREENWAY
Nothing.

Too fast. Too defensive.

GREENWAY (CONT'D)
This will take several hours. Go to sleep.

JAYNE
How long?

GREENWAY
I don't have time for questions.

His eyes flick back to the Silver Star.

Fear.

GREENWAY (CONT'D)
I must go.

Greenway exits.

FLASHBACK - INT. LABORATORY NURSERY - UNKNOWN

A BABY lies in a crib inside a transparent enclosure.

A colorful MOBILE spins overhead.

Tiny fingers reach toward a dangling creature.

The mobile rotates away.

The baby reaches for another.

It moves out of reach.

Again.

And again.

Frustration builds.

The baby kicks.

Fusses.

Then the baby stares.

The mobile stops.

A section of support wire begins to glow.

Orange.

Then white-hot.

POP.

The wire melts.

The entire mobile drops into the crib.

The baby giggles.

Delighted.

She grabs one of the dangling creatures and stuffs it into her mouth.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GREENWAY'S LAB - LATER

Darkness.

Jayne tries to sit up.

Can't.

Metal restraints lock her wrists, elbows, knees, ankles, neck and head in place.

A pulse of panic.

Then the headache hits.

BLUE WARNING LIGHTS flash. A KLAXON sounds.

Then silence.

A LAB TECH enters and begins releasing restraints.

JAYNE
How long was I here?

LAB TECH
A little over six hours.

Jayne stares.

LAB TECH (CONT'D)
That's very unusual. The scan usually takes less than two.

Jayne looks around.

Other restraint chairs sit in the darkness.

Empty.

Waiting.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - NIGHT

LUCKY (O.S.)
Come in, Thirteen. I have made you something to eat. There is an analgesic for your headache on the table.

JAYNE
How did you know?

LUCKY (O.S.)
I know how grueling the first day of Practical TEM can be.

Jayne considers telling Lucky everything.

She decides not to.

Instead, she looks down at the Silver Star.
Thoughtful.

FADE OUT.

INT. SPAVATOR TRAINING STAGING AREA - DAY

Apprentices gather around a JOURNEYMAN FIXER.

JOURNEYMAN FIXER
You'll work in pairs. Collect your
tool packs from Stores and report
to the spavator undercarriage.

Partners are assigned.

JOURNEYMAN FIXER (CONT'D)
Kane Thirty-Seven. Riley Twenty-
Three.

Joseph leaves with another apprentice.

Jayne watches him go. A small disappointment.

JOURNEYMAN FIXER (CONT'D)
Wu Thirteen.

No second name follows.

JOURNEYMAN FIXER (CONT'D)
Looks like you work with me.

INT. STORES - LATER

Jayne retrieves a heavy tool pack.

INT. SPAVATOR UNDERCARRIAGE - LATER

A vast curved corridor lined with diagnostic points and
glowing LEDs.

Jayne immediately gets to work.

Lockout tie. Test core. Contact point.

The LEDs change color.

JAYNE
Three months before failure.
Replace in two.

The Journeyman is impressed.

His VID flashes RED.

JOURNEYMAN FIXER
I have to go. Keep working. If you
need me... don't.

He hurries away.

INT. SPAVATOR UNDERCARRIAGE - MONTAGE

-- Jayne tests panel after panel.
-- Logs degradation reports.
-- Marks completed stations.
-- Continues deeper into the structure.

INT. SPAVATOR UNDERCARRIAGE - LATER

Jayne pauses.

The corridor curves endlessly upward yet never returns to its beginning.

She notices the floor slowly rising.

JAYNE
It's a spiral.

INT. SPAVATOR CORE ROOM - LATER

The spiral ends in a circular chamber dominated by the SPAVATOR CORE.

An isolated door stands on the far side.

Her VID beeps. Three minutes of personal time remain.

She tries the scanner. Nothing.

She jumps to see through the window.

The SILVER STAR slips from beneath her jumpsuit in slow motion.

CLICK.
The door unlocks.

INT. SECRET STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lights rise.

Six refrigerated niches.

Only one occupied.

Jayne opens the compartment.

Cold vapor spills out.

Inside rests a white container.

She opens it.

A second sealed case.

Label: HUMAN ORGANS - OPEN FOR IMMEDIATE TRANSPLANT ONLY.

Her VID erupts with warning beeps.

Startled, she puts everything back and leaves.

INT. SPAVATOR UNDERCARRIAGE - LATER

Jayne works.

The image of the organ container refuses to leave her mind.

INT. SPAVATOR CORE ROOM - LATER

The Journeyman returns.

JOURNEYMAN FIXER
You're nearly out of lockout ties.
Come on.

They approach the same door.

Jayne braces herself.

The door opens.

The refrigerated niches are gone.

A perfectly ordinary supply room stands beyond.

Bins. Tools. Lockout ties.

Nothing else.

Jayne is too stunned to speak.

INT. SPAVATOR UNDERCARRIAGE - LATER

Jayne and the Journeyman finish the day's testing.

FOOTSTEPS approach.

A worker passes with his helmet tipped low.

A SILVER STAR bracelet dangles from his wrist.

Jayne notices immediately.

The worker disappears into the core room.

The Journeyman frowns.

JOURNEYMAN FIXER

That's odd. I thought this area was
restricted.

Minutes later the worker returns.

His backpack is noticeably fuller.

A white corner protrudes from beneath the flap.

The same size. The same shape.

The same container.

Jayne watches him disappear down the spiral.

Her breath catches.

Someone is moving human organs from the Biomes through the
spavator.

FADE OUT.

INT. PRACTICAL TEM WORK FLOOR - DAY

Jayne works beneath an open SPAVATOR access panel.

Around her, supervisors argue over inventory mismatches.

A worker opens a crate.

Empty.

Across the floor another worker stares at a terminal.

WORKER

This shipment doesn't exist.

SUPERVISOR

It's right there.

WORKER

Not according to the system.

Terminal screens flash: MANIFEST ERROR.

A software rollback begins.

The apprentices are sent home early.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - MORNING

Classical music slowly increases in volume.

Jayne groans and pulls a pillow over her head.

LUCKY (O.S.)

Get up, Thirteen. I have made you something to eat.

JAYNE

I'm not hungry. I feel yucky.

LUCKY (O.S.)

You do not feel well? I will schedule a physical.

JAYNE

Stop. I don't need a physical. I'm bored out of my mind.

LUCKY (O.S.)

Why don't you go to the gym?

JAYNE

There's a gym?

INT. HUB GYM - LATER

The gym is packed with apprentices.

Machines hum. Weights clank.

Then Jayne sees it.

A MINIATURE GRAVTUBE dominates the room.

Colored gravity lanes spiral through a transparent cylinder.

Players run on walls, leap impossible distances and fly through open space.

Jayne's face lights up.

INT. GRAVTUBE VIEWING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Jayne settles into the sparse seating near the centerline.

A drop-in game is already in progress.

Joseph carries the ball down a neutral line.

A SEEKER flashes a signal.

Joseph cuts left, dodging a knocker.

He hits a low-gravity line.

Misjudges the acceleration.

He sails upward toward the center axle.

An anti-grav pulse flips him end over end.

He crashes harmlessly to the floor saved by the built in safety devices in the suit.

JAYNE

That's my move.

She signs into the next game. BEGINNER flashes across the screen.

INT. BLUE TEAM PIT - LATER

Jayne wears the smallest suit she can find. It is still too large.

She rolls up the sleeves and cinches the belt.

BLONDE GIRL

Did you see that big goof mess up that run?

Laughter.

JAYNE

I'm your seventh.

My name is Thirteen.

The team goes quiet.

SPIKE

We use names here, not numbers.

JAYNE

My nick name is Thirteen but you
can call me Jayne.

SPIKE

Good.

Numbers make my head hurt.

Spike points around the pit.

Busy Izzy. Jumper. Cannon Ball. Eye Spy. Pinky.

SPIKE (CONT'D)

And I'm Spike.

Spike demonstrates hand signals.

Thumb up. Low grav. Thumb down. High grav.

Open-close hand. Pulsar.

JAYNE

Wow. This tube has pulsar tech.

SPIKE

What position?

JAYNE

Knocker.

The team stacks fists.

SCORE!

INT. GRAVTUBE - GAME IN PROGRESS

The ball launches into play.

Jayne immediately misjudges a challenge.

The opposing ball carrier slips beneath her and scores.

SPIKE

Tough one, Thirteen.

The next possession begins.

The ball drops from above and lands directly at Jayne's feet.

She scoops it up.

Signals explode around her.

Every thumb points down.

High gravity everywhere.

Joseph charges straight at her.

SPIKE (CONT'D)
Pass it off!

Jayne searches for a trailer.

Nothing.

Then she sees it.

A reverse pulsar.

She runs toward her own goal.

The Blue Team groans.

Joseph grins.

Jayne leaps into the pulse.

A gravity wave launches her backward and upward.

She arches toward the centerline.

The anti-grav field bumps her higher.

She rolls across the tube.

Drops into a low-gravity lane on the opposite side.

Every defender is trapped behind her.

Jayne laughs.

She skips. Leaps. Somersaults.

SLAMS THE BALL HOME.

PINKY
That was fracking fantastic!

SPIKE
Stupidly dangerous.

But very cool to watch.

INT. GRAVTUBE - CONTINUOUS

The celebration dies.

The grav generators shut down.

Lights dim.

Doors lock.

COMPUTER VOICE (O.S.)
HUB 169 is in lockdown. Please sit
on the floor and wait for further
instructions.

INT. GRAVTUBE - LATER

Both teams sit beneath the centerline.

Joseph sprawls across from her.

Bored.

Waiting.

He notices Jayne watching him.

A slow grin.

He wiggles his fingers.

Jayne immediately looks away.

Joseph keeps grinning.

Across the circle, Spike notices.

Uh-oh.

Jayne notices Spike noticing.

Her face turns bright red.

PA VOICE
All GravBall players, please exit
the tube, remove your suits and
prepare for inspection.

INT. GYM INSPECTION AREA - LATER

Players sit shoulder-to-shoulder on benches.

Still sweaty.

Still breathing hard from the game.

Nobody talks.

Security teams sweep the room with scanners.

Jayne watches.

One member of the red team --

THE QUIET BOY.

Keeps glancing toward the lockers.

Again.

And again.

And again.

Jayne follows his gaze.

A beat.

Something is wrong.

A scanner CHIRPS.

Green.

Another scanner.

Green.

Another.

Green.

The Quiet Boy swallows.

A FEMALE TECH stops.

Her handheld scanner flashes RED.

Everyone turns.

The tech opens a locker.

Reaches inside.

Removes a small device.

A GRAVITY METER.
The room goes silent.

A SENIOR SECURITY TECH strides into the room.

The gravity meter changes hands.

Looks at it.

Smiles.

Not a pleasant smile.

The smile of someone who finally has an audience.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH
Well now.

Which one of you geniuses brought this in?

Nobody answers.

The Quiet Boy stares straight ahead.

Jayne notices.

The tech strolls down the line.

Predator.

Looking for prey.

He stops in front of Jayne.

Looks her up and down.

Oversized uniform.

Smallest person in the room.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
You look like you could barely lift
the ball.

Did you bring this so you could pretend you knew what you
were doing?

A few nervous laughs.

Jayne says nothing.

The tech is disappointed.

No reaction.

He moves on.

He stops in front of Spike.

Studies the ridiculous ponytail.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
And what about you?

Ponytail boy.

SPIKE
I don't need a grav meter.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH
No?

Then maybe you planned to sell it.

SPIKE
Maybe you should ask whoever owns
it.

The room freezes.

Wrong answer.

The tech leans in.

Very close.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH
Maybe I should ask you.

Spike doesn't back down.

The tech finally shoves him back onto the bench.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
Sit down.

Ponytail boy.

Now Joseph.

The tech circles him once.

Looking him over.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
Those are some mighty big feet.

Joseph keeps staring at the floor.

Silent.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
Need help finding the low grav
lines?

Nothing.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
No?

Then maybe you're just naturally gifted.

Still nothing.

The tech waits.

Nothing.

His smile disappears.

He drops the gravity meter.

CRUNCH.
His boot destroys it.

Plastic fragments scatter.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH
I don't care about the meter.

He points at the broken pieces.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
I care how it got past the
scanners.

Now he scans every face.

Slowly.

SENIOR SECURITY TECH (CONT'D)
Until I know that...

every one of you is under my microscope.

His eyes stop on Jayne.

Then Spike.

Then Joseph.

Then finally...

The Quiet Boy.

A fraction too long.

The Quiet Boy looks away.

Jayne notices.

Nobody else does.

INT. QUARTERS 2197 - NIGHT

LUCKY (O.S.)

There has been a serious security
breach. Some rodents have been
stolen from one of the biomes.

Security still has no idea how the thieves bypassed the
scanners.

Jayne crawls into bed. She mumbles under her breath.

JAYNE

I don't care.

Music plays softly.

She drifts to sleep thinking of Joseph. Spike. And the quiet
boy.

FADE OUT.

INT. HUB CAFETERIA - DAY

Lunch buzzes with conversation.

Every table seems to be discussing the same thing.

The stolen rodents.

Rat Man. Mouse Marauder. Rodent Thief.

Wild theories fly from table to table.

Jayne sits alone with a salad and listens.

At first the jokes annoy her.

Why would anyone want biome rodents?

Then an idea forms.

She stops eating.

Biome markers.

The rats would carry them.

Rats reproduce.

The markers reproduce with them.

An endless supply. A perfect way to smuggle biologicals from the biomes.

Her thoughts jump to the mysterious white container she saw earlier.

The one labeled with a human heart.

Her appetite vanishes.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

How are you squeaking, Mini Mouse Girl?

Joseph drops into the seat across from her.

He makes an exaggerated squeaking noise.

JAYNE

No. Only you. I imagine it was the highlight of your life.

JOSEPH

You wound me.

JAYNE

I'll try harder next time.

Joseph grins.

JOSEPH

Things have changed.

This afternoon you're following me.

JAYNE

That sounds terrible.

Joseph's VID BEEPS.

JOSEPH

You'll see.

INT. EAST ROTUNDA - LATER

Joseph studies his VID.

Jayne arrives.

JOSEPH
Section Sub D.

Base of the spavator.

Cleanup duty.

JAYNE
Yeech.

Joseph laughs.

They step onto a PUT pad.

INT. SPAVATOR BASE - EQUIPMENT ROOM - DAY

An exhausted supervisor hands out equipment.

Dust masks.

Industrial vacuums.

Shovels.

SUPERVISOR
Don't break anything.

JOSEPH
That seems directed at me.

SUPERVISOR
It was.

INT. SECTION SUB D - LEVEL 1 - CONTINUOUS

A vast circular chamber stretches beyond sight.

Massive fiber bundles descend from the ceiling like the roots
of giant trees.

Static crackles through the air.

Jayne takes one step inside.

Her hair immediately stands straight out.

Joseph bursts out laughing.

JOSEPH
Don't move.

I want to remember this forever.

JAYNE
I hate you.

He points to a grounding strip.

Jayne touches it.

Her hair collapses.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
Better.

JOSEPH
Disagree.

They separate and begin cleaning.

Dust vanishes into vacuums.

Rows and rows of contacts.

Thousands of them.

Jayne finishes one section.

Looks up.

She hasn't even made a dent.

Fiber contacts emerge from beneath months of grime.

Time passes.

JAYNE
You know what's bothering me?

JOSEPH
The hair?

JAYNE
The rats.

Joseph shrugs.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
I think they stole them for the
biome markers.

JOSEPH
You spent lunch thinking about
stolen rats?

JAYNE
Yes.

JOSEPH
You're weird.

JAYNE
Probably.

INT. SECTION SUB D - LEVEL 2 - LATER

The lower level is dirtier.

A conveyor system runs the length of the room.

A monorail hangs overhead.

Dirt. Leaves. Debris.

JAYNE
I joined TEM to become a
technician.

Not a janitor.

A KLAXON SOUNDS.
Both apprentices look up.

A gigantic LINE-VAC glides along the overhead rail.

It stops.

Tilts forward.

Tons of debris pour onto the conveyor below.

JAYNE
That's bigger than I expected.

JOSEPH
That's what everybody says.

Jayne throws a clump of dirt at him.

They return to work.

Another line-vac arrives.

More debris.

Hours seem to pass.

Then Joseph's VID BEEPS.

He frowns.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
That's weird.

Jayne checks her own VID.

No message.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
It wants me standing in the center
of the room.

He walks there.

Jayne returns to shoveling.

Her VID BEEPS.

Now she has the same instruction.

JAYNE
Damn.

She joins him.

An uneasy silence settles.

Joseph studies the message.

His smile disappears.

Just for an instant.

Then it's back.

Jayne notices.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
What?

JOSEPH
Nothing.

A LINE-VAC glides silently into the room.

Different.

Cleaner.

It stops directly in front of them.

A side door slides open.

The interior is spotless.

Padded.

Wrong.

JAYNE

Joseph...

He steps closer.

As if to see the strange vehicle better.

Then...

SHOVES HER.

Jayne stumbles into the
compartment.

Slams into the padded wall.

The door closes instantly.

DARKNESS.

The vehicle begins to move.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Sorry Wuuuuuu...

His voice stretches away.

A hiss fills the compartment.

Gas.

Jayne pounds on the door.

The pounding weakens.

Her vision blurs.

She tries to stay awake.

Fails.

BLACK.

INT. SAFEHOUSE ROOM - UNKNOWN

BLACK.

A distant ringing.

Breathing.

Then...

JAYNE'S EYES OPEN.

A grey, mottled ceiling swims in
and out of focus.

Nausea rolls through her stomach.

Pain spears through her face.

She tries to sit up.

Instant regret.

The pounding in her head multiplies.

She collapses back onto the bed.

Minutes pass.

Finally the pain eases.

Jayne opens her eyes again.

A small room.

No windows.

A bed.

A bathroom.

Nothing else.

She slips out of bed.

Still wearing her work clothes.

The oversized coveralls are gone.

She shuffles toward the bathroom.

A wave of dizziness hits.

She grips the wall.

INT. SAFEHOUSE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The light snaps on automatically.

Jayne stares into the mirror.

A black eye.

A swollen lip.

Memory returns.

FLASHBACK - INT. SECTION SUB D - LEVEL 2

Joseph SHOVES her.

She slams into the padded wall.

The HISS.

Gas.

end flashback

INT. SAFEHOUSE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She fills a glass with water.

Drinks carefully.

Water dribbles from her injured lip.

She drinks anyway.

INT. SAFEHOUSE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Fear replaces confusion.

She heads for the door.

One step.

The room spins.

Two steps.

She falls hard.

CUT TO:

INT. SAFEHOUSE ROOM - LATER

Voices.

Jayne slowly regains consciousness.

She doesn't move.

An IV line runs into the back of her hand.

Her eyes remain closed.

Listening.

FEMALE MEDIC (O.S.)

She must have gotten up for water.

I found a glass on the bathroom floor.

She points to an overturned tumbler and a splash of water.

FEMALE MEDIC (O.S.)

She never made it back to bed. You used too much gas.

MALE HANDLER (O.S.)

I had to be sure she wouldn't
escape.

FEMALE MEDIC (O.S.)

Who gave her the black eye?

MALE HANDLER (O.S.)

One of the new recruits.

Big kid. Not very bright. He pushed her harder than he meant
to.

FEMALE MEDIC (O.S.)

Is he the one we've been watching?

MALE HANDLER (O.S.)

Yeah.

We've been manipulating him for months. Keeping him close to
her.

Jayne's pulse quickens.

The medic and the handler enter the room and approach Jayne.

Jayne keeps her breathing slow.

Steady.

MALE HANDLER (CONT'D)
We took over his training
assignments.

Sent him where we needed him.

FEMALE MEDIC
She's asleep, right?

She touches Jayne's wrist.

Checks her pulse.

Jayne forces herself to stay limp.

FEMALE MEDIC (CONT'D)
Looks asleep.

Footsteps move away.

MALE HANDLER
We even made him follow her during
the first assessments.

I wanted to know what they were looking for.

FEMALE MEDIC
At the PSI testing?

MALE HANDLER
Yes.

After a few tests of our own... We'll know.

A syringe clicks.

FEMALE MEDIC
I'm giving her another sedative.

Cold fluid enters the IV.

The ceiling drifts.

The room softens.

Like sinking into warm water.

She fights it.

MALE HANDLER
He wasn't happy when we told him.

Actually, he was pretty angry.

The room begins to drift away.

MALE HANDLER (CONT'D)
I sure hope she isn't really what
they think she is.

Jayne tries to stay conscious.

The drug wins.

BLACK.

INT. SAFEHOUSE ROOM - DAY

A GREY CEILING swims in and out of focus.

A distant ringing. A pounding headache.

JAYNE'S EYES OPEN.
She blinks. Tries to sit up.
Instantly regrets it.

The room tilts. She drops back onto the mattress and waits
for the dizziness to pass.

FLASHBACK - INT. SECTION SUB D - LEVEL 2

She is staring at Joseph.

He is sweeping debris on to a conveyor.

She looks up as a LINE-VAC glides silently into the room.

She smiles at him and turns to the LINE-VAC as it opens.

He steps behind her.

end flashback

She pushes the rest of the memory away. She whispers to
herself.

Jayne

I've been kidnapped.

She looks down. The IV is gone. Only an empty saline bag
hangs beside the bed.

Her bladder wins the argument. She forces herself to her
feet.

The door opens. A WOMAN IN A LAB COAT enters and immediately steadies her.

WOMAN

Easy.

Without explanation, the woman helps Jayne to the bathroom.

INT. SAFEHOUSE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The light snaps on.

Jayne catches her reflection. Black eye. Swollen lip.

She stares at herself.

INT. SAFEHOUSE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The woman dabs ointment onto Jayne's lip and hands her two pills.

WOMAN

These will help.

JAYNE

What are they?

WOMAN

Pain relief. Nothing exciting.

Jayne hesitates.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

If I wanted to drug you, I had better opportunities.

Jayne reluctantly swallows them.

A MAN arrives with a food tray. The smell hits her like a physical force.

She eats ravenously.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Everything will be back to normal soon.

Someone will be in shortly to speak with you.

The woman leaves clean clothes and exits.

Jayne immediately drops her utensils and sets the food tray on her bed.

She begins searching the room.

Door. Vent. Furniture. Camera.

Nothing.

Then she spots a tiny blemish high on the wall.

JAYNE

Found you.

While retrieving her shoes, she discovers a discarded NEEDLE beside the IV stand.

Without looking toward the camera, she hides it inside her shoe.

INT. SAFEHOUSE HALLWAY - LATER

Jayne opens the door.

Unlocked.

The hallway beyond looks more like a hotel than a prison.

A UNIFORMED ESCORT rises from a chair.

ESCORT

Jayne Wu?

She nods.

ESCORT (CONT'D)

I'm here to escort you to the interview room.

Can I get you anything first?

Jayne studies him, suspicious.

JAYNE

A map.

The escort almost laughs.

ESCORT

I don't have a map. Anyway I don't think you will need one.

He directs her down the hall. She walks cautiously.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

There are a number of chairs around a large circular table

Jayne sits in an empty chair.

Warm lighting.

Which somehow makes it worse.

The simple decor makes her more apprehensive.

Two MEN and a WOMAN enter carrying VIDS.

Jayne jumps to her feet.

FIRST MAN
Miss Wu, please relax.

We're not here to hurt you.

JAYNE
Bit late for that.

The first man points to her eye.

FIRST MAN
The collision in the line-vac was
an accident.

The gas dosage was a mistake.

JAYNE
That's a lot of accidents.

She curls into the chair, feet tucked beneath her. One finger
touches the hidden needle.

WOMAN
We needed to speak with you
privately.

What we discuss here is confidential.

SECOND MAN
You may leave at any time.

Jayne

Really?

Second man

Yes.

Jayne begins to gather herself and stand up. She intends on leaving.

SECOND MAN (CONT'D)
However, if you leave, your recent memories will be erased.

Silence. She sits.

JAYNE
You can do that?

SECOND MAN
Yes.

JAYNE
That's horrifying.

SECOND MAN
It's necessary.

JAYNE
Those aren't the same thing.

The woman takes over before the conversation derails.

WOMAN
We're Fixers. Just like you.

Our job is maintaining society and protecting the biomes.

JAYNE
Why am I here?

FIRST MAN
You need context first.

Jayne's grip tightens around the hidden needle.

JAYNE
Are you planning to brainwash me like Joseph?

Who is the nine-fingered man?

Who stole the heart?

The room goes still.

The SILVER STAR suddenly grows warm against her chest.

On impulse she stands on her chair and pulls the pendant free.

JAYNE (CONT'D)
Did you give me this?

The center spokes unfold.

A series of spikes begin to rise up.

One after the other.

They reflect light from their glittering needle points.

They are sharp and predatory.

The room freezes.

Nobody moves.

Nobody speaks.

The Woman's face drains of color.

The First Man slowly stands.

The final spoke locks into place.

Each point seems to be crawling with evil intent.

COLLECTIVE GASP.
The SECOND MAN lunges for a
security panel near the door and
slams a red button.

CLANG!
Steel shutters slam over the door
and curtained windows.

PA VOICE
Interview Room M is now running
dark. Level Seven lockdown
initiated.

The announcement repeats.

WOMAN
Silence it.

The man touches his VID.

The announcement stops.

The interviewers slowly form a semicircle around Jayne.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Where did you get that?

Jayne stares at the woman as she carefully lowers the star being careful to avoid the sharp points.

First man

Answer her! Where did you get that... thing?

JAYNE

It was in my music box.

First day at the HUB.

SECOND MAN

Answer carefully.

JAYNE

I received a message telling me to wear it. I thought...

Beat.

Jayne

I'm telling the truth.

One of the men reaches under the edge of the table. His finger presses a button.

A hidden compartment opens in the table.

One of the men moves closer to Jayne.

She stares at him. He stops.

WOMAN

It's alright, dear.

Jayne looks at her.

The Woman smiles.

The First Man moves.

Fast.

His hand closes around the chain.

RIP.

His eyes never leave the pendant.

He is carefully avoiding touching one of the needles.

He drops it into the compartment.

SLAM.

The Silver Star vanishes.

Jayne lunges.

Too late.

Jayne hears it disappear.

Feels it disappear.

The nausea hits instantly.

Violent. Crushing.

JAYNE

What did you--

The nausea detonates inside her.

She doubles over.

VOMITS across the table.

The interviewers jump back.

She retches again.

A cold sweat erupts across her skin.

Her legs buckle.

She collapses to her knees.

Still retching.

Nothing left.

Still retching.

The room erupts into chaos.

The woman produces a syringe.

WOMAN

Hold her still!

A man restrains Jayne.

The injection hits.

The nausea begins to fade.

The room drifts away.

FADE OUT.