

MALAISE IN THE WATER

Written by

Katie

1 EXT. THE RIVER**1**

We open on a hot summers day. People from the town have come to cool off in the river. People raft down the river in floaties. Families have picnics and barbeques at the side of the river with hammocks set close by with people lazing around in them. A man throws a frisbee for a golden retriever.

Up on a small cliff, people cannonball off with a splash, screaming with laughter. People in the river cheer.

A group of kids play with a bright beach ball that bounces between them.

Up on the cliff, a FIGURE lurches towards the edge of the cliff, posture slumped, feet dragging, face slack and vacant. Down below, people cheer them on.

The kids continue to throw the cheerful beachball. The FIGURE looms closer to the edge.

The FIGURE tips sideways, tumbling into the water with a grotesque limpness. The body hits the water with a loud, flat smack, in the middle of the group of kids.

The crowd below cheers. The beachball flies over the space where the body of the FIGURE bobs to the surface, facedown.

The crowd doesn't seem to acknowledge the body, walking around it like it isn't there. They continue to swim, laugh, and play carefree.

2 INT. HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK**2**

We are in an operating room, Dreamlike flashes of Surgeons in masks and blue surgical gowns.

DOCTOR V.O.
(frantic)
The Patient's heart rate is
dropping

Blinding lights flash a sterile white. The beeps from the hear monitor seem deafening.

DOCTOR V.O.
Doctor, we are losing her!

We see blood pooled on the floor, and on shaking, gloved hands holding a scalpel

DOCTOR V.O.

Dr. Clement!

The screen goes black, and the heart monitor rings.

CONT. DR. CLEMENT
Time of death, 2:32 pm

3 INT. HERMIA CLEMENT'S APARTMENT

3

DR. CLEMENT'S hand holds a kitchen knife, shaking faintly, and the other hand bleeds from a small cut.

DR. CLEMENT V.O.
Hey mom, yeah no, I'm doing fine.

She lives in a barren apartment, filled with boxes. and several cases of bottled water.

DR. CLEMENT cleans and bandages the finger, a cell phone held up to her ear by her shoulder.

DR. CLEMENT
The move is going fine. No, no, you don't need to visit. I- uh-

DR. CLEMENT takes a frying pan out of a box on the counter, opens up the empty fridge. She tries to make breakfast, but most of her stuff is in boxes and she has no food.

CONT. DR. CLEMENT
No, I'm all unpacked. I had a- neighbor come over and help. You know what small town folk are like. Always helping. Not that I need it it, because I'm a grown woman and am perfectly capable of moving on my own- no, not alone. You know what I mean

She shuts the fridge.

4 INT. SHOP UNDER APARTMENT- MORNING

4

DR. CLEMENT walks through the empty shop below her apartment, past the owner, who sits behind the counter and doesn't look at her as she walks by.

CONT. DR. CLEMENT
You know what towns like these are like- nosy neighbors and all. Impossible to be alone-

5 EXT. DREARY - MORNING**5**

DR. CLEMENT walks down the empty street, phone to her ear. She holds a coffee from a cafe and a pastry. The few people walking by don't talk to each other.

CONT. DR. CLEMENT

(agitated)

No, I'm still looking for a therapist. But it's not exactly-- No, I know but-- Look, mom, I'm at work. I have to go. I'll talk to you later okay? No, I have to go-- bye.

DR. CLEMENT arrives at the clinic. A bottle of pepper spray swings from her keychain as she unlocks the door.

6 INT. CLINIC - MORNING**6**

DR. CLEMENT hangs up the phone and enters the clinic. She sits behind her desk. She keeps her desk neat, although a little barren. She has pictures of her with family, some office supplies, and a few things to help pass the time.

Her neurosurgeon's PHD hangs on the wall behind her.

She opens up a book with blank pages labeled 'appointments.' She looks up at the room which seems big, empty. She picks up a rubix cube, and fiddles with it.

7 MONTAGE - DR. CLEMENT'S DAY**7**

--Apartment-- DR. CLEMENT gets up, makes breakfast, talks to her mother on the phone.

--Shop-- DR. CLEMENT walks to work past the owner of the shop who doesn't speak to her. A tv plays on the counter next to him, but he doesn't look at it. He only stares off into space.

--Clinic-- DR. CLEMENT sits behind her desk. The book of appointments still sits blank next to her. She spends her days filling her time with things she can do at her desk. Putting together Legos, doing crossword puzzles, and doing cross-stitching.

8 INT. CLINIC - MORNING**8**

Another morning, DR. CLEMENT arrives at the clinic, and finds the door open ajar.

DR. CLEMENT
Mom, I'm at work, I've got to go.

She hangs up the call, and pushes the door open cautiously.

9 INT. CLINIC - MORNING

9

DR. CLEMENT stalks through the waiting room, and towards the exam room. Somebody rummages through cabinets looking for something. DR. CLEMENT grabs the bottle of pepper spray off her keychain, sneaking up behind a figure in a black hoodie, and leather jacket. As the figure turns, both jump and scream.

HUNTER
what the-

Dr. Clement sprays them square in the face.

HUNTER
Oh fuck my eyes!

The scene cuts, and HUNTER sits in the waiting room, eyes red from the pepper spray. They squint at a clip board, filling out paper work. DR. CLEMENT stares at them from the desk, arms crossed. HUNTER finishes the paperwork, and slide it onto the desk.

HUNTER
I'm done, can I see you now?

DR. CLEMENT
(Flatly)
Your appointment is at 8:15.

HUNTER
But- It's 8:14.

DR. CLEMENT stares at the clock, while HUNTER stands looks impatient. They look around the desk, noticing the PHD hanging on the wall, and the appointment sheet; Which besides their appointment, is still blank. The time on the clock switches to 8:15. Satisfied, DR. CLEMENT stands up.

DR. CLEMENT
Alright, follow me.

HUNTER sits on the exam table, legs swinging. They watch her movements, fascinated. DR. CLEMENT reads their chart. The medical form is filled out very badly, medical history left blank.

DR. CLEMENT

Alright...Hunter Lethe. How long has it been since your last check up.

HUNTER

(Distracted)

Detective Hunter Lethe, actually. Ah, I'm not sure. A- a couple years probably. How long have you worked here for?

DR. CLEMENT

5 months. Are you up to date on all your most recent vaccinations?

HUNTER

yeah, sure. And how far back does that appointment sheet go?

DR. CLEMENT

that's private

HUNTER

It was blank. Is it normal for it to be blank?

DR. CLEMENT

It's a small town. Do you have any allergies to medications?

HUNTER

And you don't think that's weird? Have you had any appointments since you've been here?

DR. CLEMENT

It's quiet, So-- no I haven't.

(Repeating)

Do you have any allergies?

HUNTER

No, No, I don't. But you don't think that's weird?

DR. CLEMENT

(Impatiently)

How often do you smoke or drink?

HUNTER

But it's weird right?

DR. CLEMENT

You know what's weird? Me letting you make an appointment after you broke into my clinic instead of calling the police.

(impatiently)

Do you smoke or drink?

HUNTER

You pepper sprayed me!

DR. CLEMENT

Because you broke in.

HUNTER

I was- looking to make an appointment

DR. CLEMENT

Right, and that's why you were snooping around in the cabinets. I really should have called the police. Your eyes will be fine, just wash them out thoroughly in the sink before you go. I should have some saline solution somewhere. But I'm not giving you any drugs.

HUNTER

I wasn't looking for drugs, and calling the police wouldn't do anything. But your not like the others, are you? Maybe you haven't been here long enough.

DR. CLEMENT

What are you talking about?

HUNTER

Isn't it weird that you haven't had a single other appointment in 5 months? That you never see any people on the streets, and when they do, they never spare you a second glance?

(pause)

Not even a wave, or smile?

DR. CLEMENT

How do you- I'm a stranger, why would they?

HUNTER

Exactly, your a stranger. And this is a small town, where everyone knows everyone. So why haven't they tried to get to know you? Haven't you noticed?

DR. CLEMENT stares at them, mouth agape. HUNTER slides off the table.

HUNTER

I recommend you take a walk down by the river. There is a trail down to it behind the old mill. Lovely in autumn. You should go after work. And maybe you'll start to see it too.

HUNTER steps out of the room, leaving Hermia to stare after them in shock.

10 EXT. RIVER - AUTUMN - AFTERNOON

10

DR. CLEMENT goes on a walk down by the river. buzzing gets louder the closer DR. CLEMENT gets to it. She winces and covers her nose. As she turns the corner, she finds the source.

The river is full of bodies, lying in various states of decay, and covered in a strange plant or ooze. They all wear different clothes. Some wear suits, some wear nightgowns or robes; A few wear bright summer bathing suits. A filthy deflated beach ball stuck to a branch nearby.

DR. CLEMENT stumbles back from the river in horror, and pukes into the bushes.

HUNTER

So you can see them. I wasn't sure you'd show up.

(pause)

It's not a pretty sight is it?

DR. CLEMENT

Oh god these people- You, this is you- what did you-

HUNTER

Me? I couldn't do this

DR. CLEMENT

we need to call someone

DR. CLEMENT gets out her phone and dials a number, fingers fumbling with the buttons.

HUNTER

Again with calling the police. I told you that's not going to do anything.

the phone rings, and then picks up

POLICE OFFICER

hello?

DR. CLEMENT

hello, I'd like to report a body- several bodies- in the river

POLICE OFFICER V.O.

calm down ma'am. It's alright.

POLICE OFFICER V.O.

You need to send someone down here right away

HUNTER

(Quietly)

there's no use

POLICE OFFICER V.O.

Look ma'am, I'm sure it's nothing. Just a deer.

DR. CLEMENT

It's not a deer! I'm a Doctor, I think I know what a body looks like-

POLICE OFFICER V.O.

Everything is fine ma'am. Just go back to enjoying your walk

DR. CLEMENT

wha- but-

POLICE OFFICER V.O.

you have a nice day ma'am

The phone beeps, and the line goes dead.

HUNTER

I told you they wouldn't care.

DR. CLEMENT

They're the police, how can they not-

HUNTER

Not their fault. I'm not sure they could see the bodies if they tried. What's wrong with them is what's wrong with the rest of the town. Besides, they wouldn't be able to do anything about it even if they did. They only deal with- human problems. And what killed those people certainly wasn't a human.

DR. CLEMENT

What's happened

HUNTER

Your a Doctor, why don't you tell me?

DR. CLEMENT

I'm a surgeon, not a pathologist

HUNTER

Give it your best guess

DR. CLEMENT winces as she leans down to inspect the bodies.

DR. CLEMENT

I can't tell without an autopsy. But there don't seem to be any injuries. Drowned, maybe?

HUNTER

There's no one left to do an autopsy. And they didn't drown. They were all dead before they hit the water.

DR. CLEMENT

What could do that?

HUNTER

I don't know. But there is a sickness in this town. They become forgetful, apathetic, lethargic. They become shells of who they were, stop eating or drinking. And then, once everything else is gone, they walk right into the river.

(pause)

If you want to know what's going on, I have something to show you at my apartment.

HUNTER walks back up the path, beckoning for DR. CLEMENT to follow. She looks hesitant at first, but follows.

11 DR. HERMIA'S CAR

11

Dr. Hermia Clement and HUNTER sit in DR. CLEMENT's car. HUNTER looks out of the window with a frown on their face, DR. CLEMENT stares ahead with a determination.

HUNTER LETHE
This is the wrong direction to my apartment

DR. CLEMENT doesn't say anything. HUNTER looks at DR. CLEMENT with a strange look in their eyes.

HUNTER LETHE
This is the way out of town.
(pause)
Where are we going?

DR. CLEMENT
we are leaving

HUNTER LETHE
(alarmed)
what? we can't leave

DR. CLEMENT
we are getting out of here. This is all fucked.

HUNTER LETHE
You *can't*

DR. CLEMENT
watch me

The car continues to drive, driving out onto a quieter road. they approach the edge of town, the 'you are now leaving' sign approaches like the edge of a cliff, their fall imminent. Hunter grabs the wheel and jerks it to the right. DR. CLEMENT screams as the car swerves off the side of the road and into the grass. She slams on the breaks just in time to narrowly avoid hitting a tree.

The car door slams as DR. CLEMENT flees the vehicle, reeling from the danger. Hunter exits the vehicle behind her looking unfazed.

DR. CLEMENT
(gasping)
What is *wrong* with you! You could have gotten both of us killed.

HUNTER LETHE
Neither of us can leave this town.

DR. CLEMENT
You are a lunatic! This is all insane! You need to stay the fuck away from me.

HUNTER LETHE
Your a doctor, you do know how contamination works, right? You said it yourself, those people were sick.

DR. CLEMENT
I don't know what that was, or anything about what killed those people. But you are *sick*.

HUNTER LETHE
This whole place is sick. But it's contained. Nobody cares enough to leave anymore. Right now, this town is a fish tank, and the fish are dying.

DR. CLEMENT
I've never seen anything like what killed those people. I've never even heard of anything that can do something like that.

HUNTER LETHE
Exactly! We have no idea what this thing is, or how it spreads. We seem fine for now, but--

DR. CLEMENT
(in horror)
We could be asymptomatic

HUNTER LETHE
(Resolutely)

We can't leave this town. So we may
as well pull Death's hood down, and
meet our end while we can still
recognize it's face.

HUNTER steps into DR. CLEMENT's space, who seems offput by
them, glancing back and forth between the car and HUNTER.
HUNTER's gaze intensifies and an almost excited grin spreads
across their face.

HUNTER LETHE
Don't you want to know what killed
those people?

DR. CLEMENT gazes into HUNTER's eyes for a moment, thinking.

DR. CLEMENT
What kind of a sickness could do
that? Make people forget, and then--
- All those people-- Why the river?

HUNTER LETHE
I have no idea. And don't the
questions just make you itch?

The two hold each others gaze for a moment longer, before DR.
CLEMENT closes her eyes and lets out a long weary sigh.

DR. CLEMENT
I need a drink.

HUNTER LETHE
Good, I've got plenty at my place.
Scotch or gin?

DR. CLEMENT
Red wine, actually

DR. CLEMENT

The two make their way back to the car. HUNTER looks pleased
and excited, like the start to a very fun game. DR. CLEMENT
looks like she needs a long nap.

HUNTER LETHE
Fantastic, I'll show you what I
have so far on the investigation
over drinks at mine?

DR. CLEMENT
(weakly)
May as well

The doors slam shut as they get back into the car, DR. CLEMENT pulling off the side of the road, and back into town.

12 INT. HUNTER'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

12

They show her back to their apartment. HUNTER unlocks the door and shows DR. CLEMENT inside.

HUNTER
Make yourself at home!

HUNTER throws their coat on a chair and makes their way towards the kitchen.

HUNTER
It's a bit of a mess. I haven't had guests in a while.

Dirty coffee mugs cover every surface. papers and news articles, research papers, pictures of people, both alive and dead, and maps all strung together cover the apartment almost wall to wall, across the upstairs and downstairs.

A million post it notes cling to the walls everywhere in different colors, typically reminders of some kind.

DR. CLEMENT moves over to look at their cabinets. Old detective and 70s sci-fi movies cover the walls.

From the kitchen , HUNTER calls out.

HUNTER
What kind of wine do you like?
Malbec, Merlot, or zinfandel.

DR. CLEMENT looks at an empty, filthy fish tank.

DR. CLEMENT
Merlot!

DR. CLEMENT moves on.

13 INT HUNTER'S APARTMENT - SOME TIME LATER

13

DR. CLEMENT sits on the couch holding a glass of wine in her hand, watching HUNTER pace from wall to wall, pointing to pieces of evidence.

HUNTER
The first bodies in the river started showing up around-
(pause)

6 months ago. But see, here's the rotten fish in the cargo. There have been 25 bodies reported as being found in the river over the last 10 years.

DR. CLEMENT
(disbelieving)
How is that possible? Somebody would have noticed.

HUNTER
Okay, granted, they haven't all been under strange circumstances. You've got the odd murder, a body dumped in the river. And the rest were all labelled as drownings; either from suicides or accidents. But I found the police reports-

DR. CLEMENT
found?

HUNTER
Don't ask. The officers reported at least 23 of the bodies 'in a state of decay, covered in green algae.' and what does that sound like? And get this. The last 4 bodies? They were found this year.

HUNTER turns to DR. CLEMENT with a wild excitement in their eyes.

HUNTER CONT.
The bodies didn't stop-

DR. CLEMENT
-the reports did.

HUNTER
Exactly!

DR. CLEMENT stands and approaches HUNTER to take a look at the wall. HUNTER turns back to the wall.

HUNTER

I've been trying to identify and keep record of everyone in the river. And none of them have anything in common. They all come from different parts of town, at different times, living different lives. Sickness is the only explanation, but without knowing how it spreads, it's hard to pin exactly how it progresses.

HUNTER stands close to the wall, eyes darting between papers and photos as if they will find some hidden clue within layers of gathered evidence.

HUNTER CONT.
(thoughtfully)
It always comes back to the river.

DR. CLEMENT lifts the glass to her lips, eyes wandering over the wall, her eyes landing on a map of DREARY. The town is built along a river that runs into a reservoir. Various locations are pinned and labelled. She approaches the map, and her eyes landing on a pin labeled *River Research Station*. She picks it up, and turns it around to show HUNTER, eyebrows raised.

DR. CLEMENT
Have you checked here?

14 EXT. OUTSIDE RESEARCH STATION - SUNSET

14

DR. CLEMENT and HUNTER approach an abandoned research station. It's built along a the river, with a pier. A filthy, pollen covered truck sits out front. The pair step out of the car and walk towards the station. DR. CLEMENT peaks through the window.

DR. CLEMENT
Looks empty. It looks like it needs a key card to open.

HUNTER
Good, that means nobody will care
(Chuckles)
not that they would anyways

HUNTER gets down on the ground, looking for something

DR. CLEMENT
What are you going to do?

HUNTER

We need to get in don't we?

DR. CLEMENT
Your going to break in?

They stand up holding a large rock.

HUNTER
Yup!

They pull back their arm as if to throw the rock through the window.

DR. CLEMENT
Wait!

HUNTER stops.

HUNTER
What?

DR. CLEMENT
You can't just break the window.

HUNTER
I mean I *can*-

DR. CLEMENT
Okay, A)You can't just go around breaking windows for- a million reasons, and B) you'll get glass everywhere, you could hurt yourself. Let's check around back before we go breaking any windows.

HUNTER looks mildly disappointed, but drops the rock

HUNTER
Fine

They make their way around the back. Where the deck and pier extend out over the river. The sound of buzzing flies fills the air. HUNTER tries the door, and peaks through the window.

As they do, DR. CLEMENT follows the sound of buzzing to the river.

HUNTER
Great! This door is locked to.
That's it, I'm going to break the-
Doctor?

DR. CLEMENT yelps stumbles back away from the water, covering her nose and gagging. Hunter rushes over and looks into the water.

HUNTER

Oh geez.

Two rotting corpses float in the river, both in lab coats. Any other features have rotted away.

DR. CLEMENT

(faintly)

But how-

(realization)

the truck, oh god- How long have they been here?

HUNTER

That seems more your field than mine.

HUNTER hops of the pier and into the water. Wading over to the bodies.

DR. CLEMENT

What the fuck are you doing?

HUNTER grabs the bodies and drags them towards the bank of the river. DR. CLEMENT gags.

CONT. DR. CLEMENT

Oh that is-

HUNTER rummages through the bodies for a moment, wincing slightly at the texture, before producing a white card.

CONT. DR. CLEMENT

That is vile.

HUNTER walks over to the door and scans the card, and the light blinks green.

HUNTER

Still works!

DR. CLEMENT

How did you know that they would have a keycard on them?

HUNTER

I didn't

They step aside, and pull the door open.

CONT. HUNTER

After you.

They step inside.

15 INT. RESEARCH STATION - SUNSET

15

There are no people in the research station, and a small layer of dust covers everything. On one table, samples of a green, plantlike substance that looks a lot like the substance on the bodies in the river sit in flasks. The room has three other desks. Two seem rather empty, as if all the research had been moved over to one desk in particular. DR. CLEMENT looks at a stack of papers piled high on one of the desks. She opens the computer and switches opens to the lock-screen.

DR. CLEMENT

And you never thought to come here?

HUNTER shrugs.

HUNTER

I must've thought about it if it was in my notes.

DR. CLEMENT

You don't know?

HUNTER

I've got a lot of notes. I haven't explored this thread yet.

HUNTER opens up a drawer and picks up a pair of car keys covered in key chains that jingle when they move it.

HUNTER CONT.

Somebody left their keys

DR. CLEMENT

For the truck outside?

HUNTER

Most likely.

DR. CLEMENT picks up a stack of papers and flips through it.

DR. CLEMENT

Well, I guess we better get reading. You take one half and I'll take the other.

The two get to reading. DR. CLEMENT finds several sticky notes attached to Documents with simplified information on them. DR. CLEMENT frowns at the handwriting.

The documents have pictures, diagrams and water samples of this mysterious green plant substance.

DR. CLEMENT sits back in her chair and sets the papers on the table.

DR. CLEMENT
I can't make sense of any of this.
Medical journals I can understand,
but I don't know anything about-
(squints)
River ecology. I don't know what
half of this means.

She looks over to where Hunter feverishly reads through their papers.

DR. CLEMENT CONT.
Are you having any better luck
(pause)
Hunter?

HUNTER reads the paper fervently, holding it close to their face. HUNTER stands up abruptly.

HUNTER
Holy shit! A Parasite!

DR. CLEMENT
What?

HUNTER rushes over and drops the papers on her desk.

HUNTER
I was wrong. It's not a sickness,
it's a type of parasitic aquatic
fungus! The Researcher's at this
station found something in the
water and were studying it. I don't
think they knew what it was. But
look here. They found it on dead
animals found floating in the
river. This parasite was effecting
the animals long before it was
effecting the people. They were
already researching the effects
this would have on the water supply
for the town.

DR. CLEMENT

If it's a parasite, that means it can be removed.

HUNTER

yes!

DR. CLEMENT

Did they say where it's found in the body?

HUNTER

No- I mean I'd have to read the rest of it to be sure. But it doesn't look like they got that far, and I mean, they were marine ecologists. They couldn't do research on how it would effect people. They'd need to do an autopsy of some kind.

DR. CLEMENT

(Sarcastically)

That's just great. Didn't you say there was no one left to do an autopsy?

HUNTER

Weeeeeell- We do have a surgeon-

DR. CLEMENT

What? I told you. I'm not a pathologist.

HUNTER

But you do know the human body better than *literally* everyone else here. You know what should and shouldn't be in the body

DR. CLEMENT

Even if I was able and *willing* to do an autopsy. We'd need a body, a fresh one. Before decay starts to set in.

HUNTER seems to think for a moment, before they grin

HUNTER

Well, there *is* a river full of bodies. And new ones are showing up there all the time. We'd have our pick of fresh subjects.

DR. CLEMENT

(disgusted)
You are seriously disturbed. I'm
not desecrating a corpse

HUNTER
Is it really desecration if it's
for science?

DR. CLEMENT
Yes!

DR. CLEMENT gets up and walks away from them. HUNTER follows
after.

DR. CLEMENT
It's not just ethically wrong, it's
illegal.

HUNTER
Yeah, and whose going to arrest us.
The police? Look, Now's not the
time to get righteous. If it's in
the water supply, who knows how
many people this could effect. The
entire ecosystem. We need to figure
this out-

DR. CLEMENT
(Exhausted)
And we are the only one's who can.
I get it.
(long sigh)
Your really going to make me do
this aren't you?
(Pause)
I could just leave. If it spreads
through the water, then I'm not
contagious. There's no reason for
me to stay.

HUNTER
You'd really do that? Leave all
these people to just die? Let
somebody else take care of it?

DR. CLEMENT
I'm not- qualified for this.
Whose going to do that when
everyone's dead?

DR. CLEMENT seems to think for a moment, face passing through
several expressions of frustration, disgust, and then defeat.

DR. CLEMENT

Fine. Let's do it.

HUNTER's expression turns into a grin, and holds up the jangling car keys between them.

HUNTER
Fantastic! I suggest we take the truck!

16 EXT. RIVER - AUTUMN - DUSK

16

DR. CLEMENT and HUNTER drag a fresh body from the river and up the hill to the truck. DR. CLEMENT looks around, worried about people seeing them. A man walking his dog passes by them and DR. CLEMENT jumps.

DR. CLEMENT
Shit!

But the man doesn't seem to notice, a vacant expression on his face. He doesn't spare them a glance as he walks by.

HUNTER
I told you, the sick don't care.
I'm not sure they can see the bodies, or if they just don't care.
They aren't going to bother us.

DR. CLEMENT observes some of the people watching them and walk as if in a haze, others act reckless and careless. A man swerves along the street, stopping inches before hitting an old woman as she crosses the road. The old woman doesn't even wince, and keeps walking. She sees a teen throw a rock through a house window, and climb inside. DR. CLEMENT frowns.

HUNTER
Are you going to get in the car?

DR. CLEMENT blinks, and shakes her head.

DR. CLEMENT
Yes, right. I'm coming.

DR. CLEMENT gets in the car and they drive off.

17 INT. RESEARCH STATION - NIGHT

17

The first rounds of autopsies don't go well. DR. CLEMENT has to step out of the room to be sick.

She comes back in and slumps into a desk chair next to where HUNTER sits on one of the desks.

DR. CLEMENT

Nothing. I can't find a single thing in any of the organs, muscles, bones. Maybe the researchers were wrong. Maybe it isn't a parasite. But if it's viral, we'll need blood samples, and microscopes- and that's way out of my field.

HUNTER

No, the scientists research concluded it to be a parasite. Have you checked everywhere?

DR. CLEMENT

Yes!
(hesitant pause)
Except-

HUNTER

(Impatiently)
Except?

DR. CLEMENT looks nervous.

DR. CLEMENT

I haven't checked the brain

They return to the table where the body lays. DR. CLEMENT stands over the table with a scalpel, hand shaking. HUNTER watches attentively, fascinated. Carefully, she moves to make the first cut, but her hand slips.

DR. CLEMENT

Fuck- I can't

The scalpel clatters on the table, and DR. CLEMENT pulls off the apron.

DR. CLEMENT CONT.

I need a minute.

18 EXT. RESEARCH STATION DOCK- NIGHT

18

DR. CLEMENT sits on the dock. Crickets still chirp and flies still buzz in the air where the other body lies at the bank of the river.

She has her phone open to the recent calls screen. 911 can be read on the screen.

HUNTER appears next to her, sitting down beside her.

HUNTER

Hey, are you okay? I heard you
talking out here

DR. CLEMENT

(Bitterly)

I called 911. Thought maybe I could
get an operator from another town
over, but service is shit out here.
I got enough to know that the
nearest town with an ambulance is
nearly 5 hours away. How is that
even possible.

They produce a bottle of cheap whiskey they found hidden in
the research station.

HUNTER

I thought you could use this.

DR. CLEMENT

Where did you find it?

They shrug, and open the bottle.

HUNTER

Found it in one of the desk
drawers. Scientist's probably kept
it to celebrate *big* discoveries, or
whatever. Or maybe they were just
alcoholics.

They take a swig from it, and then hand it to her.

HUNTER CONT.

Take a sip, it'll calm your nerves.

DR. CLEMENT takes the bottle, and takes a big swig from it.
HUNTER takes out a pack of Cigarettes, and a lighter. They
put one between their teeth and light the end of it.

DR. CLEMENT

This situation is so fucked.

HUNTER

Tell me about it.

DR. CLEMENT

really? you don't seem phased by
any of this.

HUNTER

I'm just- desensitized to it by
now.

DR. CLEMENT

Right

HUNTER

So what was that in there? I thought you were a surgeon. I get it's a dead body, but- Aren't you a neurosurgeon? The parasite effects your emotions and motor functions. I'm surprised you didn't check the brain first. It makes the most sense.

DR. CLEMENT

right

HUNTER

that wasn't meant to be an insult. But we are in this together. You may as well tell me.

DR. CLEMENT sighs.

DR. CLEMENT

I- *was* a neurosurgeon. And a pretty damn good one at that. But- Sometimes overconfidence will cause you to make mistakes- And during an operation, I made a stupid, careless, mistake. There was a hemorrhage in the brain. And the bleeding just *wouldn't* stop. I lost the patient and I lost myself. I couldn't even face the parents of that poor girl. I couldn't face my job, so I quit. And then I couldn't face the people in my life, so I moved out here. I figured a small clinic in a small, quiet town would be good for me. I could be alone. I haven't been able to operate since. Holding a knife, and the sight of blood- I just can't anymore. And even if the bodies dead, I felt like I was right back there, in that operating room.

HUNTER

Damn, that's- damn.
(pause)

I'm not sure what can be done about that- I don't know you or the mistakes you've made. But, I can tell you that that body in there is not a person you can kill. And your kind of the only person who *can* do it.

DR. CLEMENT
how reassuring.

HUNTER
Hey, I never said I was a wise Detective.

DR. CLEMENT
so what about you then?

HUNTER
huh?

DR. CLEMENT
What did you do before this?

HUNTER
I'm a Detective.

DR. CLEMENT
Can't be very many cases in a small town like this.

HUNTER
I got by.

DR. CLEMENT
but what else? did you have family? friends?

HUNTER
Nope, just me. Not much else going on really. There isn't much to tell.

DR. CLEMENT
oh-

HUNTER
but if your feeling better, then we should probably get back to work.

DR. CLEMENT
right

HUNTER pats DR. CLEMENT on the shoulder and stands up, putting out their cigarette.

HUNTER
Well, nice talk

HUNTER heads, back inside, leaving DR. CLEMENT with a strange expression on her face.

19 INT. RESEARCH STATION - NIGHT

19

DR. CLEMENT opens up the skull on the corpse. She pulls out of the cavity a green algae like substance with long tendrils that wrap around the brain. She examines it for a long time.

HUNTER
So?

DR. CLEMENT
It wouldn't be an easy surgery to do on living tissue. In my prime I could definitely do it. It wouldn't be that much harder than removing a complex tumor. But you'd have to be careful.

HUNTER
Well that's good isn't it?

DR. CLEMENT
Maybe. There's always a risk of permanent injury when your dealing with the brain. It controls everything. But I could probably narrow down where it is in the brain based on the symptoms. There is a bit of morphine at the clinic, but not enough for a whole town.

HUNTER
You said you called 911, right? So lets just wait till they arrive. We can explain everything to them.

DR. CLEMENT
We still don't know how it's spreading.

HUNTER slumps into a chair

HUNTER
Shit, right

DR. CLEMENT stares out the window at the river. We see a flash of the map in HUNTER's office and the river running through the town, leading to the reservoir. She stands, the chair screeches.

DR. CLEMENT
Oh! The river leads to the
reservoir. It's getting in through
the water supply!

HUNTER stands up with a shout.

HUNTER
Fuck, your right! We can check the
water treatment plant in the dam!

The two stare at each other in excitement. DR. CLEMENT frowns.

DR. CLEMENT
(Uncertain)
So is that it?

HUNTER has a giddy grin on their face. DR. CLEMENT still looks bothered by something.

HUNTER
I think it is! We did it!

DR. CLEMENT
(Uncertain)
Yeah

HUNTER
I think this calls for more
whiskey! In proper glasses this
time! I'll get it!

HUNTER rushes out of the room to go looking for the whiskey, leaving DR. CLEMENT alone. Something still seems to be bothering her. As she leans back, a sticky note flutters down under the desk. A password is written on it. DR. CLEMENT thinks for a moment, opens up the computer and types in the password. What she sees on the screen when the computer opens causes a change in her expression. HUNTER returns to the room, and she shuts the laptop with a slam.

HUNTER pours them both drinks.

DR. CLEMENT
(Voice sounds strange)
Guess this answers that "How often
do you drink" question from
earlier.

HUNTER

Huh?

DR. CLEMENT

From the appointment?

When HUNTER stares at her blankly, she shakes her head.

DR. CLEMENT CONT.

Never mind

HUNTER holds up their glass for a toast.

HUNTER

To the great accomplishments of the
greatest Detective in the world,
and the greatest Surgeon in the
world, even if she is a little
rusty.

DR. CLEMENT

I'm not the best in the world.

HUNTER

Take the compliment, Doctor. You've
earned it.

DR. CLEMENT holds up her glass to match HUNTER's. HUNTER
downs theirs in one sip.

DR. CLEMENT

How long have you been a detective?

HUNTER

(Shrugs)

Not sure the exact number. I got
into it when I was young. I've had
a great, long career.

DR. CLEMENT

And you've always lived in this
town, yes?

DR. CLEMENT

I- yeah. I have. Born and raised.

DR. CLEMENT leans forward.

DR. CLEMENT

So you've always been a detective
in this town. You've had your *great*
long career in this *Small* town
where nothing ever happens?

HUNTER's smile falters.

HUNTER

I mean it sounds improbable. But
I've made it work.

DR. CLEMENT

What, Nancy Drew style? Solving
chalkboard mysteries?

HUNTER

A little more sophisticated than
that. I'm a serious Detective, you
know?

DR. CLEMENT

Tell me about one of your cases.

HUNTER

Why are you interested in my cases?

DR. CLEMENT

Because you haven't told me
anything about yourself besides the
fact that your a detective.

HUNTER

I don't-

DR. CLEMENT

-Have much going on besides being a
Detective?

(gravely)

No, you don't do you?

HUNTER's expression darkens.

HUNTER

what are you getting at?

DR. CLEMENT

What were your parents like?

HUNTER

I don't have parents. I told you
it's just me.

DR. CLEMENT

But what were they like before?
What happened to them?

HUNTER

(More uncertain)

I- I was adopted.

DR. CLEMENT
I thought you said you always lived here?

HUNTER
I have, I-

DR. CLEMENT
Who adopted you? What happened to them.

HUNTER
(Angrily)
What's with all these questions all of the sudden. You haven't been interested in me the whole time. And now you want to ask me all of these questions?

DR. CLEMENT
Because you don't make sense, Hunter. You couldn't fill out your own medical history. You can't give me straight answers on your past-

HUNTER
(insistent)
There isn't anything else!

DR. CLEMENT
Exactly! Why isn't there anything else!
(Pause)
Everyone has parents. Everyone has somebody. Where is your Detective agency?

HUNTER
I- Don't

DR. CLEMENT
(Softly)
Hunter, why is it that in a town full of infected people. You the only person unaffected?
(Pause)

Me, I make sense. I'm new, and I don't drink from the tap. A habit I picked up from the city, because the water is always contaminated there. But you do. You've lived here your entire life, drinking from the same water as every one else, and your just- fine? And what's more, your behavior. Your reckless, flippant. You crashed the car on the both of us, and you didn't even blink. You pulled those bodies from the river like it was nothing. You act like this is a game.

HUNTER stands up, and paces.

HUNTER

No, I would know if I was infected.

DR. CLEMENT

Would you? You said the sickness effects memory. And practically everything you remember is up on that wall in your house. and then there is this.

DR. CLEMENT opens the computer and flips it around. The home screen has a picture of three scientists, the two researchers from the river, and a third researcher that looks like HUNTER. They wear a white lab-coat, and their hair pulled back into a bun.

DR. CLEMENT

Why was this research station on your wall Hunter?

HUNTER stares at the screen like a deer in headlights.

DR. CLEMENT

This is your laptop, Hunter. Your not a detective. You were one of the researchers. That must be how you found the case in the first place. That wall of investigation has kept you going this whole time. But everything else has washed away.

HUNTER

No, no, That's not possible. Your lying.

DR. CLEMENT
I'm sorry Hunter.

HUNTER leaps forward, and slams the laptop shut. And then they grab it and throw it against a wall, smashing it. DR. CLEMENT stands frozen, and backs away from them.

HUNTER
It's not true. I am a Detective. My name is Hunter Lethe, and this is my investigation. I'm not-

DR. CLEMENT
Fine, your not. Your a detective.

HUNTER
I'm a detective.

DR. CLEMENT stands up

HUNTER
Where are you going?

DR. CLEMENT
(High pitched)
I'm going to check out the water treatment plant. Somebody should do it.

20 EXT. OUTSIDE RESEARCH STATION -

20

DR. CLEMENT walks towards the car, HUNTER in tow behind them

DR. CLEMENT
Your not coming with me

HUNTER
Well, you can't go alone. I'm coming with you

DR. CLEMENT
you are not. I'll be fine

HUNTER
You don't know what your going to find there, or, what if you need someone to help you break in.

DR. CLEMENT
Hunter-

HUNTER

This is my case- I'm a detective,
you need me.

DR. CLEMENT
Hunter, your not a detective. We
just talked about this.

HUNTER
What? What the hell are you talking
about?

DR. CLEMENT
Your infected. And it's getting
worse. In your condition, it's not
safe. You'll put us both in danger.

HUNTER
What's a little danger. I'm coming
with you, parasite or no parasite.

DR. CLEMENT
there is no convincing you is
there?

HUNTER
nope!

DR. CLEMENT thinks for a moment. She looks towards the river,
and the research station, and then back towards the car.

DR. CLEMENT
Fine. Let's go

HUNTER
fantastic!

They both get in, and Dr. Clement drives off.

21 INT. HERMIA'S CAR - NIGHT

21

As she drives, DR. CLEMENT side-eyes HUNTER with caution.

When they pull up to the research station, DR. CLEMENT gets
out and locks HUNTER in the car.

HUNTER
What the hell! Did you lock me in?

DR. CLEMENT
I'm sorry. It's not safe. You need
to stay here.

HUNTER

What are you talking about? You can't go alone! I'm not stupid, I'll just unlock it from the inside!

DR. CLEMENT
Child safety locks. I've got a niece. I'm sorry Hunter.

DR. CLEMENT walks towards the Water treatment plant. HUNTER bangs on the car window frantically.

HUNTER
Hermia, let me out of this car right now! Hermia!

22 INT. THE TREATMENT PLANT - NIGHT

22

DR. CLEMENT explores the dark, empty water treatment plant. DR. CLEMENT has to pull out a large torchlight. She casts the torch around the pools, looking for evidence of the green substance.

23 INT. HERMIA'S CAR - NIGHT

23

HUNTER bangs on the windows, trying to find a way out. They manage to find something heavy enough to shatter the window. The glass cuts their hand, and rips through their jeans as they crawl through the window. Finally free, they run towards the research station.

24 INT. THE TREATMENT PLANT - NIGHT

24

DR. CLEMENT continues to explore the eerily quiet water treatment plant.

HUNTER makes their way through the treatment plant. They don't have a flashlight, and keep tripping over things. HUNTER stumbles around a corner and finds a bunch of bottles of gasoline containers. They grin. and grab them. HUNTER spreads the gasoline around the building, including the control room for the turbines.

DR. CLEMENT looks over one of the turbines and finds it filled with the green ooze. The Ooze has been collecting here and getting into the water supply. DR. CLEMENT sees the control station, and heads towards it.

HUNTER stands outside, waiting for DR. CLEMENT to come out. They flick the lighter on and off.

DR. CLEMENT makes her way to the control station. She winces at the smell, but shakes her head. She steps through a puddle of gasoline on the floor, Looking at the buttons. As her hand finds the "on" button, for the turbines that would clear the ooze from the system, we also see HUNTER outside stand up a little straighter.

A strange expression crosses their face, and this time the lighter stays on. Hunter runs back into the building, this time they know exactly where to go. They beeline for the control room. DR. CLEMENT's hand hovers over the button. She looks up, startled by a noise. HUNTER stands in the doorway of the control room, expression strange, the lighter flickers in the dark.

DR. CLEMENT
Hunter? What are you-

She pauses when she sees the lighter, and seems to notice the gasoline on the floor.

DR. CLEMENT CONT.
(Nervously)
How did you get out of the car?

HUNTER turns to her at an odd angle, expression vacant, eyes looking right through her. She bolts for the door, slamming into them just as they drop the lighter. The building goes up in flames. HUNTER slumps to the floor, eyes still not all there. DR. CLEMENT shakes them.

DR. CLEMENT
You idiot! What did you do!

An explosion rocks the building, sending chunks raining from the ceiling. Dr. Clement sits up, covered in rubble and ash. She coughs from the smoke, and winces from a burn on her abdomen. She looks around for Hunter, and sees them standing silhouetted against the flames, swaying slightly. They begin to walk.

DR. CLEMENT
Hunter!

DR. CLEMENT follows, dodging flames and pieces of rubble. HUNTER walks past them as if in a trance, only just dodging debris as it falls.

DR. CLEMENT follows them outside.

25 EXT. THE TREATMENT PLANT - NIGHT

25

The fire from the building lights up the night.

HUNTER walks like a zombie towards the reservoir next to the treatment plant.

DR. CLEMENT slams into them, wrapping her arms around the waist and pulling both of them to the ground. The two struggle, HUNTER tries to get towards the reservoir, and DR. CLEMENT tries to drag them back to the car.

HUNTER manages to get on top, expression still blank. Their hands wrap around her throat and squeeze. She tries to struggle, but HUNTER is stronger. DR. CLEMENT's eyes rolling back in her head, face turning purple. She goes limp. Satisfied, they get up and continue to walk towards the reservoir.

DR. CLEMENT coughs, trying to recover. She tries to get up and crawl towards HUNTER, but she can't move fast enough. Time slows as HUNTER comes to the edge of the water, and falls into the reservoir. DR. CLEMENT cries out.

26 EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

26

DR. CLEMENT jumps in after them. We see the splash, and her fishing them out of the reservoir.

27 EXT. SHORE OF THE RESERVOIR - NIGHT

27

She drags their body out of the water and onto shore. Collapsing next to them. She feels for a pulse with shaking, frantic fingers.

DR. CLEMENT
(Screaming)
Fuck!

Alone and helpless, she places her hands over HUNTER's heart and pumps heart compressions until her arms give out.

One last time she checks their vital signs, and gasps, when she hears their heart beat.

DR. CLEMENT
Hang in their, Hunter.

She gets up and drags their body towards the car, pulling them into the passenger seat.

28 INT. HERMIA'S CAR - NIGHT

28

DR. CLEMENT drives as fast as she can to the clinic, feeling HUNTER's pulse with one hand on the wheel.

DR. CLEMENT
Just a little longer.

29 INT. CLINIC - NIGHT

29

DR. CLEMENT finds the clinic's small stash of morphine and surgical equipment. She cleans up the station, and scrubs her hands up to the elbows, pulls on her gloves, and approaches the operating table. She fights the shaking in her hands as she operates.

Her fear of operation threatens to overtake her, her hands threaten to shake even when she holds them as steady as possible. And without a team to help her, she struggles to pick up the equipment without contaminating the station.

She pauses for a moment, and closes her eyes, taking a deep, deafening breathe, and a new determined expression crosses her face.

with careful hands, DR. CLEMENT pulls out the parasite. She makes sure that she gets out any remnants of the creature from their skull. And sews them back up the best they can.

As she steps back from the operation, we hear sirens outside.

30 EXT. OUTSIDE CLINIC - DAWN

30

DR. CLEMENT goes outside to see an ambulance followed by several police officers drive by. Lights flashing. She waves them down. The Paramedics surround her and police officers, asking her questions. But she still seems dazed. Paramedics flood into the clinic and return with HUNTER on a stretcher.

31 INT. AMBULANCE - DAWN

31

The scene blurs and a paramedic pulls DR. CLEMENT into the ambulance. They check up on her, and ask her questions she can't quite hear. All she can see is HUNTER being pulled into the Ambulance, and the paramedics surrounding them.

DR. CLEMENT
Are they okay?

Nobody seems to hear her, the paramedics buzz around HUNTER, checking vital signs and hooking them up to a monitor.

PARAMEDIC

Vital signs are stable for now, but condition is critical. We should be able to keep them stable, but we need to get them back to the hospital.

DR. CLEMENT collapses with relief against the wall. Her head falling back, and she finally lets herself cry.

DR. CLEMENT sits in the ambulance, by HUNTER's side, as the ambulance drives away from the town. She watches the town fade into the distance.

32 EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

32

She watches as paramedics rush HUNTER into a proper operation to ensure the rest of the parasite is out of their head, and that they aren't experiencing any brain bleeds.

DR. CLEMENT sits by HUNTER's sleeping form, all wrapped in bandages.

DR. CLEMENT

We did it. I know you can't hear me. The doctors said it would take some time for you to wake up. I don't know who you were before. Or if that person will ever come back. But you are safe.

DR. CLEMENT looks out the window.

DR. CLEMENT

But the rest of them aren't. There are still people in that town, and who knows how many towns get their water from that river. Or how many rivers this effects. And I'm one of the only people to know how it works. So I'm going to help as many people as I can, for as long as I can. I promise you that.

DR. CLEMENT puts her hand on HUNTER's, looking out the window towards the horizon

33 EXT. DREARY - DAY

33

We see the town, covered in a thick fog. The bodies in the river. And the green goo still on them.

THE END

