**Summary**

As the chief of security at Aleph Null Biomedical’s Montreal branch, Cassandra Hao is charged with protecting the company’s newest asset – a fantastical machine that can read and alter memories. Intended for therapeutic use, the device becomes the center of a factional struggle as the company debates its value to the police and military, a conflict that soon devolves into subterfuge. To protect themselves, their home, and their ideals, Cassandra and her colleagues must join the fray, even if it means confronting parts of their past they would rather leave behind.

**Outline**

Chapter 1 – Rainier Wind

* After a struggle with airport security wherein she is subjected to an invasive interrogation, Akiko meets Marcus, Cassandra, and Shufen while en route to Athens.
* Lancaster boards their ship, arrests Marcus, and confiscates the mnemonic matrix.
* Shufen and Cassandra assure Akiko that they will still be safe at the conference, as they have allies from the other branches there.
* **Characters introduced: Akiko, Cassandra, Shufen, Lancaster, Marcus**

Chapter 2 – J’Accuse!

* Cassandra attends the conference and meets her brother, Elias, who is representing the Comintern. They have a friendly chat, but he seems too preoccupied to spend much time with her.
* At the conference, Lancaster presents the mnemonic matrix.
* A bomb explodes at the conference, killing many and destroying the exhibition hall.
* Cassandra and her friends flee, but Lancaster accuses them of planting the bomb due to the Comintern influence in Montreal, which has caused ongoing tension with Headquarters. Elias’ intervention allows them to escape.
* **Characters introduced: Jackson, Elias**

Chapter 3 – The Cloud Garden

* Cassandra and company return to Montreal, where Xiang tells them that Lancaster is using the disaster, and Cassandra’s alleged role in it, as grounds to reintroduce the Montral Defense Initiative. This would give Lancaster control over the Montreal branch and allow armed mercenaries to suppress labor strikes.
* Shufen and Xiang present a plan to sway the vote in their favor, using a combination of bribes, blackmail, and exchanging favors.
* **Characters introduced: Xiang**

Chapter 4 – Crossing the Aisle

* Xiang and Shufen leave on their tour to recruit allies from the other branches. Shufen orders Cassandra and a group of her best staff to escort them, despite Xiang’s protests that she is too young and underqualified for such an important task.
* Before they leave, Cassandra asks Akiko and Jackson to look into dirt on Lancaster that might tie him to the riots or the bombing. She also explains her and Xiang’s troubled relationship due to Chenmei’s death after Akiko asks why they’re so hesitant to work together. Akiko encourages Cassandra to try and settle things before they leave, lest their conflict cause problems during the trip, but she refuses
* They successfully recruit the delegations from several other branches to their side. Due to strong anti-communist sentiment in the remaining branches, their final target is the Skywatch representative, whom Xiang convinces to vote against his own interests by exaggerating the state of armed resistance in Montreal and offering a better deal than Lancaster.

Chapter 5 – Ostracon

* At the company’s headquarters in Toronto, Shufen and Xiang debate the Montreal Defense Initiative with its remaining proponents, seemingly gaining the upper hand.
* Meanwhile, back in Montreal, Akiko and Jackson infiltrate the Skywatch office at the airport. They learn that Lancaster is using the vote as a means of identifying disloyal executives, and is planning to have the Skywatch arrest them all, to be handed over to the Greek government as suspects in the terrorism case. Whether or not they are found guilty, their absence will solidify his faction’s control over the company.
* Akiko calls the Montreal delegation to warn them, and they narrowly escape the purge.

Chapter 6 – The Devil

* After hearing about the purge, Elias reaches out to Cassandra and offers her the Comintern’s support in taking down Lancaster, but only in exchange for the mnemonic matrix blueprints. After much deliberation, Cassandra and her friends accept.
* Cassanda confronts Xiang about their mutual distrust, and they come to an understanding regarding Chenmei’s death and their poor behaviour towards each other thereafter.
* Due to the Montreal branch leadership escaping, Lancaster’s power in the city remains limited. He agrees to a truce with Shufen provided that she assist in hunting down her children, which she accepts, pretending that she is convinced of their guilt.

Chapter 7 – Magic Bullet

* While trying to steal the blueprints, the fugitives find information indicating that Akiko and Jackson had their memories erased at one point. Wondering if this could reveal important information that the higher-ups are concealing, they try to reverse the process by accessing the mnemonic matrix’ core.
* On the way inside, they learn of Shufen’s betrayal and are almost arrested by the corporate security. As their former chief, Cassandra convinces the guards to stand down.
* They restore Akiko’s memories, but before she can tell them what she learned, Jackson also betrays them and holds them at gunpoint

Chapter 8 –