

The Rot

By

Jonathan Barceló Iñiguez

-- Waves crash on the beach. Some plastic bags wash ashore. They dance around briefly before getting swept away. One of them gets stuck on a rock and resists the tide.

-- KIDS run around near the shore. There are discarded wrappers and plastic bottles scattered around the sand.

-- A sand castle crumbles, revealing a large, pink pearl.

KIDS

Hey, look!

-- Hotels and a Ferris wheel reflect on the harbor.

-- Hundreds of colorful umbrellas tile the sand from above.

EXT. BEACH -- DAY

2

It's mid-summer afternoon, and the weather is perfect for going to the beach to spend a lazy Sunday.

Among the beach-goers is Sergio (mid-30's), a jaded street vendor selling sea shells by the sea shore.

It's not going well.

Some children run past his stand and arrive at the another that sells super hero replicas made from soda can scraps.

SERGIO

Gimmicks.

He scoffs and averts his eyes. This lands him a view of some KIDS gathered around something that washed ashore.

It's the pearl from before, but it has grown larger. It almost looks like a bubble the size of a human head.

KIDS

(Indistinct)

Is it a jellyfish?... I don't know...

Touch it... No, you touch it.

Sergio makes himself comfortable to see what the kids do.

The FIRST KID, whose rank was the determined by the power of peer pressure, picks up a stick and goes to the sphere.

                  SERGIO  
                  (Hitting a vape)  
          Don't get stung.

The sphere twitches. The kid screams and stumbles onto his butt. The other kids laugh and mock him.

So does Sergio, at least a little.

A SECOND KID, appearing to be much braver, prods it not once, but twice. He even takes the time to giggle each Justine it twitches. The other kids approve. He is definitely braver.

The sphere convulses. Everyone jumps back a few feet. This catches the attention of some ADULTS nearby.

Sergio is now more concerned than curious. He stands up to get a better look, but a STRANGER blocks his view.

                  STRANGER  
          Hey, how much are these?

                  SERGIO  
          Sorry, I-- One second.

                  STRANGER  
          Excuse me?

The STRANGER tries to pay for a strange multicolored shell, but Sergio does not take the money. He leaves the stand.

                  SERGIO  
          There's more in the sea!

Sergio trots up to the newly gathered crowd. He makes his way through the crowd's babble of theories and insight.

Now an ADULT is prodding the sphere with a stick. It appears to be filled with some kind of liquid, like ink in water.

                  BYSTANDER  
          So, is it a jellyfish or not?

The sphere convulses a few more times. Then it stops. The Adult prods it a bit more, but it fails to react.

ADULT

It's dead.

Others in the crowd mumble their agreement.

The Adult goes to touch it with his hand. Right as he's getting close, the liquid starts forming into a series of interconnected veins running through the inside.

ADULT

What is that?

The ADULT gets close. So do his friends. And so does Sergio, who has now pushed his way to the front of the crowd.

Once the last of the fluid clears, an eyeball is revealed.

The Adult stumbles and falls back. Nobody mocks him. Rather, they help him up and away from the sphere.

Sergio moves even closer. The eye doesn't follow him.

SERGIO

It's not an eye.

It's something else, and there are a bunch more of them. They're kind of like intertwining tentacles.

Pretty soon they've filled most of the sphere's volume, which swells and stretches to accommodate.

DISTANT VOICES

Is that a jellyfish?

Those voices belong to a different group of people gathered around another identical sphere a little ways up the beach.

They are currently at the stick stage of the investigation.

As Sergio returns his attention to his bubble, he realizes that he is being filmed. The man behind the cellphone is Justin (early 20's), a local college guy on his "year off".

JUSTIN

Look!

He's referring to the size of the bubble. It's swollen to about twice the size it was a second ago.

SERGIO

I don't think we should be so--

A woman screams from the opposite side of the beach.

There's something like a small deformed seal with no eyes and tentacles for a tongue trying to eat a beach towel nearby.

SERGIO

Wha-- Ah!

The tentacles in the bubble by Sergio's feet burst out. Some of the fluid inside splashes on him. He screams in agony.

EXT. HARBOR FAIR -- DAY

3

A Godzilla face smiles back with some of its plastic teeth already missing. A tennis ball knocks another one out.

This is a carnival stand in the fair by the harbor.

ALE (Ah-Leh, 16), a cocky tomboy on summer break, has three tennis balls left, two teeth to knock out, and no attention to pay to the ambulance rushing past in the background.

JO

Ten bucks says you miss.

The heckler is JO (short for José, 14), Ale's wormy younger brother. As is usually the case, he spoke too soon. Now there's only one tooth left to knock out.

JO

Okay, double or nothing on the last one... and a corndog.

ALE

Hah! Can you afford it?

JO

I won't have to.

Ale chuckles. She readies her shot.

ALE

Alright, if you say so.

And misses.

The CARNIE that runs the stand smirks to himself as he hands Ale the last tennis ball. She takes it, annoyed.

ALE

Okay, triple or nothing.

But Jo's attention is on something else now.

ALE

Hey aren't you gonna watch...

It's a 7ft tall tapir looking creature with no eyes above the thick tentacles that make up its mouth. The colorful marbling on its hide almost seems to ooze across its body.

ALE

This?

Ale watches the creature calmly cross onto the street. It is hit by an out of control sedan covered in bumper stickers.

The car slams against a light post, which then collapses and pins the dying creature onto the hood.

Ale freezes at this sight. Jo is too excited to think.

JO

Let's go check it out!

ALE

What? No--!!

But Jo is already gone. Ale rushes after him.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

4

Jo scurries to the front of a crowd gathered around the car.

The young DRIVER (early 30's) lays over the airbag. The dead creature's tentacles wrap around his face. His body twitches.

His GIRLFRIEND (early 30's) is the nose-pierced woman who bashed her head against the window. She's not breathing.

Jo regrets seeing this. He goes to leave. Ale stops him.

ALE

Jo, wait.

There's a little girl crying in the back seat, MARA (8). Today is her birthday. She had asked to go to the beach.

ALE  
There's a kid.

Mara's full attention is on her mom, not the creature smashed against the pole on the other side of the car.

ALE  
H-- Hey! Kid!

Jo yanks at Ale, but she yanks her arm back.

JO  
We should go.

Ale peeks into the car window. Mara's leg is broken.

ALE  
Wait, she's hurt.

Jo's more concerned with the curious creature trotting up the road. Most of the crowd has already scattered.

JO  
A-- Ale?

Ale tries the door. It's locked. She knocks on the window.

ALE  
Kid! Open the door!

Mara sobs at a rapid staccato, unable to respond. Jo, fixated on the creature, fails to notice Ale walking OFF SCREEN.

JO  
Yo... hurry u-- Ah!--

ALE  
--Aaaaaaah!

Ale returns with debris from the fallen pole and smashes the window. She reaches in and unlocks the door.

ALE  
Kid! Come on!

Again, no response from Mara. Ale offers her hand. Mara's sobbing slows a bit. She turns to acknowledge Ale's arm.

ALE  
It's okay... give me your hand.

Mara seems to have no idea where she is. She does know, however, that she is scared and confused, and that the friendly hand being offered is neither scary nor confusing.

She takes the hand.

ALE

That's right. Let's get you out of here.

Ale pulls Mara out of the car, but Jo pushes them both back inside. He climbs in with them and shuts the door.

JO

Go! Go! Go! Go!

He orders, urging them to crawl across and exit out the other door, right as the second creature arrives to eat the bumper.

The trio go to exit out the other side, Mars and Ale nearly trip over the dead creature's tentacles as they exit.

Jo doesn't. His shoe got stuck under between the seats. He has to kick it off to break free. By the time he exits, Ale is nowhere to be seen. For a moment, he panics.

JO

A-- Ale?

Someone yanks Jo's hand. He joins the stampede of people running away from the beach.

Then, Jo realizes that he doesn't actually recognize the hand leading him. It belongs to an equally CONFUSED OLD MAN.

Upon seeing Jo, the Old Man immediately releases his hand and returns to the street, calling out for his son as he goes.

Jo is alone again, paralyzed in fear by the sight of scared bystanders fleeing from the creatures' passive destruction.

ALE

(O.S.)

--o! Jo!

Ale grabs Jo's shoulder from behind.

JO

Huh?!



ALE

Come on!!

Jo runs down an alley with Ale, who is pulling double duty leading him with one arm, and carrying Mara with the other.

ALE

Do you still have the keys?

JO

(Coming out of his trance)

What?

ALE

The keys! Do you have them?!

JO

Uh... Yes!

Ale makes an abrupt stop at a parked scooter. Jo does not. It takes him several steps to stop and turn around. By the time he does, Ale is already placing Mara on the scooter.

Jo scrambles to find the keys and tosses them to Ale. She tosses him a helmet in return.

ALE

Climb on!

She straps her helmet on; Jo follows suit. Ale secures Mara between herself and Jo, then starts the scooter.

ALE

Locked?

Jo hangs onto Ale, holding Mara in place between the two.

JO

L-- Loaded.

Ale takes this as confirmation that he's ready. She speeds down the alley, then takes a sharp turn onto the street.

JO

(Struggling to hang on)

Home's the other way!

ALE

We're taking her to a hospital!

They disappear into the city. The coastline is revealed to have been completely overtaken, with the creatures continuing to explore the environment with indiscriminate curiosity.

The real problem is the saliva. It causes an allergic reaction that feels like your skin is burning; some cause seizures. But nobody knows this, so they keep spreading it.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION -- DAY

5

Dozens of doctors and nurses race back and forth, trying to maintain a semblance of calm and order.

It's not going well.

An overworked nurse, IRMA (35), races across the ER with an IV. She disappears behind some double doors.

She returns after a moment, dodging the rest of the staff on the way through to an operating room. Before she reaches the door, another crew of DOCTORS stampede out with a patient.

The Doctors disappear through another set of double doors down the hall. Finally, Irma arrives to tend to her patient.

A team of PARAMEDICS roll in with Sergio in tow. He's still convulsing from earlier. Justin is with him, still filming the event, and certainly not helping.

PARAMEDIC

He's having a seizure!

Irma quickly directs them to an OR. She follows them inside. Justin tries to as well, but Irma stops him.

IRMA

You can't come in here.

JUSTIN

Yeah, I know. I'm just--

She shuts the door in his face.

JUSTIN

--Documenting.

Justin tries to take a peek inside, but the medic huddle around Sergio blocks his view of anything interesting. A STAFF MEMBER approaches to urge him to find a seat elsewhere.

Instead, Justin goes to tweet the footage and record outside.

Behind him, Ale, Jo, and Mara are asking an exhausted RECEPTIONIST about where to take Mara.

ALE

She needs an X-Ray. I think her leg might be broken, or sprained, or--

RECEPTIONIST

What's her name?

ALE

Her name?

JO

She won't tell us. She won't say anything!

RECEPTIONIST

Wait, do you not know this girl?

ALE

No, we--

The lights all go out at once.

JO

Now what?!

INT. HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM

6

It's dark in here. The doctor's scramble to tie Sergio down. His convulsions are getting more and more intense.

DOCTOR 1

We need power!

IRMA

Incoming!

It does. There's limited power in some rooms, this one included. The heart rate monitor kicks in.

Sergio flat lines.

DOCTOR 2  
Defibrillator!

IRMA  
Charging!

DOCTOR 1  
In 3... 2... 1...

Irma watches the DOCTORS shock Sergio.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE -- NIGHT

7

A body bag with Sergio inside. The Paramedics zip it up.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY WARD -- NIGHT

8

Mara sleeps. Her leg is in a cast. She has an IV in her arm. Her eyes are puffy. She probably cried herself to sleep.

Ale yawns. She scrolls through her news feed. The coast still has no power. Helicopter footage shows hundreds of creatures rummaging through abandoned streets, like giant pests.

The creatures' multi-colored marbling glows in the dark.

ALE  
(To herself)  
It's kind of... pretty.

Jo perks up from his chair on the other side of the bed. He had been scrolling through his own news feed.

JO  
What are they?

ALE  
I have no idea.

JO  
(After a moment)  
Think tía's okay?

ALE  
I'm sure, look...  
(She shares her screen)  
See? They keep to the beach.

She's right. All the stories show the creatures sleeping across the coast, going north and south for miles and miles, but not inland. This seems to have happened state-wide.

JO  
Then how come she won't answer?

Ale doesn't have an answer for that. Defeated, Jo gets closer to Ale and leans his head on her shoulder. She reciprocates.

JO  
You were right. We should've gone to the arcade.

ALE  
Heh. I thought you'd be more upset that you didn't get to drive.

JO  
Next time.

She hands him the keys to seal the promise.

ALE  
Next time.

They each scroll in silence for a moment. Every headline is a different take on the event; none can explain why any of this is happening. It's all just random, crazy theories.

There's even one showing Justin's footage of Sergio.

Another story shows TROOPS slaughtering the creatures in evacuated zones. The footage is quite graphic.

Ale locks her phone.

ALE  
Yeah, that's enough of that... We should get some sleep.  
(Looks to Mara)  
We'll sort this out in the morning.

She leans back in her chair. Jo digs himself further into her shoulder. He tries to sleep. He can't.

Ale had no such issue.

Jo's mind is racing. He takes out his phone again and scrolls through his news feed. The stories get more violent, with images and video of the creatures being shot by the dozens.

Jo keeps scrolling, overtaken with morbid curiosity, until his finger actually moves the glass a little.

JO

What the--?

Parts of his phone are soft, as if it had turned to tissue.

Jo inspects the phone further and finds spots around it that look like mold. It's almost like it's... rotting?

Jo drops the phone. This nearly wakes Ale. She repositions and keeps sleeping. Jo goes to inspect his phone. He picks it up and carries it over to a nearby table, OFF SCREEN.

Ale sleeps soundly. Nothing could wake her now.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY WARD -- DAY

9

Ale wakes with a start to the sound of trucks and construction going on outside.

ALE

Jo?

Jo is nowhere to be seen. Neither is Mara. Strangely, it appears that Mara's IV bag has partially rotted away. The needle hangs to the ground. It also has some rot on it.

ALE

Jo!

Ale's eyes dart around the room. She sees many more plastic items that have started to rot, including Jo's phone. It seems to have been used as a science experiment overnight.

JO

(O.S.)

Ale! Come look!

Jo is huddled up with Mara up against a nearby window. Mara can barely hold herself up with the cast around her leg, so she kneels on a chair to see over the windowsill.

Ale joins them at the window, which overlooks a PARKING LOT.

WHAT THEY SEE:

-- The streets outside all display signs of rot. Mold and bacteria have started to accumulate over almost everything. Specifically, anything that contains plastic in any way.

-- Chainlink fences have been set-up around the boardwalk. As people exit the buildings, ARMED TROOPS signal them to file in line around the various medical stations they have set-up.

JO

What kinds of cops are those?

ALE

Those aren't cops.

She's right. They belong to a private contractor, BLACKSTONE.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- DAY

10

The rot is much more pervasive in the streets. It has even started to accumulate over people's clothes and accessories.

They are being asked to remove any plastic items and dispose of them, then file into the medical stations for tests in what appears to be an improvised quarantine zone.

A NERVOUS WOMAN refuses to step into a medical station, so a BLACKSTONE GUARD grabs her by force and pushes her in.

Some people are filming this. Though the guards may ask them to stop, there's nothing they can do about the people filming from the Hospital and other buildings' windows.

Many of these bystanders, like Jo before, start to realize that their phones are decomposing.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY WARD -- DAY

11

Jo, nervous by the sight, holds Ale's hand more tightly than

before. He then realizes that Mara is doing the same, which he isn't entirely sure how to feel about. He looks away.

IRMA  
(O.S.)  
Excuse me?

Everyone by the windows in the recovery ward turns to face Irma and TWO GUARDS wearing gas masks by the main door.

IRMA  
Could y'all come with us? Please?

Her voice trembles with every word.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION -- DAY

12

The chaos from the night before never subsided. Most of the staff working is the same. They are exhausted. ARMED TROOPS have been tasked with keeping people from coming inside.

All of the plastic toys in the kid's waiting room have rotted and are stinking up the place. Some BLACKSTONE FUMIGATORS have isolated the area and are getting ready to spray it.

Jo and Mara watch the cleanup operation in awe.

Mara looks down to her feet. She notices rot on her remaining shoe. She can stick her toe through the hole. It's gross.

Jo watches Mara slip off her shoe and kick it away.

He sighs and turns his attention to one of the testing room doors. He lingers on it, hoping for any kind of movement.

The door opens; Jo perks up; a DOCTOR exits; the door closes.

Jo slouches.

Growing impatient, he tries to get up, but is dissuaded by a menacing glance from a nearby BLACKSTONE GUARD.

Jo sits back down. He keeps watching the door.



INT. HOSPITAL - TESTING ROOM -- DAY

13

Ale watches the door to the testing room. She flinches.

ALE

Ow!

IRMA

S--Sorry.

Irma is the attending nurse. She has been unsuccessfully attempting to get a blood sample from Ale, from both arms.

Irma disposes of the needle and hands Ale another cotton swab with alcohol to cover up the prick. Ale reluctantly accepts.

Hands shaking, Irma goes to try again, but Ale stops her with slight nudge and an empathetic smile.

ALE

Would you like to take a break?

Irma hesitates before accepting the offer. She lowers her hands and puts the needle away, then lets out a deep sigh.

IRMA

Thank you.

They share a brief silence, though it is interrupted by the sounds of PEOPLE arguing just outside the door.

Ale listens for her brother's voice, but cannot find it.

There's a loud THUD. Then, nothing.

Ale's leg betrays her nerves. Irma makes herself busy tidying up the mess of used cotton swabs.

ALE

Do you know wha--

IRMA

--I don't. I don't know either.

Ale eyes a BLACKSTONE TESTING KIT on the counter. It doesn't belong with the rest of the medical equipment.

ALE

What's the test for?

IRMA

(Failing to appear calm)

If it's green, you get a shot, and you can go.

ALE  
And if it's not?

Irma has no answer for that.

ALE  
Listen, my brother's just outside, I should--

IRMA  
--I know... I saw. He'll be tested too.

Ale does not like this response. Irma's attempt at an empathetic smile is somehow unnerving.

There's a knock at the door. This startles them both.

BLACKSTONE GUARD #1  
(O.S.)  
What's the holdup?!

IRMA  
A minute, please!

Irma looks to Ale and presents her with a brand new needle.

IRMA  
I really am sorry.

Ale's heart is racing. Defeated, she extends her arm. Irma steadies her hand, then goes to take the blood sample.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECEPTION -- DAY

14

Ale exits the testing room. She wears a bracelet with a green tag on her wrist. Jo and Mara are nowhere in sight.

Trying to stay calm, Ale goes to sit in the waiting area, but a BLACKSTONE GUARD steps forward and points her outside.

ALE  
I'm waiting for someone.

The guard keeps on pointing to the exit, like a statue.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT -- DAY

15

Sunset approaches. Dozens of people have been waiting outside the chainlink fences for their loved ones to appear.

Both the hospital and the improvised testing rooms in the parking lot have started to clear out, giving way for a CREW OF FUMIGATORS to begin the sterilization process.

Ale is among the onlookers. Her eyes remain fixated on the hospital entrance. She perks up as people exit the hospital

WHAT SHE SEES: Mara comes out of the hospital. She's carried by a BLACKSTONE GUARD and wears a green tagged bracelet.

ALE

Hey! Hey kid! Heeeeey! Wait!

This gets the attention of the guard, who notices Mara looking back at Ale. Ale pushes her way through the crowd, until she meets the guard at the fence.

The guard approaches. He is less callous than the rest.

BLACKSTONE GUARD #2

(To Ale)

Do you know this girl?

ALE

We got separated during the tests.  
She's... my sister. J-- Jessica.

The guard isn't sure what to make of this. The bus is waiting and the other guards are starting to grow impatient.

BLACKSTONE GUARD #2

(To Mara)

Is this true?

Mara remains catatonic for several seconds, looking through Ale, as if trying to decipher the situation.

BLACKSTONE GUARD #2

Jessica? Is this your sister?

Mara nods.

ALE

(Relieved)

We're waiting for our brother.

BLACKSTONE GUARD #2  
There's no one else.

The guard pushes Mara into Ale's arms and walks away, never looking back to acknowledge Ale struggling to carry Mara.

ALE  
W-- What do you mean there's no one  
else?!

Ale pleads as the guard climbs onto the bus. It starts its engines, then joins a parade of other military-grade vehicles getting ready to vacate the premises, toward the beach.

Demoralized, the few stragglers at the fence scatter.

Ale is left alone with Mara, scared and confused.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

16

-- The cleanup efforts continue across the city, with BLACKSTONE SOLDIERS hunting down the last of the creatures.

-- Ale struggles to carry Mara down the street. Random gunshots in the background startle her. She nearly falls.

-- Mara sits on Ale's parked scooter, until Ale realizes that she doesn't have the keys anymore. Mara prods the sideview mirror. It breaks off where it had started to rot away.

-- Ale carries Mara piggy-back style across town. Along the way, she witnesses some BLACKSTONE PERSONNEL loading up a dead creature onto a bio-hazard disposal van. She keeps walking when a GUARD motions her to move on.

-- Ale continues down an empty highway, towards the suburbs. Behind her, dozens of billboards display light signs of rot.

INT. TIA CHACHI'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

17

The foyer has a rustic aesthetic. Pictures of a well-dressed woman in her 50's, TÍA CHACHI, tile every inch of the wall. She is pictured in beautiful destinations all over the world

Some faint chattering is audible, though it is overpowered by someone trying to open the front door, which is locked.

The faint chattering continues. There's a knock at the door.

ALE

(O.S)

*Tía? Tía, iya llegué!*

Ale peeks in through a window next to the front door. She puts Mara down and knocks on the window .

ALE

*¡Tía! Help! Jo needs help!*

There's no answer. Ale motions to Mara to stay put and slowly backs away. Mara tries to follow, but she can't in her cast.

ALE

Just... hold one for a sec. I'll be back, I promise.

Ale sprints OFF SCREEN, leaving Mara alone by the window. The rest of the house is slowly revealed as Mara begins to weep.

The chattering grows louder in the living room, just beyond the foyer, where there's a half packed suitcase on the couch.

NEWS ANCHOR

(O.S)

... tests are 100% voluntary, and can be taken at any of the newly available stations in your area.

The chattering is coming from a large smart-tv that hangs above a chimney. It was left on autoplay on a news channel.

NEWS ANCHOR

(From the TV)

Local government officials are asking residents who have been cleared by the authorities to evacuate the area as soon as possible.

The living room has a large window that overlooks a fenced yard. Ale can be seen hopping the fence, into the yard.

NEWS ANCHOR

(From the TV)

Be advised that that clearance is only  
temporary--

Ale bursts in through the backdoor that goes to the yard.

<p>ALE Hello?! Is anybody home?!</p>	<p>NEWS ANCHOR --with stricter protocols to follow in the coming hours.</p>
--	---

Ale hears Mara crying and goes OFF SCREEN to let her in,  
before carrying her back into the living room.

NEWS ANCHOR  
We now go live to the coast of Baja  
California, Mexico, where first  
sightings are being reported alo--

Ale shuts off the television. She then realizes that the door  
to the garage on the other side of the living room is open.

ALE  
*¿Chachi?... ¿tía? You there?*

She goes to check it out.

INT. GARAGE -- NIGHT

18

Ale enters. The garage door is open; there are half empty  
boxes scattered around the attic stairs. There are no cars.

Chachi must've left in a hurry.

She forgot a suitcase.

After a moment of coming to terms with having been left  
behind, and still carrying a mostly catatonic Mara in her  
arms, Ale presses the button to close the garage door.

She watches it close all the way.

OVER BLACK

19

70's prog rock crescendos.

EXT. HARBOR FAIR -- NIGHT

20

BLACKSTONE FUMIGATORS open the back of a van and unfurl some thick hoses. They begin spraying the nearby stands.

More fumigators are revealed to be repeating the process all over the fair, across the boardwalk, and into the harbor.

A BLACKSTONE TROOPER breaks the backdoor of the Godzilla themed target practice stand with an axe. She steps inside.

WHAT SHE SEES: The carnie from before. He died hours ago from an allergic reaction to the creature that he stabbed to death to keep it from crawling in through the front of the stand.

The trooper motions for a team of MEDICS behind her, and goes to inspect another stand. The medics enter with a body bag.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

21

-- More ambulances gather the wounded and the dead. Large biohazard disposal vans follow in their wake to collect the corpses of the remaining dead and dying creatures.

-- Hundreds of creatures tile the sand from above. They're fairly docile, interested only in eating plastic items.

-- Some of the creatures begin to howl. It's a dissonant screeching that slowly forms an uneasy harmony as more and more creatures join in with their own droning howls.

-- More pearls wash ashore with every crashing wave.

-- Even more TROOPS arrive to help with the cleanup.

-- The trucks that are fully loaded up start to drive away.

-- Dozens of similar biohazard trucks head south, down the highway. They get lost in the distance as they journey on.

-- Irma, still in her scrubs, watches the trucks from the only window in her studio apartment. She smokes a joint.

INT. IRMA'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

22

Irma's hands are still shaking. She has scratches on her wrist. There's a blood stained scalpel on the windowsill.

Below her, on the carpet, near her feet, there are various torn up rolling papers, a lab coat, and a lightly bloodied red tagged bracelet that's been forcibly ripped in half.

The keen eyed might notice that her left leg is a prosthetic.

Irma's is a modest apartment. She likely spends her money on rent, groceries, and an impressive vinyl record collection that has been neatly stored into every available crevice.

The loud music has been coming from her record player, which has, like everything else around it, begun to rot.

The song skips when the needle hits a moldy spot.

And then it skips again. And again.

And so on.