

## Do Immigrants Dream of Designer Babies?

**Place and time:** New York, USA, 2050-2052

### Character List

**Chuol:** South Sudane, CRISPR geneticist

**Nadia:** Polish, immigrant

**Olexandra:** rich middle-class woman who speaks through her nose (doubles as **Siobhan** and **Suleika**)

**Wasil:** her husband, older than Olexandra, business type

**Siobhan:** a homeless woman and a mother of 5. She speaks with an undefined accent, as if she had rocks her mouth

**Remulus, Remus, Francesca, Noony, Roger:** her children

**Ida Walls:** Chuol's patient; Black

**Suleika:** Chuol's patient

**Conrad:** Nadia's client (doubles as **Ezra** and **Adam**)

**Adam:** Nadia's client; Black

**Leon:** Nadia's client (doubles as **Wasil**)

**Ezra:** Chuol's colleague, geneticist

### SCENE 1

*Point and Kill by Little Simz plays, blackout. Music plays loudly at first, still on the blackout. After the first stanza, the music fades and the audience hears the characters speak. The buzz of a tattoo gun fills the space.*

NADIA

Do you believe in signs?

CHUOL

I do. I think that we omit many of them because of the rush, we forget to look.

NADIA

This part might hurt more; you seem to have very thin skin.

CHUOL

Do your thing. I've gotten through worse.

NADIA

Tattoos?

CHUOL

Wounds.

*Lights. The scene opens with two women seated at the table. One of them (CHUOL) has her arm extended and laid on the table. The other (NADIA) holds a tattoo gun and runs it through Chuol's forearm.*

CHUOL

What is your body count? I mean... *(conflicted)* how many tattoos have you made thus far?

NADIA

I lost count. All the pictures on the walls are my works. It must be over a hundred now. My first time doing a penguin tattoo. A big animal fan?

*Recipe by Jean Deaux plays in the background*

CHUOL

It is symbolic. Penguins are very social and community-oriented. They move in spirals, constantly moving inwards which allows them to keep warm. Everyone takes a turn at warming up and suffering from cold for the benefit of others.

NADIA

Where do you want to establish a community?

CHUOL

I want to get my sisters out of the refugee camp. I wasn't able to get asylum documents for them because they were sent to a different camp.

NADIA

My siblings are at home too. I couldn't take them with me.

CHUOL

Where is home?

NADIA

Poland. Where is home?

CHUOL

South Sudan.

NADIA

I hope you get them out of there soon.

CHUOL

I will. I just need to finish my degree. I don't have the social standing to convince the authorities yet.

NADIA

Have you tried filling in guardianship papers?

CHUOL

My mother has custody, I can't take it away from her. She would not sign it over to me but I want to get them all to come here.

NADIA

It is so messed up that refugee camps are still a thing in 2050. We are halfway past the 21st century and nothing is changing in the right direction.

*Wildfires by SAULT playing in the background.*

CHUOL

There are so many more refugees now, climate change is here to stay.

NADIA

I hope we figure something out. Humans need to survive.

CHUOL

Do we? We could maybe survive if that was our priority, I think that we are way past caring for this planet.

NADIA

So what do you propose doing?

CHUOL

Watch it burn aware of our role in it. I don't think anything is going to save us. We did that together.

NADIA

What if there is a prophet somewhere out there selling NFTs, waiting for us to believe in modern genesis.

CHUOL

Destruction must happen first. That is the natural order.

NADIA

What if the prophet is not of the people but an inhabitant of some other universe.

CHUOL

I think that extraterrestrial species are having a blast watching us killing this planet and one another. No smart person would burn a hole in their rug and yet we are burning the ground underneath our feet.

NADIA

What if we are alive and well in the parallel universe but wiped off from the face of Earth in this universe?

*Hustle by Sons of Kemet plays in the background*

CHUOL

If you get to live through only one dimension of time, then why not save the only place we know rather than hoping you will be alive in a different universe?

NADIA

*(she sings along the song)* Born in the hustle inside me. I might go broke but that's unlikely.

CHUOL

I like your music.

NADIA

*(she abandons the previous topic)* Sons of Kemet. They are a good band.

CHUOL

Are you almost done?

NADIA

Just some shading left and it will be ready. Hurts a lot? Bleeding is normal, don't worry.

*(Beat)*

CHUOL

What if we humans were given consciousness to entertain ourselves? Like, God believes that we truly don't have any other purpose on this Earth but to exploit and destroy it and because of that he wants us to believe that we have a greater purpose. Whether we use our minds well, the purpose of having them is to fill in the time we have till we blow up this world.

*One Life Might Live by Little Simz play in the background*

NADIA

*(she sings along)* No one loves you like I love you, note to self...

I got one life and I might just live it...

Double cheek, kissing, and popping in this party...

Please don't kill my vibe, I've been getting high for days.

CHUOL

You sing well.

NADIA

Five years of music school will do it.

CHUOL

What happened then?

NADIA

My teacher showed his real side, cutting his toenails, bringing a bowl of strawberries to class when my mom could not afford more than bread and water. His ego floated above him. It could no longer be contained within his body. And then I graduated thank God. The end of my story.

CHUOL

What happened next?

NADIA

I used my mind to entertain myself and my hands, I mean tattoos, to earn money. Life keeps moving on.

CHUOL

Would you want to come back to it?

NADIA

Singing? Not for real just to my children.

CHUOL

You have kids? (*genuinely surprised*)

NADIA

Do I look like someone who can get a license? Of course not. Scrappy, white immigrant, no formal education in the US, self-taught, queer, living paycheck to paycheck. I wish. I don't know how I could play the exams and papers though. They are so diligent with checking all that shit.

CHUOL

I know people who have found a way.

NADIA

I know what you are getting at. Even if I was to marry and get a better-paid job, I still am not a citizen and don't have a college diploma. I am far from getting it. The last thing I want is for this goddamn government to take away my child. I ain't giving no kids of mine to cops for them to become their properties. My kids won't become slaves.

CHUOL

I know a woman who is schizophrenic. They let her keep her children because no family would want to adopt a child with heritable schizophrenia. They would not risk it. Now, does she have schizophrenia? That I don't know but I sure have seen at least one of her kids.

NADIA

Was your phone on when you said that?

CHUOL

I don't have a phone yet. Yours?

NADIA

It is downstairs. The last thing I need is for someone to rat me out. You're done. Put the shea butter on it and keep the saran foil on so it absorbs. If it fades fast, which it shouldn't, but if it

does in a few years and you want to get it retouched, pull up and we will go over the design with fresh ink.

CHUOL

It looks great. Thank you.

NADIA

It'd be \$80.

*(CHUOL takes out a \$100 from her back pocket and hands it to NADIA).*

NADIA

Thanks. Hey, if you hear more about people who kept their babies, who don't have licenses, please tell me. I really want a child. I am 23 now so I make the age requirement but that is all. I don't meet any other requirements.

*(CHUOL leaves)*

*(NADIA closes the door behind her, watches her go, and then pulls the curtains down)*

*Hard Life by Pip Millett plays, Nadia sings along  
(She turns on a red light and sets it by the door. She turns one more light and sets it high on a shelf on the wall beneath her. She removes her white apron revealing a white boxing undershirt and no bra. She pulls that off facing off stage and puts a black slip dress on. She removes her black joggers and puts hosiery on, sprays perfume around, fixes her hair, and sits on the table. She stares at the door).*

## SCENE 2

*(Gentle knocking is heard. NADIA doesn't move but stops singing. A male figure enters the space. He closes the door and removes his coat).*

NADIA

Hello sir. How do you want me to serve you tonight?

ADAM

The best way you know.

*(ADAM approaches NADIA and spreads her legs, his back is facing the audience)*

NADIA

These visits are getting more and more expensive for you, aren't they.

ADAM

A price worth paying.

NADIA

I am glad you think that.

*(ADAM lays NADIA on the table and talks to her hovering above her figure)*

ADAM

I am free till 7:30 pm.

NADIA

I don't like to be rushed.

ADAM

I will pay more.

NADIA

You will pay for my silence. Your wife knows about me. She came here a few days ago screaming your name. I told her she got her addresses mixed up, that this is an artist studio. She called me names, she was fuming. Oh, your real name is Hector. I'd change it too if my name was Hector. But, Hector, my silence has a high price.

ADAM

My real name is Adam, Hector is an alias.

NADIA

What for?

*(ADAM leans in to kiss her).*

ADAM

How much?

NADIA

\$200 every week and an additional charge for my services. It will be \$3,000 today. Show me your papers.

*(ADAM takes out a slip of paper from his back pocket. Recites its content as he lays on her, still dressed).*

ADAM

Mr. Adam Kosciushko is free of any SDS or STI, his sperm count is normal and no unusual lumps or issues were reported. Green light.

NADIA

Did they test your endurance?

ADAM

That is your job, I was told.

*(ADAM takes off his belt)*

NADIA

If you remove a condom one more time, imma cut your balls.

ADAM

Leave that for my wife, I'm sure she'd enjoy it more than you.

NADIA

Allow her by keeping latex on your cock. It will take 7 years for my body to replace all your cells. Unless you want to keep paying for the next 7 years, use the condom and keep it on. I ain't playing this time.

ADAM

I like it when you get mad.

NADIA

Your time is ticking, Hector. *(She rolls the r exaggerating his fake name)*

ADAM

Ain't you a beast?

*(She pulls him toward her. They proceed to kiss passionately, it looks as if they know each other's*

*bodies well. Birth in Reverse by St. Vincent plays in the background. The lights fade and we see SL lit up. There is CHUOL sitting behind a mahogany chair, facing NADIA and ADAM, still on the blackout. The door to CHUOL's office is on SL. CHUOL stands up and opens the door to her office. A young woman (SULEIKA) walks in. She instructs her to sit on a medical chair and proceeds to wash her hands as she speaks to the woman).*

CHUOL  
Maiden name?

SULEIKA  
Suleika DuVernay

CHUOL  
Date of birth?

SULEIKA  
December 9th, 2029

CHUOL  
What's the reason you are seeing me today?

SULEIKA  
I want to get medical clearance to apply for a parental license. Before you say anything, I know that I am too young to get the license, I am turning 23 in 4 months. I know that I am not legally married yet but, I want to get medical approval to expedite the process.

CHUOL  
(smiles) Relax. I am on your side. Did you have any recent health complications?

SULEIKA  
Asthma attack but I am sure it was due to air pollution.

CHUOL  
What makes you claim that?

SULEIKA

I was on a job excursion to Atlanta.

CHUOL

How soon after your arrival did you get the attack?

SUILEKA

A day after.

CHUOL

Is it documented?

SULEIKA

It is in my medical files.

CHUOL

Lay down, I will examine your organs.

*(CHUOL lifts SULEIKA's blouse and palpates her chest and stomach searching for tension points and lumps)*

Have you ever been pregnant?

SULEIKA

No, or I was never aware of it.

CHUOL

Miscarriages?

SULEIKA

No, never.

CHUOL

Did your partner seek his medical examination to obtain the license?

SULEIKA

He received his 2 years ago, he is 28 now. He will have the chip installed next month.

CHUOL

That should speed up the process. Please tell him that what people talk about the insertion procedure is incorrect. It is a very fast procedure and nothing to worry about. We do that just to

make sure that parents who don't have licenses don't try to smuggle children out of the country. With the chip, he will never be stopped in transit or frisked unrightfully.

*(Beat)*

Show me your wrists.

*(examines SULEIKA's wrists)*

Sit up and follow the light.

*(flashes the light into her eyes to examine the pupils' response. Goes back to the table and hands SULEIKA a urine cup)*

SULEIKA

What's this for?

CHUOL

I need to make sure you weren't using it for the past 3 months. Go pee into the cup and leave it on the sink. I will do the analysis tonight. If the test comes out negative, you will receive your medical clearance via email with my digital stamp and signature.

SULEIKA

And if it doesn't?

CHUOL

You have to wait a year to do another medical examination for the purpose of obtaining the license.

*(SULEIKA stands up slowly and heads to the door with her eyes glued to the floor. She doesn't say anything).*

*(CHUOL sits at the desk and calls another patient in, IDA WALLS. A young Black woman stands in the door).*

CHUOL

Good morning Mrs. Walls. Take a seat please *(smiles gently)*.

IDA

Walls, Ida. Date of birth March 13, 2027. Married since 2049. I live in Brooklyn, New York.

CHUOL

I am happy to see you here. I am sorry about your child. I will do everything in my power to help you carry to term this time. I want you to be aware that you might lose the license if your mental health declines further below what I have on my card. Your social standing will not matter.

IDA

What do you have on file about me?

CHUOL

Two documented suicide attempts.

IDA

I never- I never tried to commit suicide. The pain was so great I took a few painkillers but that is all, and the second time, Dr. Chuol, the nurse was threatening me that she will clone my child to become her house servant. I tried to leave the room but she was running after me-

CHUOL

*(looking down at the file)* she found a scalpel in your hand.

IDA

Indeed.

*(CHUOL proceeds to close the door, takes a seat again, and lowers her voice)*

CHUOL

Mrs. Wells, you cannot be caught in any questionable act if you want to carry this child to term and keep it. This is a simple evolution of racism that we need to face in this century, we will overcome it and find ways around it but at this moment, we don't know what to do yet. You need to abide by the rules. Work from home, send your husband to work in the office, hire a Black doula and allow me to become your midwife when the time comes. You need to do everything it takes to keep your family safe.

IDA

Yes sir *(confused)*, ma'am.

*(her voice raises and is more audible)*

CHUOL

Either is fine. I don't mind.

IDA

What should I do next?

CHUOL

Tell your husband that he needs to keep himself in check. This, unfortunately, is an invisible *pan-octagon* but if you follow the rules, you will get what you want, I assure you.

IDA

I just want to live in peace.

CHUOL

Don't let them kill you. Survival is revolutionary.

*(IDA nods. Tableau of IDA sitting in front of CHUOL, CHUOL looking over her file, holding an EKG scan in her hand, IDA leaning toward CHUOL. Lights dim)*

*(On the other side of the room, the light rises revealing a man kneeling in front of NADIA kissing her inner thighs. She pulls his chin up forcing him to stand up. She stands right next to him running her hands over his back and shoulders, just looking at him).*

NADIA

How old are you?

LEON

Older than you.

NADIA

Are you sure about that? Big boys pay well.

LEON

Wait and see.

NADIA

Can't wait.

*(NADIA pulls him to the depths of the room and pushes him on the chair, she sits on his lap. Lights dim to blue. They continue their activities but those are smaller movements not to distract the happenings taking place on SL, where CHUL is meeting with the clients. The lights rise revealing CHUOL facing a middle-aged couple, both light-skinned. As they talk NADIA and LEON engage intimately. Those are subtle movements hinting at sexual tension).*

OLEXANDRA

You see we have been trying for quite some time and our primary consultant, Wasilewski, suggested we reach out to you. I have read every article on gene editing you published. Your methods herald the new beginning of humanity. I want to, we want to, become your next subjects. We truly believe that this is not only for our own interest but that this design will help our society.

WASIL

We know what the general procedures are but we want to ask for a few additional enhancements. I've read the lawful implications of this request and we are willing to register our child with national security and inform you and other researchers in the field about its development. Just give us a chance, that is all I, we, ask for.

*(LEON stands up, moves NADIA aside, leaves a stack of bills on the desk. LEON leaves the tattoo shop. She remains still for a moment and after what seems to be the end her train of thoughts or washed up guilt, she walks to the door to greet another male figure. CONRAD is an older-looking, dark-skinned man. He picks her up and carries her into the room)*

CHUOL

What additional enhancements are you seeking? First, let me tell you what the customary enhancements I have implemented. For the past 4 designer babies, I implemented anti-radiation endurance, enhanced lungs with the ability to develop gills with an added cosmetic procedure if there would be a need, the ability to withstand higher temperatures, and an added gene that

would protect against telomere withering. That is the protecting ends of chromosomes would not wear off fast. These changes however were only implemented in the child. I do not agree to do germline editing. No one in the field has received approval nor is seeking it due to the dangers of such generational modification.

*(WASIL, OLEXANDRA & CHUOL tableau)*  
*(On DSR, CONRAD carries NADIA inside the room. He sits her down on the table and proceeds to search her drawers, as he does that, they talk)*  
 NADIA

I haven't seen you for a minute.

CONRAD

I was thinking about you every night in El Salvador.

NADIA

When did you come back?

CONRAD

Last week.

NADIA

Did they cut off much of the forest?

CONRAD

It looks vastly different but let's not talk about it. We have better things to do.

NADIA

Tell me how you want it.

*(He takes out a syringe, and a small pack of crack from his pocket, he tosses a white coat at her).*

CONRAD

Change into that.

NADIA

I don't do drugs.

CONRAD

You will start tonight.

I *don't* do drugs.

NADIA

I wouldn't hurt you. You know that.

CONRAD

I don't want to die, Crad.

NADIA

You have me.  
I am paying with Bitcoin.

CONRAD

How much?

NADIA

a quarter.

CONRAD

a half.

NADIA

you are out of your mind.

CONRAD

4/10 of a coin.

NADIA

0.35.

CONRAD

0.4 and I will snort. I am not injecting, and you go first.

NADIA

*(He takes out a spoon and a lighter from his pocket and heats up the belly of the spoon. NADIA watches him do that)*

NADIA

Pay right now before you inject.

CONRAD

You are so impatient, babygirl. Have faith in me. I will pay you after you snort.

*(He injects and she sniffs the line)*

NADIA

I need to use the restroom, lay down.

*(CONRAD lowers himself to the floor leaning against the wall as she walks away, his head is buzzing. NADIA comes back, sees him lose consciousness, and looks through her drawers)*

NADIA

*(screams)* You fucking idiot! Wake up!

*(She searches through his checkbook and writes herself out a few checks, goes through his wallet frantically, removes cash and a small piece of paper hidden there. She finds Narcon and administers it to his thigh. She dials 911 and talks to them on the phone, what she says is inaudible, blue and red lights flashing as CHUOL, OLEXANDRA and WASIL begin to speak).*

WASIL

I see. I hope that will change in the next 20 years or so. What we wanted to ask for is enhanced intelligence, ideally replicating some genes from Neil DeGrasse Tyson.

CHUOL

Are you aware that DeGrasse Tyson probably wouldn't have been able to obtain a license until he was recognized as a scientist, making his chances of even passing on his genes in gene engineering difficult. His daughter probably wouldn't be able to obtain a license because of pre-marital teenage mistakes. You need to seek a genome template from someone who represents your kin. You need to gain their approval.

OLEXANDRA

But if you asked, DeGrasse Tyson would give you his approval.

CHUOL

I won't ask. This conversation has no point. What is your rationale to proceed with this demand?

OLEXANDRA

Dr. Chuol. Consider this an investment in humankind.

CHUOL

At this moment, I must refuse.

WASIL

We will pay in shares and cryptocurrency, making sure that your research is well-funded and you never face a single financial difficulty in your life.

CHUOL

As I said, I must refuse. If I happen to change my mind, you will be informed. Please leave my office.

WASIL

Dr. Chuol-

CHUOL

Please *(points to the door, they leave)*.

*(NADIA hugs her needs, observing the space where CONRAD was)*

*Strange Fruit by Billie Holiday plays in the background (or Strange World, Dziwny Jest ten Świat by Czesław Niemen)*

*(Blackout)*

### SCENE 3

*(The scene opens with a projection of water and a bridge. Under it, there is a tent set up. A younger woman, SIOBHAN, maybe 25, sits outside the tent on a blanket and spreads food around. She assembles something like a charcuterie board but with leaves and rocks, sand and water from the river in a glass vase. Inside the tent, there is a child and two small pairs of shoes arranged outside the*

*tent. The child, a 5-ish-year-old boy in neat clothes, REMULUS. He has a toy car in his hand, there is also a doll on the floor, though without a head).*

*CHUOL, holding a big tote bag, comes on stage from the audience. She walks around looking for someone, without much fuss, discretely. She then sees the tent and picks up her pace. She walks toward it)*

*(CHUOL, in front of the tent, facing SIOBHAN)*

SIOBHAN

Oh Yezzus, I didn't sea ya cwomin'. **H**were deed ya cwom from?

CHUOL

Worry not. Where did your children go?

SIOBHAN

Mai chillun? Here they are, all in the tent

*(the tent opening is now closed. There is a small break through which light comes in. The tent lit up, casting a silhouette of one child, REMULUS, playing with his toys).*

Dey arr gud chillun, well **bihaved**.

CHUOL

In good health?

SIOBHAN

De bruzzes wend oway. Remulus cat hiss hand yesturdai. Remulus! Come out and sea de docta!

*(The child, slowly crawls out of the tent. He makes sure to close the opening behind him)*

REMULUS

This is for me? *(points at the bag)*

SIOBHAN

Chil', be patie-ent. If she wanet to geeve yt to you, she wuld.

CHUOL

Show me your hand.

*(he hesitates, stands as far as he had at first but at last, he extends his arm, only so far that CHUOL can see but not touch him).*

We need to clean it.

REMULUS

How do you want to clean it?

CHUOL

It might hurt a tad but you are the bravest little man I know. Can you handle it? *(dramatically)* If you can't, who can?

SIOBHAN

Lisun to de docta.

CHUOL

Yea?

REMULUS

I can handle it.

CHUOL

You are so, indeed, brave. Tell me about your favorite things to do.

*(He doesn't answer. She takes a bandage and antiseptic out the pocket of her trench coat and starts fixing the wound with the antiseptic. REMULUS hisses at her)*

SIOBHAN

Behaiv! Ansa de docta!

REMULUS

I like to read. *(he looks to the sky)* And play with cars.

CHUOL

It is done. That's it. The end of it. *(smiles)*. No more infections, right? No more.

*(Beat)*

*(He scurries back to the tent)*

SIOBHAN

Say tenk you!

REMULUS

Thank you, doctor.

SIOBHAN

Gud.

CHUOL

And you? How are you? Are you still urinating blood?

SIOBHAN

No. Am gud too.

CHUOL

What did you last dream about?

SIOBHAN

Abut militiants taakin' oway my babies.

CHUOL

Did you see them do that?

SIOBHAN

Verry cleerly.

CHUOL

Did they hit you?

SIOBHAN

It didn't hoort.

*(CHUOL takes out the things from her bag. She hands them to SIOBHAN one by one, first the book).*

CHUOL

How many kids do you have?

SIOBHAN

Five. Five helty chillun'. Playin' ol day lon'.

CHUOL

All live in the tent?

SIOBHAN

How were else?

*(Beat)*

*(The silhouette still reveals only one child. Playing with the toy car making noises)*

SIOBHAN

Remulus, I haf sumtink fo' you!

*(a pair of hands extends from the opening in the tent and grabs the book)*

CHUOL

There is more. This is for the older one *(passes a thicker book)*

SIOBHAN

Remus!

*(the same pair of hands extend from the tent, just at a different height. The silhouette reveals REMULUS arranging the objects in the circle as he receives them)*

CHUOL

This is for the girl, you said you have a girl?

SIOBHAN

*(passes a doll from CHUOL to REMULUS)* Nunny! Yes-sa, shess ten. Smart gurl. My gurl.

CHUOL

and the other 2 children?

SIOBHAN

Et schull. Dey arr eleven end tuelf.

CHUOL

Boys?

SIOBHAN

Francesca, eleven. Roger, tuelf. Francesca wantss to do actink. She stoodies a lot.

CHUOL

There are some notebooks at the bottom, and here, (*points at groceries*) you might need some.

*(SIOBHAN looks through the groceries, arranges a charcuterie board from real food, replaces rocks, pours out the water, etc.)*

SIOBHAN

Docta, don't tell dem abut my chillun'. Dey wud tak dem oway. I saw dat in my dreams. Don't let dem.

CHUOL

Worry not. But if you are going to move again, let me know.

SIOBHAN

I will lef a rock under yerr door. I'll let yerr nou.

*(As she speaks, FRANCESCA comes on stage from DSR).*

FRANCESCA

Doctor (*nods*).

CHUOL

Good day.

FRANCESCA

If my mother was speaking non-sense just know that she can never wash her hands clean. There is a method to her madness. She keeps seeing flying daggers, forests moving, people attacking us but she is no fool.

CHUOL

How is your health, mind?

FRANCESCA

Well. I am well. We need to move soon. Where one door closes, the other opens.

CHUOL

Where to?

FRANCESCA

Willow Lake. There is a boat there. Remulus, Remus, we will live on a boat!

*(she runs into the tent, now the silhouette reveals 2 children, FRANCESCA and REMULUS).*

CHUOL

She is indeed a bright girl. Keep me posted about their health and don't let her near the Upper East Side, this is where you'd get caught.

SIOBHAN

Neva. Dose arr my chillun.

CHUOL

Take care, Siobhan.

SIOBHAN

Tenk you docta.

#### SCENE 4

*(The scene opens with NADIA on the floor. There is blood, a few cloths stained with blood used to wipe it off, and a pair of silver scissors with elaborate patterns on them. It is the only object in the scene that looks expensive. NADIA is holding a child in her hands, covered in blood, with a long umbilical cord. She is crying, wailing, screaming, the child doesn't breathe. It is exceptionally small)*

*(NADIA brings a small basin with water and slowly cleanses the blood of the child's body. She sings to it as she does it, from time to time interrupting it with cries)*

The world is covered by our trace  
 Scars we cover up with paint  
 Watch them preaching sour lies  
 I would rather see this world through the eyes of a child  
 Through the eyes of a child

*(NADIA then puts oils on the child's body, rubs it gently, and dressed the child in tiny clothes, visibly too big on its body. The child is very pale. She lays it down on the mattress on the floor and goes to UR to search for clothes)*

*Through the eyes of the child by Aurora*  
 Darker times will come and go  
 Times you need to see her smile  
 And mothers' hands are warm and mild  
 I would rather feel this world through the skin of a child  
 Through the skin of a child

*(She comes back with a polka dot dress with a low neck and puts it on. Prior to that, she walks on stage wearing a gray oversized T-shirt with a logo of Amazon on it, but modernized. She hastily smears the blood on her legs in an unsuccessful attempt to clean her body. The dress is worn over her uncleansed body)*

*(Approaches the child)*

NADIA

Shh.. don't cry. I am here.

When a human strokes your skin  
 That is when you let them in  
 Let them in before they go  
 I would rather feel alive with a childlike soul  
 With a childlike soul

*(She combs her hair, finds a needle on the floor, and pierces her finger. She smears the blood on her lips and cheeks)*

*(she sings)*

Please don't leave me here

Please don't leave me here

*(NADIA, sets up a camera on a tripod. Takes out the battery and blows at it to check if it's working, puts it back in, and starts the recording. She gently picks up the child and resumes singing. She is singing, cooing the child, talking to it, and from time to time posing with it like for a photo).*

*Claude's Girl by Marika Hackman*

Turn off my mind, I beg you  
It's buzzing like the Devil's bow  
Pulling a soft virgin string  
A terrible shriek from below

The flies on my walls, they're silent  
But the swarm in my head is a hell  
So I'll try to play you correctly  
For a toll of your deep slumber bell

My fingers are wretched and calloused  
Soon daybreak will creep up my stair  
Now I've not got long to summon the song  
Of the girl with the flaxen hair

*(NADIA falls silent. She poses with the child close to her face, smiling through the tears. She puts the child down, removes the dress once more revealing her bloodied body, and wraps the child in it, covering its head. She puts that tiny cocoon on the mattress. She sits next to the child facing the camera. She doesn't move).*

NADIA

Fallen angel will herald of the end of me.

*(Blackout)*

**SCENE 5**

*(NADIA goes to see a doctor, she looks very tired and lifeless. She arrives to see CHUOL in the office, sitting behind the desk, scribbling in her notepad)*

NADIA

Good morning. I think- I think I am in the wrong office.

*(she leaves)*

*(Beat)*

*(comes back)*

NADIA

Chuol? Your name is Chuol? I did your tattoo. You are a doctor?

CHUOL

Nadia Skowronski? Sit down. You are in a right place.

NADIA

Just like that, you are a doctor? Right! Your degree... I didn't know it meant a medical degree. How are your sisters?

CHUOL

There was a raid.

NADIA

Were they harmed?

CHUOL

They didn't-

*(Beat)*

NADIA

I am so sorry.

*(Beat)*

CHUOL

How can I help you?

NADIA

I need some anti-depressants. Look, I know I need them. Don't give me that look. I am going mad-

CHUOL

What happened?

NADIA

Chuol- Doctor. I don't want to talk about it.

CHUOL

I need to know what your symptoms are.

NADIA

I lost another child, those are my symptoms. Do you need anything more? Oh, I do. You have connections and all that, could you get me a tin of Vantablack?

*(CHUOL is laughing, NADIA is crying)*

CHUOL

You are not being serious.

NADIA

I don't know how much more serious I can get. I need it. Doctor, I need it. Look at your wrist. Community. Be in the community with me and help me. I beg you.

CHUOL

I can prescribe you pills but I don't think I can get you Vantablack. What do you need it for?

*(Silence)*

CHUOL

I will see what I can do. I know someone who can help.

NADIA

Call them.

*(Beat)*

NADIA

Call them! Don't you see I am for real? I have nothing to lose. You are speaking to a madwoman.

*(Beat)*

NADIA

For Lord's mercy. Be a human!

CHUOL

Step outside and I will call him.

*(NADIA steps outside. Stands outside the door, listening in)*

*(CHUOL calls EZRAL. Her phone projects his image from a flat surface into a 3-D plane. It looks like a small hologram but the conversation is carried out in real time)*

CHUOL

Hi Ezra, give me 7 minutes of your time. I won't need much more than that.

EZRA

Go on.

CHUOL

I need a tin of Vantablack, what would you need in return for that?

EZRA

Why do you need it?

CHUOL

Don't worry about it. We can discuss that later.

EZRA

If it is for an experiment of yours, I demand to be mentioned as a second writer.

CHUOL

It is not for an experiment.

EZRA

Then?

CHUOL

Later. Trust me. What do you need in return?

EZRA

I would like you to design a baby from my wife's eggs. I can deliver sperm sometime this week. No big enhancements. I would just like to make sure that my child would not carry cancer cells, and that it is at least as intelligent as my wife was.

CHUOL

I do not agree to do germline editing. I can monitor it as it is growing and remove the cells but I won't edit the whole genome. You also need to renew the license to become a legal guardian, and you need a female to carry the child for you. Find her, and I can implant the fertilized egg.

*(NADIA comes in, she looks at the hologram and speaks directly to EZRA)*

NADIA

I can become the surrogate. I can carry your child but I need Vantablack this week.

EZRA

Who is she?

NADIA

Chuol's patient.

EZRA

What do you need Vantablack for?

NADIA

To transport a still-born child and give it a proper burial. Vantablack would not be detected under the X-ray at the airport.

EZRA

It is your child?

CHUOL

You two would need to be married. This is the only way you could keep the child, Ezra.

NADIA

Today. I can be at the court at 6 pm.

EZRA

I agree. I need a contract to make sure that you will carry to term and not rat out.

NADIA

Write it and I'll sign it but I need Vantablack this week.

EZRA

Deal.

CHUOL

I only agree to edit out the cancerous cells. We will do screenings at 8 months and make a plan to proceed.

EZRA

Deal.

NADIA

Lower East Side court at 6 pm. Be on time.

EZRA

I will be there.

*(a week later. A flash of light, NADIA going through scanners at the airport, being patted down. Her luggage goes through the scanner. She stares at it. It comes out on the other side, she quickly puts her shoes back on and drags the luggage UR)*

*(CHUOL's office. EZRA storms in)*

EZRA

I can't reach her. The fertilized egg was implanted, she has Vantablack.

CHUOL

You had a contract, you can cite her on it.

EZRA

Ventablack was patented. I will get sued for using it without clearance.

CHUOL

It is on you. I can't do anything about it.

EZRA

You called me. You started all of this. I lost my wife, you left right before, help me get through this.

CHUOL

I will carry your child.

*(they look at each other tensely. A knock on the door is heard. SIOBHAN peeks your head in)*

SIOBHAN

Docta. My chillun has fallin' sick. It's Remus. He's alveys doink sumtink. But can you check dem al. I want dem chillun to be helty.

CHUOL

Come in, all of you.

*(to EZRA, sullen & calm)* leave. We should check in a few months. This matter requires time.

*(EZRA leaves)* *(to SIOBHAN)* Which young gentleman is Remus?

*(REMUS step forward)*

CHUOL

Make yourself comfortable, kids.

*(FRANCESCA, REMULUS, NUNNY and ROGER) all sit down on the floor, looking up at CHUOL and REMUS. SIOBHAN sits on the chair. CHUOL examines the 12-year-old child. Tableau).*

***The House of Tuning II by Sudan Archives plays***  
*(Blackout)*

**The End**