

Director's Note

I didn't write this because I thought I had something important to say. I wrote it because I couldn't get it out of my head. This show started as moments—images, sounds, pieces of people—and it kept growing. Not because I sat down with a plan, but because every time I tried to walk away from it, something pulled me back. A line. A melody. A feeling I couldn't shake. That's what this is. Not just a story, but a place. Somewhere between memory and reality. Between control and chaos. Between what's real and what we tell ourselves is real just to get through the day. Everyone in this show believes they're right. That's important. No one wakes up and decides to be the villain. Not here. Not in life. Every person you see on this stage is doing what they think is necessary—whether that's protecting themselves, fixing something broken, or just surviving one more day. And sometimes... that's where things go wrong. There are things in this show that won't be explained. On purpose. You might hear a line that feels like it means more than it should. You might notice something small... slightly out of place. You might leave with questions. Excellent. That means you were paying attention. I don't want you trying to walk out of here with a clean answer. I want you to talk about it on the way home. Or wherever you think you're going.

I want you to disagree with each other. I want you to sit with it a little longer than is comfortable. Because the truth is, this isn't really about an asylum. It's about what happens when people are trapped—by systems, by expectations, by other people... or by themselves. And if, at any point, you forget where you are—if you get pulled into it, if you feel something for someone on that stage, even for a second—then we did what we set out to do.

Welcome to your new home.

—Greg

The Asylum — Character Breakdown

Note on Casting & Time Period

This story is set in the 1940s and reflects the gender roles and language of that era (e.g., “nurse” as female, “orderly” as male). These descriptions are written to match the period setting, not to exclude. I welcome performers of all identities and backgrounds to audition and embody these roles.

Nora (Lead, age appropriate, female)

Quiet, distant, and deeply guarded. Watches more than she speaks, holding onto something she won't let go of. There is strength in her silence—and something unresolved beneath it.

Edward Keane (Lead, age appropriate, male)

A man lost between memory and reality. Searching for meaning, for truth, for something he feels he's forgotten. Driven by an emotional pull he can't explain but refuses to ignore.

Dr. Sidney Lumen (Lead, age appropriate, any gender)

A psychiatrist who serves as both caretaker and narrator. Calm, articulate, and composed, guiding the audience through the asylum with precision and control. Speaks with authority, even when the truth beneath the surface begins to slip.

Dr. Lucian Mathias Grendel (Lead, age appropriate, male)

Once regarded as brilliant, now rigid and uncompromising. Believes “cleansing” the afflicted is the only path to order. Charismatic but deeply unsettling, driven by obsession and control masked as purpose.

Nurse Eve (Supporting, age appropriate, female)

Empathetic and well-meaning, caught between compassion and survival. She wants to help the patients but is slowly worn down by the system around her. Often trying to convince herself she's doing the right thing.

Nurse Lilith (Supporting, age appropriate, female)

Sharp-tongued, cruel, and commanding. Thrives on control and intimidation, especially over weaker patients. Finds power in fear and isn't afraid to use it.

Nurse Ivy (Supporting, age appropriate, female)

Calculated and observant. Less explosive than Lilith but just as dangerous. Uses charm and subtle manipulation to maintain control and back Lilith's authority.

Elsie Keating (Supporting, age appropriate, female)

Hardened, blunt, and no longer willing to be small. Carries the weight of years of suffering but has learned to stand her ground. Strength forged through survival, not softness.

Cheeky (Dottie) (Supporting, age appropriate, female)

Flirtatious, impulsive, and unapologetically bold. Craves attention, pleasure, and freedom—often taking what she wants without thinking twice. Beneath the charm and mischief is someone who refuses to feel trapped again.

Private Shaw (Supporting, age appropriate, male)

A soldier shaped by war and haunted by it. Disciplined and commanding on the surface, but constantly battling the guilt and trauma he carries. Struggles to hold himself together.

Hooded Spirits (Ensemble, any age/gender)

Silent, watchful figures that exist on the edges of reality. They echo, observe, and linger—never interfering, but never gone. Represent memory, guilt, and the inescapable pull of the asylum.

Orderlies (Supporting/Ensemble, any age, male)

Enforcers of structure within the asylum. Some are professional, others rougher around the edges. Represent routine, control, and the physical presence of authority.

Nurses (Supporting/Ensemble, any age, female)

Staff within the asylum who maintain daily operations. Some show care, others detachment. Their presence reinforces the system the patients cannot escape.

Sgt. Whitaker (Supporting, male)

Carl (Supporting/Ensemble, any gender)

Suzy Circles (Supporting/Ensemble, female)

Orderly Walter (Supporting/Ensemble, any gender)

Private Jenkins (Supporting/Ensemble, male)

Harold Keating (Supporting, male)

Frank Bloom (Supporting, male)

Dr. Edmund Cartwright (Supporting, male)

Rose Carter (Supporting/Ensemble, female)

Vivian Clarke (Supporting/Ensemble, female)

The Board (Supporting/Ensemble, any gender)

Patients (Supporting/Ensemble, any age/gender)

Soldiers (Supporting/Ensemble, any age/gender)

The Asylum

Written By Gregory Willis

Prologue: Echoes of the Asylum

[The stage is dark. A faint hum lingers in the air. Slowly, dim lights rise, illuminating six hooded figures dressed in gray robes, though this number may be adjusted depending on cast size. Their faces are obscured, and they each hold a flickering candle. The figures move deliberately, their steps synchronized as they form a solemn procession downstage. They represent the souls lost to the asylum. They begin to sing.]

1 - SONG: Echoes Of The Asylum

Spirits (singing softly):

Welcome, my friends, to your new abode
These halls now echo with your woes
Within these walls, your minds will roam
Each shadow whispers tales untold
And it's here, you'll mend, fears slowly unfold

In this place, where daylight is gone
Through iron gates, you've come to stay
Where time stands still in shadows gray

Your memories will start to blur
As shadows move, and silence stirs
No peace awaits, just endless night
Where reason fades from every sight

[As the song draws to a close, the figures extinguish their candles one by one. The light dims with each extinguished flame until the stage is plunged into darkness. The figures slowly exit, leaving only the faintest glow on stage.]

Scene 1: Dr. Lumen's Welcome

[The sound of distant whispers and creaking doors echoes through the theater. Slowly, the curtain rises, revealing a dimly lit insane asylum. The walls are cracked and peeling, with faint shadows flickering as if alive. Dr. Lumen enters from stage right, a commanding yet eerie figure dressed in a sharp 1940s suit. Dr. Lumen surveys the audience with a sly smile.]

2- SONG: Dr. Lumen's Welcome

Dr. Lumen (singing):

Welcome here, you're in my care

A place where minds can freely share
Through doors that never close
Come rest your weary woes
Step inside, I'll guide you there
Sanity's a fleeting flair
The walls, they breathe with silent dread
Where fractured minds are gently led

[Dr. Lumen moves through the asylum, gesturing to different areas and occasionally addressing imaginary patients as he sings.]

Dr. Lumen (continuing singing):
The night, it whispers soft and low
As reason fades, the darkness grows
Your past will melt in twisted dreams
Lost in echoes, muffled screams
But fear not, friends, you're not alone
Call this asylum your new home

[Dr. Lumen reaches the center of the stage, where a chair and small table sit. He pauses, his voice building as he reaches the chorus.]

Dr. Lumen (continuing singing):
Welcome to the void within
Where madness starts, and hope grows thin
No need to fight, no need to flee
Embrace the dark, set your mind free
Here in this place where shadows dance
Your thoughts will spiral, lost in trance
No windows here, no light of day
Just endless night to guide your way
Step further in, the cold awaits
The darkness here, it calculates
The whispers slither through your mind
They show the truth you've left behind
You cannot hide, you can't retreat
This is your fate, your mind's defeat

[Dr. Lumen gestures toward unseen rooms, nodding as if approving their contents. The lights shift, dimming as he walks toward an unseen door. A patient is escorted onto the stage, flanked by two staff members in plain white uniforms.]

[Two or three spirits emerge slowly from the shadows upstage as Edward is escorted across the stage. They do not approach him. As Edward passes, the spirits stop in unison and slowly turn their bodies toward him, acknowledging the arrival of another soul to the asylum. Once Edward disappears behind the scrim, the spirits continue silently into the darkness and fade from sight.]

[Music softens, fading into eerie instrumentals. Dr. Lumen steps aside as the staff brings the new patient, Edward, to center stage. The patient is wearing disheveled street clothes and appears disoriented. The staff wordlessly guide him behind a scrim, where he is briefly silhouetted as he changes into asylum attire. The patient yells out—they must have the wrong man, it must be a mistake, he's not sure what's happened. Dr. Lumen watches from a distance, his expression unreadable.]

[After 20-30 seconds, the patient is set to start the flashback. The eerie music starts up again. Dr. Lumen steps forward, downstage left, to continue.]

Dr. Lumen (singing):

So while you're here, you're in my care
A place where you can freely share
Through doors that never close
Might as well rest your weary woes
Your journey here will never end
This asylum here, is now, your only friend

Dr. Lumen (very professional, straight to the audience):

I am Dr. Lumen. In these halls, I am doctor, caretaker... and sometimes, your witness. But tonight, I am your guide. What you see may blur the line between my memory and madness. Have I told this story before? (slightly confused smirk) Walk with me... into the asylum.

Flashback: Begins

[The stage transitions to a flashback scene. A soft spotlight illuminates a bed where Patient 18486 is lying, his eyes wide open, staring at his wife beside him, peacefully sleeping. He reaches for a pillow, and with a deliberate but emotionless motion, he smothers her with it. The action is swift, almost haunting in its calmness. After a brief pause, the lights flash back to normal.]

Transition Back to Present Day: Flashback Ends

[Dr. Lumen, now in psychologist mode, addresses the audience directly, breaking the fourth wall. He pulls out a notebook and begins speaking in a calm, almost detached manner.]

Dr. Lumen (calmly, scribbling in his notebook):

Patient 18486, male. Edward Keane. Brought in for violent tendencies. Seems to be in decent enough spirits for now. A man of few words, but his eyes... well, they tell a different story. There's more beneath the surface, as always.

[Dr. Lumen looks up at the audience.]

Dr. Lumen:

No one's past is ever simple. (Looks around) Not in here. But we all carry our burdens. (Pauses, lowering the notebook and looking at the patient's notes.) If I could just understand the why... Why did she... (Lumen trails off for a moment). There you have it. A person driven by something far beyond reason. But (deep sigh) no judgment here. It's my job to understand. And so, we

begin.

[The scene shifts back to the present, the lights returning to their normal dim state. Dr. Lumen steps forward.]

Dr. Lumen (Looking at the patient, breaking the moment):
Please bring in the patient...

[The patient is escorted in, now wearing asylum attire. Dr. Lumen looks at him as the eerie music fades.]

Edward (Confused and disoriented):
What? I don't know, I haven't done anything. I don't remember. I don't know what... don't know how... where? What is this place?

Dr. Lumen (Leaning on his cane, calmly):
Ah, another weary soul brought to this sanctuary. Welcome to your new beginning, my friend. (Pauses, leaning closer.) My name is Dr. Lumen and this... This... (gestures to the asylum) is where lost minds are found, and fractured hearts are pieced together—if they can be.

[Nurse Eve enters from stage left, a kind-faced woman in a crisp white uniform. She carries a clipboard and steps beside Dr. Lumen.]

Dr. Lumen:
This is Nurse Eve. She will assist in your orientation. A gentle hand to guide you, though even she cannot shield you from the truths these walls hold.

Nurse Eve (Softly, reassuringly):
Welcome. There's nothing to fear. You're safe with us. We'll take good care of you here.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):
Safe with us... Safe with us... We'll take care of you... Care of you.

Dr. Lumen (To the audience, with a final note):
But remember this, dear friend—follow the rules and we will do everything in our power to set your mind free.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):
Follow the rules... Set your mind free... Your mind free.

[The lights dim as Dr. Lumen exits stage right, leaving the patient and Nurse Eve silhouetted against the backdrop of the asylum. The sound of a door slamming echoes, signaling the end of the prologue.]

[Blackout.]

Scene 2: Rules of the Asylum

[The stage lights rise from the blackout, illuminating Nurse Eve and Edward standing in a sterile corridor of the asylum. Nurse Eve holds a clipboard, her tone calm but matter-of-fact.]

Nurse Eve:

Now listen carefully. This place runs on rules. Follow them, and things will be easier for you. Break them... Well, let's just say it's not worth learning what happens next.

Edward (still disoriented):

Wait, wait a minute... None of this makes any sense. This is a mistake. (Grabbing at his neck, his face clenching) It's hard to breathe... Why am I here?

Nurse Eve:

You're here to heal. That's all that matters now. (gesturing down the hall) Come on, I'll introduce you to someone who can help you settle in.

[They walk a few steps as Dotti "Cheeky" Bloom enters from stage left. She's lively, with a mischievous grin that contrasts sharply with her calm demeanor. Cheeky takes one look at Edward and smirks, intrigued.]

Nurse Eve:

Ah, Dotti... Just the person I was looking for.

Cheeky:

Uhh, (talking out of the side of her mouth covered by her hand) call me Cheeky in front of the new guy ma'am, please? After all, it suits me better. A girl can dream big, can't she? Don't ya think?

Nurse Eve:

Very well... Cheeky. This is our newest guest. Can I trust you to show him the ropes?

Cheeky (slyly, eyeing Edward):

Oh, you can trust me all right. (to Edward) Come on, sugar, let's take a little tour.

Nurse Eve (to Edward):

Remember what I said—rules are the key. Cheeky will fill you in.

[Nurse Eve exits, leaving Cheeky and Edward. Cheeky wastes no time, grabbing his arm and leading him toward the commons area.]

Cheeky:

So, welcome to the jungle, handsome. First things first, don't lose your mind—you'll need it to survive in here. Oh also, we have coed sleeping quarters, so when the time comes, keep your hands to yourself, and stay on your own bed, (flirting) unless you see something you want, and maybe wanna share a bunk with someone. (winks/licks her lips) Welcome to your new home!

[They enter the Commons Area, where various patients are scattered. The space is dimly lit, with

mismatched furniture and peeling wallpaper. A gramophone plays faintly in the background. Several patients exhibit peculiar behaviors: one draws endless circles on the wall, another rocks back and forth muttering incoherently, and Carl clutches a trumpet protectively while glaring at anyone who gets too close.]

[Far upstage, nearly lost in the shadows, a single spirit slowly crosses from one side of the stage to the other. The movement is steady and deliberate, almost unnatural in its calmness. None of the patients acknowledge it. The spirit disappears into the darkness as the scene continues.]

Cheeky:

All right, (swiping her finger under his chin) rookie, let me give you the rundown. Over there, that's Carl. Never—and I mean never—touch his trumpet. He'll bite your hand off.

[She points to the person drawing circles.]

Cheeky:

That one? Just let 'em draw. They've been at it for days. Who knows, maybe they're on to something.

[Cheeky continues pointing out various patients and their quirks, her tone playful but laced with seriousness.]

[Nora sits apart in the corner, half in shadow. She hums softly under her breath — the melody is faint but recognizable as the tune that will later become "Crazy Lovers." Her eyes are fixed on the small locket in her hands, which she turns over and over, barely registering the others as they interact around her.]

Cheeky:

See her? Yeah, best leave her be. She's been here longer than anyone. Keeps to herself mostly. [Edward glances at Nora and doesn't look away as quickly as he should. She sits alone, back turned to him. She doesn't look up. The moment lingers.]

[Nora's humming stops immediately at the snap.]

Cheeky (Snapping fingers to Edward):

Hey gorgeous, eyes this way. You see the music player? Don't mess with it unless you want everyone in here to turn on you. And if you hear someone yelling, just stay out of the way. If you hear a whistle blowing, keep your head down. It's not gonna be pretty.

[They finish the tour back where they started. Edward's anxiety begins to rise, his movements becoming agitated.]

Edward (voice escalating):

Nobody is listening to me. I am not staying in this place!

[He moves to the main door and starts pounding on it.]

Edward (Frantically yelling and punching the door):
Let me out! Please! I don't belong here!

[The other patients react to the noise, their behaviors growing erratic. Carl clutches his trumpet tighter, the circle-drawer starts muttering, and the room hums with restless energy. Cheeky steps forward, trying to calm him.]

Cheeky (half-joking, half-serious):
I wouldn't do that if I were you.

[Edward ignores her, slamming the door harder. With one final bang, he accidentally knocks over a table. A loud crash echoes through the room, sending the patients into a frenzy.]

[Private Shaw stands up sharply from his seat, his posture rigid and military-like. He marches over to Edward and stands inches from his face, shouting with the authority of a soldier.]

Private Shaw (at full volume):
STAND DOWN, SOLDIER! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

[Edward freezes, staring at Private Shaw, who is now trembling but holding his ground. The chaos builds, patients yelling and moving erratically. Suddenly, a piercing whistle blows, cutting through the noise. At the sound of the whistle, Shaw immediately stiffens. The stage goes black.]

Scene 3: The Battlefield Within

[The stage is dark except for a single spotlight on Private Shaw, now huddled in a fetal position. He rocks back and forth, arms wrapped around his knees, trembling. A sharp whistle echoes, causing him to flinch violently and bury his head deeper into his knees. The commotion fades to silence. Lights rise downstage right on Dr. Lumen, who stands calmly, notebook in hand, addressing the audience.]

Flashback: Begins

Dr. Lumen:
Patient 31664. Private James Francis Shaw. A soldier—a hero, some would say. But heroism comes at a cost, doesn't it?

[Dr. Lumen starts pacing slowly, flipping through his notebook as the spotlight on Shaw dims slightly, transitioning focus to Dr. Lumen.]

Dr. Lumen:
The Army trained him to fight, to kill, to survive. They called it discipline. But war leaves a mark, not just on the body but deep in the mind. For Shaw, the fight from the battlefield never truly ended. The loud noises, the chaos—it all drags him back to the front lines. Back to a place he can't escape.

[Dr. Lumen pauses, looking up at the audience.]

Dr. Lumen:

They call it shell shock. A fitting name, don't you think? A constant bombardment of the mind. Let me take you there.

[Dr. Lumen steps back into the shadows, and the lights transition. A soundscape of military drumbeats and marching boots rises, and the stage transforms into a boot camp. Private Shaw stands in a line with other soldiers dressed in full military garb. A Drill Instructor, Sgt. Whitaker storms onto the stage, barking orders.]

[Unlike the others, Shaw never fully transitions into a soldier's uniform—remaining in his patient attire throughout.]

Sgt. Whitaker:

Line up, you spineless sacks of shit! Look at you! A goddamn parade of clowns! (paces furiously) You think this is some Sunday stroll in the park? You're here to learn how to stay alive, and by the look of it, half of you won't make it through breakfast!

[He stops in front of the first soldier, staring him down.]

Sgt. Whitaker:

You! What's your name, maggot?

Private Jenkins (terrified):

Private Jenkins, sir!

Sgt. Whitaker:

Private Jenkins?! No, your name is asshole until you prove otherwise! You got that, asshole?

Private Jenkins (saluting nervously):

Yes, sir!

[Sgt. Whitaker moves to Shaw, glaring at him.]

Sgt. Whitaker:

And what the hell about you? What's your name, princess?

Private Shaw (quietly):

Private Shaw, sir.

Sgt. Whitaker:

What was that? I didn't catch it over the sound of your goddamn uselessness! Speak the fuck up!

Private Shaw (louder, trembling):

Private Shaw, sir!

Sgt. Whitaker:

Let me make one thing clear, Shaw. I don't give a damn if you're scared, tired, or crying for your mommy. Out there, hesitation gets you killed. You hesitate on my watch, and I'll make sure you wish you were dead!

[He turns to the group, shouting louder.]

Sgt. Whitaker:

All of you! You're mine now. Your bodies, your souls—they belong to Uncle Sam. You think you can handle that?

Soldiers (in unison):

Sir! Yes, sir!

Sgt. Whitaker:

We'll see about that. Now MOVE!

[Sgt. Whitaker begins the cadence, stomping his boot rhythmically. The soldiers snap to attention, marching stiffly at first.]

[The soldiers snap into motion. Movements begin rigid and precise—more drill than dance. Each step is sharp, mechanical, controlled.]

As the cadence builds, the formation becomes increasingly stylized. Movements grow more synchronized and theatrical, blurring the line between military discipline and choreographed motion.]

Sgt. Whitaker:

Left, left, left, right, left!

3 - SONG: March Of The Brave

Soldiers (Chanting):

Left, left, left, right, left,
Onward we march, with hearts unfurled,
From boot camp to war, we face the world,
Left, left, left, right, left,
Onward we march, with courage we strive,
Through blood and sweat, we stay alive.

Sgt. Whitaker (barking):

Get your knees up, you lazy bastards! This ain't a fucking picnic!

Soldiers (Chanting):

Left, left, left, right, left,
A soldier's path, from start to end,
But the scars of battle, they never mend!

[The marching turns into more choreographed movements, stomping and turning in unison as the music builds. The cadence grows harsher, transitioning into the hardcore section.]

[All the soldiers are now transitioning from boot camp to real war. They line up, grab a helmet and rifle, and start to engage. Private Shaw also grabs a helmet and rifle while still wearing his patient attire.]

[Set pieces—sandbags, barriers—move into place as part of the choreography, transforming the stage into a battlefield in real time. The energy shifts from control to urgency.]

Left, left, left, left, left, left...
Onward we march, with hearts unfurled,
Left, left, left, right, left,
Brothers in arms, side by side,
Facing the fear, there's nowhere to hide,
We march together, through the tide,
(Steady) Left, left, left, right, left,
Through the mud and rain, we push on,
Left, left, left, right, left,
The sweat and grit, it's our uniform,
Through fiery storms, we weather the norm,
Left, left, left, right, left,
As daylight fades, and night unfolds,
Brave souls emerge, stories retold,
Left, left, left, right, left,
Brothers in arms, side by side,
Facing the fear, there's nowhere to hide,
We march together, through the tide,
(Steady) Left, left, left, right, left,
Through the mud and rain, we push on,
Left, left, left, right, left,
The sweat and grit, it's our uniform.

[Siren rings out.]

Sgt. Whitaker:
Go! Go! Go! The enemy is here!

[The choreography collapses into disarray. Movements lose synchronization as chaos takes over. The music shifts abruptly as the scene transitions to the battlefield. Explosions sound, and the stage becomes chaotic with flashing lights and smoke. Soldiers duck for cover, shouting orders, and several fall as if hit by gunfire. Private Shaw hesitates, overwhelmed by the chaos.]

[Soldiers shout over one another as the battle erupts. Overlapping cries: "I'm hit!" "Move!" "Incoming!" "Medic!" Gunfire intensifies. Commands become impossible to distinguish.]

Sgt. Whitaker:
Shaw! Get your ass moving, soldier! Do your goddamn job!

[Sgt. Whitaker is shot mid-command and falls dramatically. The remaining soldiers cry out, but one by one, they are taken down until only Shaw is left standing. The battlefield grows eerily silent except for distant gunfire and Shaw's heavy breathing. As the final soldiers fall, Shaw is left alone. The battlefield noise fades, replaced by his heavy breathing.]

He drops the rifle. Removes his helmet and casts it aside. He sinks to his knees, staring at his trembling hands. Then clutches his head and collapses inward—returning to the same fetal position seen before.]

Transition Back to Present Day: Flashback Ends

[The stage lights dim on the battlefield, and the sounds of war fade. A spotlight rises on Dr. Lumen, still downstage right, observing the scene somberly. The battlefield dissolves quickly. Lights fall. When they rise again, Shaw remains in the same position—only now back in the asylum.]

Dr. Lumen:

And so, here he is. The last man standing. But what does survival mean when your mind is shattered, and the only war left to fight... is in your own head?

[Dr. Lumen closes his notebook, stepping out of the spotlight as it fades to black.]

Scene 4: The Favorites

[The lights return to the asylum as the battlefield fades away. Private Shaw is rocking back and forth in a fetal position. Edward stands near the door, visibly shaken. Cheeky leans against the far wall, trying to appear nonchalant but avoiding eye contact with anyone. The other patients are tense, their movements uneasy.]

[Spirits form a loose half-circle around Shaw as the lights rise from black. They disperse slowly with control as the scene resumes.]

[The door creaks open, and Nurse Eve steps in, her expression kind but fraught with concern.]

[One final whistle blast echoes faintly from the battlefield memory.]

Nurse Eve:

All right, everyone, let's settle down...

[She motions with her hands to settle the room, her voice rising slightly over the echo of approaching footsteps.]

[She's interrupted as Nurse Lilith and Nurse Ivy enter, their heels striking the floor with a sharp, deliberate rhythm. The air in the room shifts immediately. Patients shrink back, and even Eve tenses. Cheeky shifts her posture slightly, folding her arms defensively while keeping her gaze down.]

Nurse Lilith (mocking the room and Eve):

Oh, look at this mess. Honestly, what is this, Eve? A ward or a playground? (turns to Shaw) And look at this one. (laughing with Ivy) What happened, soldier?

Nurse Ivy (to Shaw, sneering):

Back and forth, rocking like an infant. The war's over and you're still hiding? This is what came back?

[The room grows tenser as Private Shaw's rocking becomes more pronounced. He mutters incoherently under his breath, his fingers gripping his knees.]

Nurse Eve (speaking firmly now):

Stop it! He's already been through enough.

[Both nurses pause, their eyes narrowing at Eve. A moment of silence lingers before Lilith smirks and steps closer to her.]

Nurse Lilith:

You've got a lot of nerve, Eve. But don't forget who's really in charge here.

[Ivy smirks, taking in the scene with cold amusement. She glances at Edward, who stands stiffly near the door.]

Nurse Ivy:

And who's this? New blood? (sneering) Let me guess, another broken little thing for you to fawn over, Eve?

Cheeky (half under her breath, with a sly grin):

At least he's easy on the eyes.

[Edward looks over at her, confused, while Cheeky lets the smallest smirk cross her lips before quickly dropping her gaze to avoid Lilith's notice. She shifts her weight, brushing her hair back as though trying to appear indifferent.]

Nurse Lilith (sharply, glaring at Cheeky):

Careful, Cheeky. You wouldn't want to give anyone the wrong impression, would you?

[Cheeky tenses but doesn't respond, pressing herself further into the wall. Lilith turns her attention to Eve, her voice dripping with disdain.]

Nurse Lilith:

And you. Is this how you keep order around here? Letting them rattle the walls and scare each other senseless?

Nurse Ivy (snickering and sarcastic):

No wonder Dr. Grendel keeps you around. Someone's gotta keep the chaos alive for him. (Walks

towards Eve poking at her) You shouldn't even be here.

[Eve doesn't respond, her jaw tightening as she glances at the patients around her, particularly Private Shaw, still rocking on the floor, and Edward, who looks overwhelmed.]

[Ivy's eyes land on Carl, who's clutching his trumpet tightly and muttering to himself.]

Nurse Ivy:

Oh, Carl. (Waves) You haven't even said hello.

[Carl freezes, clutching the trumpet tighter but not looking up. Lilith steps closer, her tone cutting.]

Nurse Lilith:

Dr. Grendel needs to see you. Now.

[Carl flinches but doesn't move. Ivy steps up beside Lilith, crouching slightly to meet his downcast gaze, her voice falsely sweet.]

Nurse Ivy:

You don't want to keep him waiting, do you?

Eve (reluctant to speak up):

I didn't see Carl on the schedule today. We should make sure this is correct.

Lilith (to Ivy, but loud enough for Eve):

Oh, it's correct. Always the favorite, aren't you, Eve? Standing neat and tidy while we do the dirty work.

Ivy (snide):

Don't get too comfortable, dove. The Doctor's pets don't last forever. (pushes Carl) Come on trumpet boy.

[Carl's trembling fingers fumble against the trumpet valves. He raises the instrument slightly as if to play, but no sound comes out. After a shallow breath, he lowers it again, defeated.]

[Reluctantly, Carl stands, trembling. Lilith grabs his arm and starts leading him toward the door. Ivy follows, turning back to Eve with a smirk.]

Nurse Ivy:

And you, Eve—lights out. Get these little misfits to bed. Now.

Nurse Lilith (sternly, with a cold glare):

Or else.

[Lilith and Ivy exit with Carl, slamming the door behind them. The room is left in tense silence. Nurse Eve sighs heavily, then softens her expression as she looks at the remaining patients.]

Nurse Eve (Trying to convince herself):

I've got you, Shaw. (Helping Shaw up and calming the room) You're okay now. All right, everyone. Let's go. Time to get some rest.

[She begins herding the patients toward the exits, herding them gently but firmly. Cheeky lingers for a moment, casting one last glance at Edward, offering a faint smile before following the others. Eve gestures for Edward to follow as well.]

Nurse Eve (quietly, to him):

You'll get through this. You have to... It's the only way.

[As the patients shuffle out, the lights dim. The scene transitions into a full blackout, signaling the end of the scene and the move to the next part of the story.]

[Masked souls enter. Low whispering and synchronized breathing fill the space, deliberate and rhythmic. On the final exhale, all souls quickly vanish offstage.]

Scene 5: Embers

[The room is dimly lit. The sleeping area is filled with rows of simple beds, all pushed together in tight quarters. The beds are unkempt, with some patients curled up, others lying flat. The atmosphere is quieter, with an undercurrent of tension. The patients settle into their sleeping positions. Nurse Eve has handed off the task of settling Edward into his bed to Cheeky, who walks beside him with a slightly teasing, confident air.]

Cheeky (slyly, with a glance):

Sorry about all the drama, I tried to tell ya, you gotta follow the rules.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):

Follow the rules... Follow the rules.

Cheeky:

So, you liking the tour so far? You'll get used to it. Some of these folks might seem... well, eccentric, but they've got stories.

[Edward watches her, still unsure, but intrigued. Cheeky teases him, clearly enjoying the chance to rattle him a little.]

Cheeky (leaning in, lowering her voice):

And don't worry, you'll get the hang of things... some people here, though, they like to touch, if you catch my drift. And that's a no no, like I said before. (Flirty) Especially at night...When the lights are off, and no one can see what happens...

[She gives him a sideways glance, a knowing smirk playing on her lips. Teasing her own body, she leads him further into the room.]

Cheeky (softly):

This is your new spot... lucky you. You'll fit right in.

[They approach Edward's bed when suddenly, Elsie Keating (Patient 76653) stands up from the bed, blocking their way. Her movements are rigid, and her eyes are wary as she sizes up Edward.]

Elsie (voice low, but commanding):

Hold on. I'm gonna need to lay down a few ground rules, you got that?

[She gestures to the bed, where she's been sitting, clearly taking possession of it as hers. Cheeky steps back, observing quietly, but still keeping her playful distance.]

Elsie (gruff, cutting straight to the point):

This is a shared dorm, and things get... complicated. You need to keep your hands (looks him up and down/groin area) to yourself. That goes for me, and especially goes for you. (gesturing towards Cheeky) Goes for everybody. If you can't follow that, we're gonna have problems.

[Edward looks uncertain, trying to respond, but Elsie holds up a hand, silencing him.]

Elsie (sharply):

I don't know you. I don't trust you. End of story. You keep your distance, and maybe we'll get along fine. Bad move earlier in the commons area getting everyone riled up. But you will follow my rules here. Got it?

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):

Follow rules... follow rules... Got it... Got it.

[Edward hesitates for a moment, but nods, sensing the weight in her words. Cheeky watches the interaction, still standing back, but keeping a protective posture.]

Cheeky (softly, teasing):

Don't worry, sweetie. She's just setting you up for the night shift.

[The scene lingers on Cheeky, who's trying to keep her distance from Edward while still wanting to be close, her eyes flickering between him and the others around her. In the background, Private Shaw is huddled in his corner, his hands nervously twitching as the tension mounts.]

Cheeky (soft chuckle, trying to divert the tension):

Don't mind her. She's all bark.

[Suddenly, the lights dim, and Dr. Lumen steps forward, entering from stage right. The stage lights focus on him as he breaks the fourth wall, addressing the audience.]

Flashback: Begins

Dr. Lumen (stern, almost solemn):

This is patient 76653. She is known here as Elsie Keaton. You see, she was once a wife— taken for granted... she endured... until she didn't.

[Dr. Lumen pauses for effect, looking at Elsie in the background, who stands silently at her bed.]

Dr. Lumen:

Her story isn't unique, but hers is defined by that moment of clarity. The moment she stood up and took back control. And with that action, she also lost everything—her life as she knew it, and her freedom, which she now seeks to reclaim in a very different way.

[The lights fade to darkness as the flashback begins. Elsie remains dressed in her patient attire throughout, the memory bleeding into the reality of the asylum.]

[The kitchen is modest, dimly lit. Elsie stands at the stove, preparing food. Harold Keating enters, visibly irritated. He eyes her with disdain, his posture drunken and aggressive.]

Harold Keating (angry, mocking):

No pie, huh? You know apples are my favorite... Look at yourself, piss-poor excuse for a wife. You don't even look good anymore, you've let yourself go. What happened to you? You used to be pretty... used to be something worth looking at.

[He circles her, poking her in the ribs. She flinches, stepping away from him.]

Elsie:

Stop it please...

Harold Keating (voice rising, cruel):

What is this, huh? What are you making? Your cooking's god-awful—it's like you don't even try anymore! I should just throw it all out!

Elsie:

Hey, you're drunk again, go sleep it off...

[He grabs the dish she was preparing, throwing it on the floor, breaking it. Elsie flinches, but doesn't react immediately.]

Harold Keating (snarling):

You're useless. You hear me? Useless!

[He suddenly backhands her, and she stumbles, landing hard against the counter. The force of the hit causes her to gasp for breath. She stands and gets ready to attack him in a defensive stance.]

Harold Keating (laughing menacingly):

You think you can stop me? You think you can hide from what I do to you? I'm gonna kill you this time. There's no coming back from it. No one's gonna help you. Come here you ugly bitch.

[She stares at him, her body shaking with fear, but something inside her begins to stir. As he

approaches again, she looks to the knife block on the counter. Elsie grabs the knife, her hands trembling, but with new resolve.]

Elsie (whispering to herself):
Not today. Not ever again.

[She turns quickly, stabbing Harold, he yells, clutching his side in pain, and stumbles backward.]

Harold Keating (cursing, furious):
You bitch! You crazy bitch!

[He stumbles toward the door, leaving her standing in shock, covered in blood. He runs out the door, clutching his wound, leaving her behind. Elsie collapses to the floor, her emotions a mixture of fear, rage, and empowerment.]

Elsie (softly, to herself):
Finally...

[She stands up slowly, still shaking, and begins to sing.]

4 - SONG: Rising From The Ashes

(The music starts softly, then swells as Elsie begins to sing.)

I used to be silent, kept my pain inside,
Tears hidden behind a forced smile, I tried to abide.
But behind closed doors, the bruises told no lies,
His hands, like chains, he'd ignore my cries.

But I'm finding my voice, rising from the ground,
No longer afraid, to shout out my sound.
I'll break these chains, that bind me tight,
Stand up tall, and finally fight.
His words cut deep, like a sharpened knife,
Stripping me of worth, suffocating my life...
But I've found strength, within my soul,
To reclaim my power, to take back control.

The anger boils, deep inside,
Years of pain, I can no longer hide.
His every blow, I grow stronger still,
Ready to break free, and defy his will.

Now the tables turn, as I stand my ground,
No longer a victim, I refuse to be bound.
With fire in my eyes, and fury in my soul,
I'll rise above, and take back control.

I've found my voice, rising from the ground,
No longer afraid, to scream out my sound.
I've broken these chains, that held me so tight,
I stand victorious, in my fight.
As the night grows older, anger consumes,
Blurring the lines, of where tragedy looms.
I'll find my peace, once the storm subsides,
But for now, I'll revel, in my newfound pride.
I've found my voice, rising from the ground,
No longer afraid, to let them hear my sound.
I've broken these chains, that bind me tight,
I'm standing up tall, prepared to do what's right.

[The song ends on a high note, with Elsie standing strong, breathing heavily but full of resolve. She looks down at her hands, then at the door her Harold ran out of.]

[Dr. Lumen steps back into the light, his voice solemn. The lighting returns to normal.]

Dr. Lumen (softly):

The Battered Woman, Elsie Keaton—patient 76653—found her strength in the darkest of moments. She fought back. In this place... we see all kinds of people... each scarred... each broken... but some rise above. Some may even find their soul.

[Dr. Lumen pauses for a beat, watching Elsie as she stands silently, looking at the floor. The lights slowly fade to black.]

Transition Back to Present Day: Flashback Ends

[The stage transitions into a dimly lit sleeping area, filled with rows of simple, tightly packed beds. Elsie remains staring at the floor until Edward breaks the silence, trying to reach out to her. Elsie puts her hand out, stopping him.]

Edward (vaguely understanding):

Are you alright...

Elsie (Breathing hard, slapping his extended hand away):

Did you hear what I said? I don't want any funny business. Keep your hands to yourself. Don't touch me or my things. And don't let me hear you while I'm trying to sleep.

Cheeky (flirtatiously):

Well, maybe not keeping your hands to yourself wouldn't be so bad...

[She gives Edward a sly grin, but he barely notices, focused on Elsie's words. Elsie glares at Cheeky.]

Elsie:

You're not helping.

[Edward finally speaks up, frustrated.]

Edward (sincerely, shaken):

Listen, I shouldn't be here. I don't belong in this place. (Shakes head) None of this makes sense. (Deep breath) Has anyone ever... gotten out of here?

[The question hangs in the air. A moment passes before Cheeky leans in, her voice dropping to a whisper.]

Cheeky (softly):

Well... we've talked about it. Maybe...

[Private Shaw, sitting nearby, perks up and quickly moves over to the group.]

Private Shaw (whispering, urgent):

Cheeky! What are you doing? You can't bring him in on this!

Cheeky (playfully):

Relax, Shaw. He's one of us now.

Private Shaw:

No. You don't know him. You can't just trust someone new!

[The group starts bickering in hushed tones, with Elsie watching silently. As tensions rise, a voice comes from the far corner of the room.]

Nora (calmly, almost coldly):

It's not going to work.

[The group freezes, turning toward the shadowy figure of Nora, sitting on a bed in the corner. She steps forward slightly, but stays at a distance.]

Nora:

Nobody ever gets out of here.

[One spirit slowly appears far upstage behind Nora, motionless in shadow.]

Nora (slight hesitation):

You're just going to get yourselves caught—and when that happens, you'll make it worse for all of us.

[Edward is immediately captivated by her, his eyes following her every move. She remains distant, her tone flat and detached.]

Edward (softly as if familiar, taking one step toward her):

You... Who are you?

Nora (ignoring him):

Every time someone tries to leave, they fail. Every time, we all pay the price. Stop trying to fight it. (almost to herself) I have.

[The spirit slowly drifts backward into the shadows.]

[The group exchanges uneasy glances. Cheeky frowns, trying to lighten the mood.]

Cheeky:

Well, aren't you just a ray of sunshine?

Nora (steadily):

I've seen what happens. You'd be better off if you listened.

[Edward steps toward her slightly, his curiosity overwhelming him.]

Edward (earnestly):

How do you know? How can you be so sure?

[Before she can answer, a loud pound on the wall interrupts the moment. The voice of Orderly Walter calls out.]

Orderly Walter:

Lights out now! Everyone calm down and get to your beds!

[The group starts to disperse reluctantly. Cheeky stays near Edward, leaning in one last time before leaving.]

Cheeky (low, flirtatious):

My bed's always open if you change your mind, sugar.

[She winks and moves toward her area. Nora lingers for a moment, looking at Edward with a mix of pity and warning before retreating to her corner.]

[Orderly Walter pounds again, louder this time.]

Orderly Walter:

Lights out!

[The room darkens as everyone climbs into their beds. Edward remains standing, deep in thought, gazing toward where Nora disappeared. Slowly, he moves toward the edge of the stage, stepping into the shadows and climbs into his bed.]

Scene 6: Daily Bread

[Masked souls carrying lights move in a slow, deliberate pattern through the darkness,

occasionally flashing the audience in a particular order... as if observing them.]

[The dormitory fades into darkness as the patients settle into bed. Bright lights flash twice as if someone is checking pupils, an eerie and disjointed flicker hinting at a deeper mystery. The stage transitions to the cafeteria where the morning routine begins. Whispering and murmuring of the spirits gets louder and nightmarishly eerie. Then, abruptly stops.]

Lilith (rudely, from offstage):

Up and at 'em, you lunatics! Time to join the land of the living!

Ivy (mocking):

Or, well, as close to living as you lot get. Let's go! Let's go, you pathetic things, food and meds won't wait!

[The patients shuffle into the cafeteria, groggy and disoriented. Eve enters behind them, attempting to soften the harshness.]

Eve:

Good morning, everyone. Let's get in line, all right? Food and pills are ready for you.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):

Pills... Still... Still... Pills...

[The cafeteria setup comes into view. Two distinct lines form: one for food, where Lilith slops unappealing meals onto trays, and another for pills, where Ivy stands with a tray of water and pills. Patients shuffle in reluctantly, heads down. The atmosphere feels stifling as the musical number begins.]

5 - SONG: Medication Edification

Chorus 1 (Patients):

Time to take your pills, pills, pills, pills, pills, pills,

So you don't get the chills, ills, shrills, spills, swills, thrills.

Time to take your pills, pills, pills, pills, pills, pills,

So you don't get the chills, ills, shrills, spills, swills, thrills.

[Far upstage, three to five spirits move in slow synchronization, faintly reflecting the motions of the patients beneath them.]

One at a time in a single file line

Bridge (Nurses/Orderlies alternate):

Nurses:

In the quiet of the ward, where shadows softly prey,

Orderlies:

Pills are passed to you like whispers, to help you drift away.

Nurses:

With tender care and kindness, we bring them to your hand,

Orderlies:

To soothe away the worry, to help you understand.

Chorus 2 (All):

So here's to brighter tomorrows, where love and comfort heals,
In the melody of feelings, with the swallowing of pills.

You just had your pills, pills, pills, pills, pills, pills,
So you won't get the chills, ills, shrills, spills, swills, thrills.

[Lilith suddenly SLAMS a tray against the serving table with a deafening crack.]

Lilith (roaring):

I don't... Want to hear... A peep... Out of any of you.

Ivy (determined, a little faster than Lilith's delivery):

Yeah, keep ya crazy... Mouths shut... Or else.

Eve (lightly, to Lilith and Ivy):

Okay, I think they've got it. Please just let them enjoy some calm this morning.

[Ivy and Lilith give Eve a death stare. Eve covers a bit and tries to usher the patients to sit and relax. All the nurses and orderlies end up leaving or just overseeing the area while breakfast continues.]

[After the song, Edward tries to position himself closer to Nora in line, but Cheeky slides in between them, smiling coyly.]

Cheeky (hedonistic, to Edward):

Careful, sugar. Some pills (head nodding toward Nora) taste bitter. You might need me to sweeten things up.

[Edward barely acknowledges her, keeping his focus on Nora, who is entirely detached from the scene and retreats to sit alone after receiving her food and pills.]

[Edward, Cheeky, Elsie, and Private Shaw sit at one table. Their voices drop to hushed whispers as the cafeteria hums with low chatter.]

Cheeky (holding up a wobbly spoonful, teasing):

It wiggles when I breathe on it...

[She leans closer to Edward, eyes glittering, voice dropping into innuendo.]

Cheeky:

Wonder if it'll wiggle when I put it in my mouth.

[She flicks him a look that's almost flirtatious. Shaw, dry and authoritative, cuts her off.]

Shaw:
Stand down, Cheeky.

Edward (leaning in):
Has anyone ever gotten out of here? I mean, really out?

Cheeky (smirking):
We might have a little something planned, don't we?

Private Shaw (quickly, cutting in):
Cheeky, stop.

Elsie (flatly):
If you're asking me, no. Nobody gets out. At least, not in their right mind.

Edward (leaning forward, begging):
I need to get out. I don't belong here.

Cheeky (grinning):
Well, sugar, stick with me. I might have a few tricks up my sleeve.

Private Shaw (urgently, giving in):
Fine... all right, (beat) he's in. (Looks around and leans in) If we're doing this, we stick to the plan. No improvising. (beat) Tonight's the night.

[As they whisper, Nora approaches, clearly overhearing.]

Nora (serious):
It's not going to work. It never works. All you're doing is making it worse.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):
Making it worse... Worse.

[The group reacts, tense but undeterred. The lights dim slightly as a loud knock interrupts the moment. Lilith and Ivy enter abruptly, standing at the door with the foreboding presence of authority.]

Lilith:
Boys and girls, Dr. Grendel needs to see someone. Now.

[The room falls silent. Dr. Lumen enters as Lilith and Ivy walk toward Suzy, grab her roughly, and start to lead her out.]

Suzy Circles (panicked):
No! Not me! Not me!

[An uproar begins as the patients protest. Dr. Lumen, in psychologist mode, steps forward.]

Dr. Lumen (to Eve):

Was that on today's schedule? I didn't see anything about this.

Eve (looking worried):

I... I wasn't informed. Lilith? Ivy? What's going on?

Lilith (grinning):

Doctor's orders.

Ivy (Having fun):

If you got a problem with it, take it up with him!

[They disappear with the patient, leaving the cafeteria heavy with tension. Dr. Lumen shakes his head, muttering.]

Dr. Lumen (to Eve):

I need to look into this. Something isn't right. (before exiting) Take care of them, Eve.

[As the commotion dies down, Nora approaches the group again.]

Nora (quietly):

Please. Don't do this. You'll only make things worse—for everyone.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):

Make things worse... Things worse.

Private Shaw (steely):

We've got no other choice.

Elsie (flatly):

If we don't try, we rot here forever.

Nora (pleading):

You don't understand. The last time someone tried, it was chaos. Darkness. I can't—

[Before more can be said, Lilith and Ivy return.]

Ivy (almost chipper):

Time's up, darlings. Hope you enjoyed your slop. Dr. Grendel wants to meet the new guy. (Fake cheer) Oh, and don't forget—it's game night! Clean up. Look your best. You're in for a real treat.

Lilith (Unhinged):

Everyone move! Now!! I said, move it! Move it...

[The group exchanges uneasy looks. As the patients are herded toward the exit, they huddle briefly.]

Private Shaw (whispering):
Tonight. No matter what.

Nora (bitterly):
You'll regret this.

[The stage fades to blackout as the cafeteria transitions back to the commons. The tension simmers, setting the stage for the next explosive encounter.]

[Masked souls appear and a faint heartbeat can be heard beating quickly. The whispering builds to a quiet chant that can't quite be made out. The heartbeat gradually slows... but never fully stops.]

Scene 7: House Rules

[The lights fade up slowly on the commons area, where the patients are scattered. In the center, a board game has been set up. Edward, Cheeky, Elsie, Private Shaw, and Nora sit around it. Others linger in the background, muttering or fidgeting. The atmosphere is tense, even as the group attempts to appear casual.]

Cheeky (playfully, reaching for a piece):
Hey—why do you get to be red again? I was red last time.

Elsie (not looking up, firm):
No, you weren't. And you know that one's mine.

Cheeky (mock offense):
Oh, I know it's yours. Everything's yours, Elsie.

Elsie (final, placing the piece deliberately):
Not everything. Just this.

[Cheeky rolls her eyes, grabbing another piece with exaggerated annoyance.]

Cheeky:
Fine. I'll be green again. Hate green.

Private Shaw (calm, without looking up):
Color doesn't matter.

[He adjusts a piece with precise placement.]

Private Shaw:
It's how you position them. How you move. That's what keeps you alive.

Cheeky (smiling sideways at him):

Alive, huh?

[She leans in slightly, lowering her voice just enough.]

Cheeky:

Well... if we're escaping through tunnels, maybe I'll dig my own shortcut... (beat, teasing)
leave the rest of you lost in the dark.

Private Shaw (firmly):

Stick to the plan, Cheeky. We do this together, or not at all.

Elsie (flatly, crossing her arms):

He's right. Half-baked schemes are what get people hurt. If you're not serious about this—

Nora (interjecting softly, though her voice shakes):

We're all serious. But it's still madness. What if you fail? What if you're all caught?

Cheeky (smiling, with a shrug):

Then we'll go back to playing games and taking pills. You know, the usual. We've played this game before, haven't we?

Elsie (sharply):

It's not funny.

Edward (absently fumbling with the game pieces, knocking several over):

Sorry. I wasn't trying to—oops.

[Edward reaches to move his piece, but fumbles, knocking it sideways. He ducks under the table to retrieve it, only to bang his head hard on the edge as he comes up.]

Edward (wincing, rubbing his head):

...well, that's one way to lose a turn.

[Nora bursts out laughing — sudden, unrestrained, surprising even to herself.

The others look over. Edward grins sheepishly, rubbing his head harder.]

[The group collectively stares at Edward. Nora lets out an unexpected laugh. The others are stunned into silence at her sudden break from her usual demeanor.]

Nora (smiling, almost despite herself):

It's not your clumsiness. It's just...

[She trails off, shaking her head. Edward seizes the moment.]

Edward (softly):

You should laugh more. Suits you better than all that brooding.

Nora (returning to her guarded self):
Don't get used to it.

Edward (studying her carefully):
You know, I can't shake the feeling that I've seen you before.

Nora (pulling back, defensive):
What are you talking about?

Edward (earnestly):
I don't know. It's like you're familiar to me, but I can't place why.

Nora:
There's no way you know me. (touches her locket) I've been stuck in here longer than...than I can remember.

Edward (pausing, his voice distant):
That's just it. I don't even remember how I got here, or why. It's all shadows, like someone wiped my mind clean.

[The group exchanges uneasy glances as Edward's voice grows more impassioned.]

Edward:
I feel like I've forgotten something important. (beat, searching) Maybe... there's something out there waiting for me. (he falters slightly) Or maybe I just... think there is. (quiet, frustrated) I can't quite put my finger on it. (he shakes his head) It's like something's missing... (softer) Or I am. Like... I left someone. (beat) And if I stay here... I think I'll lose it completely.

[Nora softens visibly, though her expression is still conflicted. She speaks quietly.]

Nora:
And if you're wrong? (embracing her locket) What if there's nothing left out there for you?

Edward (steadfast):
Then I'll figure that out when I'm free. But staying here? That's a cage I can't live in.

[The group sits in heavy silence, the weight of his words settling. Cheeky clears her throat, trying to lighten the mood.]

Cheeky:
Well, on that cheerful note... how about we get back to the game before someone suspects we're plotting?

[The group chuckles faintly, but the tension lingers. At that moment, Lilith, Ivy, and Eve enter the room. Eve hangs back, hesitant, while Lilith and Ivy stride in confidently.]

Lilith (mockingly cheerful):

Well, aren't you all having a cozy little gathering? Don't let us interrupt.

Ivy (grinning):

Though, we do have some important news to share.

Eve (muttering, reluctantly):

I'm not sure now's the time—

Lilith (cutting her off):

Of course, it's the time. Don't be such a coward, Eve.

Ivy (teasing):

Oh, don't tell me you're too good to introduce the Doctor. You still have a voice, don't you?

Eve (defensively):

That was before—

Lilith (smiling coldly):

Before you made a mistake you couldn't take back? Right. Then let's not forget who keeps that little secret of yours safe.

Ivy (fixing Eve's cap, mock sweet):

Straighten up. Wouldn't want the Doctor to see his star pupil looking sloppy.

Lilith (dry, with a smirk):

Still playing his cozy little lap dog. Shame brilliance doesn't rub off just by standing close.

[As the number begins, Lilith and Ivy snap into a bright, rehearsed routine, all smiles and sharp precision. Eve is pulled into the formation reluctantly, forced to match their cheerfulness as the patients watch in uneasy silence.]

[Eve looks away, defeated. Lilith and Ivy exchange a triumphant glance before stepping forward.]

6 - SONG: The Doctor Is In

Ivy, Lilith, and Eve (ominously, reluctantly at first for Eve):

Lilith and Ivy- There's a doctor in town, with a sinister smile,

He loves his work, and it's been a while.

His patients come in, but they never leave,

In his twisted mind, that's how he achieves.

Ivy- Oh, he's got a scalpel Lilith- and a wicked grin,

Ivy- He'll poke and prod, Lilith- it's such a sin.

Ivy- He loves to torture, Lilith- it's his favorite game, Lilith and Ivy- In his operating room,
you're never the same.

Ivy- He'll tie you down, with straps so tight,
Then he'll whisper softly, Lilith- "It'll be alright."
Ivy- But his tools are sharp, and his mind is dark, In his laboratory, he's gonna leave his mark.
Lilith- Ouch

(Chorus)

Lilith- Oh, he's got a scalpel Ivy- and a wicked grin,
Lilith- He'll poke and prod, Ivy- it's such a sin.
Lilith- He loves to torture, Ivy- it's his favorite game, Lilith and Ivy- In his operating room,
you're never the same

Lilith- Some say he's mad, some say he's cruel, Ivy- Cruel?
Lilith- But to him, it's all just part of the duel.
He'll shock and stab, with a gleam in his eye, Ivy- Awww Lilith- In his laboratory, where dreams
go to die.

Lilith and Ivy- So if you ever find yourself in his care,
Beware his laughter, beware his stare.
For once he's got you, there's no turning back, In his house of horrors, there's only black.

(16 Measure dance break, Eve gets bullied into it)

Eve- He'll tie you down, with straps so tight,
Then he'll whisper softly, Ivy- "It'll be alright."
Eve- But his tools are sharp, and his mind is dark, In his laboratory, he's gonna leave his mark.
Lilith- Ouch

All 3-(Harmony) So if you ever find yourself in his care,
Beware his laughter, beware his stare.
For once he's got you, there's no turning back, In his house of horrors, there's only black.

All 3- (Harmony)Oh, he's got a scalpel and a wicked grin,
He'll poke and prod, it's such a sin.
He loves to torture, it's his favorite game, In his operating room, you're never the same.

(2 measure tag ending)

[The nurses finish their song, the last sinister note echoing through the commons area. The lights dim. A shadow appears beyond the heavy double doors before they creak open, revealing Dr. Grendel. He steps into the room dressed in immaculate black, his face partially obscured by darkness, his movement deliberate and predatory. His presence is overwhelming, almost supernatural. The room falls silent.]

Dr. Grendel (smoothly, with an unsettling calm):
Ah, my dear patients. How fortunate we are to gather like this.

[He slowly paces the room, hands clasped behind his back, his sharp gaze dissecting each person

he passes.]

Dr. Grendel (speaking as if delivering a sermon):
I know it is difficult here. The days are long. The nights, longer still. But there is a purpose, my friends—a purpose to this... inconvenience.

[He pauses dramatically, turning to face the group.]

Dr. Grendel:
Sickness is a stain. A blight. And blight... must be removed. For you to leave this place of care, you must be cleaned. Completely, immaculately, purged of filth.

[He gestures to the room, a wide, sweeping motion.]

Dr. Grendel:
And so, I ask only for your patience and your trust. I will rid you of your impurities. I will make you whole. Otherwise, you shall not leave this asylum.

[As he speaks, Dr. Lumen, in psychiatrist mode, enters quietly from the back of the room, observing the scene. Dr. Grendel turns his attention to Edward, his expression calculating.]

Dr. Grendel (smiling):
Ah, I see we have a new patient among us.

[Edward stiffens but says nothing. Dr. Grendel circles him slowly.]

Dr. Grendel (softly, almost menacingly):
Listen carefully to the rules, and you might just find this place... tolerable.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):
Rules... Listen to the rules.

[His gaze shifts to the nurses. His tone changes, almost fond.]

Dr. Grendel:
Nurse Eve. My bright star in this otherwise dim sky.

[Nurse Eve forces a small smile, visibly uncomfortable. Nurse Lilith and Nurse Ivy exchange sour glances, their jealousy clear. Dr. Grendel dismisses them with a flick of his hand.]

Dr. Grendel (to Eve):
You've always understood the importance of order. I only wish your peers shared your diligence.

[Lilith and Ivy bristle but remain silent. Turning his attention back to the patients, Dr. Grendel snaps his fingers sharply.]

Dr. Grendel:

I believe it's time for one of you to assist me.

[He approaches a random patient, a frail figure trembling in their seat. Dr. Lumen steps forward immediately, his voice calm but firm.]

Dr. Lumen:

Dr. Grendel, I don't recall this patient being on today's schedule.

[Dr. Grendel halts, his expression darkening. Slowly, he turns to face Dr. Lumen.]

Dr. Grendel (coldly):

Do remind me, Dr. Lumen... who is in charge here?

[Dr. Lumen doesn't flinch but gestures pointedly toward the patient.]

Dr. Lumen:

In charge or not, there's protocol. The last few patients you've taken weren't on the schedule either, and we haven't seen them since. Where are they, Dr. Grendel?

[Dr. Grendel's demeanor shifts, his voice dropping to an icy whisper.]

Dr. Grendel:

Know your position, Dr. Lumen. This is neither the time nor the place for such questions.

[Grendel notices Dr. Lumen's name tag is pinned sideways. He instinctively reaches to fix it, but his hand trembles violently. He freezes, ashamed, then lowers his hand quickly. His jaw tightens.]

Dr. Grendel (firmly after staring at his hands, he sharply stares at Lumen's name tag):

Do fix yourself, doctor. Disorder is the enemy of progress.

[The room is deathly silent as Dr. Lumen straightens his posture and name tag, holding Dr. Grendel's gaze.]

Dr. Grendel (Pointing to a patient):

Ivy, Lilith, make yourselves useful. Clean this one up and (walking out) bring them to me.

Dr. Lumen (flatly):

We all answer to someone, Dr. Grendel.

Dr. Grendel (smirking and stops for a moment):

Do we?

[He spins on his heel, his black coat billowing dramatically, and begins to exit. The nurses fall in line behind him, with Lilith and Ivy sneering at Eve. Eve hesitates, looking back toward the patients, but follows reluctantly. Dr. Lumen remains, watching as the doors swing shut behind the group.]

Dr. Lumen (softly, almost to himself):
I'll get to the bottom of this.

[Dr. Lumen turns back toward the group and speaks with quiet assurance.]

Dr. Lumen:
Stay calm. I'll make sure everyone in this...asylum... is safe.

[Dr. Lumen exits, leaving the group alone. All the extra orderlies and nurses are not in sight either. For a moment, the patients sit in tense silence before Private Shaw rises, his voice low but commanding.]

Private Shaw:
This is it. They're all gone. Everyone meet at the basement entrance at zero one hundred. Come separately, don't cause any suspicion.

[The group quickly scatters, their movements deliberate but quiet.]

[The last to leave is Edward. He looks back and notices Nora hasn't moved. She's sitting alone, quietly turning a small locket in her hands. It's open just enough to reveal a faded photo—two figures. One is clearly her. The other is blurred, the image worn thin with time.]

Edward:
Mind if I sit?

Nora:
Suit yourself. (tucking the locket) It's not like I own the floor.

Edward (smiling):
Yeah, but I've learned the hard way—territory matters around here.

Nora (not looking at him):
Smart man.

Edward (grinning):
That almost sounded like a compliment.

Nora (glancing at him, faintest smirk):
Don't get used to it.

Edward:
I won't. But... It's nice. Seeing you like this. A little less guarded.

Nora (untucks the locket, voice quieter):
This place takes pieces of you—memories, names, faces. (taps the locket) It's the one thing I still have that feels like mine. I should get going.

Edward (gently):

I guess we all hold on to something... even when we're not sure why.

[A quiet pause. Nora closes the locket slowly, almost reverently. As she stands to leave, Edward adds—barely above a whisper as she crosses in front of him.]

Edward:

Even in the dark, I still see you there.

[Nora stops for a second, eyes flicking back toward him—but says nothing. She turns and walks off. Just before disappearing down the hall, she glances back—just once—as if some part of her wants to stay.]

[Edward disappears down the hall. The lights dim slowly as the distant sound of footsteps echoes through the asylum.]

Scene 8: The Appointment

Dr. Lumen (to audience, measured):

You're wondering how a man like that comes to hold power... (beat) He didn't fight for it.

Flashback: Begins

[Lights shift. A harsh fluorescent glow reveals a long table. Shadowed figures sit, backs partially turned. Clipboards. Still. Clinical.]

Dr. Lumen:

He was... appointed.

[Dr. Grendel steps into the light. His hand trembles slightly.]

Board Member 1:

This facility is failing.

Board Member 2:

Patients are worsening. Staff turnover is unacceptable.

Board Member 3:

And with the unexpected passing of Dr. Cartwright... (beat) We find ourselves in a difficult position.

Board Member 1:

We need results.

Board Member 3:

Dr. Grendel... your methods are... unconventional.

Dr. Grendel (calm, precise):

Disorder... spreads. (beat) And you've allowed it to fester.

Board Member 2:
Careful, Doctor.

Dr. Grendel:
No. Careful is what got you here. (beat) You don't need compassion. You need precision.

Board Member 3:
And what would you do differently?

Dr. Grendel:
Remove the sickness. (beat) Completely. (softly) And what remains... is perfection.

Board Member 1:
You're asking for full authority.

Dr. Grendel (confident):
I'm telling you... it's the only way.

Board Member 2:
If we grant this...

Board Member 3:
There will be no oversight.

Board Member 1:
No interference. (beat) This asylum becomes yours. (beat)

Dr. Grendel (quietly):
Then I will fix it.

Transition Back to Present Day: Flashback Ends

[The fluorescent lights hum loudly. One by one, the board members fade back into shadow until only Dr. Grendel remains. He stands motionless for a moment as the lights begin to flicker.]

[Blackout.]

[The sound of dripping water echoes through the darkness. Distant footsteps. The scrape of metal. Somewhere far below, something creaks.]

Scene 9: Flickers in the Dark

[The scene opens in the damp, dark tunnels beneath the asylum. The light from Shaw's lantern barely cuts through the oppressive gloom. The group is huddled together. Only Edward, Nora, and Private Shaw are present, speaking in hushed tones as they creep forward.]

[Three hooded spirits stand far upstage, spread across the darkness and barely visible. They are never acknowledged directly, but their presence gives the uneasy impression that the darkness is alive and watching.]

[Edward and Nora are the first to arrive. Private Shaw tells them to wait for the others while he scouts farther down the corridor to make sure the path is clear.]

Private Shaw:

Hey, the other two aren't here yet. I'm going to scout the forward area, wait here for the others and keep your volume to a minimum. Watch your six... your back.

[As Shaw leaves, Edward and Nora are left with a lantern, huddled in close proximity.]

Edward:

The others should be here. I hope everything is all right.

[Nora clutches her locket, takes a deep breath, and exhales as if submitting to the moment. Edward notices her demeanor and tries to ease the tension.]

Edward:

Funny how quiet it gets... for a place full of screaming.

Nora (softly):

It almost feels like we're not in it anymore. Like we already made it out.

Edward (watching her):

Almost.

[A pause. Nora shifts slightly, the chain of her locket catching the low light.]

Edward (gently):

That locket... you always seem to be holding it when the world goes quiet.

Nora (nods, doesn't look at him):

It's the only part of me they couldn't take.

Edward:

Have you remembered who the other person is?

Nora (quiet, but honest):

No. But I think... maybe I don't need to. (turns to him) Sometimes it's enough just to feel like someone mattered.

Edward (beat):

You matter.

[Their eyes meet. It's not a declaration—it's quiet, real, and earned. Nora doesn't answer, but she doesn't look away. A breath passes between them. Not quite a kiss, but a closeness—leaning in just enough to be felt.]

[They both turn slightly at the sound of footsteps echoing from the tunnel ahead. The moment breaks, but something has shifted.]

[Shaw returns, followed closely by Cheeky and Elsie.]

Cheeky:

We made it. It sure is dark down here.

Shaw (reporting, crisp):

Perimeter clear. Just shadows and silence. Reporting in.

Elsie (uneasy):

Are you sure?

[Shaw glances left, then right, then suddenly lunges forward as if startling an invisible foe, his own bone-dry attempt at humor.]

Shaw:

If there's an ambush waiting... (throws a sharp, exaggerated military-style kick) it's patient.

Elsie (half-smirk shaking her head):

All right, hero. Save the jokes for later. We better hurry. The doctor started making his rounds. We gave them the slip, but there's no telling how soon someone is going to notice we're gone.

Private Shaw (whispering):

Keep close. No sudden moves. These tunnels aren't the safest, but they're our only way out. The shadows move even when we don't.

Cheeky (quietly, teasing):

"Way out." I've been stuck in this place so long, (looking around) It's so dark down here... I'm not sure I'd know the way back.

Elsie (softly):

Time doesn't mean much in a place like this. Feels like I've been here forever.

Nora (looking ahead, voice distant):

Forever's a long time. But I've been here for as long as I can remember.

[The group falls silent for a beat, her words sinking in.]

Shaw (softly, to the group):

We're almost at the end. I'll peek out, check the guard's rotation. Wait here.

[He steps forward cautiously, the dim light flickering on the walls as he vanishes around a corner. The others huddle closer together, their voices low and personal.]

Shaw (returning after a moment):

Guard's got a five-minute rotation. We've gotta sit tight for now.

[They settle in, speaking quietly, the tension momentarily giving way to reflection.]

Private Shaw (softly):

When we get out... I'll find my brothers. What's left of my Company. God, I hope they're okay. They need to know I didn't give up. I fought for them. For us.

Elsie (looking down):

I'm tired of sickness. Tired of the bruises, the fear. When I'm out, I'll fight back. For the women who can't. For the ones still stuck in the dark.

Cheeky (smiling faintly):

Always loved too much, I guess. Everyone I meet, I feel... something. Maybe, just maybe, someone out there will give me another chance.

Nora (softly):

For some reason... I feel it. Hope. We might actually make it. And if we do... —maybe something might come of it. Thank you all for pushing me. (She glances at Edward) Edward... you said I felt familiar before... it's strange... but I... I feel it too.

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):

Hope... Hope... Hope

[As the moment shifts toward the song, the spirits slowly recede into the darkness and disappear.]

[She looks at him, and he hesitates before responding.]

Edward (haunted):

I don't know if that's a good thing. I keep feeling like I did something... wrong. And I don't even remember how. But I need to find out what it was... what it is. I need to make it right. I just... I need to get out of here first.

[The group settles into a fragile stillness. What begins as individual confession slowly builds into shared resolve.]

7 - Song: Glimmer Of Hope

Edward:

Lost in the shadows, I walk alone,
Haunted by memories, my heart's turned to stone.
Battles within, I fight the pain,
Searching for meaning, but it's all in vain.

Private Shaw:

I hear echoes of battle, brothers who've gone,
The weight of their absence still pushes me on.
For country, for honor, I've paid my dues,
But in this dark prison, I've nothing to lose.

Edward and Private Shaw:

All roads lead to nowhere, I'm drowning in despair,
But still, I hold on to a flicker of a prayer.
Betrayed by his love, torn apart at the seams,
Yet in the darkest night, I still have dreams.

Edward:

She was the light, my guiding star,
But left me broken, with wounds that scar.
Promises shattered, truth to unfold,
In the ruins of love, I'm still left in the cold.

Elsie:

I once knew a kindness, a love that was pure,
But fists and cruel words taught me how to endure.
Now I dream of a future, where strength will arise,
Where women like me will no longer hide.

Edward and Elsie:

All roads lead to nowhere, I'm drowning in despair,
But still, I hold on to a flicker of a prayer.
Betrayed by her love, torn apart at the seams,
Yet in the darkest night, I still have dreams.

Cheeky:

I've always believed love could heal the soul,
But my heart's been shaken, it's taken its toll.
Still, I feel there's a chance, a spark to ignite,
A love that will guide me back to the light.

Edward and Cheeky:

All roads lead to nowhere, I'm drowning in despair,
But still, I hold on to a flicker of a prayer.
Betrayed by all love, torn apart at the seams,
Yet in the darkest night, I still have dreams.

Nora:

This place tried to break me, steal my name,
But through every trial, I've stayed the same.
I've dreamed of a freedom, a life that is mine,
And now I see hope—it's starting to shine.
I won't let this prison define who I'll be,
There's a world out there waiting for me.

[CHEEKY/ELSIE in tandem]

CHEEKY in tandem:

I once believed I was too far gone,
But laughter and love can carry you on.

ELSIE in tandem:

They called me weak, said I wouldn't last—
But I've outlived every voice from my past.

[SHAW/EDWARD in tandem]

SHAW in tandem:

And honor's not just medals or war—
It's who you protect when you can't fight anymore.

EDWARD in tandem:

I've stumbled through silence, through pride and through fear,
Too lost in the noise to see what was clear.

ALL (entering in soft harmony, building):

We are more than the bruises, more than the pain,

We are voices unbroken, rising again.

With each heavy step, we carve a way—

This is not the end. We will not fade.

(Full harmony now. Nora holds center.)

ALL (final line, strong and unified):

Not just survival, but something more.

A life that begins, beyond this door

We are the light. We are the spark.

We are the fire that outlives the dark.

We are the light. We are the spark.

We are the fire that outlives the dark.

[The group is silent, their dreams briefly uniting them in their shared desperation. Suddenly, Shaw stands.]

Shaw (urgently):

It's time. Let's go.

[They move cautiously, tension rising as the dim light fades. The sound of barking dogs and faint voices grows louder as they reach the surface. Chaos erupts—flashing lights, shouting, and the sound of running feet fill the stage as the group scatters. The lights cut to black with a harsh snap.]

Scene 10: Deliberately Disobeyed

[The stage lights come up, revealing the group lined up with their hands tied. Dr. Grendel, flanked by Nurse Lilith and Nurse Ivy, paces behind them, his face twisted in fury. He speaks with cold, calculated menace.]

Dr. Grendel (quietly, building in intensity):

I asked you to trust me. To be patient. And yet, you defied me. You wanted to spread your sickness—your infection—beyond these walls.

[He stops, glaring at the group.]

Dr. Grendel:

I will not allow it. You risk contaminating everything I've cleansed. Why couldn't you stay under my care?

[He resumes pacing, his voice growing more venomous.]

Dr. Grendel:

There will be hell to pay. You will be disinfected. Run if you like—no one escapes this asylum.

[He stops behind Edward, placing a heavy hand on his shoulder.]

Dr. Grendel (to Edward):

Come with me.

[As he begins to pull Edward forward, Cheeky suddenly steps out of line, defiance blazing as she tries to protect him.]

Cheeky (spitting in his face):

Leave him alone. You don't own us, you bastard.

[Dr. Grendel recoils, his face twisting in rage. He grabs Cheeky roughly, shaking her.]

Dr. Grendel (furious):

You little harlot. You think you're brave? You think you're clever? Fine. It's about time you get what's coming to you.

[He shoves Edward back into line and drags Cheeky away. Turning to Lilith and Ivy, he barks orders.]

Dr. Grendel:

Take the rest to solitary. Lock them away for now. They will all need to be sanitized properly.

Spirits (Echoing sharply with anguish):

No one escapes. NO ONE ESCAPES!

[The nurses forcefully herd the remaining group offstage as Cheeky is dragged in the opposite direction, struggling against Dr. Grendel's grip. The stage fades to black as the sound of slamming doors echoes, leaving the audience in chilling silence.]

[Blackout.]

End of Act 1

Act 2

Scene 1: The Grip Tightens
(Overall Scene 11)

[The stage is dark as haunting ambient music plays. The sound of whispers and faint cries echo in the background. The spirits from Act 1, robed in gray with obscured faces, slowly emerge onto the stage. Their movements are sharp and mechanical, like marionettes. The music builds into a fast-paced rhythm as the spirits begin to sing.]

Song: The Asylum's Embrace

[The spirits sing, their voices overlapping in eerie harmony. Voices do not move in unison—some lag, some echo, some arrive too early. The lights flicker, casting distorted shadows across the stage.]

8 - SONG: Asylum's Embrace

Verse 1:

In the depths of despair, where shadows reign,
There's a place of torment, driving you insane.
With every step you take, it tightens its hold,
in the asylum's grip, your soul's story unfolds.

Chorus:

Slowly, oh so slowly, it devours your soul, In the asylum's grasp, you're losing control.
Whispers in the darkness, they echo your name, In this labyrinth of madness, you're never the same.

Verse 2:

Each passing day, the walls close in tight,
Fragments of your sanity, consumed by the night.
The flickering lights cast eerie shadows on the floor,
in this twisted realm, you can't take anymore.

Chorus:

Slowly, oh so slowly, it devours your soul,
In the asylum's grasp, you're losing control.
Whispers in the darkness, they echo your name,
In this labyrinth of madness, you're never the same.

Bridge:

Haunted by memories, you can't escape,
Trapped in this, this nightmare, your mind begins to break.
The voices grow louder, as darkness takes hold,
In the asylum's embrace, your story unfolds.

Chorus:

Slowly, oh so slowly, it devours your soul,
In the asylum's grasp, you're losing control.
Whispers in the darkness, they echo your name,
In this labyrinth of madness, you're never the same.

Outro:

In the asylum's silence, your spirit fades away,
Lost in the darkness, forever to stay.
For those who enter, beware of the toll,
In the asylum's clutches, it devours your soul.

[As the song progresses, the spirits move closer to the edge of the stage, reaching toward the audience as though pulling them into the asylum. The lights grow dim, and the tempo slows, signaling a shift in mood.]

8 ½ - SONG: The Asylum's Call

[The spirits begin the song, but as the music grows, voices from the asylum join them—nurses, orderlies, and patients emerging at the edges of the stage or from shadow. The song becomes less like a haunting and more like the entire institution calling out.]

Verse 1:

In the shadows of the night,
Where the lost souls take flight,
There's a place of endless fright,
Where the mind loses its might.

Chorus:

Oh, hear the asylum's call,
It whispers and it mauls,
Dr. Lumen: In its halls, you'll lose control,
Beware, it'll take your soul.

Verse 2:

In the echoes of the past,
Where the memories are cast,
There's a darkness that will last,
A labyrinth of broken glass.

Chorus:

Oh, hear the asylum's call,
It beckons, standing tall,
In its grasp, you'll start to fall,
Beware, it'll take your all.

[The spirits circle the stage, their voices layering with increasing intensity.]

Bridge:

ALL: Locked within these walls of pain,
Sanity begins to wane,
As the voices softly reign,
In this asylum of disdain.

Chorus:

Oh, hear the asylum's call,
It whispers and it mauls,
In its halls, you'll lose control,
Dr. Lumen: Beware, it'll take your soul.

[The final note lingers as the spirits freeze in place. The spotlight shifts downstage right, illuminating Dr. Lumen, who steps forward with deliberate poise. The spirits retreat into the

shadows, blending into the background.]

Dr. Lumen (calm, measured tone):

In the asylum, every story begins the same—with a moment. A moment when the rules of the outside world no longer apply, when the line between reality and delusion is blurred, and the weight of judgment becomes too much to bear. That’s when they find their way here, into our embrace.

Dr. Lumen (to audience):

You see their laughter, their small rebellions, their fight for scraps of freedom. But freedom here is fragile. It crumbles faster than crust beneath a blade.

[Dr. Lumen leans in slightly, his voice softening as if recalling a memory.]

Dr. Lumen:

Ask them what they want most... and sometimes it isn’t escape. It’s simpler. A memory of sweetness. A slice of pie. Always apple. Always apple.

Spirits (echoing with anguish, voices lingering):

Slice of pie... Pie.

Dr. Lumen (tone turning clinical again):

But memories don’t last... (beat) Not here.

[On “Not here,” the spirits recede into the shadows and vanish from sight.]

Flashback: Begins

Dr. Lumen:

Here is where we meet Patient 66490. But you might know her better by another name: Cheeky. Dotti “Cheeky” Bloom. She is... how should I put it? Generous in her affections. A woman who loved freely, deeply, and without restraint. But in a world like ours, where love has rules, hers was a love that society could not tolerate.

[Dr. Lumen steps aside, gesturing to the center of the stage. A dim light fades up, revealing a small, disheveled bedroom. Clothes are strewn across the floor, and the outline of two figures can be seen under the sheets of the bed. Dr. Lumen remains partially visible, watching from the shadows.]

[Unlike the other flashbacks, this memory begins to heighten around Cheeky, becoming more theatrical, more glamorous, more like the version of herself she needed to believe in.]

Scene 2: Freely Given

(Overall Scene 12)

[Cheeky’s husband, Frank Bloom, storms into the room, his silhouette backlit for dramatic effect. Cheeky scrambles to cover herself. Rose Carter and Vivian Clarke are in the bed with her,

startled and half-dressed. They grab their clothes in a panic.]

Frank Bloom (baffled):
What the hell?

Rose Carter (nervous):
Oh my God.

Vivian Clarke (embarrassed):
Frank, I'm sorry!

[Rose and Vivian duck past Frank, clutching their clothes as they hurry out. Frank stands frozen for a beat, one arm still braced against the doorway. Then slowly, he turns back toward Cheeky.]

Frank Bloom (furious):
This? What the hell is this? This is what you do while I'm working my ass off? I thought you were done with these little experiments of yours. I shoulda believed ya when you said you couldn't stop. But me? I married ya anyway. You've disgraced me. You've disgraced this house. You're no wife. Nuh-uh. You're a disease. And I'll make sure you're locked away for good. You hear me? For good.

[Frank leaves and slams the door. Cheeky, trembling at first, suddenly straightens her posture. A look of defiance crosses her face as she steps forward into the light.]

Cheeky (whispering at first, still shaken):
I'm sorry... I'm always sorry, aren't I? Sorry for wanting more, sorry for feeling alive... sorry for being me.

[She takes a step toward the door, eyes fixed on it, her voice hardening.]

Cheeky:
But you know what? I can't shut it off. I can't put out the fire, not for you, not for anyone. I've tried. God knows I've tried. And every time I do, it just eats me alive.

[She glares at the door, almost daring it to open.]

Cheeky:
You think locking me away will cure me? No. I'm not sick. I'm starving. Starving for a touch, a glance, a moment where I feel the rush of being wanted. And if that makes me broken... then I'd rather be broken than empty.

[She turns, walking slowly back across the bed, her tone shifting into defiance.]

Cheeky:
I don't need his permission. I don't need his forgiveness. What I need... is to live.

[She reaches the desk, bathed in light. With a deliberate gesture, she drops the robe, revealing the

glimmering dress. Her posture shifts—no longer trembling, but radiant, bold. A sly smile breaks through.]

Cheeky:

And if they want to call me a sinner for it... fine. I'll be the brightest sinner they've ever seen.

[The first notes of "Chasing Ecstasy" swell as she lifts her head, stepping into her new skin.]

[The stage transitions into a spotlight on Cheeky. The mood shifts into something smoky, glamorous, and theatrical. Her voice starts soft, then builds with confidence and sensual defiance as she takes command of the room.]

9 - SONG: Chasing Ecstasy

Verse 1:

I've got a man, he gives me love, but I need more
Craving the thrill, the endless chase, the open door
Whispers in the night, I live for the delight
Can't you see, it's in my nature, I burn so bright

Pre-Chorus:

No chains can hold me, I'm wild and free
Pleasure's my master, and I bend the knee
From dawn to dusk, I chase the ecstasy
To make the world happy, that's my destiny

Chorus:

I want it all, the fire, the passion, and the thrill
To touch, to taste, to feel the love, my heart can't be still
Satisfying everyone, I'll make the world sing
In my embrace, I'll give them everything

Verse 2:

I see the longing in their eyes, I feel the heat
A symphony of lust, my life is incomplete
In every touch, in every kiss, I find my way
To spread the joy, to light the night, to break the day
I love the way you stare at me

Pre-Chorus:

No chains can hold me, I'm wild and free
Pleasure's my master, and I bend the knee
From dawn to dusk, I chase the ecstasy
To make the world happy, that's my destiny

Chorus:

I want it all, the fire, the passion, and the thrill
To touch, to taste, to feel the love, my heart can't be still

Satisfying everyone, I'll make the world sing
In my embrace, I'll give them everything

Verse 3:

I see the longing in their eyes, I feel the heat
A symphony of lust, my life is incomplete
In every touch, in every kiss, I find my way
To spread the joy, to light the night, to break the day
[music break]

Verse 4:

I see the longing in their eyes, I feel the heat
A symphony of lust, my life is incomplete
In every touch, in every kiss, I find my way
To spread the joy, to light the night, to break the day
(Riff)

Bridge:

In shadows deep, I find my light
With every lover, I take flight
Bound by desire, I rise above
Spreading my wings, giving love

Verse 5:

Through city streets, the lonely hearts, they call to me
Their silent cries, their hidden scars, they yearn to be free
I open up my arms, I show them brighter days
In my embrace, they find the strength to change their ways

Chorus:

I want it all, the fire, the passion, and the thrill
To touch, to taste, to feel the love, my heart can't be still
Satisfying everyone, I'll make the world sing
In my embrace, I'll give them everything

Outro:

In the night's embrace, my spirit flies
Searching for the love, beyond the skies
A final note, I can't deny, I hold it tight
In my heart, the music of the night

[Dottie adjusts her costume, staring at herself in the mirror. She forces a smile, speaking to her reflection.]

Dottie:

Still got it, Cheeky. Even if it's only the walls watching.

(She straightens her shoulders, grandly.)

Dottie:

Dottie Bloom — star of the stage, and the world.

(She blows herself a kiss, then softly, almost tenderly:)

Dottie:

Break a leg, darling. (beat) Oh, believe me... the world won't know what hit 'em.

[The vanity lights flicker out. Darkness swallows the memory.]

Transition Back to Present Day: Flashback Ends

[As the song concludes, the light on Cheeky dims, and the scene fades back to the present. Cheeky is now seated in a wheelchair, her posture slack and her expression vacant. The sound of a faint, haunting reprise of her song echoes in the background.]

Scene 3: The Price
(Overall Scene 13)

[The lights on the bedroom fade. A cold wash comes up on the asylum side. Nurse Eve stands beside Cheeky, gently wiping her face and adjusting her blanket. Dr. Lumen steps forward, half-lit, visibly distressed, his voice low and haunted.]

Dr. Lumen (measured, almost whispering):

You saw her there, didn't you? Dotti, radiant... alive. For a moment, she believed she was free. She believed in laughter, in love, in nights that never ended. That was the Dotti I knew—flawed, reckless, but burning with life.

[He paces slightly, buying time as Nurse Eve moves in, gently draping the patient gown over Cheeky's glittering dress.]

Dr. Lumen (tone shifting heavier):

But look closer. Look past the music, the memory. Because memories can lie... and the walls of this place never let go.

[By now, Nurse Eve has Cheeky fully covered, adjusting the blanket. Cheeky is wheeled slowly into the light, slack and vacant.]

Dr. Lumen (voice cracking, anger rising):

This... this is what they've done to her. Cheeky—no... Dotti... was alive in every way. And now? Now they call this treatment. A success, they say.

[Nurse Eve looks up at Dr. Lumen, her expression a mix of guilt and sadness. She places a hand on Cheeky's shoulder, but Cheeky doesn't react.]

[The stage begins to darken slightly as Dr. Lumen summons the nurses. A brief, awkward silence hangs in the air.]

Eve (with caring concern, fighting tears):

Dr. Lumen... look what Dr. Grendel has done to poor Dotti. I didn't know. I swear, I didn't know it would go this far...

Spirits (Echoing with anguish, voices lingering):

I swear... Go this far... Go this far.

Dr. Lumen (calling out angrily):

Nurse Lilith! Nurse Ivy! Someone explain this to me.

[Lilith and Ivy rush in from offstage.]

Dr. Lumen:

How did this happen? How could this happen?

Lilith (folding her arms):

There's nothing to explain. They tried to escape, and this is what happens. Dr. Grendel ordered a lockdown—it's not our call.

Ivy (nodding, matching Lilith's tone):

He's in charge, and his rules are clear. You don't want chaos, do you?

Dr. Lumen (scowling):

Lockdown is one thing. This... this is barbaric. Throwing everyone into solitary like this? Treating them like animals? What about Dotti? What happened to her?

Ivy (glancing away, trying to sound casual):

Dotti... so that's her name, huh. (smirks) She wanted out. (sarcastically) Now she doesn't want anything. Dr. Grendel stepped in to handle things.

Dr. Lumen (horrified):

Got what she deserved? Are you hearing yourselves? Dotti Bloom didn't deserve to be hurt, no matter what she did.

Lilith (snapping):

With all due respect, maybe you should talk to Dr. Grendel about this instead of blaming us.

[Dr. Lumen glares at them, his voice calm but icy.]

Dr. Lumen (to Eve, who is quietly tending to Cheeky in her wheelchair):

Eve, keep her comfortable. These next 48 hours are critical to her care. I'll see to her later, but for now... let her rest.

[Eve nods, gently adjusting Cheeky's blanket. The wheelchair sits in silence. Dr. Lumen steps closer, staring at the vacant shell of the once-vibrant woman.]

Dr. Lumen (low, to himself):

Once she burned so brightly... laughter, hunger, fire. Now all that remains is this... silence.

[A long pause. Lumen swallows hard, forcing composure.]

Dr. Lumen (continuing, voice heavy):

They call it science. They call it mercy. I call it theft—a life carved away until nothing is left to recognize.

[Lumen glances at Eve, then back to the audience, eyes dark.]

Dr. Lumen:

And so we name it treatment... but I call it what it is: loss.

[Dr. Lumen looks once more at Cheeky, then turns back to Eve.]

Dr. Lumen:

Take her to the infirmary.

Eve (nodding, gently):

Yes, Doctor.

[Eve slowly wheels Cheeky offstage. Lumen stays rooted, gaze following until the chair disappears into shadow.]

[Dr. Lumen turns back to Lilith and Ivy, his voice sharp.]

Dr. Lumen (Commanding):

If Dottie Bloom doesn't survive this... you answer to me... (gathering self) Take me to the other patients, we are going to take them out of lockdown.

Lilith (smirking slightly):

We can't. Dr. Grendel took our key. He doesn't want anyone released without his say-so.

Dr. Lumen (narrowing his eyes):

Then I'll get mine. Stay here. I'll be back.

[Dr. Lumen exits, walking briskly offstage. Lilith and Ivy exchange sly glances, revealing their hidden defiance. Lilith pulls a keyring from her pocket and dangles it mockingly. Ivy smiles. The keys catch the light for one brief second before blackout.]

Scene 4: Where Hands Don't Meet
(Overall Scene 14)

[The lights brighten slightly to reveal solitary confinement. Dim. Heavy silence. Each cell contains a figure, sitting or pacing. The spotlight falls on the two central cells, where Edward and Nora sit on opposite sides of a thin dividing wall, close enough to speak through a small metal vent but unable to see each other clearly.]

Edward (soft, almost to himself):
Well... I've seen better plans.

Nora (dryly):
We made it farther than I expected. That's either a victory or a very proper disaster.

Edward:
Maybe both. Though, it would've been nice to see the stars again.

Nora (wistful):
I used to count them before bed. Every night. Like they were mine. It would've been nice... just one more night under the sky.

Edward (quiet):
Yeah.

[A pause. The air stills around them. Something softer creeps in beneath the quiet.]

Edward:
What are you thinking about?

Nora:
Nothing. Everything. Mostly just trying to hold onto a piece of myself that still feels real.

[A soft sound—metal shifting. Edward recognizes it.]

Edward:
You're holding the locket again?

Nora (a small breath):
Mmhm. I keep it close when the silence gets too loud.

Edward (gently teasing):
I'm starting to think that locket's got more history than this building.

Nora (smiling faintly):
It's bent, the photo's faded... but somehow it's still here. Like it refuses to forget what I can't seem to remember.

Edward:
You look at it often.

Nora:
Every night. The person beside me in the photo... they're so (sigh) familiar, but I can't place them. And lately...

Edward:
Lately?

Nora (soft, guarded):
Lately I've been thinking... it might be... someone like you.

[Silence settles. Not the cold kind. A pause that breathes.]

Edward (quietly):
That's... I don't know what to say.

Nora:
You don't have to. It's not about facts or names or timelines. It's just... a feeling. Like some part of me is still reaching for something it never got to keep.

Edward:
Maybe remembering isn't the point. Maybe it's enough just to feel like we knew each other... before all of this.

[Edward puts his hand to the cell wall. Nora matches him from the other side. They cannot see each other, but the feeling between them is overwhelming.]

Nora:
Or maybe we're only just starting to.

[A beat. She touches the locket again, fingers brushing it gently.]

Nora:
Maybe it doesn't matter who's in the photo. Maybe it matters who I wish had been there.

[There's no more talking. Just breath and silence and something unspoken swelling between them. Then—softly—one of them hums a fragile melody. The first line of “Crazy Lovers.” The other answers, unsure at first, then steadier. The duet begins.]

[Though separated by the wall, their bodies shift toward one another as if drawn by something they cannot explain. The tension between them grows warmer, more vulnerable. The lights dim briefly, and music swells softly, setting the mood for “Crazy Lovers.”]

[As the song begins, the cell block shifts into a dreamlike state. The other prisoners emerge from their cells in stylized movement, surrounding Edward and Nora without breaking the feeling of confinement. The bars and walls remain, but for the length of the song, the space feels larger than it is.]

10 - SONG: Crazy Lovers
(Edward starts singing quietly, his voice filled with longing and resolve.)

Ah, look at all the crazy lovers

Ah, look at all the crazy lovers
Ah, look at all the crazy lovers
Ah, look at all the crazy lovers

[Verse: Edward]

Locked in these walls
Where whispers of madness fill all of the halls
We found each other (Nora: so unlikely)
In a place where shadows draw the line
You took my hand, so gently in mine

[Chorus: Both]

In this world of chaos, we found our, come what may
Hoping one day we'll break free, from these walls

[Verse: Nora]

Dreams are made behind these bars
Bound by fate, escaping scars
In each other's eyes, we find the stars

[Chorus: Both]

In this world of chaos, we found our, come what may
Hoping one day we'll break free, from these walls

[Bridge: Edward]

We paint our dreams on these padded walls

[Bridge: Nora]

Whispering secrets, as night falls
In a place where sanity's frail

Both: We'll weave a love tale, through night and gale

[Verse: Edward]

In every corner, memories fade
But with you, I found a bond we've made

[Verse: Nora]

Through the echoes, our laughter patterns
Building dreams where hope still matters

[Chorus: Both]

Our hearts are free
Breaking chains with every breath we breathe
Love's a beacon, shining bright
Guiding us through the night

[Chorus: Both]

In this world of chaos, we found our, come what may
Hoping one day we'll break free, from these walls

[Chorus: Both]

In this world of chaos, we found our, come what may
Hoping one day we'll break free, from these walls

Ah, look at all the crazy lovers
Ah, look at all the crazy lovers
Ah, look at all the crazy lovers

Ahhhhhhh

[The song begins to resolve as Edward and Nora are drawn back toward their bars.]

Ensemble (Softly, fading):

In this world of chaos, we found our, come what may
Hoping one day we'll break free, from these walls.

[As the song ends, Edward and Nora return to their separate cells, hands still reaching for one another along opposite sides of the wall. Their hands never truly meet, but they remain connected as long as they can.]

Nora (whisper, clutching locket):

Every time I touch this, I feel less lost. Like part of me remembers...

Edward (softly, almost ashamed):

I don't have anything left to hold on to. Except... except you.

(Nora lifts the locket gently between them, holding it almost like a prayer.)

Nora (after a beat):

Then maybe... maybe we're not so lost.

[The lights dim back to the cold, stark lighting of the cell block.]

Scene 5: Extraction

(Overall Scene 15)

Elsie:

Wait, Carl, is that you?

[A faint note cuts through the silence—a trumpet. The group turns. Carl sits on a bunk in one of the cells, trumpet in hand. He gives a small, triumphant grin and blasts a single squeaky note.]

Nora/Edward/Elsie/Shaw (relieved, overlapping):

Carl! You made it!

[Carl lifts his trumpet in salute, wordless. The moment hangs—a tiny victory—before the shadows close back in.]

[The sound of footsteps echoes ominously. Lilith and Ivy approach. The metallic clank of keys and the heavy creak of a cell door echo as Ivy and Lilith arrive to extract Edward. Tension hangs thick in the air. The other patients—Shaw, Elsie, Nora—are in nearby cells. The mood is tight with dread.]

Lilith (mocking, sweetly sinister):

Looks like someone's got an appointment. Dr. Grendel wants to see you, big guy. Time to go.

Edward:

Where are you taking me?

Lilith:

Fresh air, a cup of tea, and a friendly little chat. You'll love it.

Ivy (dryly):

He's practically rolled out the red carpet.

Elsie (alarmed, gripping the bars):

No! You can't take him!

Private Shaw (stiffening, his voice firm):

Leave them out of this. I volunteer.

Nora (stepping forward from her cell, voice rising):

Take me instead! He's done nothing wrong!

Ivy (coldly, with menace):

Grendel didn't ask for you. Step back before you make things worse for everyone.

[Lilith unlocks Edward's cell with a snap. She grabs him roughly by the arm. He struggles, but doesn't resist fully. His eyes meet Nora's across the hallway.]

Edward (quietly, to the group):

Don't worry. I'll be fine.

Nora (desperately):

No! You don't know what he'll do to you!

[As Ivy and Lilith begin dragging Edward toward the hallway exit, Shaw, Elsie, and Nora call out after them. There's a flurry of desperation.]

Shaw:

You don't have to be this. Either of you. Why are you giving into this madness?

Elsie:

You act like you've got no choice—but you do. You could be like Nurse Eve.

Nora (sharply):

She actually helps people. You just hurt them.

[Ivy stops. Turns slowly. Her smile is like glass.]

Ivy:

Oh, sweetheart. You think little Miss Eve is your hero?

Lilith (toying with the keys, amused):

Let us tell you a story.

Ivy:

There was a patient once. We gave him the wrong dose—on purpose. Watched him seize for five whole minutes.

Lilith:

Then we cried big ole crocodile tears and blamed poor little angel Eve. Told her it was her mistake.

Ivy:

She believed us. Dr. Grendel never questioned it. Oh, and Eve... she begged us not to report it.

Lilith:

So we made her a deal. Do what we say... or we ruin her.

Shaw (furious):

You manipulated her. You broke her.

Elsie (softly, horrified):

She thinks it was her fault...

Ivy (shrugging):

That's the beauty of guilt. Once it's planted, it grows all on its own.

Edward (voice low, filled with quiet fury):

You don't just hurt people here... you erase them.

Lilith:

And what's worse? They let us.

Ivy (grinning, beginning to tug Edward forward):

Come along, then. Don't keep the doctor waiting.

Edward (calm with focus):

Don't worry about me, at least this way... I can check on Cheeky. I'll make sure she is all right.

[They drag Edward offstage. As their footsteps fade, Nurse Eve steps out from the shadows. She has been there the whole time, frozen, listening, watching. Her face is pale and devastated.]

[She steps forward slowly, toward the remaining patients. Her hands shake. She kneels beside Elsie's cell, her voice barely above a whisper.]

Eve:

I didn't know... I didn't— (Her throat catches. Then, steadier.) I'm so sorry. It's going to be okay. I'll get Dr. Lumen. We'll sort this out—I promise.

Elsie (hesitant, clutching the bars):
Are you sure? Dr. Grendel doesn't listen to anyone.

Eve (nodding firmly):
Dr. Lumen will listen. Seems to be the only doctor who cares. Stay strong. (Starting to exit) I'll be back.

Shaw (a bit panicked):
Hey, is Cheeky okay? We haven't seen her since last night.

Eve (stopping sharply, slowly turning):
She didn't... she... (breaking, taking one step toward them) Cheeky... she didn't make it... (starting to sob) she's gone. I'm sorry.

[Eve turns before exiting and shakes her head discouragingly while fighting back tears, then exits quickly, leaving the prisoners murmuring uneasily. The lights dim, signaling the transition to the next scene.]

Nora (crying a bit while clutching her locket):
Ohh no... no no no—not Cheeky...

Elsie and Shaw (upset):
She didn't... what? That can't be right...

[Nora, Shaw, and Elsie absorb the news of Cheeky's death as the lights fade to black.]

Scene 6: The Turning Key (Overall Scene 16)

[Dr. Lumen sits at a large wooden desk, leafing through patient records under the warm light of a single desk lamp. He examines a key, turning it over thoughtfully in his hand. Papers and notes clutter the desk, evidence of his meticulous work to maintain some order in the asylum. A bowl of apples sits quietly among the files and instruments.]

Dr. Lumen (to himself, softly):
This key... opens everything. (beat) I'm just not sure if it locks anything.

[He sets the key down and picks up another file when Nurse Eve bursts in, breathless and panicked.]

Eve (rushing in, voice frantic):
Dr. Lumen! Dr. Lumen, it's that monster... Grendel—he's up to something terrible. They took Edward... and—(she falters, slight beat) Cheeky didn't make it...

Dr. Lumen (under his breath, almost involuntary):
No... Cheeky...

Eve (pushing through, trying to stay focused):

I saw Lilith and Ivy take Edward... I don't know where, but it wasn't good. They were smug... like they'd already planned it. Like this was supposed to happen.

Dr. Lumen (collecting himself, then firm, standing to meet Eve's gaze):

Eve, slow down. Take a breath. (beat) What exactly did you see?

Eve (hesitating, then speaking quickly):

I saw them drag him out of the cell. He wasn't fighting, but something about it felt... wrong. And Dr. Grendel—he's losing control, Dr. Lumen. I can feel it. I don't know what he's planning, but it's dangerous.

Dr. Lumen (studying Eve, then nodding):

I believe you. I'll get to the bottom of this. But first, there's something I need to understand.

[Dr. Lumen steps closer, his voice soft but probing, the tone of a psychiatrist drawing out a patient.]

Dr. Lumen:

Eve, why do you stay by their side? Lilith and Ivy. You're not like them. So why do you let them control you?

Eve (avoiding eye contact, her voice reluctant):

It's... complicated.

Dr. Lumen (pressing gently):

I know it's hard. But if I'm going to trust you, I need to understand. Why do you follow them?

Eve (after a long pause, voice breaking slightly):

Because I made a mistake... Before you came along, I... No. They—made me believe that I did it. (beat) The patient was already too far gone, and I didn't realize it. I thought... I thought I killed someone. Lilith and Ivy saw it, and they... they said they'd ruin me if I didn't fall in line... So, I've been trying to make it right ever since. Every day... every day I try to make up for it. I give my whole heart to every single one of these patients. They all deserve to be treated like human beings. Not like... well, you know.

[Dr. Lumen regards Eve with a mixture of compassion and resolve, then places the key in Eve's hand.]

Dr. Lumen (with conviction):

Eve, whatever happened before, you have a choice now. You can make it right. I need you to gather all the patients. I understand how hard this will be. Take them somewhere safe. Away from here... away from Dr. Grendel. I shouldn't trust you. (beat) But I do.

Eve (wide-eyed):

You... trust me?

Dr. Lumen (nodding):

Yes. Because deep down, I know you're one of the good ones. Now go. We don't have much time.

[Eve nods, clutching the key tightly, and exits with determination. Dr. Lumen watches her leave, then turns to his desk, his demeanor shifting as he picks up a journal. Lumen looks directly out toward the audience, transitioning seamlessly into narrator mode.]

Flashback: Begins

Dr. Lumen (Narrating):

These are the moments that define us. This is how it happens. Not all at once... but in small choices you don't realize you're making. And as Nurse Eve stepped into the light, I couldn't help but wonder—how did she end up here? How did any of us?

[The stage darkens as the flashback begins. A younger Eve is revealed, standing in a stark, sterile hospital room.]

[The first song begins, detailing the fateful day when Nurse Eve, new and hopeful, accidentally over-sedates a patient. The music starts gentle and tender but becomes tense and dissonant as the patient's vitals fail. Lilith and Ivy enter, seizing on the moment to manipulate Eve. They sing slyly, their voices oozing malice, as they coerce her into servitude.]

Scene 7: The Cost of Care

(Overall scene 17)

[Eve checks the patient frantically, trying to keep her voice steady.]

Nurse Eve:

No, no, stay with me. Please... stay with me.

[Ivy and Lilith watch from near the doorway, already too still, already too calm.]

[As Ivy and Lilith cover the patient, they stare at Eve like disappointed parents.]

Nurse Eve:

Please, I don't know what happened. I did everything by the book. He shouldn't have...

[Ivy and Lilith turn their backs on her.]

Nurse Eve:

Please, tell me what to do. I'll do anything. Just don't leave me alone with this.

11 - SONG: Crossroads Of Care

[Lilith]

You thought you had it all, the perfect nurse attire

A single misstep now there's nothing left to admire

What's the matter with you, girl?

How did you trip and fall so low?

This secret you hold dear

Could bury you below

[Ivy]

Can't you see?

There's no room for mistakes in this game we play
On your knees
Or you'll watch your whole world just fade away
Serve us now
Or face a fate so cold, so dire
Bow to us
Keep your secrets under fire!

[Eve]
Please wait! It was just a moment's lapse in my care
Let's not hate, we can all be fair, I was unaware
What do you need from me?
I'll do what you say, just let me be
Can we find common ground?
Or am I just your pawn now?

[Lilith]
Can't you see?
There's no room for mistakes in this game we play
On your knees
Or you'll watch your whole world just fade away
Serve us now
Or face a fate so cold, so dire
Bow to us
Keep your secrets under fire!

[Eve]
In the dark
Of this hospital's cold, hollow halls
Lost my spark
Will I rise or forever just crawl?

[Lilith & Ivy]
Ivy: Can't you see?
There's no room for mistakes in this game we play
On your knees
Or you'll watch your whole world just fade away
Lilith: Serve us now
Or face a fate so cold, so dire
Both: Bow to us
Keep your secrets under fire!

[The last note of the song fades. Eve is left trembling at the patient's bedside, chart clutched in her hands. Ivy and Lilith stand like shadows at the edges of the room, cold and watchful. The patient lies still. A silence lingers — heavy, suffocating. The door creaks open. Dr. Grendel enters.]

Dr. Grendel (stopping, staring at the bed, voice breaking):
...No. No, not again.

[He rushes forward, pulling back the sheet. The lifeless face beneath stops him cold. He grips the edge of the bed, his hands trembling.]

Dr. Grendel (hoarse):
Another life... stolen in my care. My oath — shattered. Damn these hands... these cursed... useless...

[He stares at his palms, shaking violently, then slams a fist against the rail of the bed. Eve stumbles forward, desperate to explain.]

Eve (pleading):
Dr. Grendel! I... I don't know what... I gave the dosage you told me...

Dr. Grendel (not truly listening, lost in his grief):
Enough!

Lilith (overlapping, pointing at Eve):
It was her! She's the one who gave it...

Ivy (talking over Lilith, sharp):
Eve made the mistake, Doctor, we all saw it...

Dr. Grendel (furious, silencing them all):
ENOUGH! All of you! (beat, voice breaking) Another life... another failure, my failure. Under my watch. These damned hands, (beat) too unsteady... too weak to save him.

[He buries his face in his hands. Eve kneels beside him, clutching the chart, voice trembling.]

Eve (through tears):
I only wanted to help. Please... tell me what I should do. Tell me how to make it right.

[Dr. Grendel lifts his head and finally looks at her. For a brief moment, there's something almost gentle in his eyes. Behind them, Ivy and Lilith stiffen, exchanging sharp, bitter glances.]

Dr. Grendel (softly, leaning toward Eve):
You would kneel in grief rather than turn away. I am the true culprit... (beat) you are rare, Nurse Eve.

[He rises slowly, shoulders squaring, voice shifting from sorrow to obsession.]

Dr. Grendel (to himself, then to all):
They're not going to like this. (beat, something changes) They never do. If I cannot cure, then I must cleanse... (slowly looking at his palms, frustrated gasp) No more weakness. No more mistakes. Only purity. Only order.

[He pulls the sheet fully over the patient's face. A beat of silence. Then he places his hand briefly on Eve's shoulder — almost a blessing, almost a claim. Ivy bristles; Lilith forces a brittle smile.]

Dr. Grendel (focusing on Lilith and Ivy):

Others preen, flatter, scheme... but you—(to Eve) you bowed your head.

(Ivy bristles; Lilith forces a brittle smile. Eve drops her gaze, overwhelmed.)

Dr. Grendel (commanding):

Stand tall, Nurse Eve. You will endure. You will assist me — from this day forward.

[Eve bows her head, stricken but bound. Ivy and Lilith shoot each other a glare; their plan to ruin Eve has only lifted her in his esteem. Their envy burns, but they bite it back, curtsying like mock-disciples. Grendel lingers over the body one last time, whispering to himself.]

Dr. Grendel (low, to the patient):

Forgive me. This will not happen again. I swear it!

[He steps back into the shadows of the room and exits. Ivy and Lilith smirk, a soft hiss of laughter passing between them as they drift closer to Eve. Their mocking chuckles coil like smoke around her. The lights shift and the mocking laughter bleeds into the opening strains of Shadows of Regret.]

[The second song, "Shadows of Regret," shifts into a brighter, more playful tempo, almost cruel in its cheerfulness. Eve sinks further into fear while Lilith and Ivy circle her with mocking delight, turning her desperation into a game.]

Lilith (sarcastic):

So, the princess here seems to think she's better than us... Looks like we gotta fill out the report. It's the right thing to do. We gotta tell the truth. You did this, not Dr. Grendel.

Eve (under her breath):

I didn't, I wouldn't...

Ivy (following Lilith's lead):

Yeah, well. You're on your own, toots. Looks like you are going down with the ship... Unless?

Eve (panicked and naive and defeated):

Unless what? I'll do anything.

Ivy (standoffish):

Nahh, forget it. (They start to leave Eve by herself) Good luck cleaning up this mess.

11 ½ - SONG: Shadows Of Regret

[Eve]

Late at night in the hallway
You whisper threats to me, oh why?
I made a mistake, it's true, I know (Lilith and Ivy: I know)
But can't we make amends, please don't show (Lilith and Ivy: Oh no)
[Chorus]
Just don't leave me alone (Lilith and Ivy: Alone)
I'll do what you want, every day
(Lilith and Ivy: Just don't) Don't leave me alone, ladies
Let me stay
(Lilith and Ivy: Just) Don't leave me alone (Lilith and Ivy: Alone)
I'll do what you want, I will obey
(Lilith and Ivy: Just don't) Don't leave me alone, ladies
All: Let me stay, yeah
[Eve]
I see the smirks when you pass by
Your (ALL:) twisted words, make my heart cry
An accident, I swear, it was (Lilith and Ivy: It was)
But now I'm at the mercy of your claws (Lilith and Ivy: Your claws)
[Chorus]
Just don't leave me alone (Lilith and Ivy: Alone)
I'll do what you want, every day
(Lilith and Ivy: Just don't) Don't leave me alone, ladies
Let me stay
(Lilith and Ivy: Just) Don't leave me alone (Lilith and Ivy: Alone)
I'll do what you want, I will obey
(Lilith and Ivy: Just) Don't leave me alone, ladies
All: Let me stay, yeah
[Bridge]
I'm trapped in your shadows
Nowhere else to turn
Please keep my secret, I'll serve you (Lilith and Ivy: Serve you)
Don't let me burn
[Chorus]
Just don't leave me alone (Lilith and Ivy: Alone)
I'll do what you want, every day
(Lilith and Ivy: Just don't) Don't leave me alone, ladies
All: Let me stay
(Lilith and Ivy: Just) Don't leave me alone (Lilith and Ivy: Alone)
I'll do what you want, I will obey
(Lilith and Ivy: Just don't) Don't leave me alone, ladies
All: Let me stay, yeah

Transition Back to Present Day: Flashback Ends

[The hospital room fades into darkness as several hooded spirits emerge, moving with slow, ritual precision. They pass through the space like a silent reset, clearing the memory away until only the asylum remains.]

Scene 8: The Breaking Point
(Overall scene 18)

[The operating room is unnervingly orderly. Along one wall, medical instruments are arranged with unsettling precision: scalpels, forceps, a metal head mirror, restraints, and a stethoscope hanging slightly apart from the rest.]

[Edward lies restrained on an operating table, his face a mixture of fear and defiance. Dr. Grendel meticulously organizes his tools, humming softly, preparing for his twisted “procedure.” Lilith and Ivy stand near the door.]

Lilith (smirking):
All yours, Doctor. He’s prepped and ready.

Ivy (mocking Edward):
Don’t worry, sweetheart. You’ll come out of this... different.

[Ivy and Lilith both laugh as they go to the other side of the room. Dr. Grendel approaches Edward, picking up a syringe and inspecting it with surgical precision.]

Dr. Grendel (softly, almost to himself):
You’ll thank me when this is over. Sanitary... perfect... free...

[There’s a sudden knock at the door. Dr. Grendel freezes, his face darkening. He quickly shoves gauze down Edward’s mouth to silence him. He strides to the door and opens it slightly, revealing Dr. Lumen standing outside. Dr. Grendel gestures for the nurses to keep Edward quiet.]

Dr. Lumen (firmly knocking):
Dr. Grendel. Dr. Grendel. We need to talk. Now.

[Dr. Grendel steps out into the hallway, closing the door behind him, blocking Lumen’s view of the room.]

Dr. Grendel (feigning innocence):
Of course, Dr. Lumen. What seems to be the matter?

[Dr. Lumen doesn’t hold back, his voice sharp and resolute.]

Dr. Lumen (controlled explosion):
Enough of this... charade, Dr. Grendel. I know what you’ve been doing. The experiments. The disappearances. The screams. And what you did to Dottie... It ends now.

Dr. Grendel (coldly):
You think you understand? You think you can see the contamination the way I do? You’re blind, Dr. Lumen. Blind to the sickness that festers in every corner of this asylum.

Dr. Lumen:

These are people. Patients... who came here for help. They didn't come here to be your... experiments!

Dr. Grendel (snarling):

They're broken. Diseased. If I don't disinfect them, who will? You? With your endless sympathy? You're no savior, Dr. Lumen. You're just as useless as the rest.

[The tension peaks. Dr. Lumen steps closer, his voice dropping to a deadly calm.]

Dr. Lumen:

I'm reporting you. The board. The authorities. Whoever will listen. You've gone too far, Grendel, and I won't stand for it any longer. Dottie Bloom and all the other patients didn't deserve this!

[Dr. Grendel's lip curls into a sneer, but he says nothing. Dr. Lumen turns and walks away, his resolve unshaken. Dr. Grendel reenters his operating room, slamming the door behind him. Lilith and Ivy are lounging nearby, grinning.]

Lilith (teasing):

Trouble in paradise, Doctor?

Ivy (gesturing toward Edward):

Maybe you should take out some of that frustration on him.

[Dr. Grendel says nothing, pausing at the wall. He removes the stethoscope, holding it for half a beat longer than necessary. His hand trembles, then steadies. He places it around his neck and turns back to Edward, his rage simmering beneath the surface. He moves to the table, picking up his instruments.]

Dr. Grendel (muttering):

No one escapes the refinement. One way or another, you will be sterilized!

[He begins his work. The lights dim, and from the darkness, Edward's muffled screams pierce the air. The sounds are haunting, echoing through the asylum.]

Scene 9: Fall From Grace

(Overall scene 19)

[Dr. Lumen sits at his desk, visibly shaken but resolute. He flips through his notes, muttering to himself, his voice heavy with concern.]

Dr. Lumen (to himself):

Dr. Lucian Mathias Grendel... how did it come to this? You were brilliant. Compassionate. One of the best. What happened to you? You were the reason I chose this, this sanctuary. I thought I could learn from the best.

[Lumen's words trail off as the lights dim, signaling another flashback.]

Flashback: Begins

[The flashback begins with a young Dr. Grendel in an elegant hospital office. Across from him sits an older doctor, his face lined with regret. Young Dr. Grendel gathers a few papers from the desk, trying to appear composed. A stethoscope rests among the files. He notices it, picks it up, and offers it back to Dr. Cartwright.]

Young Dr. Grendel:
You nearly forgot this, Edmund.

[As Dr. Cartwright reaches for it, Young Dr. Grendel's hand trembles. The stethoscope shakes faintly between them. Dr. Cartwright notices. Young Dr. Grendel notices him noticing.]

Dr. Edmund Cartwright (watching Young Dr. Grendel tremor):
Thank you. You know this is...

[Cartwright takes the stethoscope carefully, not unkindly. A brief silence settles between them.]

Dr. Edmund Cartwright (gracefully):
Dr. Grendel (takes a moment to gather himself) hmmm Lucian... you've a gifted mind, and a healer's heart. No one disputes that. But your... compulsions, your rituals — they've grown heavier with each passing month. You scrub until your hands bleed, you linger over instruments long after the patient's gone cold. (He sighs, leaning forward, tone firm but sorrowful.) We can't ignore it any longer. The trembling, the... fixations. It clouds your judgment, it endangers the very people you mean to save. You must understand — the Board cannot place lives in your hands when your own are no longer steady.

Young Dr. Grendel (pleading):
No, please. Edmund, just give me time. One year. I'll fix this. I'll untaint my mind, my sickness. I'll prove to you I can do this.

Dr. Edmund Cartwright (shaking his head):
I wish I could. But your health comes first. We can't risk it—for you, or for the patients. And please refer to me as (slow with purpose) Dr. Cartwright.

[Young Dr. Grendel's desperation turns into a haunting resolve as the song begins.]

Song: The Healer's Redemption
[The song begins with Young Dr. Grendel's hopeful plea, but as it progresses, his resolve twists into obsession. His vow to "cleanse himself" foreshadows his descent into madness.]

12 - SONG: A Healer's Redemption

[Verse 1]
In bustling wards, I walked with pride
A healer's touch, no pain denied

But whispers grew, a shadow's cast
A sickness deep, my strength surpassed

[Chorus]

They say I'll fall, my time is near
A doctor's fate, now cloaked in fear
With trembling hands, I face the day
My license stripped, dreams torn away

[Verse 2]

In sterile rooms, they bring the news
A cruel twist, my health they choose
Today the verdict's handed down
My life of care now wears a frown

[Bridge]

Oh, the pain I've caused, the hurt I've seen
Now mirrored back, a haunting scene
My own affliction, stark and real
A wound no scalpel's cut can heal

[Outro]

In halls once mine, I walk alone
A doctor's fate, now overthrown
But in my mind, a vow I make
To fight the dark, a stand I'll take

[Finale]

So now the tale has just begun
A journey back, redemption won
Though fallen now, I'll rise and say
"Do no harm," will light my way

Young Dr. Grendel (softly, almost to himself, catching his breath after the song):

You know, I never wanted glory. No plaques on a wall. Just... to ease the pain. To see a patient walk again, to hear a child laugh without fever in their lungs. That would be everything. But now, when the sickness has come for me... If I can cleanse myself, then I could cleanse the world. I need to heal. To keep helping. (He looks down at his trembling hands, a flicker of shame crossing his face.) How cruel, isn't it? A healer undone by his own... disease. They'll call me dangerous. Maybe... maybe they're right. (beat) But they're also wrong. (He steels himself, his tone hardening, eyes shifting toward obsession.) I will prove it. I will find the cure. No matter the cost. Even if it kills me.

Transition Back to Present Day: Flashback Ends

[The flashback ends, and the lights return to Dr. Lumen's office. He leans back in his chair, troubled by the memories.]

Dr. Lumen (to himself):

You wanted to heal yourself... but instead, you let the sickness consume you.

[Lights fade out on the scene and up on Dr. Grendel's operating room.]

[Back in Dr. Grendel's operating room, Lilith and Ivy burst in, their faces pale with alarm.]

Lilith:

Doctor, we've got a problem.

Ivy (frantic):

The patients. The staff. They're gone. Dr. Lumen let them go!

Dr. Grendel (stunned, then enraged):

What?!

Lilith:

We think Dr. Lumen gave the master key to your little favorite, Nurse Eve. They're gone. All of them.

[Edward is relieved to hear, Nora and the others have escaped.]

Dr. Grendel (slamming his fists on the table):

How dare she? No... no... no... you don't leave. Not like this.

[Dr. Grendel storms out of the operating room, Lilith and Ivy scrambling to follow him.]

[Lights go down on one half of the stage as the other half rises on Dr. Lumen's office.]

Scene 10: What Remains

(Overall scene 20)

[Dr. Lumen sits at his desk, recording his final thoughts. His voice is calm but tinged with sorrow.]

Dr. Lumen:

This will likely be my final entry. I've done everything I can to protect the patients, but this place... this place is beyond saving. And Dr. Grendel... (pauses) He was a good man once. I know he was. (beat) So, what happened?

[As Lumen finishes speaking, a shadow looms behind him. It's Dr. Grendel, moving silently, his face twisted with rage. He grabs Lumen from behind, dragging him out of the chair. The lights fade to black as the sound of Lumen's struggle echoes through the silence.]

Blackout.

[Edward staggers from the table, pressing his back to the wall. His breaths are ragged, every word pulled from the edge of his lungs. A single light isolates him.]

Edward (hoarse, broken, to himself):

So this is what it feels like... when the fight is done. No voices calling. No more noise. Just... quiet. If they've made it out, if they've truly gone free, then maybe the weight of all of this, was worth it. (He swallows hard, his gaze drifting upward as if searching for stars that aren't there.) And her... Nora. If she's breathing under an open sky, then I can close my eyes knowing... I gave her the stars.

[His voice catches. He exhales, steadies himself, and begins softly into Because of Me.]

13 – Song: Because of Me

Edward:

Lost in the shadows, I'm now alone,
The halls are empty, the voices are gone.
Battles have ended, the silence remains,
I gave all I had, but love still sustains.
Though roads lead to nowhere, I found my way,
If they're free tonight, I can finally fade away.
No chains can bind me, no walls can keep—
My soul finds its rest in eternal sleep.
I hear their voices calling in the night,
A chorus of freedom, a flicker of light.
Every scar I carry, every tear I bled,
Turns into hope for the life they'll tread.
And if tomorrow dawns without me here,
I'll rest in knowing love conquered fear.
Let them live, let them see, let them breathe the skies,
I'll bear the weight, so their hope survives.
If her heart remembers when morning breaks,
Then all I've lost was worth what it takes.
No stars above me, no dawn to see,
Yet still a glimmer burns quietly.
In the darkest night, I still dream...
And I dream she's free... because of me.
Now she's free... because... of... me...

[The last chord fades. Edward collapses, breath shallow. A low, ominous underscore begins — a pulsing motif that suggests Grendel's return. A shadow stretches across the wall like a claw.]

Edward (forcing himself upright, whisper-growl):

So... Grendel... you've come to finish me. Then you'll have to fight (breaking) for what's left of me.

[His body trembles, fists clench weakly — a last flicker of defiance. Suddenly, light breaks. The

sinister theme shatters. A gentler motif swells as Nora's voice pierces the darkness. The stage is dimly lit. Nora wanders through the asylum, her footsteps echoing in the silence. Her expression is a mix of fear and determination as she searches for Edward.]

Nora (calling softly):

Hello? Edward? Edward, are you here? Please... say something.

[She approaches Dr. Grendel's operating room. The door is slightly ajar, and she hesitates before pushing it open. The sight inside makes her gasp—a streak of blood leads from the operating table to the corner of the room. Her trembling hand covers her mouth. She follows the trail and finds Edward slumped on the ground, barely conscious. She kneels beside him, gently shaking him awake.]

Nora (tearful):

Edward! Oh my God, what did he do to you?

Edward (weakly, struggling to speak):

Why... are you still here? I heard...(choking a bit) everyone else left. You weren't meant to come back. You should've run. You should've lived.

Nora (shaking her head):

I couldn't. I couldn't leave you. My whole life I've turned my back on everything. It's always dark. I couldn't leave you in the dark too. I don't want to live in a world without you.

(Edward looks at her, pain etched across his face.)

Edward (guiltily, final words with meaning):

I'm sorry... I let you down. When you close your locket, remember me. Because when I close my eyes, it's... only... (faint) you.

Nora (firmly):

You didn't let me down. You never let me down. I just... I just wanted to see the stars with you... Edward.

[He smiles faintly, his strength fading. She cradles him as his breathing slows. She begins to hum a tune, which transitions into her song.]

14 - SONG: Shattered Dreams

Song: Shattered Dreams

[A haunting, melancholic song about loss, regret, and shattered hopes. Nora's voice is fragile and heart-wrenching as she sings about the life she dreamed of with Edward, now slipping away before her eyes.]

There's a shadow where my heart once beat
In the silence, I hear his voice, still I'm weak
Oh, dear love, how you've left me incomplete

Nevermore, I'll find the solace that I seek

[Chorus]

'T is the ache, the cry of the broken
Shattered dreams, shattered dreams, and nothing spoken
In the ruins of a life once whole
Every whisper brings memories unkind
Haunted halls and echoes of the soul
A mind adrift, in shadows I'm confined

[Chorus]

'T is the ache, the cry of the broken
Shattered dreams, shattered dreams, and nothing spoken
In the night, where shadows fall so deep
I see visions, of a love I couldn't keep
Every heartbeat, a hollow, empty sound
In this madness, where my sorrows are bound

[Bridge]

Oh, how the moonlight fades in sorrow
Drawing nights into bleak tomorrows

[Verse 3]

In the dim light of dawn's gentle weep
Lies the burden, the secrets that I keep
No redemption, as the tears softly fall
I'm a prisoner within these shadowed halls

[Chorus]

't is the ache, the cry of the broken
Shattered dreams, shattered dreams, and nothing spoken

Yet in the darkness, I find no way
Through the echoes, the emptiness, where memories stray
I'm lost again, though broken I may be
For in the depths of hollowness, there is no me
Once I dreamed of a love that would last
Now I'm haunted by the ghosts of the past
Each day I wake, a prisoner of my mind
In this madness, no peace will I find
My reason for living, forever torn apart
Left to wander with an empty heart

[Chorus]

'T is the ache, the cry of the broken
Shattered dreams, shattered dreams, and nothing spoken

[Final Verse]

I'll never escape this dark insanity
For the shadows have become my reality

[His body goes still. Nora clutches him, sobbing, as the hooded figures begin to emerge from the shadows. The hooded spirits enter slowly, moving like a tide across the stage. For the first time,

they lower their hoods — one by one — revealing the lost: Cheeky’s husband, Elsie’s husband, Shaw’s drill instructor Sgt. Whitaker, and others whose lives were claimed in this dreadful world. Their faces are solemn, neither cruel nor kind. They are limbo itself.]

[Nora kneels beside Edward, clutching his hand. The spirits encircle them, their movements ritualistic, deliberate. One spirit lowers a hood over Edward’s head, as if welcoming him into their number. Another touches his shoulder with reverence, as if in silent benediction.]

[With ceremony, they lift Edward’s body. Not gently. Not cruelly. Simply... as if he belongs to them now. The hooded figures carry him into shadow, their procession slow, unrelenting, leaving Nora behind, clutching her locket, empty-armed.]

[She halts her cry. She just watches. The only sound is the fading echo of footsteps and whispers. As the spirits are exiting with Edward’s body she reaches into her blouse and takes out her locket. Her hands are shaking. She opens it with care, as if afraid it might break.]

Nora (softly, to herself):
It was you.
It was always you.

[She holds the locket to her chest. The last of the spirits disappear. A faint glimmer of peace flickers across her expression—but it vanishes the moment the shadows shift.]

[Dr. Grendel steps forward from the dark. Calm. Inevitable. His presence fills the stage like a storm cloud. He doesn't speak. He simply reaches out a gloved hand. Nora doesn't resist. She closes the locket, tucks it away, and lets him take her. Her gaze never leaves the spot where Edward disappeared.]

[As they vanish into the dark, the stage begins to black out—light fading like breath.]

Scene 11: A Favorable Conclusion
(Overall Scene 21)

[The lights flicker back on, revealing Nora strapped to the operating table. Dr. Grendel looms over her, his tools gleaming ominously. Lilith and Ivy are by his side, preparing the equipment.]

Dr. Grendel (calmly, almost soothingly):
You’ve been drowning in filth, my dear. But don’t worry. You’ll be unsoiled by me. I’ll make you perfect.

[Nora struggles against the restraints, screaming in terror.]

Lilith and Ivy (handing Dr. Grendel a scalpel):
All ready, Doctor. Just say the word.

[Dr. Grendel begins attaching electrodes and preparing his instruments.]

15 - SONG: Do No Harm

Dr. Grendel (singing):

[Verse 1]

In my pristine, white-coated halls, see
Such order and decorum, gleam
Where sickness hides as filth unseen
I'll cure their minds, make 'em clean

[Chorus]

With scalpel sharp and pure delight
I'll cast the madness from their sight

[Verse 2]

In antiseptic realms I've made
I scrub the filth, let darkness fade
Each slice, precise, in my parade
Of cleansing minds from chaos' shade

[Bridge]

Oh, the grime they bring, the stains I see
But with my hands, they'll be set free

[Outro]

In shadows deep, I'll find their fears
Remove the stains of bygone years
Their turmoil, I'll surgically erase
For in my hands, they find their grace

[Finale]

So watch, as I do no harm
With every cut, a calm, in my palm

Dr. Grendel (heartless):

You will be my finest... work... yet.

[As the current surges through Nora, her screams fracture into the sound itself—half human, half mechanical. The lights begin to stutter—irregular, violent, unnatural. Reality starts to slip. The flickering doesn't stop—it settles. What was chaos becomes rhythm. What was pain becomes control.]

[As the lights fluctuate, Dr. Lumen and Dr. Grendel speak as if into a recorder. Their voices are calm and professional, but with a faint hint of satisfaction.]

[Dr. Grendel is gone. In his place stands Dr. Lumen—composed, precise, entirely at ease. Where Lilith and Ivy once stood, there are now three nurses: Eve and two calm, attentive nurses. Nora lies on the table, motionless. Her body is at rest. Her face is peaceful. Empty.]

[As Dr. Lumen and Dr. Grendel begin speaking, the lights narrow around Nora. The rest of the operating room falls away into darkness. A single hooded spirit enters, moving with quiet urgency, and approaches the head of the table. Nora remains motionless, unaware or unable to react.]

