

THE CLEANSED
PILOT - "INCUBATION"

Written by

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INT. TERA AND SANA'S UNIT - BATHROOM - EVENING

A large bathroom designed to be blindingly WHITE.

The **FLOOR** is one solid block of **WHITE**. No tiles. No seams. Not a break to be found.

The 2 **SINKS** above the floor practically sparkle from how clean and WHITE they are. Even the **FAUCETS** are WHITE.

The SOUND of RUNNING WATER can be heard. A shower. Accompanied by HUSHED but hurried MUMBLING.

The **MIRROR** over the sinks has FOGGED over from steam.

The solid white **WALLS** are so pristine they're REFLECTIVE.

IN THE REFLECTION we can see a WHITE **SHOWER HEAD** pouring out water... but there's no one under it.

IN THE SHOWER...

Following the sound of MUMBLING, we find TERA (16, Middle Eastern) on her KNEES and ELBOWS. Her fingers are clasped in front of her. Knuckles WHITE and hands TREMBLING.

Her chin is ducked against her chest and her hair creates a curtain, blocking us from seeing who this person is.

The water POUNDS her NAKED body as she prays. And then -

She reaches up and turns off the shower. The water CUTS OUT.

Leaving Tera kneeling in silence.

No longer obscured by the water, we can see the skin on her back is RED. The shower must've been SCALDING hot.

Tera finally glances up through her hair. She's naturally pretty with deep dark eyes and already curling hair.

Her skin is blotchy and there are TEARS in her eyes.

Body shaking, she forces herself to get up, but it's a slow process. Her elbows and knees practically **STICK TO THE FLOOR**.

Both elbows and both knees are VIOLENTLY **RED**. Like her skin has been rubbed raw.

Now upright, Tera lets out a deep BREATH and SMILES.

TERA (CONT'D)
You want to be Cleansed, right?

LILY
Yeah.

TERA
Then you have to do it.

LILY
I know, but... Dad says I'm gonna
have to go on stage. In front of
everyone.

Tera STIFFENS. Looks around for eavesdroppers.

TERA
Don't talk about him.

LILY
Oh! Sorry, Naomi, I forgot - Shoot,
I mean Tera. I'm gonna mess this
whole thing up.

Tera holds silent a moment, waiting...

When nothing happens, she softens.

TERA
You'll be fine. And if you get
nervous, just look at me. I'll be
there the whole time, okay?

Lily nods, not fully reassured but better.

Tera heads back toward the courtyard. Pauses. Turns back.

TERA (CONT'D)
Don't do this again.

Lily's eyes fill with sadness but she nods.

Tera leaves. Her own eyes heartbroken.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Just like everything else, the auditorium is totally WHITE.
It's safe to say that's the aesthetic of this place.

PEOPLE of all ages, genders, and races are PACKED into the
seats that face **THE STAGE**.

On the stage stands a large CROSS. It's a Christian cross, but there's something off about it.

It looks closer to a **medical symbol**, with SNAKES twisting up its base and WINGS stretching from the top.

12-YEAR-OLDS line the stage. A terrified Lily among them. PARENTS stand behind the children.

Tera's eyes are focused on the man standing behind Lily:

THE ARM (30s, Middle Eastern). He wears a BADGE with a strong **BICEP** on it. He's bulky, bald, and bad to the bone.

He doesn't meet Tera's gaze.

CANDIDOR (30s, white), hair carefully slicked back and handsome face unblemished, stands on the stage. He holds a MIC and a THIN BOOK in his hands.

He gives the mic to a BOY, who steps forward and RECITES:

BOY

"A leper came to him, and kneeling down, begged him and said, 'If you wish, you can make me clean.'"

The AUDIENCE listens intently.

Tera sits beside SANA (16, Korean), a trim girl with square WHITE glasses. She leans over to Tera.

SANA

(whisper)

I love this Reading.

Candidor smiles and nods to Boy. Moves to the next GIRL.

GIRL

"Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do will it. Be made clean.'"

Sana and the congregation are **engrossed** with the reading.

Candidor reaches Lily. Her voice trembles.

LILY

"The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning him sternly, he said... He said... Um..."

Lily's eyes go WIDE. This is her worst nightmare. She stares desperately at Tera.

Tera mouths: "See that you..."

But Lily doesn't understand. The Arm rests his hand encouragingly on Lily's shoulder.

Another BOY steps forward.

BOY

"He said, 'See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.'"

Candidor smiles and turns to address the crowd.

Lily's face BURNS with embarrassment and shame.

Candidor holds up his book: "**THE CLEANSED BIBLE.**"

He glances up at the mass of people.

CANDIDOR

You all know this Reading. Most of you could recite it word-for-word. In time, so will all of us.

The crowd CHUCKLES, much to Lily's mortification.

Tera tries to catch Lily's gaze again, tries to smile, but Lily's eyes stay down.

CANDIDOR (CONT'D)

Today is about remembrance. As we welcome our lambs into The Flock, we remember why we are here. We remember that we are Cleansed by Christ. That while The Infection ravaged the land outside our walls, we were spared. And I think we all know who we have to thank for that.

On cue, LIGHTS go up on stage.

The crowd ERUPTS in applause. Because in walks...

JOSHUA LEVITS (40s, white), hair styled similarly to Candidor's, slick and clean. But there's a dignity to him, a confidence. The leader. He WAVES regally.

CANDIDOR (CONT'D)
 The Present Shepherd. Christ's
 instrument here on earth.

Intense adoration from a nearly hysterical crowd.

Tera and Sana are no exception. Utterly ENTHRALLED.

Lily finally looks up. She meets Tera's eyes. Tera nods to Lily encouragingly.

Candidor hands Joshua the mic. The crowd HUSHES.

JOSHUA

This land, our home, is the only un-
 Stained place left. Free from
 danger and fear of The Infection.
 And so, in today's Bestowment
 Ceremony, we bestow new, un-Stained
 names to our newest family members.

A woman steps onto the stage: THE EYE (35, Latina). She wears a BADGE depicting an open **EYE**. Her short hair is slicked back similarly to Joshua's.

She wheels a group of what look like steel **CHANGING SCREENS**.

As Joshua steps up to the Boy, Tera hears a soft CLICK behind her and she turns...

A GUY (17, Latino) **stands** in the back of the room. Leaning against the door he's just SHUT.

Tera frowns. SOUNDS on stage FADE OUT as she stares...

Guy is **disheveled**. A little frantic. He draws a deep BREATH and then slides into a SEAT at the very back of the room.

Tera leans over to Sana.

TERA
 Sana, who is that?

SANA
 Who?

TERA
 That guy.

SANA
 Who, Nitidus?

TERA
 No, behind him.

Sana narrows her eyes. Adjusts her glasses. FROWNS HARD.

SANA
I don't actually know.

Tera stares in disbelief.

TERA
You don't?

SANA
I don't think I've seen him before.

TERA
That doesn't make any sense.

WOMAN
Shh!

Tera and Sana face forward again, chastised. But they exchange an incredulous look.

Joshua stands in front of Lily.

JOSHUA
As Christ welcomed the leper into
his flock, so too do I welcome you,
who was once called...

She glances back at The Arm and he gives her a subtle nod.

LILY
Lily.

JOSHUA
Who was once called Lily. You enter
a Flock without the Stain of sin or
sick, and so you are Bestowed the
un-Stained name of Exiana.

Joshua **THRUSTS** the changing screen in between Lily - now
EXIANA - and The Arm, like the screen is a knife.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
I Shear your lamb's coat so that a
stronger one may grow in its place.
The Cleansed is your family. The
Cleansed has your allegiance. The
Cleansed welcomes Exiana.

The crowd APPLAUDS - Tera most of all. She smiles proudly.

Exiana looks back but the screen is impenetrable. Blocks
every parent from their child.

She shrinks into herself. So alone on the stage.

But Tera either ignores it or doesn't notice as her eyes drift back to...

The somehow unknown **Guy** in the back row.

EXT. THE CLEANSED COMPOUND - FARM FIELDS - DAY

Tera and Sana are SWEATING hard despite the overcast sky.

There are all kinds of **foods** here. Potatoes, corn, grain. And even some pretty **flowers**. Lavender, roses, gardenias.

Tera and Sana work on the **grain**. Hidden in its stalks.

While Tera uses a **SICKLE** to cut them, Sana uses twine to tie the reaped stalks together.

They're expertly fast. Been doing this for years.

Exiana runs up to Tera and HUGS her.

EXIANA

I did it!

TERA

What are you doing?

Tera practically THROWS her off of her. Looks around frantically. Eyes Sana, who is watching them carefully.

Tera ducks her head and gives her back to Exiana.

EXIANA

I'm officially Cleansed. We can talk now.

TERA

Where's your living unit?

Exiana gestures vaguely behind her where the same 12-year-olds from the auditorium work.

EXIANA

Did you see me up there? I know I forgot the words, but I didn't flinch when they brought the Shear.

Tera glances at Sana again, who's completely stopped to watch their interaction.

TERA

You're gonna get us in trouble. Get out of here. Now.

EXIANA

Sana won't--

TERA

(desperately)

--We're not sisters anymore. You belong with your living unit.

EXIANA

But Naomi--

TERA

--Now!

Exiana CRINGES. Tears well up and she runs away.

Just as Sana reaches them.

SANA

What was that?

TERA

Couldn't find her living unit.

Tera smiles easily.

But Sana's not convinced.

SANA

I wouldn't risk it, Tera. Not so close to the Ritual.

CLYIO (O.S.)

Aw, let them have fun.

CLYIO (17, black) approaches them. While most people here keep their hair contained, Clyio's curls wildly around her face. There's a freeness to her that no one here possesses.

CLYIO (CONT'D)

She's already back with her living unit. No harm, no foul.

Sana hesitates. Gazes a beat too long at her.

Tera speaks with forced casualness.

TERA

Sana's right. I should do a session, just in case.

CLYIO
If it'll make you feel better.

SANA
Of course it'll make her feel better. That's the whole point of the sessions.

Clyio holds her hands up and SNORTS at Sana's sharp tone.

CLYIO
Shit, relax. Didn't mean to offend.

Tera and Sana both freeze. **GAPE.**

SANA
(whisper)
That's an unclean word.

CLYIO
I have a session today. It's fine.

Clyio picks up her BASKET and heads deeper into the stalks.

CLYIO (CONT'D)
I guess I'm lucky I'm not the one with a Ritual coming up, huh?

With a CHUCKLE, she disappears.

Sana turns back to the grain in front of her and JERKS the stalks viciously.

SANA
With all her Stains, it's only a matter of time before she's Purged.

TERA
What do you mean all her Stains?

Sana just focuses on her work. Forgotten all about Exiana.

Tera watches her a beat. Shoulders lower with mild relief as she gets back to work.

INT. SANITIZE BUILDING - EVENING

Tera walks up to a door marked "**Sanitize Sessions.**"

She squares her shoulders and draws a deep BREATH.

She turns the knob and enters.

INT. SANITIZE BUILDING - SESSION ROOM - EVENING

The room looks sort of like a dentist's office. Anatomy **DIAGRAMS** on the walls. **HAND SANITIZER** on the counters.

Tera lies on a leather **PATIENT CHAIR**. Her fingers fidget on top of her stomach and a piece of her hair has fallen out of its perfect bun.

An unlit medical **LAMP** hangs over Tera's face.

Across from her is a large wooden **DESK**, where Candidor sits. A heavy **NOTEBOOK** in his hand. A mock therapist.

CANDIDOR

Do you know what to do at the Ritual?

TERA

Yes.

CANDIDOR

Did you wanna practice again?

TERA

No.

CANDIDOR

Then why are you here, Tera?

Tera's fingers **TWIST** uncomfortably in her lap.

TERA

Sana said I should come.

CANDIDOR

Why?

Tera's fingers **FIDGET** more.

Candidor studies her a moment. Then he reaches over on his desk, to a small **DIAL**. He **TURNS** it slightly.

The lamp above Tera **TURNS ON**. Very dim. Just making its presence known.

Tera glances at it fearfully. Licks her lips.

TERA

Exiana spoke to me. In the fields. She doesn't understand we're not family anymore.

Candidor **WRITES** in the notebook.

CANDIDOR
Did you speak with her?

TERA
No.

He turns the **DIAL** again.

The light becomes a little more intense.

Tera blinks and tries not to look directly into it.

TERA (CONT'D)
I only told her to return to her
living unit.

CANDIDOR
Why did you lie when I asked if
you'd spoken?

TERA
I didn't mean to. I-I'm sorry.

Tera holds perfectly still. Eyes avoiding the light.

Candidor narrows his eyes at her and **WRITES** some more. Then
he **STANDS** and approaches Tera.

He reaches her side and she gazes up at him.

CANDIDOR
If you have any Stains left, you
should tell me. It'll make the
Ritual a lot easier.

TERA
No, that was it. And you helped me.
Thank you.

But Candidor is not convinced. He reaches for the lamp and
TURNS IT UP.

It's nearly **BLINDING** now.

Tera turns her face away from it.

CANDIDOR
Tera.

Against every instinct, Tera turns back to the light and
OPENS HER EYES. She has to **SQUINT**, but she stares into the
light. **TEARS** gather.

TERA

I have no more Stains. I promise.

CANDIDOR

Don't lie to me again, Tera.

Tera's eyes dart to him.

She's thinking... Going through her options... Arrives at the only acceptable response...

Though it pains her:

TERA

Sana said Clyio is Stained.

Candidor perks up.

TERA (CONT'D)

Sana isn't but - Clyio is. I heard her speak uncleanly myself today.

Candidor studies her a beat longer before smiling. He reaches up and **TURNS OFF** the lamp.

Tera HUFFS in relief. Blinking HARD as tears fall down the sides of her face.

Candidor rests his hand familiarly on her HIP. Tera **stiffens**.

CANDIDOR

Good job, Tera. When you return to your room, just your hands today.

TERA

Th-thank you.

As Tera sits up again, Candidor backs away, giving her room. He leans against the edge of his desk, watching her.

Tera hops off the chair with shaky legs and heads past Candidor, for the door behind him.

When she's just a foot away from him, he puts a hand out, against her **STOMACH**, to stop her.

CANDIDOR

Before you go, you should probably fix that.

He gestures to the hair that's come loose from her bun.

She freezes. Eyes him.

He waits patiently.

With trembling hands, Tera reaches up and pulls the rest of her hair free. It falls down around her shoulders.

Candidor **STARES**. Tracking her every movement.

It's... uncomfortable.

As quickly as she can, Tera does up her bun again.

TERA
Good night, Candidor.

CANDIDOR
Good night, Tera.

And then she hurries out the door.

INT. TERA AND SANA'S UNIT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tera rushes into the bathroom and beelines for the sinks.

She JERKS the faucet on and immediately starts **SCRUBBING**. She keeps going even as STEAM starts to billow up into her face.

The soap cannot hide how **RED** her hands are becoming.

After much too long, Tera turns off the sink and looks up at her reflection in the mirror.

Everything is perfectly in place, but the **distress** is so plain on her face.

She takes several deep BREATHS to try and calm herself.