

ERIC Masth

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-- and realizes too late it's TAKEN, by a small blue PORSCHE parked across two spaces and pulled so far forward it was hidden behind the SUV. Jaime grits her teeth as she starts to back up, cars HONKING BEHIND HER.

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY

Jaime hastily ties on her apron as she comes to the drink-prep area, joining a dark-haired, warm YOUNG WOMAN, MAGGIE, who's taking written-on cups from the cashiers and making coffees at BLINDING SPEED.

MAGGIE

(pointing out)

Twenty-three minutes. I'm gonna get carpal tunnel --

(puts up a drink)

Triple shot latte, extra foam!

JAIME

(apologetically)

I had to park in outer Mongolia.

Jaime starts pouring and mixing as well. They keep working as they talk, putting up drinks as they go.

MAGGIE

Venti cappuccino, soy!

(back to Jaime)

Yeah, Pretentious Porsche Guy has been here since dawn.

She nods over at a GUY sitting at a table with a brand new laptop computer. Mid-twenties, good looking in a poser way.

JAIME

How can he even own that car when all he does is sit in here all day, pretend to write, and harass us?

(puts up drink)

Hazelnut vanilla latte!

Maggie gives her an appraising glance.

MAGGIE

Jaime's hostile. That's -- refreshing. Just don't pee in anyone's cappuccino, ok?

(puts up drink)

Chai tea latte!

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY -- LATER

Jaime is behind the register now; rush hour is past, it's gotten QUIETER -- but PRETENTIOUS PORSCHE GUY is at the counter, ARGUING with her.

"The Bionic Woman"

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JAIME
 Sir, we've never had free refills.
 Ever. Never, ever --

#1

MAN (O.S.)
 (annoyed)
 Excuse me --

start =

Jaime and Porsche Guy both turn to see A GOOD LOOKING GUY waiting behind him -- early 30's, wearing surgical scrubs, he's intense in a way halfway between nerdy and sexy. His name is ERIC MASTERS.

ERIC
 -- can I please get some service?

Porsche Guy GLARES at him, but moves off.

PORSCHE GUY
 (a parting shot)
 Eddie's down the street has free refills.

He STALKS back to his table -- Eric turns back to Jaime, looking STERN AND PISSED -- and suddenly GRINS.

ERIC
 You know, someone should really start charging him rent.
 (as she grins back)
 I've got a few minutes. Did you take your break yet?

INT. STARBUCKS -- TABLE -- DAY

Jaime sits with Eric at a table.

ERIC
 Well, there's IPL laser ablation. That's pretty much state of the art for tattoo removal. Scorches the ink right out --

JAIME
 Great. 'Cause if I make her burn a few layers of her skin off, that'll definitely improve the relationship.

She puts down her tea, looks out the window, lost in thought.

ERIC
 I can't believe you feel bad about this. When your mom died, you dropped out of school for Becca -- gave up a full scholarship, took this "job" --

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JAIME
 (pointing out)
 That has health insurance --

ERIC
 -- put your career on hold --

JAIME
 What career? A half-finished degree
 in Shakespearean lit is not exactly
 a marketable skill, per se.
 (trying to lighten
 things)

Look, two months of dating is not
 long enough to qualify you for Becca-
 bashing. You have to make it to at
 least four. *

Jaime looks up -- a LINE has formed at the counter. Maggie
 NODS, beckoning her urgently. *

JAIME (CONT'D)
 Sorry, I gotta get back to it. *

She gets up, he watches her go, frustrated. *

INT. STARBUCKS -- DAY -- MOMENTS LATER *

CLOSE ON A ROW OF CUPS as Maggie passes them to Jaime --
 WIDEN ON JAIME, making ESPRESSO as fast as she can -- *

-- and Eric comes up to the pickup counter, continuing the
 conversation as if they hadn't paused. *

ERIC
 Ok, I get she's a teenager -- but
 that's no excuse. When I was a
 teenager, I was studying 24-7 -- *

Jaime STEAMS milk, hastily puts up the coffee, starts another.
 She's PERPETUAL MOTION as they talk, working fast. *

JAIME
 You were in college at 15 and a
 surgeon by twenty-two. You're not
 exactly representative.

ERIC
 What's that supposed to mean?

Jaime dumps ice and coffee into a blender. *

JAIME
 You're an overachieving, utterly focused,
 completely caffeine-addicted freak.

She starts the blender WHIRRING loudly, turns to more espresso. *

ERIC

Don't mock my dependency. It brought me in here. To you.

(slugs back espresso)

You know, if I adopted you, you'd have killer health insurance.

Jaime starts pouring the blended, along with two coffees. *

JAIME

That's disturbing on so many levels I don't even know where to start --

ERIC

Yeah, you're right. Adoption's out. (trying to sound casual)

Maybe you two should just move in with me.

Jaime TENSES, then grabs milk and pours. This is a sore subject. As she puts up the coffee --

ERIC (CONT'D)

Becca could have the downstairs bedroom. I'll even spring for a cat --

~~The WOMAN CUSTOMER taking the coffee tastes it, speaks up:~~

~~WOMAN COFFEE CUSTOMER~~

~~This isn't nonfat. I asked for nonfat. I can taste the fat --~~

~~JAIME~~

~~I'm sorry, ma'am, let me replace that.~~

She starts remaking the coffee, as the line begins to BACK UP.

JAIME (CONT'D)

(repeating, pointedly)

We've been going out two months.

ERIC

(teasing a little)

Yeah, but at moments like this it really does feel longer, doesn't it?

(more seriously)

Jaime, just let me --

JAIME

(flaring)

What? Take care of me?

~~WOMAN COFFEE CUSTOMER~~

~~(pointing out helpfully)~~

~~He seems nice, he is a doctor --~~

ERIC
 (correcting, to Jaime)
 Not "take care of you." Help. Let me help.

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*

JAIME
 I can take care of myself. And Becca.
 I've been doing it a long time.

~~STUDENT COFFEE CUSTOMER
 Look, could I get my latte? Before
 the polar ice caps melt.~~

JAIME
 (as she hands over
 coffee)
 I like you, Eric. A lot. But I'm
 not good at relying on people. They
 tend to let you down.

ERIC
 James --

His BEEPER goes off. He checks it.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Gotta get back across the street. Let's
 just -- are we still on for dinner?

Jaime turns back to the counter, coffees in both hands.

~~JAIME
 I don't know, I've got a lot to mphhh --~~

She's totally cut off as he leans across the counter and
 KISSES her, serious, intense. She barely manages not to
 drop the coffees. He pulls back --

JAIME (CONT'D)
 (low, a little dazed)
 We go dutch. And I choose the
 restaurant.

ERIC
 Pick you up tonight.

Step

He takes off, loping quickly across the street to the
 HOSPITAL. Jaime quickly hands off the coffees, BLUSHING.

INT. APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Someone is KNOCKING at the door as Jaime quickly gets her
 stuff together. Becca trails her, not happy.

BECCA
 I don't need a babysitter. It's
 insulting.

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POV JONAS, looking down at JAIME'S SLEEPING FACE; but through glass, her features are slightly DISTORTED, blurry. UNKNOWN.

INT. FACILITY -- HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

C.U. JAIME'S FACE, SLEEPING fitfully. Strangely, her FACE doesn't show the GASHES and LACERATIONS we saw on her -- instead, there's only a few pale LINES of healing cuts and light BRUISING. Her eyes DART, dreaming uneasily.

ERIC (O.S.)
Jaime, can you hear me?

Her eyes FLUTTER OPEN, focusing SLOWLY to see ERIC.

ERIC (CONT'D)
You've been out for three days.
(gently)
Come back to me.

She's in a hospital bed, sheets pulled up to her shoulders. Jaime's eyes suddenly WIDEN as she REMEMBERS --

FLASHBACK in split-second, fragmented images to JAIME'S POV INSIDE THE CAR CRASH: SKIN covered with blood, DEAFENING NOISE, shattering glass, CRUNCHING METAL --

BACK TO JAIME LYING IN THE BED as she looks up at Eric.

JAIME
(weak, bleary)
What happened? I thought... I thought
I was dead.

Eric looks DEEPLY UNCOMFORTABLE.

ERIC
Jaime, there are some things I have
to tell you --

JAIME
(sudden realization)
The baby. What about the baby?

Eric doesn't answer. And it's all the answer she needs.

JAIME (CONT'D)
Oh my god. Oh... oh god...

She turns away, eyes closed, in terrible PAIN.

ERIC
I'm sorry, I'm so sorry. I couldn't --

FLASHBACK TO THE CRASH: the dash CRUSHING her legs, the car ROLLING, glass EVERYWHERE, NOISE and HORROR -- BACK TO JAIME --

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START-

#2

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JAIME

My legs, they -- they don't hurt.
They're just... numb.
(beginning to panic)
Why don't they hurt?

ERIC

Ok, Jaime, wait, just stay calm --

ON JAIME, feeling anything but calm, remembering MORE:

FLASHBACK TO THE CRASH, more THUNDEROUS noise, images even
FASTER: the car SPLATTERED with blood, her arm MANGLED at
her side, legs BURIED beneath twisted metal --

BACK TO JAIME, looking down at the sheets covering her body.

JAIME

I can't feel my arm, either --

ERIC

Just -- just listen for a second,
ok? This is a kind of -- government
research facility. And I, I moonlight
here, doing experimental surgical
work. I've developed a system to
replace human body parts with
biomechanical ones, called "bionics."

Jaime looks up at him, beginning to be truly AFRAID.

JAIME

(small voice)
Eric... ?

ERIC

Both your legs and your arm had to
be replaced; also, your, um, right
ear and right eye. Molecular machines --
nanocytes -- have been substituted
for one eighth of your blood cells --

Jaime RIPS the covering sheets off -- to look at her ARMS.

THE SKIN is TRANSPARENT, clear as plexiglass; beneath, we
can see the BIOMECHANICAL MACHINERY that is her new arm.

It's NOT wires and metal and electronics -- the structures
mimic human bones, muscles, tissues, but the colors and shapes
are wrong, different, familiar and disturbing at once.

BONES are black-silver TITANIUM CERAMICS;
MUSCLES are STARK WHITE, flexible, striated, connected by
GREEN TENDONS and LIGAMENTS, whipcord thin; VEINS pulse in a
NETWORK of pale BLUE-WHITE "blood"; and TINY FLOWS OF MERCURY-
LIKE QUICKSILVER race over everything, DARTING like lightning
everywhere, BIONIC NERVE IMPULSES. Jaime is HORRIFIED.

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ERIC (CONT'D)

(desperately)

Listen to me, listen -- the nanocytes
are completing the graft --

Jaime looks down at the rest of her body; she's wearing a white tank top and loose white scrub pants. As Eric keeps talking, she JERKS both pants legs UP to look at her legs --

ERIC (CONT'D)

Soon the skin will look just like yours --

JAIME'S LEGS ARE TRANSPARENT, just like her ARM, showing the INNER WORKINGS of the bionics beneath.

JAIME

What -- what did you do --

Eric grabs up a mirror, holds it up to her face --

ERIC

You should have lacerations bone
deep all over your face, but look.
The nanocytes are healing you at an
exponential rate -- all of you.

And instead of answer, Jaime RIPS the bandage from her eye. She's RELIEVED for a moment, her eye looks NORMAL -- but then Jaime sees the pupil has a strange EMERALD GREEN GLINT to it, like A CAT'S EYE REFLECTING in the dark.

Jaime GRABS the mirror, holding it in her bionic hand, STARING at her eye -- and as she TENSES, the mirror CRACKS in her hand.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(hastily)

Yeah, bionics are stronger than the,
um, what you had before. Don't worry,
the biosensors just have to adjust,
it's a call and response process to
develop a neurofeedback loop --

JAIME

Shut. Up.

(shock becoming anger)

Stop talking to me about grafts and
machines and nano-neuro-whatever --

(escalating)

This is my body, what did you do to
my body --

ERIC

(desperately)

I saved it! I saved you! Your body
was broken, you were dying, and I
had to -- I had to -- just, just
look at your arm. Look.

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Afraid of what she'll see, Jaime looks at her arm --

ON JAIME'S BIONIC ARM as, with each RUSH of pulse, the bionic skin goes OPAQUE, looking for an instant like NORMAL SKIN, then back to transparent, then NORMAL again --

ERIC (CONT'D)

The nanocytes are matching pigmentation,
hair, muscle structures -- everything. *

Jaime stares as if MESMERIZED at her arm, CHANGING with each pulse. Eric takes her hand, holding it against his chest. *

ERIC (CONT'D)

Jaime... with every heartbeat, it's
turning more into you.

JAIME

Let go of me --

She PUSHES him away with her bionic arm against his chest -- *
and the force of what should have been a little PUSH sends *
Eric FLYING back, CLATTERING into a bank of EQUIPMENT. *

Jaime is SHOCKED, as Eric untangles himself from the equipment *
to get to his feet. *

ERIC

Yeah... actually, it's not just *
"stronger." More like, a lot stronger -- *

JAIME

You've made me into some kind of freak.

She turns away from him, STARING at her arm --

JAIME (CONT'D)

Leave me alone.

(as he hesitates)

You want me to say get out? All
right: get out!

Eric turns and goes -- leaving Jaime STARING at her arm,
PULSING slowly into the camouflage of humanity.

END OF ACT TWO

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