

ROXÉ15© The Series: EPISODE 2

EXCERPT: THE CLINIC SCENE

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INT. CRITICAL CARE CLINIC, WAITING AREA - DAY

The dingy, chaotic waiting room is packed with people who can't afford to be sick. Hacking coughs, snotty noses, feverish brows, running sores, short tempers and general misery. The TVs throughout the waiting room echo the same commercial in a spooky chorus. An epic water reservoir roars on every screen.

COMMERCIAL V.O.

FRESH WATER. Our most precious commodity is rapidly disappearing... but a commitment to shave your head for three years will save enough water to hydrate hundreds of children through the critical first four years of life. Commit to doing your part. (beat) Brought to you by the San Francisco Department of Public Health and Well-Being.

Like an old-school junkie, Roxë shivers in a big coat and inky sunglasses. Her knee jumps like a jackrabbit on coke. Two dots of light glow in the buds in her ears; her call is connected. She can't help but check out the scene.

ROXË (ON CALL)

I'm still waiting at Critical Care.
This is....the pits.

INT. FANTA AND AMIGO LIVING ROOM - CONT.

Wearing the same ear buds, Fanta is on the couch huddled in blankets. She's grayish and weak, with freakishly swollen glands.

FANTA

Suck it up, buttercup.

ROXË (O.C.)

Ha! You're not the one in this piece---

FANTA

I advise you to hang on til they get to you. You don't want whatever this is I got, TRUST.

INT. CRITICAL CARE - CONT.

ROXË (ON CALL)
Are you OK?

Fanta's answer is gut-wrenching coughs.

FANTA (O.C.)
(hacking cough)
Gotta go----

Fanta hangs up.

INT. EXAM WARD - CONT.

Without her shades on, Roxë looks like hell in the harsh light. Close by, a worried FATHER holds his young DAUGHTER. Roxë makes a face at the girl, who giggles. A BALD NURSE in a huge mask and goggles draws Roxë's her blood. The little girl HOWLS and clutches her dad when she sees the masked nurse coming her way.

INT. CONSULTATION ROOM - CONT.

Rows of worn-out cubicles are all in use. In one of those cubicles, Roxë faces a bald, overworked, heavily masked DOCTOR. The Doctor studies a digital tablet. Nearby, Roxë sees the weary Father smile at his teary-eyed little girl.

FLASHBACK:

INT. JONES APARTMENT - DAY

Exhausted Rockland walks in the door with a stethoscope around his neck. He smiles wearily. The memory FADES AWAY.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CONSULTATION ROOM - CONT.

ROXË
(shivering)
So what do I have?

Above the mask, behind a shield, the Doctor's eyes come straight at her.

DOCTOR

I have no idea. (beat) I've never seen anything like this. Not even close...and I've seen a lot. It---

The Doctor looks back at the tablet. Avoiding her.

ROXË

It what?

DOCTOR

(hesitates)

It almost looks synthetic...and with the bio-terrorism where it is...who knows? As it is, some of the natural super-viruses can mutate in hours. We can't keep up. If it's *synthetic*---? Sky's the limit.

ROXË

(alarmed)

There's nothing you can give me? How contagious is it?

DOCTOR

(shrugs)

The average immune system beats most viruses all day long. Problem is, this is not your average virus.

Roxë looks away, whispering frantically. Throat clearing from the doctor and Roxë re-focuses.

ROXË

(disbelief, outrage)

My father was an ER doctor...but he never caught ANYTHING. He had a chemokine receptor mutation, you understand? And I NEVER get sick!

DOCTOR

Viruses are crafty little bastards. Not technically alive, but not dead either...and they survive by any means necessary. Their life's work is outwitting immune systems...even platinum immunity like yours. (beat) But I have no clue, with this one. I'm sorry, I can't help you.

ROXË

(jumps to her feet)

There HAS to be something you can do!
Give me *something*! I can't get sick.
Not NOW...not like *this*. I don't have
time--- (pause) Please!

The Doctor stands, takes a long, slow look around the packed room. Behind the eye shield, TEARS well up. The Doctor looks at Roxë in utter defeat and tries to refocus.

DOCTOR

Sorry--- (beat) Look, I can't even
identify this virus. Do you
understand? (pause) Stay hydrated.
Try to get your hands on some meds...
any antivirals--they'll at least make
you feel better. I'm over my quota
for dispensing sponsored meds...and
we're all out anyway.

ROXË

(beside herself)

Wait, what?! WHAT? What the shit am I
supposed to do?

DOCTOR

Do as much as you can, *while* you can.
It's going to get worse. And then,
hopefully, you'll get better.

The doctor looks at her oddly and hands her a tissue. The doc straightens up under the weight of the world and goes to a device in the wall. The doctor puts both hands into two openings. The latex glove coating on the doctor's hands is removed and a fresh latex coating is put on. The doctor heads to the next cubicle.

Alone in the dingy cubicle, Roxë wipes her very runny nose.