

Aerial

C7: AERIAL

Known Infections: ?

Sol 2, 16:19

Put some clothes on me! I am the CEO's next in command, and Leo will hunt you down. People will notice the key speaker is missing. You will never get away with this,' are the first things Aerial wants to scream, opening her eyes and seeing herself in the ceiling mirror, buckled and bound to an icy table.

The Man, who dragged Aerial into the T7, stands over her, shaking his head. He pulls at her bikini bottom and jabs a needle into her thigh.

The effect is immediate. The Man's face becomes twice as blurry.

Aerial considers what will happen to this Man once she gets out of here. She imagines Maverick doing a number on this Man and making him wish he knew her high status at

Angel Garrison, but Aerial is more afraid he does.

‘What do you want?’ mumbles Aerial, but the drugs flowing through her body dull her ability to talk. Drool escapes her mouth more than the sounds of her voice. With a final burst of energy and fading control over her limbs, she forces a violent but short thrashing episode.

‘Please, relax,’ urges the Man, putting a rich minty cream on the shallow cuts around Aerial’s ankles and wrists and wiping up droplets of blood, dripping and coating the surgical bed’s stainless-steel edges.

Aerial, barely able to see the Man, answers with a death stare.

‘I wonder if you recognize the procedure I am submitting you to,’ laughs the Man, pulling aside her bottoms and covering her vagina with a yellow liquid.

Aerial gasps, looking for the liquid’s source by rolling her eyes to the left, and spots a lengthy orifice. Next to this oversized member is a container filled with yellow liquid. It doesn’t have a label. She hopes it’s something more sanitary than piss. These promotive tools remind her of her early work creating the Pearl.

One of two men in blue tights picks up the foot-long member and turns a dial. Aerial cringes, thinking of what they will do after lubing up the member, but something else steals her attention.

‘The needle,’ Aerial whimpers, feeling goblets or tiny

balls moving through her muscles and vines below the skin. It reminds her of swallowing a snake-like bug with hundreds of legs, which she hopes is an illusion brought on by being pumped full of drugs.

‘I imagine talking is beyond you now,’ states the Man. ‘I would tell you to relax and enjoy this, but you won’t understand until you try your own medicine.’

Aerial spits at the Man. A mistake. It hurts when nothing comes out.

‘Water,’ thinks Aerial, imagining even a drop might stop her muscles from withering away or tightening and cracking like rocks. She prays the Man will recognize her need, but he focuses on the leather pouch shaking at his hip.

The Man pulls a vibrating black orb out of a leather sack and holds it at eye level.

‘This better be important,’ he mumbles through clenched teeth and tight lips.

Aerial stares at the mirrored ceiling and sees an orange man in the orb.

‘The anomalies,’ booms the orange monster.

Aerial notes how the orange giant pushes out his words, like a pain in his body is holding him back from releasing his anger. ‘They may have survived the blast and disappeared in the Southern mountain.’

Aerial recognizes the Orange man’s voice, echoing in the T6’s small chamber. The Man calls him Tigranes, and she

recalls hearing his voice shortly after abandoning her jeep and seeing the giant cloud still hanging over the campus after returning from the beach.

‘You are in charge of the Campus area,’ barks the Man walking between his two men with white Xs painted on their chests. ‘No need to worry about the unexpected guests.’

‘Those uninvited guests change our agreement,’ counters Tigranes.

Aerial sees Tigranes clenching his fist like a child who isn’t getting their way. She remembers Tigrane’s losing his arm to Andrew and Sam. The two men could have rescued her from whatever hell she was going through now. However, after removing Tigranes’ arm with a mysterious weapon, they ran off to the Southern Mountain.

‘Our agreement will not change,’ hisses the Man.

‘I’ve already lost enough, and it will change,’ retorts Tigranes.

Aerial wonders if the lost limb disappeared in some impossible magic trick. She is sure the weapon Sam used sucked it up like someone zipping ice cream through a straw.

‘Maybe you lost the clarity of mind to lead this operation,’ threatens the Man, clenching his fist and pacing.

Aerial watches the Man waving his fist around, hoping he doesn’t slam it into her like when commanding the blue men. Tigranes shouts something about claiming a weapon, but Aerial is having trouble focusing. The drugs amplify her

urge to sleep until the Man explodes with anger and raps his fists into the surgical table. The cold metal table shakes.

Aerial crunches her eyelids together, waiting for Simon to slam his fist into her naked gut, then inject her again.

It is some time before Aerial realizes Simon is gone, and one Sky X is fastening a helmet over her head. The other winds several tubes around her throat and then forces the ends into her mouth. She clenches her throat in defence and imagines rolling off the table to escape. Instead, the Sky X shoves the tube deep inside, centimetre by centimetre. Time slows in the usual way as she feels the tube slide down her throat and into her stomach. Now Aerial feels like peeing as it presses against her bladder. Before she has time to react, her vision and thoughts fade to a blank whiteness, a sleepless dream. One she will never forget.

