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Synopsis:

A near-future world where Korean/Indian style family-owned conglomerates have spread globally, creating powerful corporate entities that control the governments and technology across most nations. Medical technology conglomerates have made cybernetic replacements commonplace. These biotech conglomerates maintain profit and control through maintenance contracts; users must pay regular fees for updates, repairs, and medications that prevent rejection. Most upper-middle class citizens have at least some minor enhancements from these companies (ex: neural links, sensory augmentations), while the wealthy enjoy more premium enhancements.

Main Character 1 (Researcher):

- Regenerative medicine specialist
- Has developed theoretical framework and successful animal trials for technology that could replace cybernetic parts with regrown organic tissue
- Wants this breakthrough to remain accessible rather than controlled by conglomerates
- Lost his older sister to suicide over a decade ago after she couldn't psychologically adapt to her cybernetic replacements
- Faces funding obstacles due to corporate interference
- SK-Mehta has offered to buy his research multiple times, with each offer higher than the last
- Age: 40s
- Basic Appearance: Disheveled dark hair with grey streaks, lab coat

Main Character 2 (Military Veteran / Engineering Student):

- Former military operative with 40% military-grade cybernetic replacements

- Military installed advanced, non-standard combative components that require expensive proprietary maintenance
- Financial struggles come from cybernetic maintenance costs that exceed her veteran stipend
- Attending university as an engineering student, with tuition covered by military education benefits
- Participates in underground activities to earn money for the excessive maintenance costs
- Age: 30s
- Appearance: Athletic build, shoulder-length hair tied back in a tight ponytail

Antagonist (SK-Mehta Biosciences):

- Dominant medical-technology conglomerate
- Infiltrated university research committees and funding boards
- Blacklists non-cooperative researchers from funding and publication
- Uses regulatory capture to block competing technologies
- Views regenerative technology as a serious threat to their maintenance contract revenue as it isn't as profitable (making people pay a subscription V.S a one time medical expense).

Cybernetic replacements:

- necessary medical prosthetics for accident victims, veterans, etc.

Cybernetic enhancements:

- optional upgrades that provide beyond-normal capabilities

ONE - SK-Mehta Biosciences Headquarters

Panel 1: A wide-angle shot of a corporate building and futuristic cityscape. SKMehta Biosciences' logo is prominently featured.

1. VOICEOVER: In the year of 2065, cybernetic replacements are a necessity for many, yet SKMehta keeps them locked behind maintenance contracts only the privileged can afford.

Panel 2: Close-up of someone working with tissue samples or tubes in a lab, and/or charts showing successful tests.

1. RESEARCHER (thinking): Finally... nerve regeneration at a cellular level. After all these grant rejections, they'll have to see the potential now.

Panel 3: Researcher goes before a large panel of people (the funding board). The members exchange glances.

1. FUNDING BOARD MEMBER: While your preliminary results show promise, RESEARCHER, the committee has concerns about the methodology, reproducibility, and broader impacts. We recommend you pursue alternative research directions more aligned with current industry standards.

Panel 4: Researcher leaves the boardroom looking upset.

1. RESEARCHER (muttering): "Industry standards" ... right. Third rejection this year. Ninth overall.
2. RESEARCHER: They can keep their funding, I'll figure this out myself.

Panel 5: The researcher is sitting in a quiet area of the university cafeteria, looking at research data on his tablet. VETERAN approaches.

1. VETERAN: Excuse me. Those look like nerve regeneration diagrams. Are you in the medical department?
2. RESEARCHER (subtly covering his notes): Yes. Just some theoretical work I'm pursuing.

Panel 6: VETERAN sits down, subtly rolling up her sleeve to reveal a cybernetic forearm. The researcher glances at it.

1. VETERAN: I have a personal interest in how cybernetics connect to the human nervous system. I can help with your research.
2. RESEARCHER (speaking quietly): If you're serious, meet me tonight at 8. I'll text you the address.

Panel 7: A basement with bright lights and specialized equipment, including a cell incubator.

1. RESEARCHER: it's not much, but it's off the corporate grid.
2. VETERAN: This is impressive equipment for a home setup. How'd you get all this?

Panel 8: The researcher's basement lab. Closeup of a workbench with scientific equipment. Some items have university logos visible.

1. RESEARCHER: Most of this equipment is from my lab at the university. On paper, it's all for approved research.
2. VETERAN: You're... risking your position.
3. RESEARCHER: ...What choice do I have?

Panel 9: The Veteran and Researcher working together at a lab table. The Veteran has removed her jacket, revealing cybernetic components along her arm and shoulder.

1. VETERAN: Lost most of my right side in combat, and these replacements cost more than my pension allows me to afford.
2. RESEARCHER: They designed the system that way. Dependency has always been their business model.

Panel 10: The Researcher's phone rings. The screen shows "DEPARTMENT CHAIR" as the caller. The researcher looks concerned as he answers.

1. RESEARCHER (on phone): Yes, Professor?
2. PHONE (speech bubble): SK-Mehta security just raided your university lab! Someone told them about your home setup - they're on their way there now!
3. RESEARCHER (turning to Veteran): They found us. Grab the data drives and let's go.

Panel 11 The basement lab with the Researcher and Veteran frantically disconnecting equipment. The door bursts open as corporate security agents in black uniforms with SK-Mehta logos storm in.

1. AGENT: SK-Mehta security! Drop that drive!
2. RESEARCHER (clutching data drive): This isn't yours to take!
3. VETERAN (heaving a table): Back door! Move!

Panel 12 The Researcher and Veteran running side by side across a moonlit backyard. Security agents with weapons are visible as silhouettes in the background near the house. Both characters look alarmed as they flee.

1. RESEARCHER: I've secured the data! We need to--
2. VETERAN: This way! We split up at the next corner. Meet at the backup location.

Panel 13 Interior of a small apartment filled with computer equipment. The Veteran meets with a young woman working at a multi-screen setup. The Researcher is not present.

1. TECH ENTHUSIAST: These before-and-after scans.. Tissue actually regrowing. Is this real?
2. VETERAN: SK-Mehta's been hunting us for it.
3. TECH ENTHUSIAST: Uploading this to research networks in Iceland and the Netherlands first. Their data protection laws will keep this alive long enough to become public knowledge.

Panel 14: Split panel showing two locations worldwide. Left side: Medical research lab with doctors crowded around screens displaying tissue regeneration imagery and database notifications. Right side: Public square with civilians watching breaking news on a large display screen.

1. NEWS HEADLINE (on screen): "LEAKED RESEARCH REVEALS BREAKTHROUGH: Natural Tissue Regrowth Could End Cybernetic Technology"

2. MEDICAL DATABASE (on lab computer): "Protocol Update; Clinical validation of neural tissue regeneration achieved with non-proprietary equipment."

Panel 15: A news studio with anchors reporting breaking news. Screens behind them show SKMehta stock prices dropping and people gathered around outside corporate headquarters. A ticker at the bottom shows continuous updates.

1. NEWS ANCHOR: "SKMehta shares fell 18% today following the leaked regeneration research, with the company facing questions about why this technology wasn't developed for public use."
2. FINANCIAL ANALYST (in video call window): "This research threatens their business model, but SKMehta will likely adapt. The question is whether regulators will finally step in."

Panel 16: A hospital rehabilitation room. A patient with a partially regenerated left arm works with a physical therapist. The new arm tissue appears slightly pinker than the surrounding skin, with faint surgical lines visible where old meets new.

1. PATIENT (picking up a small object): I can feel how cold this is...
2. DOCTOR: The nerve sensitivity should continue to improve. Try the dexterity exercises we talked about when you get home.

Panel 17: A busy medical clinic with a sign reading "Regeneration Center" at the entrance. Inside, people wait in a lobby. Some have partially regenerated limbs while others are arriving for consultations.

1. RECEPTIONIST: Your insurance covers the full treatment now. The waiting list is two weeks.
2. PATIENT: Thank God... I wouldn't have been able to afford another year with what they're charging me.

Panel 18: The Researcher and Veteran are sitting across from each other in a quiet area of the university cafeteria - the same spot where they first met. The Veteran is typing on her laptop with both fully human hands, red nails visible. The Researcher is sipping chocolate, looking relaxed.

1. VETERAN: My engineering thesis on opensource cybernetic control systems just won the department award.
2. RESEARCHER: That's brilliant. Your work gives people control over their own cybernetics while my tech gives them a choice.
3. VETERAN: All those rejections for not following 'industry standards'... and now they're rushing to catch up with us.