

FADE IN ON:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lived-in, comfortable: a worn wooden floor, a sway-backed couch. A battered, Roomba-like device drifts slowly around the room. It hovers a half-inch above the floor, sucking up dust, powered by four small propellers.

As we FOLLOW the device around the room, we glimpse a pair of photos on the mantle. Two young parents with a son and a daughter. Then a later picture: just the mother and two teenagers. The Roomba leads us through an open doorway:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Again: worn but tidy. Three placemats on the table. We HEAR someone opening and shutting cabinets in the next room, and the Roomba lead us into:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

FLYNNE FISHER (26) is making two sandwiches. We recognize her as the daughter from the photos: tall, sturdy, brisk, in jeans and a T-shirt with "Forever Fab" on its front. She puts one sandwich in the fridge, fills an old thermos from a coffeepot, slides the thermos and the second sandwich into a bag. Then she pours coffee into a mug, carries it into:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

More family photos on the wall, including one of the son as a young man, in a Marine uniform. At the end of the hall, Flynnne steps through an open doorway, into:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - ELLA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ELLA FISHER (50) is propped up in bed, watching TV. She hits MUTE as Flynnne enters. Flynnne sets the mug beside the bed.

FLYNNE

More in the pot.

Ella watches Flynnne bustle about, plumping pillows, tidying. We recognize Ella as the mother from the photos, but she's been radically transformed by illness. She's gaunt, prematurely aged. There's a walker in the room, an oxygen tank, a dozen pill bottles on the night table.

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FLYNNE (cont'd)  
 Left a sandwich in the fridge.  
 Burton can make his own, he wants  
 one. He ate yours yesterday, and  
 don't try to tell me otherwise.

ELLA  
 (smiling at Flynne)  
 I wasn't hungry.

FLYNNE  
 Can't keep losing weight, Mama.  
 Gonna end up in the hospital again,  
 you aren't careful. Where is he,  
 anyway?

ELLA  
 Who?

FLYNNE  
 Your fool of a son, that's who.

ELLA  
 Working, isn't he?

FLYNNE  
 That really what you wanna call it?  
 "Working?"

The Roomba has followed Flynne down the hall, and now it's  
 gotten snagged on the fringe of the bedroom rug. Flynne  
 gives it a firm KICK, and WE CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The door is KICKED open, and a BEARDED MAN enters. He's  
 dressed like a French partisan, armed with a WWII era rifle.  
 He hurriedly starts to pull out drawers, dumping their  
 contents on the floor.

A RED-HAIRED MAN joins him; he's wearing a beret, carrying a  
 rifle. He moves to the bed, starts to slice open the  
 pillows, shaking out the feathers. Through the open doorway,  
 we can hear a third man, searching the room across the hall.

BEARDED MAN  
 Attic?

RED-HAIRED MAN  
 Empty.

(CONTINUED)

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Their voices sound odd—all of the audio does—computer generated, one small step short of natural. From beyond the window, we hear AN APPROACHING ENGINE. The two men freeze. A BLOND-HAIRED MAN appears in the room's doorway. He's short and compact, dressed and armed like the others.

BLOND-HAIRED MAN  
Told you, didn't I? Fucking trap.

The bearded man edges to the window, lifts the curtain:

BEARDED MAN'S POV - OUT THE WINDOW

Fields of lavender in bloom. A dirt road winds up a slope. A beat, then a German half-track appears over the hill.

BACK TO SCENE - THE THREE MEN

The bearded man turns quickly from the window, and WE CUT TO:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - ELLA'S ROOM - DAY

Flynn sorts through the pill bottles on the night table, distributing the day's medication into a plastic dispenser, with the hours marked. One of the bottles only has a single pill left. Flynn grimaces, glances up at Ella.

FLYNN  
Think you'll need more than one  
feel-good today?

ELLA  
That should be enough, I'd guess.

Flynn tips out the last pill, then pockets the empty bottle.

FLYNN  
I'll get a refill on my way home.  
Burton transferred his VA points to  
your Medicaid account, right?

Ella is silent, and Flynn glances up. Ella pats the air.

ELLA  
You know those implants of his have  
been acting up again, Flynn.

But Flynn isn't having it: she starts out of the room, giving the Roomba another kick, and steps into:

## INT. FISHER HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

There's a window a few feet from Ella's room. Flynnne yanks it open. Down the slope from the house, we can glimpse an old Airstream trailer. Flynnne SHOUTS toward it:

FLYNNNE

Burton...!

(a beat, louder)

BURTON...!

No response. Flynnne SLAMS shut the window. We remain there, looking out, as she strides off. We hear the screen door in the kitchen open and BANG shut, and then Flynnne appears, heading down the hill toward the trailer.

## EXT. FRENCH FARMHOUSE - REAR - DAY

The ground slopes downward from the farmhouse to a large barn. Beyond the barn is a ploughed field, which in turn slopes down to a forest. As the half-track's engine grows steadily LOUDER, the three partisans emerge from the farmhouse's back door. They sprint for the barn.

## INT. FRENCH BARN - CONTINUOUS

Two dozen sheep are penned in the barn. When the partisans slip in through the big wooden door, the sheep begin to buck and baa in fright. The blond-haired man tries to quiet them. The bearded man peers out through a knot in the barn's wall.

## BEARDED MAN'S POV - THROUGH THE KNOT

A beat, then a YOUNG NAZI appears around the farmhouse, a submachine gun at the ready. He hesitates, staring toward the barn, listening to the sheep. Then he starts forward.

## BACK TO SCENE - INSIDE THE BARN

The bearded man draws a knife, steps toward the big wooden door, presses himself against the wall. Waits.

The door is dragged open, and the young Nazi peers into the dim interior. The bearded man lunges: there's a struggle, and he cuts the Nazi's throat. As the German drops, he squeezes off a BURST from his gun. The partisans yank the barn door shut, and crouch, waiting.

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CONTINUED:

FLYNNE (V.O.)  
 You gotta switch those points to  
 Mama's account.

Only the bearded man appears to hear this. He tilts his head:

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - DAY

What little there is has been tidily squared away. Flynnne stands in the doorway, staring down at BURTON (29). He's in a recliner, shirtless, barefoot, in jeans: as spare and Spartan as his surroundings. He has a VR headset on.

There are ghostly silver markings across his torso: haptic implants. They look part-high tech, part tribal, and they flicker and pulse as Burton uses them to control the game. Flynnne kicks one of his bare feet:

FLYNNE  
 Hear me?

Burton touches the headset, turns to look in her direction:

BURTON  
 Got your phone?

FLYNNE  
 Yeah.

BURTON  
 Jump in real quick. I gotta pee.

FLYNNE  
 (shakes her head)  
 Late for work. Mama can get a  
 fifty percent rebate on those  
 points, you sign them over.

BURTON  
 I'm in a situation here, Flynnne.

FLYNNE  
 Yeah, well, so is Mama. And hers  
 isn't a made-up one in some stupid  
 Sim. You don't switch those points  
 by midnight, we'll lose 'em.  
 That's half a doctor's visit.

BURTON  
 Seriously, Flynnne. I'm gonna  
 burst. Do me a solid and jump in.

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CONTINUED:

FLYNNE

You'll take care of the points?

BURTON

Word of honor.

Flynnne wavers one last moment, then pulls out her phone. She taps at its screen, synching the phone with the headset.

FLYNNE

Orient me.

BURTON

Squad of Nazis in the house. We're in the barn.

FLYNNE

Who's we?

BURTON

Me and Reece and some dude from California. Keeps saying 'chill.' It's annoying as all hell. Reece is the one in the funny hat.

FLYNNE

Who hired you?

BURTON

Dentist. From Florida. Either has a beard, or is awful fond of them.

He pulls off the headset, tosses it to Flynnne, starts for the trailer's door. Flynnne calls after him:

FLYNNE

Don't be tarrying! I'm late enough as it is.

She pulls on the headset, and:

INT. FRENCH BARN - DAY

GUNFIRE keeps slamming through the wooden walls. The three partisans lie on their bellies. Bullets are HITTING the sheep; the animals are CRYING out, bucking and kicking. The bearded man appraises the scene, shakes his head in disgust:

BEARDED MAN

Don't ya'll have the slightest shred of decency? At least let the damn sheep out.

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CONTINUED:

He jumps up, pushes his way through the animals. There's a door at the back of the barn, and he kicks it open. The sheep surge into the field, fleeing downhill toward the line of trees. The red-haired man is appraising the bearded man:

RED-HAIRED MAN  
Flynnne?

BEARDED MAN  
Howdy, Reece.

BLOND-HAIRED MAN  
Who the fuck is Flynnne?

The redhead ignores him, his eyes on the bearded man:

RED-HAIRED MAN  
Where's Burton?

Bullets keep SMACKING into the barn, making all three flinch.

BEARDED MAN  
Powdering his nose. How'd you end up here?

RED-HAIRED MAN  
Ran from the house. Heading for those trees next, if we can make it.

The fleeing sheep have exposed something in the far corner of the barn, covered by a tarp. The bearded man yanks the tarp free, revealing an old tractor, with a cart, bales of hay piled on it. The bearded man bends to examine the tractor.

BEARDED MAN  
Why were you in the house?

RED-HAIRED MAN  
Supposed to be a map inside.

BEARDED MAN  
Find it?

The redhead shakes his head. The bearded man manages to START the tractor's engine.

BEARDED MAN (cont'd)  
Map important?

RED-HAIRED MAN  
Like hands in handball.

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CONTINUED: (2)

BEARDED MAN

Well, I don't see how running into them woods is gonna get you any closer. Especially since you're both gonna be dead before you can make it across that open ground.

BLOND-HAIRED MAN

Whoa...chill. We aren't heading back into the house. There's twelve of those fuckers in there.

The bearded man maneuvers the tractor toward the big sliding door facing the house. The other two watch him:

RED-HAIRED MAN

What're you doing?

BEARDED MAN

I like your beret, Reece. Real classy. Wanna drag that door open?

The redhead adjusts his beret, a little self-consciously:

RED-HAIRED MAN

For the record. I didn't play no part whatsoever in choosing this get-up. Not the hair, neither. I'm jockeying for some lawyer out of Nashville.

BEARDED MAN

Duly noted. Now how 'bout the door?

RED-HAIRED MAN

You'll notice, too, I ain't said one word yet about that beard.

BEARDED MAN

Just open the damn door, Reece.

The redhead drags open the door. The bearded man wedges down the tractor's gas pedal. The effect isn't particularly impressive: the tractor PUTT-PUTT-PUTTS across the farmyard, and shudders to a STOP when it hits the house.

RED-HAIRED MAN

And...?

The bearded man is crouched over the Nazi's corpse, searching his pack. When he stands up again, he's holding a flare gun.

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CONTINUED: (3)

He points it out the door, FIRES a flare into the bales of hay. As the hay starts to catch fire, the bearded man strips the dead Nazi of his submachine gun, his extra magazines, his hand grenades. By the time he's finished, thick smoke is billowing skyward; the house is starting to catch fire too.

BEARDED MAN

Coming?

Without waiting for an answer, he starts to sprint toward the house, using the smoke to cover his approach.

INT. LATRINE - DAY

Burton stands over the open hole, PEEING. Finally, he zips, gets a squirt of hand sanitizer from a big bottle hanging off the back of the latrine's door, then heads out—

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

The latrine is on the far side of a packed-dirt yard from Burton's trailer. He hurries across the dirt, steps up into:

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Flynn is in the recliner, headset on, her phone in her hand, working it like a video game controller. Burton nudges her:

BURTON

Back.

FLYNN

Gimme a sec.

She keeps tapping at her phone, focused and intense.

INT. FRENCH FARMHOUSE - DAY

The bearded man is making his way through the burning house, tossing GRENADES, FIRING his submachine gun, clearing one room after another. He's methodical, cool-headed, competent. When he makes it to the front room, he exchanges SHOTS with a Nazi officer. The bearded man is HIT in the arm, but he manages to kill the German.

He steps into the room, yanks the dead man's belt free, quickly fashions a tourniquet for his own wounded arm: completely calm. As he's finishing tying off the belt, there's a sound behind him, and he spins, aiming his gun.

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His blond companion has appeared...he lifts his hands:

BLOND-HAIRED MAN  
Chill, dude.

The bearded man keeps pointing the gun at him:

BEARDED MAN  
Word of advice? Keep saying  
'chill,' and you're likely to end  
up with a bullet in you.

Before the blond can respond, the redhead appears beside him.  
The bearded man turns to him:

BEARDED MAN (cont'd)  
Wanna guess why you didn't find  
your map?

BLOND-HAIRED MAN  
Why?

BEARDED MAN  
'Cause it wasn't here yet.

He points: a map is tucked into the dead Nazi's coat pocket.

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - DAY

Flynnne tosses the headset to Burton, jumps out of the chair:

FLYNNNE  
Sign those points over, hear?

Then she's pushing past him, out through the trailer's door.  
Burton watches her go, then pulls on the headset. And:

EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The three partisans are hiking through the blooming lavender.  
The bearded man stares about with a look of wonder: his  
wounded arm, the burning house, the submachine guns and  
grenades they're carrying, the map in the redhead's hands.

BEARDED MAN  
What the fuck happened?

RED-HAIRED MAN  
Flynnne happened.

As they continue across the field, WE CUT TO:

EXT. FOREVER FAB - DAY

A storefront in a strip mall. A plastic electric bike is chained up outside Forever Fab. Through the window we can glimpse Flynne behind the counter, talking with BILLY ANN BAKER (28). Billy Ann is tall and dark-haired.

BILLY ANN (V.O.)

Name the worst thing you ever had to do here.

FLYNNE (V.O.)

See? That's where you're missing my point. It's not any one thing.

Their voices CARRY OVER:

INT. FOREVER FAB - FRONT COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Billy Ann has brought two Hefty Mart lattes and a bag of pork nubbins; she and Flynne are leaning on either side of the counter, sharing the snack. Flynne is in her jeans and Forever Fab T-shirt. Billy Ann is wearing a dark blue uniform with "Clean Sweep" on the back.

FLYNNE

It's the many small things piling up each on the other.

BILLY ANN

You just sit out here, looking pretty. While Nit and Wit back there do all the hard labor.

She waves beyond the counter. Behind a glass wall, we can see the store's 3-D printers. MACON (26) and EDWARD (24) are working them; they're both tall, scrawny, bespectacled. Macon is white, Edward black. Flynne shakes her head:

FLYNNE

I welcome people to Forever Fab. Wish them a good day as they leave.

BILLY ANN

With a smile, no doubt. While I'm on my hands and knees—

Flynne raises her eyebrows in mock alarm:

FLYNNE

Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BILLY ANN

(ignoring her)

—in some smelly hanger or silo,  
cleaning piss off the floor.  
'Cause I swear, first thing the Air  
Force trains folks to do? Is stop  
aiming at the toilet. So it's  
sorta hard to be your shoulder to  
cry on. Especially when you have a  
far more lucrative employment  
option at your literal fingertips,  
should you choose to lower your  
nose and take advantage of it.

She takes a bite of pork nubbin, watching Flynnne's face.

BILLY ANN (cont'd)

How much does Burton earn  
Jockeying?

FLYNNE

More than he deserves.

BILLY ANN

And you could get even more.

FLYNNE

I'm done with that. Told you.

BILLY ANN

Have indeed. But not the why of  
it. Which would seem like the meat  
of that particular sandwich.

Flynnne is silent, working at her coffee. Finally:

FLYNNE

This morning? I was in France.  
Fighting Nazis. With fields of  
lavender outside the window.

BILLY ANN

Operation Northwind?

FLYNNE

Only for a minute. So Burton could  
empty his bladder. But know how  
easy it would've been to stay?

Flynnne finishes her coffee, leans over the counter, tosses  
the cup into the trash can beside the front door.

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FLYNNE (cont'd)  
Sad way to live, dontcha think?  
Sweetest moments in your day spent  
inside a made-up world?

BILLY ANN  
Getting good money would likely  
make the load a tad lighter.

FLYNNE  
Rich folks paying me to do the hard  
parts? So they can get the credit?  
If that don't leave a sour taste in  
your mouth, I don't know what will.

BILLY ANN  
Got some sad news, sweat pea.  
Whaddya think you're doing here?

FLYNNE  
(ignoring this)  
And I gotta use Burton's avatar.  
Otherwise I get half what he does!

BILLY ANN  
'Course. Cause girls can't Jockey  
for shit. Everybody knows that.

Flynne SIGHS, waves the whole discussion aside.

FLYNNE  
Some weeks? Bet I spent forty  
hours, easy, in one Sim or another.  
Realize how much time that is? If  
you add it all up? Think if I'd  
been doing something useful.

BILLY ANN  
Like?

FLYNNE  
I don't know...practicing piano.

Billy Ann LAUGHS at the idea. But Flynne persists:

FLYNNE (cont'd)  
Coulda been a virtuoso by now.

Before Billy Ann can respond, the door to the rear opens, and Macon emerges, carrying a small cardboard box. He drops it on the counter, then reaches, grabs a nubbin, pops it into his mouth. Billy Ann gives him an affronted look.

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CONTINUED: (3)

BILLY ANN

Howdy, Billy Ann! Mind if I have a nubbin?

Macon ignores her, focused on Flynnne. He nudges the box.

MACON

Any idea why they ordered two grooms and only one bride?

FLYNNE

Maybe cause you misread the form?

Macon squints at a piece of paper taped to the box.

MACON

Fuck.

He flips open the box. Inside are three plastic figurines--the kind you put on wedding cakes--two grooms and one bride. They're not generic though: they've been printed to resemble the actual bride and groom. Macon takes one of the grooms, SMACKS it against the edge of the counter, snapping it in half. He tosses the pieces into the trash by the door.

MACON (cont'd)

All set then.

He shuts the box, grabs two more nubbins, heads for the rear of the store. Billy Ann calls after him:

BILLY ANN

Great to see you, Billy Ann!  
Thanks for the nubbins!

Macon gives her a wave through the big window, and tosses one of the nubbins to Edward, who waves, too. Billy Ann turns her attention back to Flynnne. She taps the box.

BILLY ANN (cont'd)

This who I think it is?

Flynnne picks up the box, sets it behind the counter.

FLYNNE

Guess I'd first need to know who you think it is.

BILLY ANN

Which you most certainly do.

Flynnne ignores this. Billy Ann keeps watching her.

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CONTINUED: (4)

BILLY ANN (cont'd)  
 You're not gonna enjoy hearing what  
 I got to say about this situation.

FLYNNE  
 But I'm gonna hear it anyway,  
 aren't I?

BILLY ANN  
 If somebody had been all puppy-eyed  
 for me, in the lead-up to my  
 marrying Jasper? I would've surely  
 wanted to know about it.

FLYNNE  
 That's it?

BILLY ANN  
 Seems like more than enough to me.

She leans across the counter, kisses Flynnne on the cheek,  
 then turns, starts for the door. OVER HER SHOULDER:

BILLY ANN (cont'd)  
 You have a good day now, Ms.  
 Fisher. I got some dried pee needs  
 attending to.

Flynnne watches her go with a smile. Then she tosses the  
 nubbins container into the garbage. A quick glance toward  
 the rear, where the boys are working the printers, and she  
 bends, lifts the broken plastic groom from the trash.

EXT. FISHER HOUSE - DUSK

Flynnne rolls up the drive on her plastic bike, home from  
 work. We MOVE with her, as she rides around the house, down  
 the slope, into the clearing outside Burton's trailer.

INT./EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

The trailer's door is open. Burton is inside, crouched on  
 the floor beside a large cardboard box. He's putting  
 something together: fastening pieces, tightening screws.  
 Flynnne watches for a beat. Then:

FLYNNE  
 Figured I'd come down here first,  
 rather than tempt Mama into lying  
 for you. You transfer those VA  
 points yet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Burton rummages in the box, pulls out a long cable. Then:

BURTON  
Go on. I can feel you wanting to.

FLYNNE  
What?

BURTON  
Ask what this is.

He holds up a white plastic headset—elaborate, top-heavy.

FLYNNE  
How old you think I was? When that stopped working? Handing me a toy to distract me from whatever I just asked you.

BURTON  
Might be surprised, Flynne. Cause when it is working? You wouldn't necessarily notice. That's sorta the whole point.

FLYNNE  
Well, it ain't working tonight.

Burton lowers the crown, resumes his tinkering.

BURTON  
Last I checked? We got till midnight to switch those points.

FLYNNE  
Damn it, Burton. How many favors I ask for today? A whole bushel?

She drops her kickstand, stomps up the steps into the trailer, and sits on Burton's cot, looking disconsolate.

FLYNNE (cont'd)  
How much you spend on that?

BURTON  
Nothing.

FLYNNE  
Just plucked it off a tree, huh?

BURTON  
Company named Milagros Coldiron sent it.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BURTON (cont'd)

All the way from South America.  
Said they want me to beta test it.  
Cutting edge VR. Like nothing I've  
ever seen.

FLYNNE

Why you?

BURTON

Turns out I'm one of the few  
Jockeys ever to reach the hundredth  
level in Serpentine.

FLYNNE

(scoffing)

You never made it past the fire  
caves. Level eighty-three.

BURTON

True enough. But my avatar got to  
one-hundred-and-seven.

FLYNNE

(shaking her head)

I'm done with Sims.

BURTON

Done with paying for Mama's pills  
too?

FLYNNE

You do it.

BURTON

Any difference between level eighty-  
three and one-hundred-and-seven?  
Cause I've only seen one of 'em.

He's finished with the headset. He holds it out to her.

BURTON (cont'd)

If you don't climb into the saddle,  
this horse is gonna ride away,  
Flynnne. Money bags and all.

Flynnne wavers another moment, staring at the crown. Finally:

FLYNNE

You'll transfer the points?

BURTON

Soon as you put on this pretty  
crown, Princess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Flynn reaches for the headset. She sets it carefully on her head. Burton smiles.

FLYNN  
What do I do?

BURTON  
Lie down. Shut your eyes. Count  
back from ten.

Flynn gets up, sits in the recliner. She tilts the chair back. As she shuts her eyes, we CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN

BURTON (V.O.)  
The rest should be self  
explanatory, more or less.

A beat, then:

CLOSE ON BURTON'S FACE

His eyes shut. A woman's hand taps against his forehead.

AELITA (O.S.)  
You in there, soldier boy?

Burton's eyes open, and WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. AELITA'S LOFT - NIGHT

High-ceilinged, austere. Flynn is inside a Peripheral: an artificial body that looks like a finely sculpted version of Burton. This BURTON PERIPHERAL lies on a divan, in a suit and tie. Aelita (40) stands over it.

AELITA  
Easy. Takes a moment to acclimate.

Aelita is pierced and tattooed, with a CONTINENTAL ACCENT. She watches the Burton Peripheral take in its surroundings, its attire. The Peripheral flexes its hands, touches the divan, its legs, its face, with a look of wonder.

BURTON PERIPHERAL  
I can feel things.

Aelita smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AELITA

Almost real, isn't it?

The Peripheral keeps touching itself: chest, stomach, and then groin, where its hand lingers, exploring. It LAUGHS suddenly, and when it speaks, we hear Flynnne's intonation:

BURTON PERIPHERAL

Oh...my...lord.

Aelita is moving across the loft. She waves her hand at the wall, and—in what seems like an act of magic—the wall silently dematerializes, revealing a garage beyond. A car is parked here: low to the ground, sleek. As Aelita approaches, the car's door slides open. She turns, glances back at the Burton Peripheral. It stands up.

BURTON PERIPHERAL (cont'd)

What am I supposed to do?

AELITA

Whatever I tell you to.

She beckons for the Peripheral to follow, and WE CUT TO:

INT. AELITA'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

The car is driverless. Aelita and the Peripheral sit beside each other. The Peripheral stares out the window: empty city streets, pre-midnight. There are no other cars in sight. No pedestrians either. The Peripheral keeps touching things. Stroking, petting, pressing its palm to the window.

The car comes to a stop. The door slides open. Aelita gestures across an empty plaza, toward a low building.

AELITA

I'll have a feed of everything you see and hear. And I'll be a voice inside your head, guiding you.

The Burton Peripheral hesitates, staring across the plaza.

AELITA (cont'd)

Go on now. Someone's waiting.

She pats the Peripheral's leg, and it climbs from the car.

EXT. PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

The Peripheral starts toward the low building.

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CONTINUED:

AELITA

Oh...so you're warned?

The Peripheral turns, waits.

AELITA (cont'd)

If you get hurt, you'll feel it.

She blows a kiss, and the door slides shut. We MOVE with the Peripheral across the plaza. The Peripheral stops in front of the red door, stands inspecting it. There's no handle.

AELITA'S VOICE

Say: 'I've arrived.'

The Peripheral glances over its shoulder. The car is gone. The Peripheral turns back to the door.

BURTON PERIPHERAL

I've arrived.

The door swings open, and the Peripheral steps into:

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

A dance floor just beyond the door: the music is LOUD, PULSING. Robotic waitresses move among the churning crowd. Beyond the dance floor is an elevated, spotlit bar.

AELITA'S VOICE

Head toward the bar, please.

The Burton Peripheral begins to push its way through the crowded dance floor, staring about, taking it all in.

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)

The woman with the red hair?

Sitting alone at the far end of the bar: a stunning woman with long red hair, pale skin, a black dress. This is MARIEL RAPHAEL (30). The Peripheral moves toward her.

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)

Convince her to take you home.

The Peripheral stops, five feet short of Mariel. It stands there, staring. A long beat. Then, with FRUSTRATION:

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)

Oh, for fuck's sake. Don't tell me you're shy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Peripheral doesn't move.

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)  
 Make this happen, soldier boy.  
Now. Or the Sim is over.

Mariel lifts her gaze, glances into the mirror behind the bar, locks eyes with the Peripheral.

MARIEL  
 It's flattering at first, you know.  
 But if you stare too long, it  
 starts to feel a tad dodgy.

She turns on her stool, faces the Peripheral directly.

MARIEL (cont'd)  
 You're about to cross that line.

The Peripheral lifts a hand in apology.

BURTON PERIPHERAL  
 I'm sorry. I was just trying to  
 imagine what it must be like.

MARIEL  
 What?

BURTON PERIPHERAL  
 To be you. Sitting here like this.

MARIEL  
 And?

BURTON PERIPHERAL  
 I couldn't. You're too beautiful.  
 It's like trying to imagine myself  
 inside a swan.

Mariel LAUGHS, charmed despite herself:

MARIEL  
 Has that line ever worked?

BURTON PERIPHERAL  
 I've never spoken those words  
 before. Never had occasion to.

MARIEL  
 Well, I've obviously had too much  
 wine. Because I almost believe  
 you. Come. Sit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She pats the stool beside her, watches the Peripheral sit.

MARIEL (cont'd)

I'm Mariel.

(she holds out her hand)

And you are...?

BURTON PERIPHERAL

(ignoring her hand)

Do you value your time, Mariel?

Mariel cocks her head, surprised at this turn. She lowers her hand, shifts back a little on her stool.

MARIEL

As much as anyone. Why?

BURTON PERIPHERAL

I could introduce myself. Then spend the next hour, leaning close. Complimenting you. And after that, maybe, if the signs seemed right, I could ask you to take me home.

MARIEL

Or...?

BURTON PERIPHERAL

I could ask now.

Mariel holds the Peripheral's gaze, wavering. Then she smiles, pushes away her wine, stands up. And WE CUT TO:

EXT. PLAZA - NIGHT

The red door swings open and Mariel appears, leading the Burton Peripheral by the hand. As they start across the plaza, a Rolls Royce Phantom pulls to the curb.

AELITA'S VOICE

Your new friend has rather affected tastes. Her car has a driver.

The Phantom's door opens and a MICHIKO climbs out: a robot, built to resemble a female Anime character. The Michiko moves around the car, opens the back door.

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)

Should you try to harm Mariel, this creature is programmed to kill you. You might want to keep this in mind as we proceed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mariel ducks into the car, followed by the Burton Peripheral. The Michiko shuts the door, and WE CUT TO:

INT. MARIEL'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Speeding through the empty city, the Michiko driving. Mariel and the Peripheral are in back, kissing. A long beat, then:

AELITA'S VOICE

In you jacket, you'll find a glass ampule. You're going to snap this open, hold it under Mariel's pretty nose. And while you do this? I'd suggest you attend rather closely to your surroundings.

As the Peripheral continues to kiss Mariel, it subtly takes the ampule from its pocket. It snaps the ampule open, holds it under Mariel's nose. Mariel tries to pull away, but the Peripheral won't let her. It only takes a second, and then she goes limp.

A blur of movement over the Peripheral's shoulder: the Peripheral flinches as a bullet SLAMS into the seat beside its head. The Michiko has pulled a Webley revolver. The Peripheral lunges, shoves the gun aside just as a second shot is FIRED, into the car's roof. They begin to wrestle for the gun, while the Michiko continues to drive, one-handed.

The Michiko keeps FIRING, keeps missing, until the revolver is empty. Then the two start to batter each other. Aelita's warning proves true: the Peripheral GRUNTS and GASPS under each blow. As they fight, the Michiko loses control of the car: it grazes a passing light pole, skids, almost flips, comes to a shuddering STOP.

In the tumult, the Peripheral gains possession of the empty pistol. It uses the heavy weapon to hammer at the Michiko's head, finally disabling the robot. The Peripheral falls back against the seat, beside the unconscious Mariel: winded, battered, bleeding. A long beat, and:

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)

I trust you know how to drive?

We hear the Phantom's ENGINE. It CARRIES OVER:

INT. MARIEL'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

The Peripheral drives the dented Phantom through the empty streets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The incapacitated Michiko has been shoved into the passenger seat; the unconscious Mariel is sprawled in back. As the car approaches an intersection:

AELITA'S VOICE

Right.

The Peripheral turns right, starts up the block. The street is lined with five- and six-story buildings, set back from the road, all of them dark: an anonymous, industrial feel.

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)

On your left. Pull in.

A short driveway leads to a blank wall. The Peripheral stops the car, its headlights illuminating the wall.

AELITA'S VOICE (cont'd)

Come on, soldier boy. Show us what you've learned.

The Peripheral hesitates, staring at the wall. Then:

BURTON PERIPHERAL

I've arrived.

The wall de-materializes, revealing Aelita's garage. She's standing there, waiting. The Peripheral rolls the car forward, the wall re-materializing behind it. Aelita pulls open the back door, leans in to examine the unconscious Mariel. The Peripheral turns to watch. A beat, then:

BURTON PERIPHERAL (cont'd)

Now what?

AELITA

This lovely young woman is going to give us a hand with something. Let's resume tomorrow, shall we?

The Peripheral nods, and WE CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN

We hear a faint TAPPING. It CARRIES OVER:

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Flynn, in the recliner, the plastic crown on her head: she opens her eyes. A beat, while she reorients herself. Then she smiles, looking as happy as we've seen her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The TAPPING continues. Flynne lifts her head, brings the recliner upright, then grips the armrest, suddenly woozy.

FLYNNNE'S POV - THE TRAILER

For a moment, the walls seem to shift and undulate; the light DIMS and then BRIGHTENS.

BACK TO SCENE - FLYNNNE

Flynnne grips the armrests, staring toward the shut door, steadying herself. A fly is banging against the door's tiny window, trying to escape: this is the TAPPING. Flynnne sits there, breathing deep, watching. And then WE CUT TO:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dark, the only light coming from down the hall. Flynnne is at the sink, splashing water on her face. She turns off the faucet, starts to dry her face. In the silence, we hear Ella LAUGH, from down the hall. We hear the MURMUR of her voice, too, but not the words. Flynnne steps quietly into:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

The door to Ella's room is open, light spilling out. Flynnne moves halfway down the hall, then stops, listening.

BURTON (O.S.)

Oh, come on, Mama. Why not? All you gotta say is:

(mimicking Ella's voice)

"VA points? Burton hasn't said nothing 'bout any—"

ELLA (O.S.)

Your sister's got a lot on her shoulders these days. It can do some damage to a person's ability to appreciate a good joke.

BURTON (O.S.)

So you admit it's a good joke?

Ella CHUCKLES, and Flynnne smiles at the sound of it.

ELLA (O.S.)

She'd blow a gasket, Burton. You know that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURTON (O.S.)

Might be the best thing for her.  
Gotta type in your password here.  
Then we're done, looks like. You  
realize you're outta these feel-  
good pills, right?

Flynnne stiffens, remembering: *fuck*.

ELLA (O.S.)

Flynnne picked up some on her way  
home from work tonight. Where's  
she gotten to, anyway?

Flynnne is already turning, heading back down the hall. She  
passes the hovering Roomba as she goes, gives it a kick.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOVING - NIGHT

Flynnne, on her bike. Lights appear up the road; there's the  
sound of music, growing louder. Flynnne slows, turns into:

EXT. JIMMY'S - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A gravel lot surrounding a low, dilapidated building. A sign  
says: JIMMY'S. Among the pickup trucks and battered cars in  
the lot, we glimpse a souped-up three-wheeled motorbike  
called a Tarantula. Flynnne locks her bike, heads into:

INT. JIMMY'S - CONTINUOUS

A handful of booths, a pool table, a long bar with a line of  
stools. Flynnne hesitates, scanning the crowd, searching.  
Her eyes snag on a man at the bar, drinking alone: CONNER  
PENSKE (30). He's a triple amputee, with only his right arm  
still fully intact. He's draining a beer; it looks as though  
it's far from his first for the evening.

Flynnne watches for a beat, then shifts her attention to the  
bar's rear. ATTICUS, BUDDY, and CASH are in a booth. They're  
all in their twenties, in jeans and T-shirts. Flynnne locks  
eyes with Buddy. Then she turns, heads back out. Buddy  
leans, says something to Atticus, and the two get up, follow  
Flynnne out. Atticus is carrying a duffel bag.

Conner watches all of this, swaying a bit. A beat, then he  
half-falls, half-acrobatically dismounts the stool. He  
starts for the door, hobbling on his stumps. A few of  
Jimmy's patrons turn to watch him go, almost despite  
themselves, their eyes drawn to the spectacle.

EXT. JIMMY'S - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Flynnne has unlocked her bike. When Atticus and Buddy are still a dozen feet away, she tosses Ella's empty pill bottle toward them. Buddy catches it, squints to examine the label.

BUDDY

You thinking a barter-type deal here, Flynnne? Cause we could work out something mighty agreeable.

Atticus LAUGHS. Flynnne grimaces.

FLYNNNE

Don't be gross, Buddy. I just ate.

She pulls out a wad of bills. Buddy takes the money, counts it, then nods at Atticus, who unzips the duffel bag. As he starts to dig through it, the bar's door swings open, and Conner emerges. Like Burton, he has haptic implants. He uses them now to START the Tarantula.

It heads toward him across the lot. Conner tries to swing himself onto the seat without stopping the bike, but he's too drunk: he misses, and the Tarantula rolls by. He has to use his implants to reverse the bike; then he laboriously clambers onto its seat. Atticus and Buddy start to SNICKER.

FLYNNNE (cont'd)

(softly)

Shut the fuck up.

The two young men smirk at her. Atticus has found the pill bottle; he holds it up. But when Flynnne reaches for it, he pulls his hand back, tosses the bottle to Buddy.

Conner settles himself onto the seat of the Tarantula. He lights a cigarette, one-handed, while he watches the ensuing game of monkey-in-the-middle. Finally, he CLEARS HIS THROAT:

CONNER

Gentlemen.

Atticus and Buddy turn to look. Conner lifts his chin:

CONNER (cont'd)

I'm thinking you should give the young lady what she paid for.

There's a snort of LAUGHTER from the bar's doorway. Cash has appeared. He shakes his head in wonderment:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASH

I would've guessed a one-armed dude would know when it's time to mind his own business.

CONNER

(turning to appraise him)  
Wanna know the best thing about being a 'one-armed dude,' Cash?

CASH

No more clapping?

Atticus and Buddy GUFFAW. Conner smiles, takes another draw on his cigarette. Then, QUIETLY, with an icy smile:

CONNER

You ain't got a lot left to lose.

Flynn can sense where this is headed, even if the others can't. She turns to Atticus, and, very QUIETLY:

FLYNNE

Walk away.

ATTICUS

Worried about your boyfriend?

FLYNNE

I'm worried about you.

Conner edges the Tarantula a little closer to the young men.

CONNER

See, in a situation like this?  
Let's say I decide to reach for that bull pup there. What's the worst that can happen to me?

He nods to a compact semi-automatic, with a collapsible stock; it's strapped to the frame of the Tarantula. The young men eye the weapon, suddenly silenced.

CONNER (cont'd)

Far as I can figure? The worst thing? I mean, the very fucking worst? Is I only manage to kill two of you, rather than all three.

He smiles again, throws his cigarette aside, flexes his hand. The moment stretches, and finally Buddy tosses the pill bottle to Flynn. The three young men start to retreat into the bar. But then Atticus turns in the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ATTICUS

They should've finished the job over there, Conner. Killed you outright. Done us all a service.

CONNER

Trust me, my friend. I've had the same thought, many a morning.

Conner watches the door shut behind the young men, then turns toward Flyne. He eyes the pill bottle in her hand:

CONNER (cont'd)

For your mama, I hope?

Flyne nods, then stares at him, debating. Finally:

FLYNNE

You drunk, Conner?

CONNER

If not, I just wasted three hours.

FLYNNE

'Cause I'm wondering if you maybe shouldn't be driving around in that condition.

CONNER

Well, Burton's Little Sister, lucky for me, I long ago got myself graduated from the should-and-shouldn't sorta life.

He nods at the bottle in her hand again:

CONNER (cont'd)

You realize Jasper Baker is a runner for Corbell Pickett, don't you? So you could just walk up the road from your place for that?

FLYNNE

I don't mind the ride.

CONNER

Save you from having to deal with the Three Stooges. And Jasper might even give you a friends-and-family discount.

It seems like Flyne might let this go. But then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FLYNNE

Billy Ann Baker's my friend. Best friend I ever had.

CONNER

And?

FLYNNE

Far as I can tell, she wants to act like Jasper hauls trash for a living. So if I got some trash that needs hauling, I'll go knock on her door. But if I need some painkillers for my mama, I'll come knocking here.

CONNER

Sounds sorta like people thinking I'll feel better if we can all just agree to pretend I'm not a cripple.

Flynnne gives him a look of exaggerated astonishment:

FLYNNE

Wait...you're a cripple?

CONNER

(he laughs)

I like you, Little Sister. You don't pity me, do you?

FLYNNE

Oh, I dunno. I pity you lots.

Conner stares at her, and she lets it hang, uncomfortably long. Finally:

FLYNNE (cont'd)

Pity your haircut, for one thing. You should be wearing a helmet. Not just for safety's sake. But to spare us all the distress of having to glimpse that atrocity.

CONNER

Shoulds-and-shouldn'ts, Little Sister.

FLYNNE

Seriously. Billy Ann cuts hair. Oughta stop by some afternoon. Let her salvage something from that mess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CONNER  
She cut yours?

FLYNNE  
Does indeed.

Conner is working to adjust his seat belt with his one good arm. Flynne watches him with a look of growing indignation.

FLYNNE (cont'd)  
A gentleman would realize this is a  
silence that needs some filling.

Conner looks up at her; it takes him a moment to grasp what she means. Then, smiling:

CONNER  
Your hair looks real nice.

FLYNNE  
Why thank you. Awful kind of you.  
If yours ends up half as decent?  
You could maybe come and say hey to  
Burton afterward. He might even be  
moved to offer you a beer.

CONNER  
Just the one?

FLYNNE  
Depends how generous he's feeling.

Conner smiles, nods at her bike:

CONNER  
How's the charge on that?

FLYNNE  
Low. Burton never pedals like he  
ought to.

CONNER  
Those words could end up on his  
gravestone one day, dontcha think?

Flynnne LAUGHS, and Conner REVS his engine:

CONNER (cont'd)  
Want some help with it?

The REVVING engine CARRIES OVER:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOVING - NIGHT

Flynn is on her bike, holding onto the Tarantula: Conner is towing her, fast, along the dark country road, charging her bike's battery. They're both grinning, giddy with the speed. When they reach the turn-off for Flynn's house, Flynn gives a long WHOOP of joy, and lets go. Conner ROARS off.

INT. FISHER HOUSE - ELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ella is in her bed, SNORING softly. Flynn tiptoes into the room. She sets the painkillers on the night table, tenderly adjusts the blanket over her mother, then steps back into:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Flynn starts down the hall, then hesitates, glancing out the window, toward Burton's trailer. A light is on.

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Flynn approaches down the slope, carrying two beers. She's just lifting her hand to knock on the trailer's door when she stops, staring through the little window.

FLYNN'S POV - THROUGH THE WINDOW

Burton is on the edge of his cot, bent forward, rocking, eyes shut, in obvious pain.

BACK TO SCENE - FLYNN AND BURTON

Flynn watches with a sad expression: concerned, but not wanting to intrude. She quietly sets a beer on the trailer's top step, then turns, starts for the house. A handful of strides, and she swings back, sets the other beer down too.

INT. FISHER HOUSE - FLYNN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bed, bureau, night table, desk. Photos are scotch-taped to the wall: Flynn and Burton as kids, Flynn and Billy Ann. Flynn is preparing for bed. As she pulls off her jeans, she feels something in her pocket. It's the two pieces of the plastic groom. Flynn smiles, a little sheepishly. Then she tucks the pieces into her bureau drawer. She climbs into bed, shuts her eyes. A long beat, and:

INT. MARIEL'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

A QUICK FLASH: the Peripheral kissing Mariel, as the car speeds through the empty streets...then it's Flynne kissing Mariel...then it's Flynne kissing TOMMY CONSTANTINE (33), who looks exactly like the plastic groom...and then WE CUT TO:

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - DUSK

Flynnne is in the recliner, watching as Burton tinkers with the plastic crown. Once again, he's shirtless, in a pair of jeans. A beat, then:

FLYNNNE

How're those haptics treating you?

BURTON

Been worse.

FLYNNNE

Saw you last night. Through the window.

Burton nods: he knows.

BURTON

Appreciate the beers. Coulda been colder, though.

FLYNNNE

Beggars and choosers, Burton. I guess you don't wanna talk about it?

BURTON

Talk about what?

Flynnne just stares at him. Burton smiles:

BURTON (cont'd)

How's that old song go?

FLYNNNE

This is something I'm supposed to know? The exact old song you're thinking of?

BURTON

(SINGING, off-key)  
Sometimes a cold wind....

Flynnne takes up the lyric, much more adeptly:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLYNNE

Blows a chill in my bones....

She trails off, watches him as he continues to tinker with the headset. Then, unable to resist:

FLYNNE (cont'd)

Still can't see why you won't take yourself down to Davisville, get that firmware update.

BURTON

This the first time you asked that?

FLYNNE

(shaking her head)

Wish to God it might be the last, though.

BURTON

I don't have a whole lotta confidence in that, I'm afraid.

FLYNNE

VA'll cover it. Supposed to help, too.

BURTON

If your phone gets a little hitchy, you feel comfortable taking it to Homeland Security for an upgrade?

FLYNNE

'Course not.

BURTON

How come?

FLYNNE

Who knows what Homes might get up to, they find themselves inside my phone.

BURTON

So why would I let the VA inside of me?

FLYNNE

Already been, ain't they?

BURTON

Exactly. And you know what they say about fools and fire, dontcha?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLYNNE

I'm guessing I'm about to.

BURTON

The one that fears it most? Is the one who's been burned. And that, little sister, is exactly the sorta fool I am. You can go ahead and lie back now, you want.

Flynnne tilts back in the recliner, and Burton sets the plastic crown on her head, adjusting it, tightening it:

BURTON (cont'd)

Comfy?

FLYNNE

Not the word I would've picked, if it'd been me doing the choosing. But it'll do.

BURTON

Whenever you're ready.

Flynnne shuts her eyes, and WE CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN

A beat, then we hear Burton SCREAMING. It CARRIES OVER:

INT. AELITA'S LOFT - NIGHT

The Burton Peripheral is thrashing and HOWLING on the divan. The skin on its right hand has been ripped off, and in its place a large patch of pale skin has been crudely grafted on. Aelita stands over the Peripheral, looking calm and detached:

AELITA

That's Mariel's palm, grafted onto your hand. If it were real, I imagine it would be excruciating. But you're not actually here right now, are you? So the pain you're feeling...is it real?

(she crouches, stares into the Peripheral's face)

I need you to discipline your mind, soldier boy. To convince it that this is all imaginary. Can you do that? Because if you can't, you're no fucking use to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She watches as the Peripheral shuts its eyes and works to calm itself, to push the pain back a step. Then another. And another. Finally, a deep breath:

BURTON PERIPHERAL

Now what?

AELITA

Now we go open some doors.

And WE CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Aelita's car pulls to the curb outside an immense glass-and-steel building. Again, there are no other vehicles in sight, no people either. Aelita and the Peripheral climb out, approach the front door. An inscription is etched above it: "All The Kingdoms Of The World."

Beside the door: a glass plate for reading handprints. Aelita gestures at it, and the Peripheral presses Mariel's skin graft to the plate. The door slides open.

INT. GLASS AND STEEL BUILDING - ATRIUM - CONTINUOUS

Vast, cavernous, empty at this late hour. Aelita and the Peripheral's footsteps echo as they cross to a bank of elevators. Another glass plate: the Peripheral presses Mariel's skin graft to it. The elevator CHIMES open.

INT. GLASS AND STEEL BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Aelita punches the button for the ninth floor; the elevator begins a rapid ascent. The Burton Peripheral is watching Aelita. She's looking increasingly nervous.

BURTON PERIPHERAL

You seem frightened.

Aelita turns, stares the Peripheral down.

AELITA

Did I tell you to speak?

The Peripheral goes silent. Then the elevator's door opens.

INT. GLASS AND STEEL BUILDING - NINTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

A long corridor, with a balcony on one side, overlooking the central atrium. At the far end of the corridor is a steel door. Aelita leads the Peripheral toward it.

Another glass plate: the Peripheral presses the skin graft to it. There's a long pause. And then...nothing. Aelita gestures for the Peripheral to try a second time. Again... nothing. The Peripheral is reaching for a third attempt when the elevator CHIMES open behind them. They both turn.

A blond-haired, MUSCULAR MAN (30) steps off. He's tall, ominous looking. Aelita turns to the Peripheral:

AELITA

Kill him. Now.

The Peripheral steps forward, and the muscular man shows no hesitation: he immediately attacks. And as fast and as strong as Flynn is in her Burton lookalike body, this man is even faster, even stronger. They trade a rapid series of blows. Then the man manages to knock the Peripheral down. He begins to brutally kick it: its head, its chest.

Finally, the man bends, snaps a pair of handcuffs onto the Peripheral's right wrist, shackling it to the balcony. Aelita has sprinted back toward the elevator. She's frantically SLAPPING the glass plate, to no avail. The muscular man crouches, pulls a knife from an ankle-sheath. Then he starts toward Aelita, moving slowly, calmly.

MUSCULAR MAN

Who else is involved, Aelita?

Aelita keeps SLAPPING the glass plate, terrified, trying to open the elevator. The muscular man is upon her. A swipe of the knife: Aelita SCREAMS. The Peripheral is struggling to free itself, tugging at the handcuffs. The muscular man keeps slashing at Aelita.

MUSCULAR MAN (cont'd)

Who, Aelita...?

Aelita is HALF-SCREAMING, HALF-SOBBING.

AELITA

No one. I swear.

But the man keeps cutting her; she tries to flee, slips in her own blood, falls onto her side. With a ragged HOWL, the Peripheral manages to rip its hand out of the shackle, scraping off the skin graft in the process. Blood gushes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beneath the raw flesh on its palm, we glimpse a tangle of wires and servos: the Peripheral's inner robotic workings. The muscular man turns. He starts toward the Peripheral, leaving Aelita on the floor: SOBBING, bleeding. The Peripheral retreats, back toward the big steel door.

MUSCULAR MAN

Who are you?

The Peripheral SLAPS Mariel's skin graft against the steel door's glass plate, but once more nothing happens. His attacker is close enough to begin slashing with his knife.

MUSCULAR MAN (cont'd)

Once we've cut this bloody thing's head off, we'll easily trace your connection. So why draw it out?

(he slashes)

Where the fuck are you?

The Peripheral is bleeding profusely; more wires and servos are visible. It tries to ward off the man's thrusts, but it's impossible. Finally, in desperation, the Peripheral lunges for the balcony, throws itself over the railing, plummets nine flights down to the atrium below. On IMPACT:

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Flynn bolts upright in Burton's recliner, GASPING, making Burton flinch backward. She rips off the plastic headset, jumps up, staggers to the camper's open doorway.

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

She drops down the steps, bends, VOMITS into the dirt. Burton appears in the camper's doorway, stares out at her with a mix of concern and astonishment:

BURTON

What happened?

Flynn stands there, her hands on her knees, waiting for the nausea to pass. She SPITS, wipes her mouth.

FLYNN

I'm done.

BURTON

But what—

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Flynn is in motion, heading up toward the house, limping slightly, holding her right hand against her chest:

FLYNN  
Never again. Hear me?

BURTON  
Flynn—

She keeps walking, not looking back. And WE CUT TO:

INT. BILLY ANN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Flynn sits in a desk chair, with a sheet over her, facing a full length mirror propped against the fridge. Billy Ann is behind her, cutting her hair. She snips, pauses to examine her handiwork, snips some more, pauses again. Then:

BILLY ANN  
How many times you guess I've cut  
your hair?

Flynn looks lost in thought: there's a delay as she surfaces, bringing Billy Ann into focus. She shrugs:

FLYNN  
I could probably figure it out,  
just about. Every four weeks, say?  
For sixteen or so years?

BILLY ANN  
You'll break your head trying to do  
that math. Let's just say "a lot."

FLYNN  
Okay: "a lot."

Billy Ann resumes cutting.

BILLY ANN  
And how many of those times would  
you guess you just sat here,  
letting me cut, without a peep?  
(mimicking Flynn's voice)  
"Not so short! Don't let it flip  
up like that!"

FLYNN  
Not too many, I'd say.

BILLY ANN  
Maybe just one? That being today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She stops cutting again. Holds Flynnne's gaze in the mirror.

BILLY ANN (cont'd)  
What's going on, sweet pea?

Flynnne gives a weary shake of her head.

FLYNNNE  
Burton got me to play one of his  
Sims. Kinda snuck inside me.

BILLY ANN  
Which one?

FLYNNNE  
New one. Don't think it even has a  
name yet. Real nasty.

Billy Ann bends, gives a sympathetic kiss to the top of  
Flynnne's head. Then she resumes her cutting. A beat, and:

BILLY ANN  
Know what I keep thinking?

FLYNNNE  
What's that?

BILLY ANN  
Keep thinking maybe you took that  
little plastic Tommy home. Plucked  
it outta the trash, and now you got  
it hidden away somewhere secret.

Flynnne rolls her eyes at this, SCOFFING. But there's  
something forced in it, and Billy Ann pauses. She spins the  
chair around, looks directly into Flynnne's eyes.

BILLY ANN (cont'd)  
Tell me you didn't. Straight to my  
face.

Flynnne looks like she's going to attempt a denial, but then  
she starts to LAUGH, lifting a hand to cover her face.

FLYNNNE  
I did!

Billy Ann starts to LAUGH too. But then Flynnne suddenly  
falls SILENT staring in horror at her hand.

FLYNNE'S POV - HER HAND

A QUICK FLASH: the skin has been ripped off her palm, only it's the Burton look-alike's hand, and there are wires underneath, and blood spraying.

BACK TO SCENE - FLYNNE AND BILLY ANN

Flynnne lurches out of the chair, steps to the sink, VOMITS. Billy Ann jumps forward, looking shocked. She rests her hand on Flynnne's back, waits for her to quiet. Then:

BILLY ANN

Flynnne Fisher...if you've gone and found some fella to knock you up, without telling me a damn thing about it, I'm gonna be real upset.

Flynnne smiles, shuts her eyes.

FLYNNE

It's that Sim. I'm all messed up.

She reaches, turns ON the tap, splashes water on her face.

INT. FISHER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK

A pot of stew is on the stove, heating. The hovering Roomba slowly pinballs around the room. Flynnne is at the fridge. She pulls out a pitcher, turns to find Burton entering the kitchen. He moves to the sink, starts to wash his hands.

BURTON

Milagros Coldiron keeps calling.

Flynnne just looks at him: this means nothing to her.

BURTON (cont'd)

The Columbian company. Testing that Sim.

Still Flynnne doesn't react. Burton watches her step to a cabinet, take down two glasses. She CALLS OUT:

FLYNNE

Sweet tea, mama?

ELLA (O.S.)

(from the dining room)  
That'd be lovely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Flynn pours two glasses of iced tea, carries them out to the dining room. Burton dries his hands, waits for her to return. She steps to the stove, starts to stir the stew.

BURTON

They know it was you, not me.

FLYNNE

How?

BURTON

I figured you must've told 'em something. While you were playing.

FLYNNE

I didn't say squat.

BURTON

Well, they know. And now this guy, he wants you to sign back in.

Flynn tastes the stew, adds some salt, keeps stirring.

FLYNNE

I'm thinking you can tell your Columbian—

BURTON

Doesn't sound Columbian. Sounds British.

FLYNNE

Awesome. Then you won't have to translate 'fuck off' into Spanish.

She takes down three bowls, returns to the stove. Burton watches her resumes her stirring. He drops his voice.

BURTON

He offered double the money, Flynn. Then triple. Then quadruple. Bam, bam, bam...just like that. Said it was—  
(fake British accent)  
"A matter of some urgency." Wants to know what happened last time.

FLYNNE

He knows. It's his Sim.

BURTON

What did happen?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Flynn ignores the question. She starts to ladle the stew into the bowls. Then, very QUIETLY:

FLYNN  
You know anything about the tech they're using?

BURTON  
Some sort of neural cutout. Why?

FLYNN  
Safe?

Before he can answer Ella CALLS from the dining room:

ELLA (O.S.)  
What're you two whispering about?

Flynn CALLS BACK, without hesitation:

FLYNN  
Burton met a bearded lady, down at Hefty Mart. Wants to go join the circus with her. I'm trying to tell him, they already got more clowns than they can use.

Flynn picks up two of the bowls, turns to head for the dining room, but Burton catches her arm.

BURTON  
Hey....  
(he stares at her, close)  
You okay?

FLYNN  
Been worse.

She starts to pull free, but Burton doesn't let her:

BURTON  
Answer straight. What happened?

FLYNN  
It was a fucked up Sim, that's all. And I wanna forget it, quick as I can.

Burton keeps watching her. Finally:

BURTON  
I'm sorry, Flynn. I shouldn't have dragged you into it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FLYNNE

Just tell your Columbian asshole he  
can go find somebody else to mess  
with. All right?

Burton nods, lets her go, and WE CUT TO:

INT. FOREVER FAB - NIGHT

Flynnne, behind the counter. Macon and Edward are visible  
through the window to the back, working the printers. Flynnne  
scrolls through her phone, killing time. She keeps flexing  
her right hand, without seeming to realize what she's doing.  
A long beat, then her phone starts to RING, making her jump.

ON THE PHONE'S SCREEN

The caller ID: "Milagros Coldiron."

BACK TO SCENE - FLYNNE AND HER PHONE

Flynnne glances over her shoulder, at Macon and Edward, who  
are both focused on the printers. Then she taps the screen:

FLYNNE

How'd you get this number?

A man's voice responds, with a posh BRITISH ACCENT:

MAN'S VOICE

Ms. Fisher?

FLYNNE

I asked a question.

MAN'S VOICE

Finding your number has honestly  
been the least challenging of my—

FLYNNE

Well, don't call it again.

She's reaching to disconnect, when the man stops her,  
speaking with GREAT URGENCY:

MAN'S VOICE

Ms. Fisher! It's of the utmost  
importance that you sign back into  
the Sim. Name your price, and it  
will be paid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Flynnne hesitates, flexing her hand. Then:

FLYNNNE

I've started seeing stuff that's not there. Feeling it, too. Your headset mess me up?

MAN'S VOICE

I'm sure you have many questions. I think the best way to answer all of them would be for you to simply sign back—

FLYNNNE

I'm never signing in to your sick fucking Sim again. Got it?

MAN'S VOICE

Ms. Fisher. I must implore you—

Flynnne disconnects. She quickly taps the screen, blocking the number. When she lifts her hand away, there's blood on the phone. Flynnne wipes at it, then stares at her hand.

FLYNNNE'S POV - HER HAND

A QUICK FLASH: the Burton Peripheral hand, the skin graft scraped clean, the blood, the wires and servos.

BACK TO SCENE - FLYNNNE

Flynnne shuts her eyes, works to steady herself. When she opens her eyes again, the blood is gone, but it's still the Burton hand. She shuts her eyes, holds herself still. A beat, then there's a BANG, and she jumps. Edward has thrown open the door from the back. He's smiling impishly at her.

EDWARD

Sleeping?

Flynnne just stares at him. She glances down at the counter: it's her hand again. Macon appears through the door to the rear, and Edward turns to him, grinning.

EDWARD (cont'd)

Flynnne's snoozing on the job.

MACON

Smart girl.  
(to Flynnne)  
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MACON (cont'd)  
Mind locking up? We got places to  
go, people to see.

He and Edward are already heading for the street door, not  
waiting for an answer. Macon calls over his shoulder:

MACON (cont'd)  
Thanks...!

They both wave, and the door BANGS shut. Flynne sits there,  
in the ensuing silence, staring down at her hand, flexing it.

INT. FOREVER FAB - REAR - MOMENTS LATER

Flynnne moves around the room, turning off the printers.

INT. FOREVER FAB - FRONT COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

Flynnne is shutting down the register when the lights in the  
rear flicker back on. Flynnne turns, stares. The printers  
are coming on too.

INT. FOREVER FAB - REAR - MOMENTS LATER

Flynnne is turning off the first of the printers when it  
suddenly speaks, in its COMPUTERIZED VOICE, making her jump:

FIRST PRINTER  
It's of critical importance that  
you sign back into the Sim, Ms.  
Fisher. Immediately. You are—

As soon as Flynnne SLAPS the off button on the first printer,  
the second printer takes up the message:

SECOND PRINTER  
—in grave danger. An ad has been  
posted on the dark net. Offering a  
nine million dollar bounty, for a—

As Flynnne SLAPS this printer off, too, the third printer  
immediately takes up the message:

THIRD PRINTER  
—contract killing. There's reason  
to believe that you and your family  
are the intended target. The—

Flynnne slaps this printer off, and the first two printers  
turn back ON, immediately taking up the message:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FIRST AND SECOND PRINTER  
—offer has been accepted, by a  
party out of Memphis.

Flynnne, thoroughly freaked out, has retreated to the doorway.

INT. FOREVER FAB - FRONT COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Flynnne pulls the door shut, but the cash register takes up the message, speaking in its own COMPUTERIZED VOICE:

CASH REGISTER  
I cannot assist you in this  
emergency unless you sign back in.  
I repeat. I cannot—

Flynnne is bolting for the front door, leaving the lights and printers on. She quickly locks the door, turns to flee.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MOVING - NIGHT

Flynnne, on her bike, gradually growing calmer. She reaches an intersection, pauses, staring to her right. The road curves downhill toward an ugly, one-story building, with two police cars outside: The Clanton Sheriff's Department. Flynnne wavers, then turns, starts to coast down the slope.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Deputy Tommy Constantine is at his desk, scribbling notes in a file: he was the model for the plastic groom. There's a photo on his desk of him and the bride-to-be.

FLYNNNE (O.S.)  
Ever gonna pick up that order? For  
the wedding stuff?

Tommy glances up, startled: Flynnne is leaning in the door.

TOMMY  
Aw, Flynnne...you could've just  
given Dee Dee a call for that.

Flynnne gives a shrug.

FLYNNNE  
I was riding by, saw your cruiser  
outside, so I thought, you know....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOMMY

Well, I appreciate it. I'll tell her it's ready.

FLYNNE

All right, then.

She starts to retreat, but then immediately sticks her head in the doorway again, feigning nonchalance:

FLYNNE (cont'd)

Hey—got a question for you.

Tommy looks up from his file, waits.

FLYNNE (cont'd)

The dark net. That a real thing?

TOMMY

Real as anything else these days.

FLYNNE

What do people use it for?

TOMMY

Nothing good. Pretty much the whole point of it.

FLYNNE

Folks hire hit men on it?

TOMMY

(smiling at the question)  
You looking for a hit man, Flynne?

FLYNNE

How much they pay?

TOMMY

More than you can afford, that's for sure. Who do you want dead? Maybe I can cut you a deal.

FLYNNE

(ignoring his teasing)  
Nine million sound right?

TOMMY

Sounds steep to me. You know how it is...life being cheap, and all. Why you asking?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FLYNNE

Saw a movie. Trying to decide if it's believable.

TOMMY

Nine million would only make sense for a high value target.

FLYNNE

Like?

TOMMY

Someone with security. Or maybe just someone you really, really want dead—no ifs, ands, or buts.

(he thinks about it)

Bounty that high would land you a team of pros, most likely. Vets. Maybe even Haptic Recon, like your brother, or Conner. Highly trained, and armed in a way I'd certainly never want to encounter. What's the name of the movie?

Flynn is silent, watching him, thinking. Finally:

FLYNNE

I ask you a personal question?

TOMMY

You know me. Open book.

FLYNNE

What's it like? Getting married?

Tommy LAUGHS, caught off guard by this.

TOMMY

Ain't gone and done it yet. Ask me in six weeks.

FLYNNE

You feel like you know what you're doing, though? Like it's the right thing?

Tommy eyes her, still smiling, but curious now, too:

TOMMY

What's this about, Flynn?

Flynn is close—so close—but she flinches, dismissing her words with a wave:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FLYNNE

Just being nosy. Stupid too. I should shut up and go.

TOMMY

They ever draw up a list to describe you? I'm pretty sure it could get mighty long, and stupid still wouldn't make the cut.

Flynnne lifts her eyes, looks at him: direct, unblinking

FLYNNE

What would?

Tommy holds her eyes. Then he LAUGHS, suddenly embarrassed:

TOMMY

You really want me to do this?

Flynnne is embarrassed now, too. She quickly shakes her head:

FLYNNE

No, I guess I don't.

TOMMY

Cause I can if you want.

FLYNNE

No, sir. That was just me proving my rightful claim to stupid.

She starts to retreat again, but Tommy calls after her.

TOMMY

Hey.

(he waits for her to turn)

You in some sorta trouble?

She shakes her head. But Tommy persists:

TOMMY (cont'd)

Someone you know in trouble?

Again, she shakes her head.

TOMMY (cont'd)

You'd tell me if you were?

FLYNNE

Course I would.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TOMMY  
That a promise?

FLYNNE  
(she nods)  
I'll come to you, Tommy. If I ever  
need you. I swear.

Then she's gone. And WE CUT TO:

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Burton and five other young vets are sitting around a campfire outside his trailer, drinking beer. There's REECE, CARTER, CARLOS, DUVAL, and LEON. They're all in their late twenties: lean, fit, a little drunk.

BURTON  
Gonna mess this up again, Leon.

Leon is Burton and Flynnne's cousin: bearded, laconic.

LEON  
Only if you keep interrupting.

BURTON  
It's the longest, dumbest joke in  
history, and you make us sit  
through the entire fucking thing,  
only to mess it up every time.  
Already off course.

LEON  
Am not.

BURTON  
You said it was a goose just now.  
It's a duck.

LEON  
Goose, duck, it's the same damn—

BURTON  
The punch line, Leon.

Leon stops short at this, frowning. He takes a long pull of beer, wipes his mouth. Frowns some more. Then, reluctantly:

LEON  
All right. Back up. It was a duck  
on that porch. Not a goose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The other young men all break into LAUGHTER. Carlos throws an empty beer can at Leon. As the laughter quiets:

FLYNNE (O.S.)  
What happened to your beret, Reece?

They all turn to find Flynne standing on the edge of the firelight. Reece smiles toward her, lifts his beer:

REECE  
The mighty Flynne. Thanks for all your derring-do the other day.

Flynne waves this aside, turns to her brother.

FLYNNE  
Your Columbian? Who's really British? He's been contacting me.

BURTON  
And?

FLYNNE  
He says someone's put a hit on us. On the dark net. For nine million dollars.

There's a moment of silence; then all of the young men start to LAUGH. Flynne shrugs, as if she expected this response.

FLYNNE (cont'd)  
Sounded stupid to me, too. But I thought I should tell you.

She starts back up toward the house. Burton calls after her:

BURTON  
Grab us that twelve pack from the fridge, will you?

FLYNNE  
(over her shoulder)  
If you're too drunk to fetch it, you're too drunk to drink it.

And then she's gone, vanishing into the darkness. The young men are all smirking at Burton.

CARTER  
You reckon she misheard? And it's actually nine dollars?

Carlos deepens his voice, like a MOVIE ANNOUNCER:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARLOS

"Burton Fisher. The man with a  
nine dollar bounty on his head."

The others LAUGH, all except Reece, who's staring at Burton.

REECE

Who's the Columbian?

BURTON

Sim developer. Hired me for a job.

LEON

Hired your fucking avatar, that is.  
Meaning Flynne.

More LAUGHTER. Again Reece doesn't join in. To Burton:

REECE

Legit?

BURTON

Paid me, that's what you're asking.

The young men sip at their beers, staring out at the  
surrounding shadows, listening to the night noises. Then:

DUVAL

Well, it's clearly bullshit. But  
it does make it a tad difficult to  
get comfortable, don't it?

Burton nods. Another sip of beer. Then he turns to Reece:

BURTON

Still got those drones in your car?

And WE CUT TO:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - ELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Flynnne is helping her mother to bed, tucking her in, clearing  
the day's dishes. Ella inhales, shuts her eyes:

ELLA

Always did love the smell of a  
campfire.

She opens her eyes, watches Flynnne move about the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLA (cont'd)  
 You were likely too young to  
 remember—your father's pig roasts?

Flynn smiles too. And:

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A QUICK FLASH: SIX YEAR OLD FLYNNE, crouched in the shadows. Two dozen guests sit around a campfire—adults and children, talking, laughing. FLYNNE'S FATHER (30) is turning an immense pig on a spit. Her father looks a bit like Burton.

FLYNNE (V.O.)  
 I remember.

THIRTY YEAR OLD ELLA appears, young and healthy, a beer in either hand. She looks a bit like Flynn. She moves toward her husband, hands him one of the beers, then slips her arm around his waist.

BACK TO SCENE - FLYNNE AND ELLA

Ella is smiling at Flynn.

ELLA  
 He never could get the meat like he  
 wanted, over that open fire. Kept  
 trying, though. That was your  
 father—through and through.  
 Always working to get things right.

FLYNNE  
 Can't say his son inherited that.

Ella smiles, waves Flynn's words away.

ELLA  
 Oh, I see a lot of your father in  
 Burton. More all the time.

There's a shout of LAUGHTER from outside, and Flynn steps to the window, stares down the slope toward Burton's trailer.

ELLA (cont'd)  
 What're they up to?

FLYNNE  
 Playing with their fool drones.  
 None of 'em have managed to grow up  
 yet, far as I can tell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELLA

Not many do, in my experience.

Flynn turns from the window, steps back to the bed. She lifts a pill bottle from the night table:

FLYNN

Knock-out pill?

There's another shout of LAUGHTER from outside, and Ella smiles, holds out her hand....

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

The young men, continuing to drink around the fire. Reece has an electronic tablet on the ground beside him, monitoring the drones. Leon is continuing to tell his endless joke:

LEON

So the guy shrugs, and the goose says: Well, if it walks like a—

BURTON

You just said goose.

LEON

(turning, blinking)  
Did not.

Burton throws up his hands in exasperation, and the others LAUGH. Duval leans, spits a stream of tobacco juice.

DUVAL

You realize he's fucking with you Burton, dontcha? It's a whole passive-aggressive thing he's got going. Playing dumb, then laughing at you when you fall for it.

Before Burton can respond, Reece's tablet begins to BEEP, loud and insistent. The young men all fall silent. Burton turns to Reece, cocks his head:

BURTON

You fucking with me too?

Reece holds up the tablet. It shows an infrared feed from one of the drones. Eight figures are creeping onto the property. Reece taps the screen, magnifying the feed: the intruders are heavily armed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The young men stare for another beat. Then they're up and in motion, instantly sober, their training taking over. Reece kicks dirt over the campfire, while Burton darts into his trailer. He starts tossing weapons to the others.

INT. FISHER HOUSE - FLYNNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Flynnne, getting ready for bed. She pulls open her bureau drawer, grabs a T-shirt, then stops, staring: the two pieces of the Tommy figurine. Flynnne steps to her desk, digs through it till she finds some glue. She sits at the desk, starts to glue the Tommy figurine back together again.

Her phone begins to RING. Flynnne answers with impatience:

FLYNNNE

Told you: fetch your own damn beer.

BURTON'S VOICE

Get mama in the basement.

FLYNNNE

What?

BURTON'S VOICE

Now.

And WE CUT TO:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - ELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Flynnne is shaking Ella, struggling to wake her from her sleeping-pill induced stupor.

FLYNNNE

Mama...! Wake up...!

Ella just keeps SNORING. Suddenly, the lights go out. A beat, then there's a burst of GUNFIRE from behind the house. Flynnne darts to the closet; she emerges with a battered wooden case. She unlocks the case, pulls out an old shotgun. There's more GUNFIRE down by the trailer. And WE CUT TO:

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Burton lies prone on the roof of his trailer, a rifle at his shoulder. A firefight is unfolding in the darkness all around him: muzzle flashes, tracer shells, the darting red dots of laser sights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Burton looks perfectly calm amid this chaos. He carefully picks a target from the shadows, awaits his moment, then squeezes the trigger. On the BANG:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We can hear the ongoing GUNFIRE. The front door is eased open. An INTRUDER appears: a helmet with night vision goggles, a ballistic vest, a large automatic rifle. He scans the room, then stands for a moment, listening, his rifle at the ready. A beat, then he starts toward the dining room.

INT. FISHER HOUSE - ELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Flynn is by the closet, frantically working to load the shotgun. Behind the house, the gunfire stutters into SILENCE. Flynn pauses, listening. A long beat, then a CREAKING comes from the kitchen. Flynn hurriedly resumes loading the shotgun—too fast, dropping two of the shells to the floor. The sound CARRIES OVER:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The intruder is in the center of the kitchen: he turns at the sound of the shotgun shells hitting the floor. He hesitates, listening, then moves quietly into:

INT. FISHER HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

The intruder starts down the hall, his gun pointed at Ella's doorway. There's another sustained BURST of gunfire from outside, and he pauses, waits. When silence returns, he lifts his foot to take a step. There's a soft THUMP behind him. He spins, aiming his gun.

The hovering Roomba has appeared, bumping its way along the baseboard. The intruder slowly lowers his gun. He turns back toward Ella's room. Goes still. Flynn is in the doorway, the shotgun aimed at the man's face. His own gun is still pointed at the floor.

FLYNNE

Drop it.

The man just stares: Flynn's hands are visibly shaking.

FLYNNE (cont'd)

Drop it, I said.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The intruder shifts his weight, takes a slow step toward her, beginning to raise his weapon. Flynne SHOUTS:

FLYNNNE (cont'd)  
Drop the fucking gun!

He hesitates, watching her face. He's just short of the hall window now, when the lights suddenly come on.

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Burton, lying prone on his roof, his rifle on his shoulder.

BURTON'S POV - THROUGH THE RIFLE SITE

The hallway window. We can see the man's shadow on the wall, his gun half raised. But not the man himself.

BACK TO SCENE - BURTON

Finger on the trigger. Coiled, yet calm. Awaiting his moment.

INT. FISHER HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Flynnne retreats a step, into Ella's room, the shotgun still aimed at the intruder. He's watching her, half-smiling now.

FLYNNNE  
Stop. Just fucking—

Another step, and as the intruder reaches the window, a bullet SLAMS through the glass, hitting him in the throat. He drops, blood SLAPPING against the wall.

Flynnne stands there, struggling to calm herself. Just as she's beginning to relax, there's a BURST OF STATIC, and she jumps, turning. The TV in her mother's room has turned ON. A message FLASHES across the screen: "More are coming. Two minutes away."

EXT. FISHER HOUSE - REAR - NIGHT

Burton, Leon, and Reece are sprinting up the hill toward the house. They almost collide with Flynnne as she emerges through the back door, breathless, the shotgun in her hands. Burton stares at her with concern:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURTON

Mama...?

FLYNNE

Slept through it—whole thing. But more are coming.

BURTON

You sure?

FLYNNE

According to your Columbian. Who's gained himself some credibility.

Leon checks his gun:

LEON

Almost out of ammo, dude.

As Burton checks his own gun, WE CUT TO:

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Carter, Duval, and Carlos are crouched over two of the attackers' corpses, pulling off helmets, turning out pockets. Duval yanks open the ballistic vest on one of the dead men, revealing his chest: a more advanced version of Burton and Conner's haptic implants.

DUVAL

Check it out. He's 2.0. Looks like they've integrated a whole—

BURTON (O.S.)

More incoming. Who has ammo?

The three young men glance up to find Burton, Flynne, Reece, and Leon approaching. Leon starts to check the dead intruders' guns. Almost immediately, Reece's tablet begins to BEEP again. He stares at its screen:

REECE

Four. On the drive.

Before anyone can respond, we hear a burst of GUNFIRE. They all reflexively drop into a crouch. The gunfire STOPS. Reece is staring at his tablet, the feed from the drones:

REECE (cont'd)

They're down. All of 'em.

They all look at each other: *What the fuck?* And WE CUT TO:

EXT. FISHER HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Flynn, Burton, and the others are moving down the driveway: wary, weapons raised. Near the road, they find the four intruders, all shot dead. And then, at the end of the driveway: Conner, on his Tarantula, smoking a cigarette with his one good hand. Burton and the others lower their guns.

BURTON

What happened?

Conner shrugs, smiles, throws his cigarette aside:

CONNER

Little Sister said I should stop by for a beer.

Before anyone can respond, Burton's phone starts to BEEP. He glances at its screen. Then he turns toward Flynn.

FLYNN

What?

Burton holds up the phone. A message: "It's not going to stop. More will come. Ms. Fisher needs to sign into the Sim." Burton watches Flynn, waiting for her decision.

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Flynn, in the recliner, headset on. Leon is in the doorway, facing out, rifle at the ready. Burton is crouched beside Flynn, holding her hand, watching as she shuts her eyes.

A BLACK SCREEN

Just for an instant. And then:

CLOSE ON FLYNN'S FACE

As her eyes open. A beat, and WE PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT. WILF NETHERTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Large, dimly lit. Flynn sits in an armchair in front of a big desk. Behind the desk is a mirrored wall. Flynn stares uncertainly at her reflection. She gets up, moves around the desk, so she can examine herself more closely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's her. Her body. Her face. Her hair. But in a way she's never seen before. There are no scars, no worry lines, no flaws. Her clothes are immaculately tailored. She's herself, but perfect. Flynnne is staring, stunned, when:

WILF (O.S.)  
Thank you for coming.

She turns. WILF NETHERTON (38) is in the doorway. He's handsome, polished. He moves toward her across the big room.

WILF (cont'd)  
Wilf Netherton.

He holds out his hand, but Flynnne ignores it, and finally he has no choice but to lower it.

WILF (cont'd)  
I'll be as direct as possible, Ms. Fisher. Because neither of us has time for anything else. I've been hired to find a woman. Aelita West. And if I'm not mistaken you might be the last person to have encountered her.

He waves at the mirrored wall, and images of Aelita begin to appear, still and video. Many seem to be from surveillance cameras. Flynnne watches for a beat. Then:

FLYNNNE  
So that's the Sim? A find the missing lady sorta thing?

WILF  
You aren't playing a Sim, Ms. Fisher. You're inside what we call a peripheral. Telepresent. Piloting that body as if it were your own. And all this?

He gestures at the wall again, and it polarizes, becoming a giant window. We're on a high floor, with a view of Leicester Square. It's midday, but there are neither people nor any vehicles visible.

WILF (cont'd)  
Is just as real as the world in which you live.

Silence from Flynnne. Wilf TAPS his knuckle against the glass and a section of the wall magically opens, transforming into a balcony with a low railing. Wilf steps out onto:

EXT. WILF NETHERTON'S OFFICE - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

He leans against the railing, stares out over the empty square. Flynnne follows him, a little hesitantly, as if unsure of the balcony's solidity.

WILF

This is London.

FLYNNE

(not believing)

Guess you didn't have the budget to put some people in?

WILF

Yes, well...that's where things might begin to get a little tricky. This is London...but London thirty years from what you think of as the present.

FLYNNE

(still not believing)

And how did London go and get so empty in that time?

WILF

That's a rather complicated question, I'm afraid. And sadly we don't have time for 'complicated.' All you need to know for the present is that someone from here is trying to kill you and your family. And you're going to require my help to stop them.

FLYNNE

Looked to me like they already got stopped pretty good.

WILF

Indeed. Unfortunately, though, they're not likely to be the last.

Flynnne shakes her head in bewilderment.

FLYNNE

You really expect me to swallow this? That I've, like, time traveled to future London?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILF

Not at all. If it were "time travel," as you say, you'd be here physically. This is merely a matter of data transfer. Via the peripheral. "Quantum tunneling" is the technical—

(he stops, noticing her expression)

I understand your confusion.

FLYNNE

I ain't confused. I just don't believe you.

WILF

Would it help if I told you what's about to happen in your world?

Flynn just stares at him.

WILF (cont'd)

It's a little after six in the morning there. On August twenty-third. In another twenty minutes or so, there's going to be an earthquake off the coast of Alaska. Magnitude 7.9. Generating a moderate tsunami that will hit the Alaskan coast within the hour. Slightly over thirteen hundred people will die. Now, is there any way I could know this, without access to your future?

Again, Flynn is silent. Wilf smiles, gives a slight bow.

WILF (cont'd)

I'll see you soon, Ms. Fisher.

He turns, heads back into his office, and WE CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN

Again, just for an instant. And then:

INT. BURTON'S TRAILER - DAWN

Flynn opens her eyes. Leon is still in the open doorway, but there's no sign of Burton. Flynn removes the plastic headset, stands up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She seems to struggle with her balance, shutting her eyes, reaching to grab the recliner's armrest. When she opens her eyes again, Leon has turned to look at her.

FLYNNE

Burton...?

Leon tilts his head toward the clearing.

EXT. BURTON'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

The young vets are scattered around the property, on guard. The tiny drones are flying a grid overhead. Burton is on the far side of the clearing, crouched over one of the dead intruders, examining the man's haptic implants. He watches Flynne approach, then stands, stretches.

BURTON

Gotta decide what to do with these gents. Burying and burning have both come up for discussion. Along with the more straight-and-narrow approach of contacting the Sheriff's Department. I figured we should hear from you before we committed ourselves.

(he looks at her)

So?

FLYNNE

Got your phone?

Burton pulls out his phone, holds it up.

FLYNNE (cont'd)

What's on the news feed?

Burton taps at the phone, scans the screen, shrugs:

BURTON

Usual. Senator from Utah caught with a mistress. Israel fired a missile at an Iranian ship. Some sort of mining accident in—

FLYNNE

No earthquake?

Burton shakes his head. Flynne breathes deep, lets it out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLYNNE (cont'd)

It started to almost sorta make a weird kind of sense, while I was in there. But now....

She shrugs, falls silent. Burton frowns at her:

BURTON

Dozen dead men on our land, Flynne. Haptic recon, most of 'em. Armed better than I ever was overseas. So I'm thinking we sorely need us some answers.

FLYNNE

Wish I had 'em.

Burton glances at his phone, reads something off the screen.

BURTON

Why'd you ask about an earthquake?

FLYNNE

Would've changed things, I guess.

Burton holds up his phone. There's a news alert on the screen: An earthquake off the coast of Alaska, magnitude 7.9. Flynne shuts her eyes.

BURTON

You okay?

FLYNNE

(she shakes her head)  
Thirteen hundred people are about to die.

BURTON

What're you talking about?

FLYNNE

Shit, Burton. I don't even know where to begin.

She stands there, staring off across the property—the sun rising on the scattered corpses, the hovering drones, the young vets with their guns—and then WE:

FADE TO BLACK.