

THE ENERGY NEVER LIES

Written by

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Based on a short story.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

A concrete throat of skyscrapers. The air is "greasy"—a thick, smog-choked yellow that feels like it's clinging to the skin.

Traffic hums, but it's a dissonant, jagged sound.

INT. NEXUS CORP - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The room is all glass and "sterile" white. SARAH (34, sharp features, eyes that look like they haven't slept since the 90s) sits at a long table.

She stares at a bowl of artificial fruit in the center of the table.

Across from her, MR. VANCE (50s, a suit that costs more than a car) is talking. His mouth moves, but Sarah doesn't hear words. She hears a LOW-FREQUENCY DRONE.

Suddenly—THE SNAP. A high-pitched RINGING.

Sarah winces. She looks at Vance. He isn't just a man anymore. A THICK, OILY BLACK SMOKE leaks from his collar. It curls around his neck like a parasite.

Sarah looks at the wall behind him. The "marble" texture FLICKERS. For a microsecond, it's just unpainted drywall with "PROP 42" scrawled on it in marker.

VANCE

...Sarah? Are you aligned with the
Q3 synergy benchmarks?

Sarah looks at his hands. They are vibrating, slightly out of sync with his body.

SARAH

(Whispering)
It's hollow.

VANCE

Pardon?

SARAH

The wall. The room. You. It's
all... vibrating at the wrong
speed.

Vance tilts his head. The black smoke from his collar pulses.

VANCE
You're looking a bit "low-res"
today, Sarah. Maybe take the
afternoon?

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A high-rise condo. Minimalist. Beige. It feels like a hotel room no one ever checked out of.

JULIAN (35, handsome in a way that feels curated, wearing a cashmere sweater) pours two glasses of wine.

He moves with a terrifying smoothness. He radiates a PALE GRAY MIST—flat, odorless, and suffocating.

JULIAN
Vance called. He's worried about
your "output consistency."

Sarah stands by the floor-to-ceiling window. She looks at the city. The lights aren't stars; they look like LEDs glued to a black curtain.

SARAH
The world is a stage set, Julian. I
saw the seams today.

Julian approaches. He puts a hand on her shoulder. His touch feels like cold, wet clay. Sarah shudders.

JULIAN
You're just overstimulated. Too
much blue light. I've scheduled a
"recalibration" session for us on
Saturday.

SARAH
(Turning to him)
Do you feel that?

JULIAN
Feel what, honey?

SARAH
The rot. It's coming off you. Like
spoiled milk.

Julian's face doesn't change expression, but the GRAY MIST around him darkens to a CURDLED CHARCOAL.

JULIAN
(Voice dropping an
octave)
That's the stress talking. You're
breaking the script, Sarah. People
don't like it when you go off-book.

He takes a sip of wine. He doesn't swallow. He just holds it
in his mouth, staring at her with dead, unblinking eyes.

INT. NEXUS CORP - OFFICE - NEXT DAY

The office is a hive of "beige" energy. Everyone moves in
choreographed loops.

Sarah walks to her desk. She sees a CO-WORKER typing at a
computer that isn't even plugged in. The monitor is just a
black piece of plastic. The co-worker smiles at her—a wide,
terrifyingly empty grin.

Vance walks out of his office. He's flanked by two SECURITY
GUARDS.

VANCE
Sarah. A word.

INT. VANCE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The room feels smaller. The black smoke is now filling the
ceiling like a thundercloud.

VANCE
We've reviewed your "Vibrational
Compliance." You're leaking, Sarah.
You're making the other assets
uncomfortable.

SARAH
I'm "leaking" because I can see the
mold in the foundation.

VANCE
There is no mold. There is only the
Image. And you are failing to
project it.

He pushes a document across the desk. It's blank.

VANCE (CONT'D)
Sign the NDA for your
"discontinuation."

SARAH
It's a blank piece of paper.

VANCE
(Leaning in)
It's whatever we tell you it is.

Sarah stands up. The room SHAKES. The "marble" walls start to peel away like cheap wallpaper, revealing dark, industrial voids behind them.

SARAH
I'm not signing a lie.

VANCE
Then you're discarded. Good luck
surviving the static.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sarah enters. The furniture is GONE. The walls are bare.

Julian is standing in the center of the empty room. He looks like a cardboard cutout of himself.

JULIAN
I can't be with a "Glitch," Sarah.
It's bad for my brand.

SARAH
Where is our life, Julian?

JULIAN
(Flatly)
It was a subscription service. I've
canceled it.

He walks toward the door. As he passes her, the gray mist from his body clings to her clothes.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
When you're ready to be "beige"
again, call the service line. Until
then... enjoy the silence.

He exits. The heavy thud of the door echoes.

Sarah sinks to the floor. The "static"—a low, buzzing white noise—starts to rise in the room.

She closes her eyes. She breathes.

Slowly, the buzzing changes. It softens. It becomes... a heartbeat?

She opens her eyes. The "greasy" city lights outside the window are flickering out. The fake world is receding.

SARAH
(To herself)
Let it go.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A beat-up 1990s sedan (not a sleek corporate car) cruises down a two-lane blacktop.

The tall glass buildings are a memory in the rearview mirror.

The "grease" in the air is gone. The sky is a searing, honest blue.

EXT. RURAL TOWN - DUSK

The town of OAK CREEK. It's dusty. It's weathered. It's real.

The houses have peeling paint, but the energy around them isn't black or gray—it's a VIBRANT AMBER.

Sarah pulls over in front of an old, rusted-out GAS STATION. She gets out of the car. Her movements are fluid now. The "static" in her head has vanished.

A man works under the hood of an old Ford truck in the bay. ELIAS (35, wearing a grease-stained t-shirt, calloused hands).

As he steps out from the truck, he doesn't radiate mist. He radiates a THICK, GOLDEN GLOW. It's warm, like a sun-drenched afternoon.

He looks at Sarah. He doesn't look surprised.

ELIAS
You finally see it, don't you?

Sarah walks toward him. She looks at her own hands. A faint, silver light is beginning to shimmer around her fingers.

SARAH
I thought I was going crazy.

ELIAS

(Small smile)

The world is a loud lie, Sarah.
Most people spend their whole lives
trying to turn the volume up so
they don't have to hear the truth.

He wipes his hands on a rag. He walks to her, stopping a few feet away. The golden energy from him brushes against her silver light. It feels like a warm breeze.

SARAH

Julian... the city... they tried to
tell me I was "broken."

ELIAS

They're the ones who are hollow.
They're just "static" in suits. I
tried to tell you.

He gestures to the horizon, where the sun is setting over the mountains. The colors are so vivid they almost hurt.

ELIAS (CONT'D)

The energy never lies.

Sarah takes a deep breath of relief.

SARAH

Yeah, but you have to see it to
believe it

ELIAS

Once you see it, you can never
unsee it. There is no going back

He hands her a cold bottle of water.

SARAH

(Smiling)

Who the hell would ever want to go
back to that?

Sarah looks back toward the city. On the horizon, a faint, grey-shadowy glow pulses—the dying heartbeat of the "simulation."

THE END