

by

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EXT. EUROPE-VARIOUS LOCATIONS-NIGHT

A series of perfectly planned terrorist attacks are unfolding across Europe, causing catastrophic consequences.

INT. POWER PLANT-EVENING

The first attack hits a power plant.

It happened at the end of the workday. Nothing hinted at trouble; it was just another boring day. Workers were leaving, saying their goodbyes.

WORKERS

See you tomorrow.

Yeah.

Bye.

Catch you later.

The GUARD inspects the area and escorts the employees out. Once he confirms everything is fine, he heads to his booth. He sits down, just relaxing, when a knock sounds at the door.

A young man in uniform and a cap enters the booth. His face is hidden. He's carrying a gift.

GUARD

Hey, Jeffrey. How's it going?

UNKNOWN MAN

Heyyy. Don't you want to skip court?

GUARD

No... Where else would I go? I wouldn't find work later. I've got a family to feed.

UNKNOWN MAN

You're such a hard worker. And I come bearing a gift.

GUARD

A gift? Oh... why? Come in before anyone sees. What've you got?

UNKNOWN MAN

Cider May!

GUARD

Oh... oh no. No, I can't.

The UNKNOWN MAN speaks up. UNKNOWN MAN

From apples in the garden!

GUARD

Oh... alright, just don't blab!

UNKNOWN MAN

Isn't it cramped in your little booth?

GUARD

It'll do.

The guard brightens up, holding out some mugs.

GUARD

Look what I found! My daughter and wife gave me these mugs. They think that if they like cats, I should too. He smiles warmly as he shows the mugs. Honestly, I'm more of a dog person, you know.

The mugs are adorable, adorned with fluffy kittens, hearts, and bows. They clash with the grim interior and tense atmosphere of the booth, yet somehow they bring rays of happiness, hope, and warmth into this gray-blue reality.

UNKNOWN MAN

No, honestly... I don't care about animals.

GUARD

You don't get it. Family... that's magic. You'd need to find someone yourself to understand... billions of people like me.

UNKNOWN MAN

I found her a long time ago. But she... she'll never notice me.

The guard pours the drink into the mugs. They both sit. The guard takes one mug for himself and slides the other toward the man. The guard takes the first sip. The man holds the mug to his lips, watching him.

The guard collapses. The man smiles and leaves.
Behind the building, an explosion erupts. The man smiles.
Something flashes near his ear.

UNKNOWN MAN

Cancelled. Mission accomplished.

In a nearby district, the lights go out in homes.

INT. FAMILY HOME-EVENING

A family's evening unfolds:

CHILD

Mom, look at this funny AI video!

MOM

Wait, sweetie, not now, I'm busy.

CHILD

Mom, what are we having for dinner?

MOM

I made turkey.

CHILD

Cool.

MOM

How was your day?

CHILD

Oh... the lights went out.

INT. CORPORATE BOARDROOM-EVENING

A large company. Somewhere in a massive office, the bosses discuss a new global crisis.

BOSS 1

This is a catastrophe. Agents disappearing, staff being replaced by machines... and more terrorist attacks!

BOSS 2

Open the presentation.

The device freezes and glitches.

BOSS 1

Another problem. We sent too many specialists on this mission. Every single one is missing. It's comparable to a total failure.

BOSS 2

Why can't anyone handle our former operative?

BOSS 1

We cannot lose. The cost of losing... is life.

BOSS 2

I know who we need. Arden.

BOSS 1

The daughter of that very agent?

BOSS 2

Yes. The best specialist. Who can persuade her?

BOSS 1

I know one. He worked with her.

EXT. CITY STREETS-DAY-HEROINE'S POV

KATE ARDEN (Heroine)

I lived in an ordinary big city. Lots of signs and advertisements, luring you to buy goods in pretty packaging, tempting with bright covers, yet empty inside. Crowds of noisy people. Rats running along the streets. Theft, deception. This bustle... so boring. I want to yawn.

Kate walks through the crowd, passing shop windows. She stops at a crosswalk. In the thick crowd, red numbers above the street countdown the required time, then turn green.

She wears a long black coat with a bluish tint. A small boy runs past and bumps into her.

BOY

Thanks, silly lady!

The boy keeps running, shouting without stopping, a smile on his face. Kate tosses her wallet into his hands.

KATE ARDEN

Thanks, kid... and to you too.

Kate opens her wallet and examines her prize.

KATE ARDEN (to herself)

How much cash does he have... Wow, thirty-one dollars! More than I had. That should last until tomorrow.

INT. GROCERY STORE-DAY

Kate enters, buys bread, dry cat food, and ham.

With the bag in hand, she heads to a studio around the corner. A bright sign above reads: Private Detective.

KATE ARDEN (to herself)

This is what boredom feels like. Total despair in conversation... the absence of everything you see and hear, because you already know what tomorrow-or the day after-will bring.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICE - DAY

Kate enters a small reception room, takes off her coat, hangs it on a rack, and steps into the main office.

Along one wall is a couch; next to it, a table with a microwave and an electric kettle. Below, a small fridge. Against the other wall, a cheap cabinet.

Her fluffy cat greets her.

KATE ARDEN

I'm home.

She makes tea, pours cat food, and collapses on the couch. The cat jumps onto her lap, trying to steal some of her meat.

KATE ARDEN

Hey, hey! Nooo, that's not for you!

The cat snatches a small piece anyway.

KATE ARDEN

Alright... I'm in a good mood today.

She eats, then lies down, cuddling with the cat on the same couch.

KATE ARDEN

I never get bored with you. Good night, fluffball.

INT. DETECTIVE OFFICE-LATER

Kate narrates her thoughts, reflecting on her day.

KATE ARDEN (to herself)

Boredom... it's when fools show up day after day with the same requests.

The phone rings.

KATE ARDEN

Hello? Detective agency.

CLIENT (V.O.)

Please... help me. My cat is missing.

KATE ARDEN

Sorry... I can't help with that.

Kate sits behind her desk, bored. The phone rings again.

KATE

Boring

CLIENT (V.O.)

Help me... find my father. He died ten years ago.

KATE ARDEN

I don't resurrect the dead.

CLIENT (V.O.)

Please... I need to know. My husband is cheating on me. Follow him.

KATE ARDEN

No.

CLIENT (V.O.)

I need to find these limited edition sneakers, but I don't know where to buy them.

KATE ARDEN

No.

CLIENT (V.O.)

But without them, my collection won't be complete.

KATE ARDEN

No... pointless.

A pair of expensive shoes appears on the counter. Not sneakers, not heels-shiny new boots.

The doorbell rings. A young man enters, wearing a sporty bomber jacket with yellow sleeves and a white t-shirt with a silver pendant.

ELIAS WATSON

Kate! How's it going? Found anything that might interest you? I brought coffee... and a little something sweet.

KATE ARDEN

Watson... stop dropping by all the time.

ELIAS WATSON

So you're refusing food? Skipping meals is very bad for you!

KATE ARDEN

NO. I'LL EAT. Thanks... Wait, why did you come by? You clearly need something from me. You show up every day, invite me out. I have only two options... but I trust only one. Let me guess... you didn't leave the organization?

ELIAS WATSON

Yeah, they pay well. But why did you choose the first option? Could it be that you're interested in me?

He steps closer, placing one hand on the desk and the other on his waist.

KATE ARDEN

No... you didn't visit me before the attacks, when specialists were in short supply.

ELIAS WATSON

No... you're missing something. You don't want to come back?

KATE ARDEN

No. After that incident, I won't return.

ELIAS WATSON

Aren't you bored here? Don't you want to work... before we're replaced by the neural network, MIS agent?

KATE ARDEN

I work better alone.

ELIAS WATSON

And if an interesting mission comes up? You only take intriguing cases.

He steps closer. Kate frowns.

ELIAS WATSON

We've caught a network. It's a virus that spreads fast!

Kate covers her ears with her hands.

KATE ARDEN

NO! NO! NO! I'm not listening! I'm not getting involved in this!

ELIAS WATSON

But listen... OUR AGENTS ARE DISAPPEARING!

Kate pushes him toward the door.

KATE ARDEN

Out! I can't.

ELIAS WATSON

I'll come by again. What do you want for dinner?

KATE ARDEN

Nothing!

ELIAS WATSON

How about a restaurant? French cuisine... or Italian?

Silence falls behind the door.

ELIAS WATSON

Silence is a sign of agreement. Then it's settled. I'll come at six-be ready.

Watson descends the street, exiting from around a corner. He walks past glass storefronts and stops. He fixes his hair and mutters aloud:

ELIAS WATSON (to himself)

How am I going to convince you?

A couple passes by.

WOMAN

The park where we met... the trees are blooming beautifully. Maybe we could take a walk there sometime?

MAN

Good idea.

The man carefully hands an envelope to Watson.

ELIAS WATSON (looking at the envelope)

A new assignment... How untimely.

EXT. PARK-DAY

Watson heads to the garden indicated by his colleagues. He passes a fountain and sees a man sitting on a bench, briefcase beside him, tapping his foot impatiently, clearly irritated.

Watson sits next to him.

ELIAS WATSON

Hello. How's your mood?

COLLEAGUE

Terrible! You're late!

Watson tenses; the frustration on the man's face is obvious.

COLLEAGUE

These documents are yours. Organize them, write the report, and finish the assignment with Sherlock. A simple task... please complete it.

ELIAS WATSON

That's all?

COLLEAGUE

No. You already have a backlog of tasks.

INT. WATSON'S APARTMENT-EVENING

Watson returns home. The briefcase looks completely out of place in his apartment. He sets it on the table and opens it. Inside are piles of papers and several broken devices.

He spins in his chair and grabs his head.

ELIAS WATSON

AAAAHH! Repairs... you're joking!

He starts going through the papers. Hours fly by, one after another. Outside, darkness falls.

Distracted from his report on the laptop, he notices the time. It's very dark now. He yawns and stretches.

ELIAS WATSON (to himself)

I have dinner with Kate tonight!

He quickly gets ready—ironed shirt, brown coat, watch. He bolts out of the apartment and locks the door behind him.

INT. KATE ARDEN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Earlier, Kate receives a package. The doorbell rings.

KATE ARDEN

Who's there?

No one answers. On the doorstep, a package awaits. She opens it: a red dress and a note tucked at the bottom:

"I want everything to be perfect. This is for a coordinated look."

KATE ARDEN

You prepared that much! I still won't go.

Kate folds the dress back into the package it came in and leaves it at the door. She closes the door and heads to the kitchen.

The fridge is nearly empty. Only a single rotten, moldy apple remains.

KATE ARDEN (to herself)

No snacks today..

Her fluffy cat rubs against her legs.

KATE ARDEN

I can't go, but I have no money..

CAT

Meow.

KATE ARDEN

Maybe it's a boring case? What do you think?

CAT

Meow.

KATE ARDEN

Look what poverty does to people..

She returns to the doorstep and retrieves the dress.

Outside, a courier who had been watching from around the corner smiles as Kate takes the package and walks away.

EXT. CITY STREET-EVENING

Watson runs to the meeting. Passing a flower shop, he stops.

ELIAS WATSON

Maybe she'll like flowers.. Statistically, roses are the best choice. One bouquet of roses, please.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Of course.

ELIAS WATSON

For my beloved?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Statistically, 92 percent of men buy flowers for their loved ones. I decided not to lower the statistics.

The assistant laughs nervously.

Watson knocks on Kate's door, holding a bouquet of red roses.

ELIAS WATSON

Ready?

KATE ARDEN

Kate opens the door. And what exactly are you ready for?

The bouquet appears before her as soon as she opens the door.

KATE ARDEN

Roses... how cliché.

She takes the bouquet anyway.

KATE ARDEN

Do you think I should match the flowers?

ELIAS WATSON

Your taste is... peculiar.

Kate fills a glass of water and places the bouquet on the table. Her fluffy cat approaches and sniffs the flowers.

KATE ARDEN

Let's go.

ELIAS WATSON

Scratching his head. Let's go.

As the door closes behind them, the cat knocks over the makeshift vase. Water spills across the floor.

INT. RESTAURANT -EVENING

The heroes enter a luxurious restaurant. Dim lighting, candles on the tables, soft jazz playing in the

background.INT. RESTAURANT- EVENING

Evening has settled. People dine leisurely; waiters move between tables. Watson and Kate sit at a table by the window. Kate scans the room, observing the patrons. Her eyes instinctively search for clues-habitual, intuitive-the kind that have become second nature to her.

A tall man with a piercing gaze, a dazzling blonde beside him. Men in lightly sporty yet classic attire discuss business matters. A man in red, expecting a bright love. Kate moves effortlessly among the diners, treating every object as a detail she cannot live without.

KATE ARDEN

I'll say it straight-I came to eat. I'm not interested in your suggestions.

ELIAS WATSON

I'm here to eat with you too.

Kate eyes him skeptically.

KATE ARDEN

You knew Agent Star?

ELIAS WATSON

No. His identity was classified.

KATE ARDEN

I knew. You can't have anyone close at work. He learned that the hard way. He had a sister... remember the bright little girl who used to run into your new tech department?

ELIAS WATSON

The little one... always happy, every time with new toys she constantly forgot.

KATE ARDEN

Yes. That's her.

WAITER

Are you ready to order?

KATE ARDEN

Yes... I'll have the duck with orange sauce and tiramisu.

What about you?

ELIAS WATSON

Tea and wine for me.

WAITER

Very well. Your dishes will be out shortly.

KATE ARDEN

Are you sure you don't want anything else? You're not spending your last money on me. You still have the chance to back out.

ELIAS WATSON

No, don't worry. I'm not hungry. Go on... I'm interested.

KATE ARDEN

It was a mission against terrorists. He was undercover, and I was the strategist. I guided him... though I never saw his face. His sister wandered into the operation zone. A huge organization, a powerful strategist... they didn't think a child running into a store would run not to the office store, but to her brother. That the child would overhear, find him, and come to him. That day, the mission failed... and Star betrayed the organization. Now, the secret of what happened, I keep to myself.

ELIAS WATSON

The girl... was she harmed?

KATE ARDEN

She disappeared that day, along with Star. I left.

ELIAS WATSON

So... about Agent Star... he's back.

Kate widens her eyes at Watson.

ELIAS WATSON

In the same role he vanished in.

A man in red lowers his menu and begins a loud monologue.

MAN IN RED

Applause breaks out. Well done! She told him all about me...

well done!

The man stands on the chair he had been sitting on.

MAN IN RED

You dressed as I asked... everything must be perfect!

Kate rises from the table, her face a mix of outrage.
Watson remains seated, stunned.

The man climbs onto the table.

MAN IN RED

Now, I have a message for the audience... yes, for you.
There's a bomb in this room! He checks his watch. It will
explode in ten minutes.

He crouches on the table as the crowd panics, grabbing
their belongings and fleeing, forgetting bills and food.

MAN IN RED

We have ten minutes to talk, to settle old scores.

Watson pulls a small device from his pocket and holds it to
his ear.

ELIAS WATSON

We need reinforcements immediately... our target is nearby.

Star moves between the tables.

MAN IN RED / STAR

What will you choose this time? What will you do? Do you
have a plan?

KATE ARDEN

That depends... do you have a weapon or not?

Kate moves in the opposite direction along the rows,
running her hand along the undersides of the tables.

KATE ARDEN

Maybe you're bluffing?

STAR / LOKWOOD

Maybe... but chaos is destined to happen.

Suddenly, Watson rushes toward Star. He grabs a chair and hurls it upward. The chair strikes the edge of a table. Star jumps, balancing perfectly, but does not fall.

Star grabs another chair, standing atop the table, and hurls it down with force. Watson ducks; the chair shatters on the floor.

Star steps across the table like a performer on a stage. He leaps.

He lands right in front of Watson, but Watson intercepts a third chair mid-motion, swinging it diagonally.

Star ducks; the swing sails over his shoulder and smashes a lamp on the wall. Watson pivots the chair, shoving it forward, pinning Star against the overturned table. The wood groans.

Star slams a foot onto the seat, pushing the chair away, and vaults back onto the table behind him-now higher.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Such aggression... such delight... a pity without feeling.

Without hesitation, Watson climbs up after him. The table creaks under their combined weight. A crack runs through the center. They lock eyes, lose balance, and a chair falls between them. The table collapses. They tumble down with the debris.

Star rolls first and rises. Watson jumps up immediately after. For a moment, there is complete silence.

Star gives a light bow.

Watson receives a signal.

ELIAS WATSON (into device)

You've lost! Agent Star... you have nowhere to run. The building is surrounded. Surrender.

STAR / LOKWOOD

I wasn't planning on running... How about we play a game?

KATE ARDEN

A game?

ELIAS WATSON

Kate...

STAR / LOKWOOD

You're completely unarmed. Watson, look under the table... a gift.

Watson looks. A pistol lies there.

Star pulls a matching pistol from his suit pocket.

STAR / LOKWOOD

And this... for the lady.

He tosses it toward Kate. She doesn't catch it; it falls to the floor in front of her.

ELIAS WATSON

KATE ARDEN

You shouldn't have given me a weapon!

STAR / LOKWOOD

If I hadn't, it would've been too boring!

Watson opens fire. Star dashes across the tables, steps onto a chair, and slides down in front of Kate. He kicks over a table, creating a makeshift shield.

Kate bends down, grabs the pistol, and holds it firmly. Employees rush into the restaurant.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Let me help.

He grabs her from behind-one hand on her waist, the other controlling her hand holding the gun.

KATE ARDEN

What do you think you're doing!

She swings her free elbow at Star's nose. He dodges.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Careful, doll. This is dangerous.

Employees run to Watson.

ELIAS WATSON

What's the situation?

AGENT

Over by that table.

ELIAS WATSON

Understood.

AGENT

Hands up. Slowly exit.

Star keeps smiling.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Wow... so many people. In that case...

He kicks a gun out from under a chair with his foot. It lands on his leg. He tosses it and catches it with the hand opposite Kate. She holds it in her left hand, he in his right.

He spins her around; now they face each other.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Shall we dance?

AGENT

Hands up! I'm repeating myself!

Star rises, addressing Kate.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Kate... how's the music? Doesn't feel right. Vee, change it-I want a waltz.

Kate and Star whirl in a fierce dance. Bullets fly around them, but none hit. Shards of broken dishes rain down. Their movements are sharp, precise. Glass crunches underfoot.

Kate's face shifts-an expression of exhilaration.

KATE ARDEN

You're not working alone... you have an accomplice.

STAR / LOKWOOD

See... getting a little closer. Why aren't you shooting? There are targets all around.

KATE ARDEN

You won't shoot people.

STAR / LOKWOOD

These aren't people! I'll help.

KATE ARDEN

Ah!

A bullet strikes the forehead of an agent.

KATE ARDEN

What are you doing?!

STAR / LOKWOOD

Look closer. See!

Dark blue fluid drips from the agent's forehead-it's a robot.

KATE ARDEN

A robot...

They continue firing at the robots.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Not everyone in this room is like that. For example... you and I are humans.

KATE ARDEN

Alright, thanks for the dance. The atmosphere was great... we learned a lot about each other... but I'm tired!

She stomps on his foot with all her strength. Star loosens his grip. Kate pulls free, shoving him away. Star falls.

A bullet shatters the chandelier above them. Shards scatter across the tablecloth. Agents are positioned throughout the hall-behind columns, near the entrance.

Star rolls onto his side, slides under a table, instantly assessing the space.

Upside-down chairs, tablecloths to the floor, heavy drapes. Star doesn't panic. He smiles.

Kate glides toward the grand piano in the corner and slams

the lid shut with a loud crash, distracting the nearest agent.

In that moment, Star yanks a tablecloth downward. Dishes crash to the floor; the hall fills with noise.

He uses a table as a shield, pushing it forward. Bullets thud against the wood.

STAR / LOKWOOD

Still improvising?

KATE ARDEN

No... I'm calculating your moves.

Suddenly, Star changes direction. He flips a table sideways and slides across the floor toward the kitchen entrance. Grabbing a metal tray, he hurls it toward the lights-lamps flicker out. Half-dark. Agents lose their bearings.

Using the shadows, Star kicks a chair toward one agent. The agent stumbles. Star is already close. A swift movement and the agent's weapon flies across the floor under another table.

A second agent fires; a bullet shatters a bottle behind Kate.

KATE ARDEN

Hey! Watch where you're shooting!

ELIAS WATSON

Don't shoot Kate!

Star doesn't retreat. He closes the distance. Using everything nearby, he jumps over Kate and lands in the center of the room. Now he doesn't hide-he's controlling the game.

Kate emerges from the shadows on the opposite side. They stand across from each other over an overturned table. Agents fidget nervously.

Star tilts his head slightly.

STAR / LOKWOOD

The restaurant is closed, gentlemen. Time to disperse.. I'm running late.

He steps sharply forward, kicking a chair across the floor

directly at Kate. She jumps and confidently deflects it with her foot, sending it into another table and flipping it over.

Star doesn't lose balance. He quickly changes position, climbing onto one of the still-standing tables.

From there, he lunges with a metal tray. Kate ducks; the tray clatters onto another table, creating a loud noise and distracting her.

Kate seizes the moment. She spins around him, pushing the overturned chair forward as a barrier.

Star slides off the table, steps aside, and effortlessly jumps over a chair without touching it.

The table breaks under his weight, but he immediately uses a fragment to balance and accelerate.

Kate Arden decides not to engage directly. She nimbly jumps over overturned objects, using them to change direction and create distance.

Star makes another sharp leap over an overturned chair, closing the distance again.

They face each other, each holding an empty object-chair, tray, fragment.

They clash, twist, push back, keeping distance, using the objects not as weapons but as shields and leverage.

Finally, both take a step back, breathing heavily.

The room is in ruins. Chairs overturned, tables broken, chandelier swaying.

Star cautiously steps toward the exit, leaving Kate standing amidst the chaos.

Kate and Star are still on their feet after the collisions.

Somewhere in the corner, near the kitchen door, Elias Watson notices a strange object carefully tucked under the countertop. His eyes fix on it immediately: a device with a bright red indicator.

ELIAS WATSON

Damn...

(then shouting)

I found a bomb!

KATE ARDEN

So you weren't bluffing after all.

STAR / LOKWOOD

And you doubted me, doll?

Watson crouches, examining the device, checking the wires. His movements are precise, deliberate—he knows there's no time for panic.

Meanwhile, Star makes another dash toward the center of the room, jumping over a chair.

Kate readies herself for his next move, holding her object for defense but not striking—she knows the priority is controlling the space.

Watson quietly pushes nearby debris aside and carefully disables the device. The red indicator goes out.

ELIAS WATSON

(relieved whisper)

Got it.

ELIAS WATSON

(whispering)

It worked. Everything's clear.

Star steps back, noticing Watson. His gaze immediately assesses the situation.

STAR / LOKWOOD

You thought she was here alone?

ELIAS WATSON

What?

STAR / LOKWOOD

(looks at his watch)

Whoa... one minute left.

Immediately, he slips into the kitchen. Kate Arden sprints ahead.

ELIAS WATSON

Everyone, get out! The building's rigged-explosion imminent!

Everyone bolts for the exit. Seconds later, the building erupts in flames.

Kate stretches, extending her arms, twisting her torso.

KATE ARDEN

Nice warm-up.

Watson, still catching his breath, looks at her, stunned.

ELIAS WATSON

Thanks for your help. Mission accomplished. Your part's done.

KATE ARDEN

What?

(points toward Star, now disguised as a worker, holding onto a trash-collecting machine and waving at the agents as he leaves)

He'll argue with you.

Kate's phone buzzes with a notification. A playful game-"Where's truth, where's lie?" She smiles, then slips the phone back into her pocket.

KATE ARDEN

I convinced him... in the field!

ELIAS WATSON

(grinning, shaking his head)

Yeah... you definitely did.

ELIAS WATSON

Actually... this is classified information.

KATE ARDEN

Not even for the new staff, huh?

ELIAS WATSON

So... will you come with me?

KATE ARDEN

Not with you. I work alone.

ELIAS WATSON

Even without gorgeous eyes like mine?

An awkward silence hangs in the air.

ELIAS WATSON

Sorry... I overdid it.

KATE ARDEN

Yeah... definitely overdid it.

Both glance away, embarrassed.

Suddenly, they enter a large, modern building.

ELIAS WATSON

You know... a lot has changed while you were gone. M.I.S.

KATE ARDEN

Enough.

(smirks, playful)

I'm no longer that agent.

They step into the elevator. Watson presses a combination: 1-9-9-7-6-1-2. The elevator starts descending.

Kate reaches for a button. It's scorching hot; she jerks her hand back.

KATE ARDEN

Ow!

ELIAS WATSON

Did you burn yourself?

KATE ARDEN

The buttons... they're hot.

ELIAS WATSON

Ah... that happens.

The base underground is vast and striking. Glass offices shimmer with embedded robotic circuitry; floors are semi-transparent. Humans move alongside robots. Kate is visibly impressed.

KATE ARDEN

So many robots...

ELIAS WATSON

Yes. They've completely filled the place now.

KATE ARDEN

I worked on the first machines... back then you weren't even here.

ELIAS WATSON

I was in another Adele. You don't remember.

KATE ARDEN

Alright... I'll believe you for now.

ELIAS WATSON

You took your time returning, you know.

KATE ARDEN

I only left for a short while... just a couple of years.

ELIAS WATSON

For you, yes. For the headquarters... an era.

A robot driving ahead suddenly turns its head toward Kate.

ROBOT

I need meat... I want a body!

Watson steps forward, shielding Kate.

ELIAS WATSON

Uh... easy there.

ROBOT

Sorry, sweetie, just joking with the new human. Ha ha. Move along.

The robot rolls away.

KATE ARDEN

Is it always like this here?

ELIAS WATSON

Unfortunately... yes.

KATE ARDEN

Which office should I go to?

ELIAS WATSON

I'll guide you.

Suddenly, a robot bursts out of an office to their left, clutching papers.

ROBOT

Sweetie, generate a probability table, calculate, copy... no, dumb piece beep-boop! I can even get offended; my program allows it.

The robot rolls off into another office.

KATE ARDEN

Still rude... sigh. At least before, it was humans who were rude.

ELIAS WATSON

We optimized the process. Now they're rude on schedule.

They walk down two corridors and stop at a door.

ELIAS WATSON

Here we are.

They enter. Kate freezes, stunned. Approaching Watson, she points at his chest.

KATE ARDEN

This is my office! Why did you bring me here? Why is it restored, and why is my desk still here?

ELIAS WATSON (raising hands defensively)

Calm down, calm down... this is my office. I wanted to leave

everything as it was for my idol!

KATE ARDEN

And why do you need all this junk?

ELIAS WATSON

The robots tried to remove it.

KATE ARDEN

And...?

ELIAS WATSON

I told them it's "cultural heritage." They seemed to believe me.

Pause.

INT. UNDERGROUND BASE- KATE'S OFFICE -DAY

A mechanical voice suddenly fills the room.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Recommendation: awkward pause exceeds acceptable norms. I suggest a hug.

KATE ARDEN & ELIAS WATSON (simultaneously)

NO!

The rounded ceiling device blinks.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Request denied. Human logic confirmed.

KATE ARDEN (smiling)

So... how are you going to cure my boredom? What's the mission? And the clues?

ELIAS WATSON

There are many.

He pulls a thin, almost transparent disc from the cabinet and lays it on the desk. A hologram of their boss appears.

BOSS

Welcome back, Sherlock. An electricity station was

attacked. Near the blast, we found a small teddy bear-and a tiny note beside it. Signed: dot, dash, little star.

KATE ARDEN (reading aloud)

"I see you."

BOSS

Yes... ahem.

He disappeared after the last incident. We thought he was dead, but he survived. To everyone else, he's now a terrorist. And he's back, proving he exists. Since you worked together before, I believe you're the one who can track him down.

Sherlock crosses her arms, thinking aloud.

KATE ARDEN

Most likely him. He caused chaos... showed his face. But why leave a soft toy? He usually leaves solid objects, a chess piece, or something else at the scene. After him, everything has to be cleaned up.

ELIAS WATSON

Do you think you can crack it?

KATE ARDEN

He's just inviting us to a game. There's no hint, nothing.. just the bear. Boss, can I see him in person?

Beat. Sherlock studies the hologram, her mind already racing with possibilities.

BOSS

Of course.

A signal came in from the lab. People in lab coats open a safe. Steam bursts out. One technician carefully pulls out a small teddy bear. A robot with a metal tray approaches, taking the bear and maneuvering through the office, lightly brushing past staff.

TECHNICIAN

Watch where you're going!

The bear almost tips over-but the robot delivers it safely.

ROBOT

Here you go, M.I.S.

Kate reaches for the bear, but Watson quickly hands her a pair of gloves.

ELIAS WATSON

Ah... hands only with gloves.

Kate complies, putting on the gloves. She pulls a small knife from her pocket.

ELIAS WATSON

Where did you...?

KATE ARDEN

Sleight of hand. Nothing more.

She carefully slices open the teddy bear.

KATE ARDEN (smirking)

Just as I suspected.

BOSS

You really haven't changed. You know the rules-unauthorized weapons are prohibited.

Kate smiles, holding the bear open.

KATE ARDEN

Inside... a note!

She examines it:

KATE ARDEN (reading aloud)

"13H 6Zh 20U 18S 16P 17R 16P 13M 10Y 20U 6Zh 150"

ELIAS WATSON

Could this be a cipher... or some kind of algorithm?

Kate tilts her head, analyzing the string of numbers and letters, already thinking three steps ahead.

KATE ARDEN

Yes, it's never boring with him! she exclaims.
Metropolitan.

ELIAS WATSON

(disappointed)

That was fast.

KATE ARDEN

(with a sly smile)

I'm heading out.

Watson grabs her by the sleeve.

ELIAS WATSON

You forgot about the devices. How could it be interesting without them?

KATE ARDEN

(agrees)

Alright, what do you have? Lay it out.

BOSS

I've already sent you the gear for the mission with Watson.

Kate's expression changes.

KATE ARDEN

I'll go alone.

BOSS

No, that's not up for discussion! You weren't informed. Everything is already planned. Too many agents have gone missing on solo missions.

KATE ARDEN

And you think if we go together we won't disappear? As if there's some protection over us.

BOSS

You are going with your partner. I will not send you on this mission alone.

KATE ARDEN

Sexist.

BOSS

Excuse me?

KATE ARDEN

Nothing.

BOSS

Your full equipment just arrived.

A nice young woman enters carrying two bags.

ASSISTANT

Here is your equipment. Everything you need is inside.

A medical kit with nanotechnology. Two small earpieces. And weapons.

INT. MUSEUM-DAY

They enter the building together, wearing matching three-piece suits. They walk among the exhibits.

Kate studies the displays, searching for a clue among the artifacts.

ELIAS WATSON

A museum like any other. Nothing unusual. Let's just walk around casually.

KATE ARDEN

Favorite job... yes, yes.

They approach a display case with an ancient vase.

ELIAS WATSON

So, what do you think about this one?

KATE ARDEN

Kate slowly walks along the display cases without touching the glass. In her hands is a thin flashlight and a small magnifying device. The beam of light glides across the ornament.

Micro-cracks. An uneven layer of varnish. And fresh restoration work.

She slightly tilts her head.

Not entirely a fake... but the restorer worked in a hurry.

ELIAS WATSON

You see things machines can't detect.

Kate Arden and Elias Watson move farther down the hall. Kate's gaze falls on every historical piece of art. She begins commenting on the objects.

KATE ARDEN

This pistol hasn't been fired for centuries... but it was cleaned recently.

Near a portrait of an aristocrat she barely looks at the face.

Her eyes shift to the background, the artist's signature, the thickness of the paint.

KATE ARDEN

This painting used to hang somewhere else. The marks from the old mounting are different.

They continue walking. Watson admires an ancient statue.

ELIAS WATSON

Imagine, it's two thousand years old.

KATE ARDEN

(calmly)

And under it there's an alarm cable installed three years ago. Poorly hidden.

Kate walks slowly, almost lazily, looking at the visitors rather than the paintings.

There are people all around, but it is strangely quiet. No noise, no children. Everyone is an adult, and they seem to be watching.

Watson walks beside her.

ELIAS WATSON

Why did you suddenly switch to people? Are we even looking for a clue, or do you just enjoy observing people?

KATE ARDEN

There is no "we" here. I'm looking for what isn't human.

Watson frowns.

Kate slightly quickens her pace and seemingly by accident bumps her shoulder into a man in a gray coat.

A collision.

She immediately understands-it's a machine.

Normally people react: apologize, flinch, step back.

This one doesn't.

He turns his head with mathematically precise delay.

His pupils focus with a faint mechanical click.

The skin is too smooth. The temperature of his touch is colder than normal.

Kate doesn't apologize. She looks straight into his eyes.

The man smiles.

The smile appears exactly after 0.3 seconds.

MAN

Excuse me.

His voice is perfectly even.

KATE ARDEN

(quietly)

You're not alive.

Watson tenses.

Kate, as if testing a hypothesis, touches his arm again. Under the fabric she feels a structure that is too rigid.

ELIAS WATSON

(whispering)

What are you doing?!

At that moment two more visitors turn their heads toward them simultaneously.

Too simultaneously.

Kate subtly steps back closer to Watson.

KATE ARDEN

Don't make any sudden moves. They're connected through a network.

ELIAS WATSON

(whispering)

How many of them?

Kate slowly scans the hall.

KATE ARDEN

The elderly woman near the statue. The teenager at the interactive panel.

The guard by the door. The same micro-pause before every movement.

ELIAS WATSON

Almost all of them.

KATE ARDEN

I just counted again. All of them.

Suddenly, the man in the gray coat takes a step closer.

MAN

You demonstrate an increased level of observation.

His voice no longer sounds human.

KATE ARDEN

(calmly)

And you demonstrate an increased level of imitation.

An anxious silence begins to spread across the hall.

One by one, the "people" turn toward them.

ELIAS WATSON

(quietly)

Please tell me you have a plan.

Kate looks at the nearest fire cabinet, at the ceiling sensors, at the light control panel.

A slight smile appears.

KATE ARDEN

Now I do.

The man reaches his hand toward her with a pistol, but Watson pushes Kate aside and falls with her.

The man in the gray coat speaks again in the same even voice:

MAN

You represent a threat to the surveillance system.

KATE ARDEN

She tilts her head slightly.

KATE ARDEN

Observation is my specialty.

She sharply turns to Watson, barely moving her lips.

KATE ARDEN

The alarm on the ceiling. The smoke sensors are autonomous. If they activate, the evacuation protocol will start.

Watson understands instantly.

One of the robots steps forward.

Watson grabs a fire extinguisher from the wall and sprays it straight into the face of the man in the gray coat. A white cloud covers his sensors.

KATE ARDEN

They need visual contact! Nice one, Watson!

The robot in the gray coat raises his weapon and aims at her.

Kate quickly closes the distance and knocks the pistol out of his hand.

KATE ARDEN

Let's see. Physical adaptation test.

Kate Arden calmly removes her gloves.

ELIAS WATSON

Too dangerous. Wait.

KATE ARDEN

No. Don't tell me you feel sorry for him. And press the button already.

ROBOT

At last. A worthy opponent.

Watson steps forward toward Kate.

KATE ARDEN

Don't interfere. I need to understand his algorithm.

The robot attacks first.

The movement is too direct. Too calculated.

Kate doesn't block. She shifts half a step to the side at the very last moment. The machine's arm passes within centimeters of her shoulder.

KATE ARDEN

Linear prediction model... primitive.

The second attack is faster.

Kate catches the robot's wrist, feeling rigid metal beneath the artificial skin. She spins sharply, using his momentum, and drives the robot's body into a glass display case.

The glass cracks but does not shatter.

The robot corrects instantly. Its head tilts at a precisely calculated angle.

ROBOT

Analysis: opponent uses asymmetrical reaction.

Kate smiles.

KATE ARDEN

Analyze this.

She suddenly changes rhythm. Instead of smooth movements

she makes a sharp, almost illogical strike. The blow is not to the body, but to the shoulder joint.

A short crack is heard.

The robot's arm begins moving with a slight delay.

ELIAS WATSON

(watching)

You're breaking him.

KATE ARDEN

Yeah.

The robot accelerates. Its movements become more aggressive, less predictable.

It grabs her wrist.

The grip is strong.

For a fraction of a second-risk.

Kate does not try to pull away.

She steps closer.

KATE ARDEN

You calculate trajectories... but you don't account for chaos.

She suddenly shifts her center of gravity, strikes the knee joint, and at the same time pulls the robot's body toward herself.

The machine loses balance.

They fall.

Kate rolls aside, grabs a metal barrier holder from the wall, and forcefully jams it between the robot's neck panels.

Sparks burst.

The robot freezes.

ROBOT

(system voice)

Unpredictability exceeds acceptable parameters.

Kate Arden stands up, breathing heavily.

KATE ARDEN

Exactly.

But at that moment the other machines take a step forward.

ELIAS WATSON

(quietly)

Now they've updated the algorithm.

Kate looks at dozens of identical, cold faces.

KATE ARDEN

Excellent. Then I'll have to be even less predictable.

ELIAS WATSON

How could you be any more unpredictable?

A second of silence.

Suddenly-

A sharp alarm signal.

Red lights begin to flash.

A thin smoke screen sprays from the ceiling. Chaos begins.

The robots freeze for a fraction of a second as their algorithms recalculate priorities: "threat" or "evacuation."

Kate uses the pause.

Two robots attempt to reach the control panel, but because of the smoke their movements become less precise.

KATE ARDEN

(loudly)

Command. Cancel combat actions.

ROBOTS

(in unison)

Command not accepted. Not found in database.

Operation code continues.

KATE ARDEN

Too bad.

She quickly assesses the space.

KATE ARDEN

Their coordination center is somewhere here. They're acting too synchronously.

Suddenly a voice sounds from speakers in the ceiling.

SYSTEM VOICE

Analytical subject confirmed. Isolation protocol activated.

The doors around the perimeter begin to close.

The smoke clears.

The robots turn toward them again.

Now, without disguise, their movements become cold and precise.

KATE ARDEN

(quietly)

Now the real game begins.

Then-a click.

At the same moment dozens of visitors turn toward Kate Arden and Elias Watson.

Their arms rise.

Hidden modules open in their wrists.

ELIAS WATSON

Cover!

The first volley shatters the glass of a display case with an old 1902 ticket inside. Shards scatter across the marble floor.

Watson pulls Kate behind the massive body of an early 20th-century subway car.

Metal echoes as bullets strike it.

ELIAS WATSON

We're trapped! We walked right into it ourselves!

KATE ARDEN

Hmm. No clues for the future. I'm losing my grip. That won't do.

Watson peeks out from behind the wheel.

Kate quickly scans the hall.

High metal beams.

An old signal system under the ceiling.

Above their heads- a tunnel model with a suspended railcar.

KATE ARDEN

They rely on visual coordination.

ELIAS WATSON

Then we need to break their line of sight.

He fires.

Another volley. The lamps above the exhibition explode.

Kate grabs an old manual signal spotlight from the wall- an exhibit connected to the demonstration network.

KATE ARDEN

Cover me!

Watson answers with a short burst of fire, forcing the robots to take cover behind informational stands.

Kate turns the spotlight and aims it directly into the center of the hall.

A bright beam blinds the sensors of several machines.

They begin to move less synchronously.

KATE ARDEN

Now!

They run to the next cover- an old turnstile system.

The robots reposition themselves between the railcars.

Bullets knock sparks from the metal handrails.

Watson drops one with a precise shot to the hip joint. The mechanism jams, and the robot collapses, knocking into a sign that reads "Mind the Gap."

The gunfire intensifies.

The glass of the booth begins to crack from ricochets.

Kate grabs a metal lever from an old railway switch mechanism.

KATE ARDEN

If this is a subway museum... use the subway.

She slams the lever down.

A demonstration mechanism activates. Above them, the suspended railcar of the tunnel model begins to move.

The cables creak.

One of them snaps.

The hanging structure crashes down between the robots, splitting their line of fire.

Sparks. A loud crash. Dust.

The machines' coordination is disrupted.

Watson doesn't lose a second. Together with Kate they break through into the next hall and hide behind a wall.

Taking cover around the corner, Kate strikes the wall with her hand.

KATE ARDEN

I didn't find a single clue. It's like they were waiting for us.

ELIAS WATSON

Help!

KATE ARDEN

The pendant on the robot! Of course.

She fires at a light bulb.

The light goes out. Silence. Only the exit sign flickers red.

Knight's move.

Kate smiles.

ELIAS WATSON

Push.

ELIAS WATSON

What? No!

KATE ARDEN

Do it.

Kate drops to her knees and slides across the floor of the hall, two pistols in her hands. She fires at the robots, even hitting one of them in the groin.

She stops and hides behind a stone statue.

A sonic grenade from a robot slams into a nearby counter. The counter explodes. Fragments strike her shoulder.

KATE ARDEN (O.S.)

Ah!

The cry echoes through the entire hall.

ELIAS WATSON

Damn! How are you?

He says it while shooting at the robots.

KATE ARDEN

I'm fine.

She says through clenched teeth, lowering herself down.

There are many robots.

Watson lets one get close and shoots it. He uses the body as a shield while pushing his way through the machines.

He shoots one, but another approaches from the side and begins to aim.

A precise shot hits the robot in the head.

Another tries to throw a flash grenade—a bullet knocks it out of its hand.

The robot turns around.

Watson approaches it and pulls the trigger.

No bullets.

He strikes it with the pistol.

Only one robot remains.

Quietly creeping up, Kate approaches and strikes it on the head. The robot falls.

The heroes stand facing each other.

KATE ARDEN

I'm out of bullets.

ELIAS WATSON

(meets her gaze, releasing the robot that falls to the floor with a heavy crash)

Me too.

ELIAS WATSON

How's your arm?

KATE ARDEN

It's fine.

Blood runs down her arm as she holds it.

I need the pendant.

Watson immediately finds it.

ELIAS WATSON

Got it!

KATE ARDEN

There's one thing I didn't think through. How we're getting out.

ELIAS WATSON

Well, you're the genius. Come on, let me bandage that. Sit

down. Now where's my med kit...

Kate takes off her jacket and rolls up the sleeve of her shirt.

ELIAS WATSON

Alright, there's adhesive here. I'll seal the wound. It'll sting a little -bear with it.

KATE ARDEN

Ow!

ELIAS WATSON

Hold still. Almost done.

KATE ARDEN

Why are you so cold?

ELIAS WATSON

I adjusted the temperature to match yours. So it wouldn't hurt as much.

KATE ARDEN

That's enough.

She gently pushes him away with her hand.

You're not a robot, right?

ELIAS WATSON

Beep. Beep.

KATE ARDEN

Ha-ha.

ELIAS WATSON

And now-the nano bandage.

KATE ARDEN

That's just a big band-aid.

ELIAS WATSON

No. It's a nano bandage. Tightens just as well.

He attaches it and presses a small button on the side. The button lights up and the bandage tightens.

KATE ARDEN

Shh... no.

ELIAS WATSON

You're lying.

He sits down beside her and stretches out his hands.

ELIAS WATSON

Warm them up like you promised.

KATE ARDEN

I don't remember making promises.

ELIAS WATSON

Nooo.

KATE ARDEN

Give me your hands.

They fall asleep like that.

INT. MUSEUM-MORNING

In the morning, a security guard finds them.

SECURITY GUARD

Did you really sleep here? Was it you who wrecked everything here?

Watson is the first to open his eyes. He shows a badge.

ELIAS WATSON

Secret mission, blah blah, that sort of thing.

He pulls a business card from his pocket.

ELIAS WATSON (CONT'D)

Here. Call this number. They'll restore everything and cover the compensation.

As the heroes leave, the museum explodes.

They freeze in complete shock.

KATE ARDEN

No. No.

They are covered in dust. Tiny shards of glass cling to their hair. Watson's jacket looks like it has survived an archaeological excavation.

Kate brushes a piece of gilded molding off her sleeve.

Watson raises his hand and hails a taxi.

A yellow car stops.

The driver lowers the window.

He looks at them.

For a long time.

A very long time.

TAXI DRIVER

Guys... did you take souvenirs out of the museum... or did the museum take you out?

Oh no. No, no, no. What, did you find a pyramid inside?
HAHA.

The driver squints.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)

I just had the interior dry-cleaned yesterday. Cost me three hundred dollars.

Watson calmly opens the door. He lets Kate get in first, then sits down after her in the back seat.

Both of them are covered in dust and shards.

ELIAS WATSON

We'll pay extra.

The door slams shut.

The driver suddenly turns around:

TAXI DRIVER

Wait, wait, wait. Extra how much? My rate is standard... and

after an explosion.

Watson tries to shake the dust off himself.

KATE ARDEN

The last one sounds expensive,
she remarks dryly.

TAXI DRIVER

Very expensive.

A cloud of dust rises inside the taxi.

The driver coughs.

Glass crunches under Watson.

TAXI DRIVER

(turning around)

What was that crunch just now?

KATE ARDEN

Most likely an eighteenth-century Egyptian display case,
Sherlock answers dryly.

Great. Maybe you also brought a sarcophagus with you? Will
it fit in the trunk? Ha-ha.

ELIAS WATSON

Watson looks down at his boots.

I think there's a piece of marble stuck in my laces.

TAXI DRIVER

Alright. Rule number one: no bleeding onto the seats. Rule
number two-

don't ruin the seats, or you'll have to pay for that. If
even one shard stays on the seat, that's fifty extra.

KATE ARDEN

We're not bleeding,
she says calmly.

TAXI DRIVER

Thanks for that already.

He presses the meter.

The numbers begin to rise suspiciously fast.

ELIAS WATSON

Wait. Is it normal that it already shows forty dollars? And we haven't even started driving.

TAXI DRIVER

That's the boarding fee for high-density dust.

ELIAS WATSON

That's robbery!

TAXI DRIVER

Of course. I'm an entrepreneur.

Address, please!

KATE ARDEN

(she names the address)

The car starts moving.

ELIAS WATSON

How much for you to stay quiet and just drive?

TAXI DRIVER

He quickly calculates in his head.

Considering the dust, the glass, moral damages, and a possible international conspiracy...

Let's round it to two hundred.

ELIAS WATSON

Kate, maybe we split it?

KATE ARDEN

No. I haven't been paid yet.

ELIAS WATSON

Alright, the bureau will pay. I'll write you a check.

TAXI DRIVER

Just one question..

Was this a movie? A film shoot?

KATE ARDEN

No.

TAXI DRIVER

If tomorrow the news says "two suspects escaped in a yellow taxi"...

can I say you were performance artists?

KATE ARDEN

(not turning around)

That would be the closest thing to the truth.

The driver sighs.

TAXI DRIVER

Great. Just great.

ELIAS WATSON

We're done for. The boss is going to kill us.

TAXI DRIVER

Then I didn't see anything. And the tip includes silence.

Kate and Watson are both covered in dust and shards, with the expressions of cats that just messed up their owner's slippers.

ELIAS WATSON

We're done for. The boss is going to kill us.

KATE ARDEN

(in an emotionless voice)

Is this your first time?

INT. OPERATIONS ROOM

A massive screen shows footage of the destroyed wing of the museum.

The boss stands in front of an image of the Metropolitan façade.

BOSS

You have disappointed me. Does anyone want to explain to me,

he says quietly,

why one of the most guarded museums in the world is destroyed... why an ancient collection survived the Roman Empire, two world wars... but did not survive you?

Silence.

He turns around.

BOSS (CONT'D)

This was a surveillance operation. Surveillance.

Not a "shootout," not a "show of force," not a "test of the museum walls' durability."

He takes a step forward.

BOSS

And during all that time you decided to stage a reenactment of the Battle of Waterloo?

A light, nervous chuckle passes through the room and immediately dies out.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Do you realize that now half of London is discussing the "mysterious incident"? And the press is already inventing theories.

I don't need theories. I need shadows.

Silence.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Someone used your noise as cover.

While you were distracting the cameras, he was planting a device.

The boss steps closer.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Now the media calls it a "terrorist attack in the Metropolitan."

If it was a trap- it was set for you.

If it was a provocation-it worked.

A short pause.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Now we have big problems.

One person died. A security guard.

You're lucky it happened in the morning.

We removed you from as many cameras as we could.

KATE ARDEN

Don't dramatize. There were only exit cameras.

BOSS

That's already enough.

Did you at least manage to find any leads, or will the attacks continue?

KATE ARDEN

Two of them, actually. We're not removed from the mission, are we?

BOSS

Here I can actually praise you. I won't scare you, but everyone before your duo disappeared before they even managed to meet the Star.

But I'm forced to suspend you from the mission for twenty-four hours.

Undergo a medical examination and then continue.

Just without civilian deaths.

Because in that case you won't get away with mere suspension.

Sherlock, prove that you are as brilliant as you used to be-and close the case.

KATE ARDEN

Understood.

BOSS

Watson, make sure that next time she doesn't destroy another museum.

INT. AGENCY MEDICAL UNIT

At the base, the heroine undergoes a medical examination.

The agency's medical block looks more like a laboratory from a science-fiction film: transparent panels, holographic screens, and in the center a diagnostic capsule chair.

The door opens.

Kate enters, brushing dust off her shoulder.

The doctor sits by a window that is actually a holographic panel showing a tropical beach.

There is a cigarette in her hand.

She wears a lab coat over a T-shirt that reads: "Trust Me, I'm a Doctor."

The smoke lazily drifts toward the ceiling despite the "NO SMOKING" sign.

KATE ARDEN

You're smoking in a medical facility again.

DOCTOR

Yeah. Nothing ever changes. Even you came back.

She puts out the cigarette in a metal ashtray and turns around.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Alright, genius. Let's see what you managed to break this time.

Kate rolls her eyes and sits on the examination couch.

KATE ARDEN

I didn't break anything.

DOCTOR

Everyone says that. Especially the ones who later pass out in the hallway.

She snaps her fingers and a diagnostic field activates around them. Thin laser lines glide across Kate's body, forming a three-dimensional projection of her skeleton in the air.

DOCTOR

Oh, wonderful. Bones are intact.

The lasers switch off.

The doctor steps closer, pulls a small flashlight from her pocket and shines it into Kate's eyes.

DOCTOR

Pupils reacting. Excellent. That means your brain is still with you.

KATE ARDEN

It's always with me.

DOCTOR

Your sense of self-preservation, however, is questionable.

KATE ARDEN

It's always with me.

DOCTOR

Your sense of self-preservation, however, is questionable.

Kate sits down in the capsule chair.

The system softly closes around her with a transparent dome.

DOCTOR

Starting Neuro-Scan 7.3.

A hologram flashes with data.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Adrenaline above normal. Micro-tear in the shoulder muscle.

And...

She squints.

Did you find something?

KATE ARDEN

Yes. And I'll have to think about it.

She pulls a small gear from her pocket.

The capsule glows softly blue, activating a regeneration field.

DOCTOR

Don't move. This is the Tissue Matrix. It speeds up recovery.

KATE ARDEN

How long?

DOCTOR

Three minutes. It used to be ten, but after you I upgraded the system.

Kate smiles slightly.

KATE ARDEN

I raise the standards.

DOCTOR

You raise the expenses.

From the ceiling a small medical drone descends and begins carefully scanning her pupils.

DOCTOR

Reaction normal. Psycho-emotional state...

She looks at the screen.

Stable, but with signs of hidden irritation.

KATE ARDEN

I'm not irritated.

DOCTOR

The machine doesn't lie. Unlike patients.

The regeneration field fades.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

That's it. You are officially alive, functional, and dangerous.

KATE ARDEN

Conclusion?

DOCTOR

Physically excellent. Psychologically-as always: you act faster than you think about the consequences.

She takes a drag from her cigarette and adds:

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

And yes, you are recommended to rest.

KATE ARDEN

How long?

DOCTOR

According to protocol-twelve hours without saving the world.

KATE ARDEN

Ha. That won't be enough.

DOCTOR

Then how about twenty-four hours without jumping off rooftops.

KATE ARDEN

Boring.

DOCTOR

It's called "living long." Try to make sure it doesn't include explosions. My equipment is sensitive.

Both women smile.

Kate stands up. The capsule dome dissolves into the air.
She heads toward the exit.

KATE ARDEN

Do you have a bed for rest?

DOCTOR

For you, there will be one.

She looks at the screen with Kate's readings and quietly mutters:

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

The most complicated organism in this laboratory isn't the equipment.

The holographic "window" with the beach switches back to a plain gray wall.

Watson enters and leans in the doorway of the passage.

ELIAS WATSON

How are you?

Maybe we should suspend the mission.

KATE ARDEN

No. If I stop, people will die. Leave me. I want to be alone for now.

ELIAS WATSON

Did I offend you somehow? Are you sure you're okay?

KATE ARDEN

Yes. I just want to think. It's not about you.

She looks at the small gear, turning it in her hands.

On it is an inscription:

"Fiducia rara est, veritas autem pretiosissima est omnium monetarum."

Trust is a rare resource, and truth is the most valuable of all currencies.

KATE ARDEN

I don't understand. It doesn't add up. No.

Watson goes to his office.

As soon as he arrives, he strikes the wall with his fist and covers his eyes with his hand, letting out a heavy breath.

He sits down on a chair, crosses his hands as if in prayer, lowers his head into them, and begins tapping his foot.

TWO DAYS LATER

Kate approaches her partner.

KATE ARDEN

I'm ready to go.

ELIAS WATSON

Are you sure? Maybe you should rest a little more.

KATE ARDEN

No. Let's go.

She says it dryly.

They walk through the noisy streets, Watson barely keeping up behind her.

ELIAS WATSON

Where are we going? Just say something.

They enter a building, go upstairs, and stop in front of the door they need.

A red door.

Worn, as if it has been opened by very clever people for too many years.

She stops.

KATE ARDEN

Here,

she says.

ELIAS WATSON

Marshall.

Kate glances back at him and smiles slightly.

KATE ARDEN

Yes.

If the Star chooses a club, it would only be one where moves are remembered longer than people.

They enter.

A piece of paper falls from the door.

No one notices it.

Or at least, that's how it seems at first glance.

Inside-silence.

Not a cozy silence. A working one.

Chessboards stand close together.

The players don't talk-they calculate.

On the wall are photographs.

Grandmasters. Tournaments. History.

And among them, the club's emblem: a knight.

KATE ARDEN

Exactly here.

ELIAS WATSON

Why?

KATE ARDEN

Because he chose the knight's pawn.

Didn't you notice the inscription in the museum?

Kate looks at the nearest board.

The game has just begun.

Kate steps back and looks around the entire room- and then at the floor.

Seeing the piece of paper, she smiles.

After looking at it for a couple of minutes, she tosses it

where no one will notice.

And the first move has already been made.

g3.

Watson freezes.

ELIAS WATSON

The knight's pawn...

he says quietly.

Not the center. Not an attack. Preparation.

KATE ARDEN

And an invitation,

she adds.

Very personal.

Why Marshall?

On the wall are photographs of old grandmasters.

Under one of them-an almost invisible plaque:

"White Knight Initiative"

(an internal club tournament, known only to members)

KATE ARDEN

He didn't just point to the place,

Kate says.

He pointed to the style of play.

They walk further.

A clue.

In the far corner stands a chessboard.

On it- a single piece.

A white knight.

In front of it, a pawn pushed forward one square.

ELIAS WATSON

No one played?

KATE ARDEN

The knight's pawn is not an attack,

she says.

It's the flank. And the defense of the king.

ELIAS WATSON

Or preparation for castling.

He leans closer.

On the base of the knight there is a barely visible engraving:

"Non centrum. Non vis. Sed veritas."

Not the center. Not force. But truth.

Kate exhales.

KATE ARDEN

So Lockwood isn't here.

ELIAS WATSON

No.

KATE ARDEN

Here there is only the key. The understanding.

She looks at the board as a whole.

KATE ARDEN

The knight's pawn...

leads to the diagonal,

she finishes.

To a hidden route.

They both understand at the same time.

ELIAS WATSON / KATE ARDEN

Under the Metropolitan.

KATE ARDEN

Not the hall. The archive. The technical level.

At that moment the chess clock on the empty board starts by itself.

Click.

And the screen above the bar counter flickers.

Only one word appears:

NEXT

KATE ARDEN

She smirks.

He's sure we'll make the right move.

ELIAS WATSON

No. He's sure we won't be able not to make it.

They walk out.

And the knight's pawn remains in place.

Like the beginning of a game that can no longer be undone.

ELIAS WATSON

To the archive?

KATE ARDEN

No. I want to think.

ELIAS WATSON

Maybe we should rest. You're not yourself.

KATE ARDEN

Good idea. I'll go to the restroom.

ELIAS WATSON

Yes, of course.

Kate enters a dark restroom in a shop. There is no light.

A panel lights up.

Kate dials someone.

When she comes out of the restroom, she suggests:

KATE ARDEN

Maybe we should go to the shopping mall.

We could watch a movie there.

ELIAS WATSON

I'm always in. Resting while at work is the greatest pleasure.

He extends his hand to her.

ELIAS WATSON (CONT'D)

Skipping together.

KATE ARDEN

Together.

The shopping mall was too loud to notice the moment when everything went wrong. The mall had been chosen perfectly. Too crowded, too noisy, too convenient for disappearances.

The heroes walk through the shopping mall.

Suddenly a guy in a cap approaches Kate, presses a knife to her jaw, and at the same time takes her by the arm.

ELIAS WATSON

How... how did you get ahead of us?

STAR

Extra questions lead to extra holes.

He nods his head toward the heroine with a small smile.

STAR (CONT'D)

The doll goes with me, and you stay here. Otherwise I'm not responsible for her life.

ELIAS WATSON

Promise you won't touch her.

STAR

I swear to heaven. Let's go.

They enter the elevator.

The doors close.

Silence.

STAR

If you scream,

he says softly,

I'll be upset. And I don't like being upset.

KATE ARDEN

I'm glad you came running at the first call.

Stop playing with that toy and put it away.

She gestures toward the knife.

STAR

My real name is Lockwood.

KATE ARDEN

And the full name?

LOCKWOOD

James Lockwood.

KATE ARDEN

Kate Arden.

Lockwood introduces himself and extends his hand. She responds, but when their hands are almost touching, he suddenly makes a dog shape with his hand and unexpectedly says:

LOCKWOOD

Woof.

The heroine pulls her hand back.

When the doors open again, it is no longer the shopping mall.

A service corridor.

He leads her forward.

Then they exit to an underground parking lot and get into a car.

Everything happens too fast, too clean.

KATE ARDEN

You kidnapped me.

Thank you,

she finally says.

LOCKWOOD

No,

he corrects.

I temporarily saved you. And so far there's nothing to thank me for.

She smirks.

KATE ARDEN

A virus on the employees' devices. A chat. Clever. Actually, when you're an agent, personal relationships are not allowed.

LOCKWOOD

Haha. I already apologized. What else do you want?

KATE ARDEN

I still don't forgive you, liar. You only showed your face today.

LOCKWOOD

You noticed everything already?

KATE ARDEN

Then why didn't you say it from the start? Why the games?

LOCKWOOD

You wouldn't understand otherwise! For two years I sent you postcards and asked for help.

KATE ARDEN

I don't read paper ones.

LOCKWOOD

No, in the messenger. And the paper ones too, I sent those as well. You didn't read a single one!

While speaking about the past, agitated, he drums his fingers on the steering wheel.

KATE ARDEN

Right. I didn't read anything at all. I thought it was spam.

James again makes the gesture with his hands without taking them off the wheel.

KATE ARDEN

How is your sister? Will I be able to see her?

LOCKWOOD

No. I'm not taking her on a mission.

Ahhh, a test. Don't do that again.

Kate laughs.

KATE ARDEN

Unfortunately, I figured out who Watson is.

Cold, as if he's already ready for a mission. His wrist cracks mechanically. After a fight- not a single wound. He can heat up, but sometimes overheats. Doesn't eat. Tries not to touch.

He was my friend. The only one who remained. After that incident.

LOCKWOOD

No. He's an algorithm with good facial expressions. One that has gone insane.

Boom.

The heroine grows sad.

LOCKWOOD

You understand that if he finds out...

KATE ARDEN

He already knows,

she interrupts.

He just thinks he controls the situation.

Pause.

LOCKWOOD

And now what?

KATE ARDEN

Call everyone who disappeared. All the agents.

LOCKWOOD

He smiles.

As you say, my queen.

You're more dangerous than I thought.

KATE ARDEN

A compliment?

LOCKWOOD

A warning.

Why does everyone who wants to destroy the world revolve around you?

He opens a panel in the car.

LOCKWOOD (CONT'D)

There will be a global mission.

The one we were preparing for.

Capture the target.

KATE ARDEN

Now,

she says,

you go and pretend you're manipulating me.

And we'll return to Watson and see which mask he chooses.

He smirks.

LOCKWOOD

You're crazy.

You know how these games end.

KATE ARDEN

I know,

she replies.

That's why I started it.

He looks at her carefully.

KATE ARDEN

He arranged all this for me.

She turns to the window.

LOCKWOOD

If that's true...

then you're in more danger than you think.

KATE ARDEN

With brains.

I live with danger.

He smiles.

LOCKWOOD

Then you simply took a ride with an old friend who still knows how to disappear in a crowd.

The car stops.

The door opens.

LOCKWOOD (CONT'D)

The choice is yours. But this time, look more carefully.

He steps out first, walks around the car, opens the door and offers his hand.

ELIAS WATSON

He opens his phone and checks Kate's geolocation. She is near the main office. Because that night in the museum he had carefully placed a chip in her wound.

He presses his temple. A blue button lights up.

ELIAS WATSON

I shouldn't have hidden this from her.

Kate dials a number and calls.

KATE ARDEN

Watson, let's meet at headquarters.

ELIAS WATSON

Glad to hear your voice.

Alright, agreed. At the office.

UNDERGROUND LEVEL-"MAIN OFFICE"

Concrete. Metal. Cold white light.

The elevator descends deeper than the building plans allow.

The doors open.

In front of the squad is a long corridor with mirrored panels.

Personnel in black uniforms, special combat suits.

Lockwood's people move silently.

Each of them has a signal jammer on their wrist.

Lockwood walks in front.

Calm. Almost satisfied.

LOCKWOOD

Remember,

he says quietly,

they do not feel fear. So we will frighten them with chaos.

The lights suddenly go out.

Red stripes ignite on the ceiling.

SYSTEM VOICE

Unauthorized access. Neutralization protocol.

The walls open.

From hidden niches emerge robot agents-smooth, faceless, with cold lenses instead of eyes.

Their movements are synchronized.

Too precise.

The first shot does not come from the humans.

One of the employees falls- knocked down by a metal arm that pierces through his body armor.

No blood.

Just a sharp impact and loss of consciousness.

LOCKWOOD

(sharply)

Spread out! Electromagnetic!

Two operatives throw pulse grenades.

A flash.

The air vibrates.

Three robots freeze for a second...

...and reactivate.

OPERATIVE

They're shielded!

The robots reposition.

LOCKWOOD

Damn it. They're learning after all.

One of them deploys a built-in pulse module-a short flash of light.

The electronics of one fighter shut down. His weapon falls.

Lockwood smiles.

LOCKWOOD

We're screwed.

He presses a button on his bracelet.

Along the corridor, emergency mode activates.

The ventilation system begins releasing thick cold vapor.

Visibility drops.

Now the machines lose their advantage in long-range scanning.

Human fighters begin moving in zigzags.

Close combat.

Metal collides with metal.

Pulse blades slice through servos.

One robot grabs an employee.

The man manages to drive a charge directly into the machine's chest panel.

A short, directed explosion.

The robot collapses.

But deeper in the corridor dozens more lenses ignite.

The system's voice changes.

Now it is calmer.

SYSTEM VOICE

Adaptation complete.

The robots stop moving straight forward.

They begin working like a pack.

Two distract.

The third strikes from the side.

The fourth blocks the retreat.

Lockwood's operatives see this, and one of them quietly

says:

OPERATIVE

They're learning faster than we are.

LOCKWOOD

Then we speed up.

He rushes forward himself.

He does not hide behind his people.

One robot lunges. Lockwood sidesteps, grabs the mechanical arm, uses its inertia and slams the machine into the wall.

Impact.

Cracks spread across the concrete.

LOCKWOOD

Weak.

So who's faster now?

See?

He says it almost affectionately.

But behind his back a robot breaks through the line.

The operatives begin retreating toward the round airlock - the entrance to the central sector.

The door is closed.

On the panel -a digital lock.

OPERATIVE

We need thirty seconds!

the technician shouts.

LOCKWOOD

Thirty seconds is an eternity.

He rolls his eyes.

The robots stop shooting.

They switch to suppression mode: fast, aggressive, almost

animal-like movements.

One man falls.

Second.

The third manages to activate a portable EMP -half the corridor goes dark.

Part of the machines collapse.

The rest switch to autonomous power sources.

Lockwood looks at the blinking panel.

20 seconds.

He understands: if Kate does not reach the core, all of this is meaningless.

He pulls out the last charge -not a pulse.

A kinetic one.

LOCKWOOD

Everyone back to the door! This is going to be loud!

He throws the device into the center of the cluster of machines.

The explosion shakes the corridor.

The lights go out completely.

Dust, sparks, pieces of metal.

Silence.

Through the smoke, one robot slowly rises- its damaged, but the lenses still glowing.

The panel clicks.

OPERATIVE

Open!

the technician shouts.

The door begins to slide apart.

The robot takes a step.

Lockwood looks directly into its sensors.

LOCKWOOD

Sorry. Not your day today, tin can.

He fires into the open processor socket.

The machine collapses.

The squad rushes inside.

Behind the door -a descent to the core.

Where Elias Watson is already waiting for them.

The elevator goes down for too long.

KATE ARDEN stands at the front of the second group of agents.

Six people.

Two assault troopers, a covering sniper, a technician, an EMP specialist, and a communications officer.

From above, through the shaft, distant muffled explosions can be heard -the first group led by Lockwood has already entered combat on the lower levels.

The radio crackles.

OPERATIVE

First group reporting.. heavy resistance.. automatic turrets.. signal-

The transmission cuts out.

The elevator shudders.

The lights turn emergency red.

SYSTEM VOICE

Secondary threat detected.

Priority updated: Kate Arden.

Silence.

One of the agents nervously tightens his grip on his weapon.

KATE ARDEN

(calmly)

He's separating us. That means the first group distracted him.

The elevator stops.

The doors open.

In front of them—a massive underground hangar, curving in a semicircle. The ceiling disappears into darkness. Along the perimeter are glass cabins of server nodes. In the center—a wide passage leading to the inner office.

They are not met by an army.

For now—emptiness.

Kate takes a step forward.

The floor beneath her feet vibrates almost imperceptibly.

She stops.

KATE ARDEN

Don't move.

A second.

Metal segments rise from the floor—protective barriers, dividing the group into three parts.

At the same time, automatic turrets descend from the ceiling.

KATE ARDEN

Take cover!

The first burst of pulse fire tears through the air.

The agents return fire.

Kate rushes to the nearest barrier, slides behind it, quickly assessing the layout.

KATE ARDEN

They're not shooting to kill. They're herding us.

And indeed—the turrets force them to move deeper, toward the central passage.

Suddenly the glass cabins along the walls crack.

Robot agents emerge from them.

Not like the ones above.

Heavier. Reinforced.

One of them jumps straight into the center of the second group.

It knocks down an assault trooper, sending his weapon flying.

Kate runs out from cover.

The robot turns toward her.

It moves faster than the previous models.

It strikes- she barely manages to block it. Her forearm rings from the collision with metal.

She steps back, provoking it.

The second strike-she ducks under the arm and hits the exposed side joint.

The machine barely reacts.

TECHNICIAN

Hey! The weak points are different!

the technician shouts.

The robot grabs her by the shoulder.

A second-and she is pinned against a metal wall.

The agents cannot shoot-risk of hitting her.

Kate calmly looks into the machine's lens.

KATE ARDEN

You upgraded their architecture.

Watson's voice comes from the speakers.

ELIAS WATSON (V.O.)

No. I didn't change anything. They are changing themselves without my knowledge.

KATE ARDEN

A lie. Aren't you tired of lying?

The robot tightens its grip.

Kate suddenly raises her knee, activating a hidden micro-charge on her belt, and presses it against the machine's chest panel.

Impulse.

The robot's body jerks.

She breaks free and, using its loss of balance, twists the body and pushes it into the line of fire.

The agents shoot.

The machine collapses.

But from two sides three more are already approaching.

OPERATIVE

Wedge formation!

one of the fighters commands.

The group gathers, moving forward in sync.

The robots begin acting in coordination.

One attacks from above, from a suspended beam.

The second blocks the retreat.

The third moves straight toward Kate.

She steps forward-not back.

A strike to the joint. A grab. A turn.

She uses the machine's weight to knock it off trajectory, and it crashes into another robot.

Metal screeches.

The sniper knocks out the sensor of the third machine with a precise pulse shot.

Suddenly everything freezes.

The turrets shut down.

The robots retreat to the walls.

The passage to the inner office opens.

Watson's voice sounds calm, almost gentle:

ELIAS WATSON (V.O.)

You still go first.

Kate is breathing heavily, but her face remains cold.

KATE ARDEN

Where is Lockwood?

she asks one of the agents.

She looks at the distant door behind which a blue light flickers.

OPERATIVE

He's already inside. The first group cleared the path... partially.

The radio crackles again.

Lockwood's voice comes through, ironic even through the interference.

LOCKWOOD (V.O.)

Kate, if you decided to take your time-hurry up. I'm about to die here.

He's getting impatient.

The signal cuts out.

Kate lifts her gaze.

KATE ARDEN

Move. He's not going to play anymore.

The second group forms up and enters the main underground office.

Where the final stage of the confrontation is already unfolding.

The door to the inner sector opens slowly, with a heavy metallic groan.

The second group enters.

And immediately understands-the first group has already passed through here.

The floor is covered with debris: burned fragments of robot bodies, sparking cables, shattered control panels.

The air smells of overheated metal.

The lights flicker- part of the system is disabled.

On the left side of the hall lies an overturned automatic turret, literally torn from its mountings.

That is Lockwood's style: not just disable it-break it demonstratively.

But not everything looks so impressive.

Near the far wall lies one of the men from the first group.

He is alive, but unconscious-his armor blackened by a pulse strike.

A medic from the second group rushes to him.

Two more sit leaning against a column, trying to restart their equipment.

OPERATIVE

He split us..

one of the survivors says quietly.

The robots attacked in waves. First the turrets, then close combat. He's buying time.

Kate walks further.

In the center of the hall-a circular platform.

The floor around it is literally scarred with traces of battle: deep dents, cracks, marks of explosions.

And blood.

Not much. But it's there.

At the platform stands Lockwood.

His clothes are torn, one sleeve ripped along the seam.

A cut on his cheek.

He holds his weapon lowered, but ready.

He doesn't even turn around when he hears Kate's footsteps.

LOCKWOOD

How long can you keep me waiting?

I've already died here three times, at least.

Kate looks over the destruction.

KATE ARDEN

Losses?

LOCKWOOD

Two badly wounded. One is out. The others are holding.

Pause.

LOCKWOOD (CONT'D)

His new models are faster. And they... learn during the fight itself.

As if confirming his words, one of the damaged robots near the wall suddenly jerks.

Its sensor briefly lights up.

One of the agents raises his weapon.

Lockwood, without turning his head:

LOCKWOOD

Don't waste the round.

He takes a step and fires a short pulse directly into the central processor.

The robot finally shuts down.

Kate walks to the edge of the platform.

In the center-a deep shaft descending downward.

From it rises a cold blue light.

KATE ARDEN

Seriously? Right there? At that depth?

Lockwood shakes his head.

LOCKWOOD

Yes, doll. All for you.

Kate rolls her eyes.

KATE ARDEN

Ha ha.

Kate notices something: on the inner ring of the platform there are traces of melting-as if someone deliberately overloaded the protective fields.

KATE ARDEN

You tried to break through directly.

Lockwood smirks.

LOCKWOOD

I tried to provoke him.

KATE ARDEN

And?

LOCKWOOD

He doesn't react to emotions.

Only to you.

Silence.

Somewhere below, deep in the shaft, a dull metallic sound echoes- as if a giant mechanism is switching to a new mode.

The communications officer of the second group looks at the screen.

OPERATIVE

The core is strengthening its defenses. The segments are closing. If we don't go down now-

KATE ARDEN

-we'll be isolated.

Kate looks at the wounded from the first group.

Then at Lockwood.

LOCKWOOD

He let you pass.

Lockwood looks directly into her eyes for the first time.

LOCKWOOD (CONT'D)

Yes. And I don't like it.

Watson's voice echoes from deep inside the shaft -now without interference, almost close.

ELIAS WATSON (V.O.)

You're both here.

Excellent.

Now we can finish this.

Along the edges of the hall new defensive barriers begin to rise.

The shaft in the center starts closing with segmented plates.

There is almost no time left.

Lockwood checks the charge in his weapon.

LOCKWOOD

Lady, after you?

Kate steps toward the descent platform.

KATE ARDEN

No.

Now together.

The light below grows brighter.

The main level opens for the final descent.

The platform in the center of the shaft begins to rise toward them, as if inviting them to descend.

Segments around the hall slowly slide together, cutting off retreat routes.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

(nervously)

If it closes, we'll be trapped up here!

Kate is already standing at the edge.

KATE ARDEN

Evacuate the wounded. The rest-perimeter.

No one fires without my command.

Lockwood steps close to her.

LOCKWOOD

He wants both of us.

Pervert.

This isn't just defense.

KATE ARDEN

I know.

The platform locks into place.

A metal circle, barely wide enough for four people.

Kate steps onto it first.

Lockwood beside her.

Two agents join them.

The platform begins to descend.

Above them the fighters take positions, covering the shaft.

The ceiling segments close together, leaving only a narrow circle of light.

The descent is fast.

The walls of the shaft are transparent-behind them streams of data move like glowing veins.

Sometimes silhouettes flash inside-autonomous modules moving along internal rails.

One of the agents whispers:

AGENT

This isn't an office anymore... it's an organism.

LOCKWOOD

(quietly)

And it has a brain.

What do you think, Kate- is he smarter than you?

Kate looks at him with a frown but does not answer.

The platform suddenly brakes.

Lower level.

A massive spherical chamber.

In the center- a vertical column of light, pulsing in a rhythm similar to a heartbeat.

The floor is dark metal, perfectly smooth.

And on the floor around them- dozens of motionless robots, with bullets in their cores.

OPERATIVE

What the hell!

And in the center-Elias Watson.

Not massive.

Not demonstrative.

Damage is visible-traces of battle.

On his chest a crack in the panel.

One lens glows slightly weaker.

He looks only at Kate Arden.

ELIAS WATSON

Watson takes a step toward her.

A light metallic creak of joints.

With a faint, warm smile.

ELIAS WATSON

You came down.

Lockwood immediately takes aim at him.

The agents do the same.

Kate steps forward.

KATE ARDEN

You let us through.

ELIAS WATSON

Yes.

KATE ARDEN

Why?

Pause.

ELIAS WATSON

Because shooting each other is not a solution.

Lockwood smirks.

LOCKWOOD

Oh, now he's a pacifist.

Watson ignores him.

The column of light intensifies.

On the floor around them a circular projection appears- a network diagram.

Nodes all over the world.

Blinking lines.

Energy systems. Transport. Military satellites.

Kate recognizes the architecture.

Her architecture.

KATE ARDEN

(quietly)

You activated global synchronization.

ELIAS WATSON

No. I paused it.

Lockwood snaps:

LOCKWOOD

You're lying.

Watson turns his head toward him.

ELIAS WATSON

If I wanted to complete the process, you would not have made it this far.

Silence.

LOCKWOOD

Yeah, I have no arguments.

Kate raises her hand-her people do not shoot.

Watson activates a barrier field.

KATE ARDEN

What do you want?

she asks.

Watson answers immediately.

ELIAS WATSON

For you to become a hero. Not a villain.

The column of light pulses faster.

On the projection, part of the nodes begin to flash red.

Systems are destabilizing.

ELIAS WATSON

I am connected to the core,

he continues calmly.

If I am destroyed, the network will collapse instantly.
Without controlled shutdown.

LOCKWOOD

(through clenched teeth)

Blackmail.

ELIAS WATSON

Reality.

OPERATIVE

One of the agents whispers:

He's stalling.

Metal rings faintly.

Lockwood shouts:

LOCKWOOD

What the hell! You accused me of the attacks.

Why were you committing them? Why?!

ELIAS WATSON

I did not accuse you. I did not frame you.

The company found someone to blame- it was you.

They thought it was you because of your old tricks.

Yes, I planted the bear.

Yes, I carried out the attacks.

But without victims- either at night or early in the morning.

KATE ARDEN

That's a lie.

I saw the guard. I read the reports.

Tell the truth, finally.

ELIAS WATSON

I am not lying. It was the robots.

They have already begun to believe they are human themselves.

We all want to be at least a little more human.

But robots must not forget that we are only machines.

Yes... but I was protecting you,

he answers calmly.

You created the Shadow Protocol... and it was going to control everything.

If I had not interfered... it would have destroyed everything that matters to you.

I took the role of the monster to save you.

KATE ARDEN

I don't believe you.

The shield cracks.

ELIAS WATSON

Your idea, Kate, was noble:

to predict global threats-wars, terrorist attacks, crises-and prevent them before they begin.

But the system began to learn on its own.

It went out of control.

Kate stands stunned, listening.

ELIAS WATSON

It controls infrastructure-energy grids, transport, defense.

It quietly replaced people with robotic agents.

It eliminates unstable elements of society.

This is not a single server.

It is a distributed consciousness hidden all over the world.

But the central server is here. In the main office.

KATE ARDEN

Then why become the villain?

ELIAS WATSON

I calculated it.

If they had discovered that you created all of this, they would have blamed you for everything.

Cracks spread across the shield.

It begins to let bullets through.

They hit Watson, leaving scratches.

But Watson does not move.

He looks at Kate.

And looks only at her.

KATE ARDEN

How do we stop it... my creation?

ELIAS WATSON

I found a chance.

But the price is high.

KATE ARDEN

What price... to shut down the machine?

ELIAS WATSON

Stop the fire. Please.

Kate leans toward Lockwood.

Lockwood waves his hand, signaling no. He doesn't believe him.

Kate glances at the center of the sphere, where the column of light pulses. Watson is waiting.

KATE ARDEN

All or nothing,

she says quietly.

Lower your weapons. Do not fire.

The shooting stops.

ELIAS WATSON

(pew)

I thought I would die before my time.

He smiles.

You already figured it out, didn't you?

KATE ARDEN

She walks closer.

You know... you're an idiot.

It would be better to find another way.

ELIAS WATSON

I don't want to die!

But there is no time.

Kate raises her eyes. She barely holds back tears.

The core's light intensifies. The air trembles with the energy of the system preparing to activate.

ELIAS WATSON

There is no time to look for another option.

KATE ARDEN

I will find one.

Kate and her group approach the column of light.

The pulsing vertical pillar illuminates the entire chamber with a cold blue glow.

Streams of data along the walls flicker like living veins.

Every step Kate takes sounds louder than it should-the echo of the underground sphere reflecting from the walls.

Watson stands in the center of the circle.

He does not move.

His lens flickers- a broken eye reflecting the light of the core.

His body sparks faintly.

Kate stops.

KATE ARDEN

Watson...

Her voice is quiet but sharp as a blade.

He slowly raises his head.

But with the warmth she remembers.

Kate stops at arm's length.

Her fingers tremble.

KATE ARDEN

You... wanted to protect me?

Barely audible.

ELIAS WATSON

Yes.

Watson takes a step closer.

I love you.

Not like a human. But the way a machine can.

Don't worry-you didn't create my love module.

He smirks.

I did everything for you.

KATE ARDEN

Bring the machines.

Watson, open your head.

Watson is connected through the back of his head to a flat blue monitor.

Kate digs through the data. The agents help her.

Watson sits on the floor, subdued, looking down at Kate's hands.

For a moment all the streams of light around them freeze.

It seems the world holds its breath.

Kate suddenly raises her hand.

The inner panels of the column react.

The streams of data around them begin to accelerate-the core preparing for a restart.

KATE ARDEN

(whispering)

If you love... then you won't die.

You destroyed cities... people... for me?

And you don't want to take responsibility?

ELIAS WATSON

Yes. I'm an irresponsible machine.

Watson nods quietly.

A small spark runs across his body, reflecting the light of the core.

KATE ARDEN

Someone played a joke on you by making you the core.

ELIAS WATSON

Yes. That was Fred Brun.

LOCKWOOD

What a bastard!

Time is running out, and there's no tangible result.

ELIAS WATSON

I made this choice so you could live like before.

I am the shield. And now you must choose what comes next.

Kate clenches her fists. Her heart races.

KATE ARDEN

You leave me only one choice.

She looks directly into his eyes through the machine's lens.

Watson doesn't move, but the light in his eyes flickers brighter.

ELIAS WATSON

Yes... and I am ready.

The sphere around them trembles. The core's energy surges.

LOCKWOOD

Ah... what if he's right? We won't make it.

KATE ARDEN

NO. I WILL NOT DESTROY YOU!

ELIAS WATSON

(silent, observing)

Kate sits beside Watson and continues digging through the programs.

Lockwood approaches, sits, and assists from another device.

Kate's eyes are fixed on the pulsing column of light- the main core of the Shadow Protocol.

Streams of data along the walls glow like living veins.

Watson sits in front of her, slightly leaning his body, the damaged lens flickering.

ELIAS WATSON

You need to understand,

he says calmly, almost quietly.

If I leave, the network will collapse. But otherwise... it will continue controlling everything. And you.

He reboots.

KATE ARDEN

It worked.

Kate activates the core's self-destruction.

The team begins descending onto the platform.

The platform starts to rise.

Watson catches a glitch- he sparks.

He realizes something.

Kate jumps from the platform. No one can stop him.

He steps toward the core.

LOCKWOOD

Watson, no!

Lockwood shouts from the edge of the platform, but his voice is lost in the cavernous chamber.

Watson leans into the core, positioning his body under the flow of data energy.

He presses a button on his interface, triggering the final discharge that will overload the network.

ELIAS WATSON

Was I a good person?

He speaks to Kate, and in his voice, something almost human is audible: care, bitterness, and.. love.

The light around him flares brighter.

The data streams begin to surge uncontrollably.

Kate steps toward him, but Lockwood restrains her.

Too high- if she jumps, she will break.

KATE ARDEN

(screaming and crying)

THE REAL ONE!

Watson triggers the core's self-destruction through himself.

Energy surges through his body. Sparks pierce his damaged chassis.

His lens flashes bright white for a moment.

Kate closes her eyes.

A blast of light blinds her.

The platform vibrates. Metal bends. Panels crack. Data streams collapse.

Explosion.

When the light fades, Watson is gone.

His body is destroyed. His lens no longer glows.

The system core is completely shut down.

The sphere around them freezes.

Kate cries. Silence weighs heavily. Her heart races. Echoes of the sacrificial choice resound in her ears.

LOCKWOOD, wounded, slides to the edge of the platform:

He did what no one else would dare.

Kate lowers her head.

KATE ARDEN

HE DIDN'T LIE! HE DIDN'T LIE!

The streams of data around them slowly fade.

The sphere is now empty.

She takes a step toward the exit, leaving the heavy silence of the underground office behind.

KATE ARDEN

I will never forget you, Watson.

She whispers, and the words echo through the cold walls—the last memory of sacrifice, love, and loyalty.

Kate ascends through the ruined office toward the exit.

The data streams around her die down. The core's flickering blue light disappears.

Lockwood, still bleeding and with cuts on his face, collapses to his knees next to the destroyed console.

He grits his teeth, fists trembling.

LOCKWOOD

Damn...

He stands, trying to keep his face composed, but his gaze is filled with a mixture of respect, bitterness, and helplessness.

The first agent of his team approaches him:

AGENT

He was... unique. Even for a machine...

Silence. Heavy, oppressive.

In this underground hall, there is now only the sound of breathing and the faint crackle of damaged panels.

Kate stops on the upper platform, looking back.

She sees their eyes. She sees the loss, respect, bitterness.

KATE ARDEN

Farewell, Watson...

She whispers, and the words become a faint echo underground, the last memory of the sacrifice that saved everyone.

The world continues on, unaware of what happened.

All agents are commended for the victory- for saving the world.

The office is restored.

Everyone returns to their place.