

SWEET PEA

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INT. ABANDONED BUILDING, OFFICE - DAY

We open on the eyes of a British Asian WOMAN, early fifties. She is lost in thought, looking out to the city beyond.

Out of the window we see a metropolis stretching out to towering SYNTH FARMS in the distance.

Transport drones cut across the grey English sky.

TITAL CARD: NOTHERN SPRAWL, ENGLAND - 2099

The woman is THE COLONEL. In another life she is a successful, even glamorous, business woman. But here and now she is a survivor and she is in a moment of self doubt.

She looks down and checks the MEDISKIN vest under her garments.

She winces. PAIN somewhere deep down. She puts a hand out to steady herself.

On her left index finger, A RING. She activates it. Pain meds bring temporary relief.

There is a knock at the door and a female soldier enters. CASS is early 30's, her brown hair tied back. Her cobbled together, almost uniform is faded, well worn. A face mask hangs round her neck.

CASS
Colonel, we're ready.

The Colonel covers the vest. The younger woman catches it.

CASS (CONT'D)
Is everything alright ma'am?

COLONEL
Yes. I'm fine Cass. How is Zuri?

CASS
She misses you.

COLONEL
I miss her too... I want to give her something. Will you do this for me?

CASS
Yes ma'am, anything.

COLONEL

Last time I saw her she was very taken with this. I want her to have it.

The Colonel moves to a desk and pulls out a worthless pendent with the words "Sweet Pea" engraved on it.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

My late husband gave me this. Sort of a joke really...

She is lost in a memory for a moment.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

Well, I want Zuri to have it now.

She passes it to the soldier.

CASS

Thank you ma'am. Ma'am, I--

COLONEL

It's alright... Now go. I'll be out in a minute.

CASS

But...

COLONEL

Cass, you are my eyes and ears. I trust you. All I ask is you trust me too.

CASS

Yes ma'am. Apologies ma'am.

COLONEL

Cass. It'll work.

There is doubt. Cass wants to say something. Doesn't.

We follow Cass out leaving the Colonel.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

Cass steps into a large, dimly lit room.

A NERVOUS MALE SOLDIER (20's) waits. He holds a METAL CASE in his hands. Distracted by something in the corner of the room.

Cass acknowledges the distraction.

CASS

She'll be out in a minute.

The formidable, masked frame of THE HENCHAMN nods.

Cass joins the nervous soldier.

The Colonel steps into the room a different woman. A leader, strong unwavering. She surveys her troops.

COLONEL

Did you get it?

The nervous soldier holds up the case. The Colonel glances at her Henchman. The man mountain steps out of shadow. Takes the case from the nervous soldier.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

Lets get started then.

Cass goes to leave. The distracted soldier still has his eyes on the Henchman. Cass gives him a nudge and he follows her.

We stay with Cass. She pauses for a second and looks over to the OCCUPIED BODY BAG laid out on a METAL MORTUARY TABLE. She is worried. She pulls on her face mask, the other soldier DOESN'T. They leave.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING, CORRIDOR - DAY

The two soldiers work their way down a narrow corridor.

They pass REFUGEES of a war we no nothing about. Sick, huddled. Masks or coverings over their faces.

The soldiers reach a table. Grimy, SHACKLED hands tear at A COOKED CHICKEN.

We tilt up to reveal an overweight, slovenly man, THE ENGINEER, sixties. He rams the greasy, white meat into his open mouth. He doesn't close it to chew.

He looks up. Inconvenienced by the interruption to his meal.

CASS

Lets go.

Annoyed he throws the food down and stands.

Cass deactivates the shackles.

He wipes his fatty fingers on his jacket and eyes her with a sexual malice. She is not afraid.

Not of him.

The male soldier hangs back.

The soldiers lead him away but not before he can grab one last chicken leg.

INT. DIFFERENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

They march him down the derelict hallway.

They reach a door. The male soldier opens it.

The engineer finishes his meal with a belch of appreciation. He throws the bone away.

The soldiers push him in and slam the door behind him.

Cass gives one last look behind. Then moves on.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Colonel watches the grotesque man from the shadows. He looks small, pathetic.

THE COLONEL

How was your meal?

The engineer is startled.

ENGINEER

Colonel? That you hiding back there?

The Henchman steps out of the shadows. He removes his mask to reveal the face of as hardened Black British man. A scar running down the left side of his face. His eye discoloured.

He growls at the Engineer.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

You know, not bad... considering...

The overweight man sees the body bag and jitters toward it.

COLONEL

Considering? How difficult it was to procure perhaps?

The Engineer looks over the body bag on the morgue table.

ENGINEER

Well, you know, for folks like you.

HENCHMAN

Folks like us?

ENGINEER

In your... eh, situation, this far north I mean. Real chicken, none of that synth crap you got growing in those towers. I'm impressed.

He spots the metallic case.

The Colonel steps into the light. Hands behind her back she commands respect.

Unseen by the others, she caresses the MedRing on her finger.

COLONEL

Our situation is quite simple. The development of xenorobotic-cybernetics has created the greatest levels of inequality in human history. Living programable tissue that--

ENGINEER

Yeah, yeah I know the spiel. We wiped out disease, cured death and eradicated erectile disfunction. What's your point?

The Colonel keeps her cool. Her Henchman seethes.

COLONEL

Corporate scientists like yourself have long claimed that genetics were the reason this technology has never been shared. Some people just rejected the xenobots, or so you said.

ENGINEER

You can't argue with facts.

The Engineer grins. The Henchman could beat him to death quite happily right now.

HENCHMAN

Facts? Here's a fact for you. Rich white asshole is not a legitimate genetic category.

The Engineer opens the case. It's an old military CONSOLE. A chunky keyboard with old ports and cables.

ENGINEER

That entirely depends on daddy's bank balance. This a RCK5-1? These were used in the 70's for in combat diagnostics...

He looks the body bag over.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

Which means you've got a military grade cyber here?

The engineer leans in. He unzips the bag to reveal a BADC BEATEN WOMAN in her late 20's. CUTS and BRUISING around her right eye. STICKY BLOOD and MATTED HAIR cover her face.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

Hello beautiful. Wait... She's a K-20.

INT. BUILDING SECURITY ROOM - DAY

A tough, broad FEMALE SOLDIER sits, bored watching HOLO feeds of security cameras. Cass and the nervous soldier enter.

FEMALE SOLDIER

'bout time. I'm burstin 'ere.

CASS

Anything good on?

FEMALE SOLDIER

Nah. Usual. Couple of company drones on the perimeter but cloak is holding. Nout to worry about.

The woman stands up and Cass takes her seat.

CASS

Yeah? We'll see.

Cass fires up a holo of the Colonel and the Engineer.

FEMALE SOLDIER

You do right. That is a fuckin shit show waiting to happen. Bringing a K-20 in here. Mass murdering cyber bastards.

CASS

Got to trust the Colonel knows what she's doing.

FEMALE SOLDIER

Well if it goes tits up don't come cryin to me.

The brash woman turns to leave. She motions, threatening the nervous male soldier. He flinches. She laughs.

FEMALE SOLDIER (CONT'D)

These newbies... Soft as shite.

CASS

Later.

The woman leaves. The nervous soldier sits. Shaken.

NERVOUS SOLDIER

She seems nice.

Cass ignores him. Watches the Colonel.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Engineer look incredulous.

COLONEL

As vile as the corporation are even they don't want you. You are a disgraced degenerate. This is your one chance to make a difference.

ENGINEER

I was the corporations best biomechanical engineer for sixteen years. I made a difference. And besides, what you are talking about is make believe. The xenorebotic genome cannot be democratized.

COLONEL

Our scientists--

ENGINEER

Your scientists? Pfft.

The Colonel changes tact.

COLONEL

Look all we need is someone who can hack into her opcode and download the genetic sequence. Can you do it or not?

ENGINEER

Course I can but... Well, there's a problem.

COLONEL

Oh?

ENGINEER

For a start she has to be alive.

COLONEL

She is.

He looks at the Colonel for a moment then back at the girl.

Rolling her over he sees an ELECTRONIC INHIBITOR at the base of her neck. A GREEN LIGHT signals all is well.

ENGINEER

Inhibitor. Okay. How you get that on a K-20?

The henchman rubs his knuckles.

HENCHMAN

Not your problem.

ENGINEER

I'll tell you slick. She let you.

HENCHMAN

Bullshit.

ENGINEER

Believe what you want but she's here because she wants to be. She regens before the DL is complete and we're all dead.

COLONEL

I am fully aware of the risks. You have been given a chance at redemption. I suggest you take it.

ENGINEER

Well redemption needs a chair.

The rebels stare at the slob with contempt.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

No?

The Colonel is reluctant but gives her henchman a nod.

The commando walks across the room. Grabs a chair.

The Colonel winces in pain, tries to hide it. She activates the MedRing but the Engineer spots it.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)

You okay there Colonel?

COLONEL

Fine.

INT. BUILDING SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cass is distracted, she holds the Sweet Pea pendant in her hands.

NERVOUS SOLDIER

What was that about?

CASS

Ignore him.

NERVOUS SOLDIER

The Colonel. Is she alright?

Cass looks up and kills the audio.

CASS

She's fine.

NERVOUS SOLDIER

What's that?

He points to the pendant.

CASS

Nothing.

She puts it away.

NERVOUS SOLDIER

You and the Colonel, you're pretty close aren't you? How long you been with her?

CASS

You know, you ask a lot of questions newbie. Make yourself useful and get me a coffee.

NERVOUS SOLDIER

Yeah, um, okay. Where's the...

She scowls at him.

NERVOUS SOLDIER (CONT'D)

I'll... never mind.

He gets up and leaves.

Cass watches. She sees a drone outside. Hits the comms.

CASS

Hey, perimeter one, we have a nosy neighbour.

PERIMETER ONE (O.S.)

Copy that. Checking it out.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Engineer works. On his temples are TWO DISKS feeding him data from the case.

He scans the K-20's eye with a pen device from the case. We see cyber in her eyes flicker.

Her vitals pop up.

IDENTITY: CLASSIFIED.

DOB: 2031.

HEART MONITOR: 22BPM.

SIGNAL MODULATION: JAMMED.

OPERATIONAL STATUS: 9%.

ENGINEER

2031. Hey, not bad for a sixty eight year old. Got to love that cyber.

This man disgusts the Colonel.

COLONEL
We are not here to indulge your
personal proclivities.

ENGINEER
Then what are we here for Colonel?

The Henchman snarls at the Engineer.

COLONEL
To save lives.

ENGINEER
Yeah? Who's?

The Colonel reads the jibe. She knows he's on to her.

COLONEL
Disease might be a thing of the
past for people like you but here,
people are dying every day.

ENGINEER
I saw the masks. Virus?

The engineer gets close in, runs his fingers down the K-20's
arm, his eyes scanning.

COLONEL
Airborne.

He finds what he is looking for. A PORT under the skin. He
pushes down and it POPS UP out of the woman's arm.

ENGINEER
But I'm guessing we are also
looking at something a bit closer
to home... How long you got
Colonel?

COLONEL
Excuse me?

ENGINEER
I couldn't help but notice the Med
Ring on you finger.

HENCHMAN
Shut your mouth before I shut it
for you.

The engineer puts his hands up and turns back to the console.

ENGINEER

Hey, just making conversation.

The henchman gives his superior a worried glance but she ignores him, turns away.

The engineer pulls a CABLE out from the case and feeds it over to the woman on the table.

He attaches it to the port on her arm.

INT. BUILDING SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Comms chime. Cass answers.

CASS

Yeah?

VOICE (O.S.)

Cass? Sorry to bother you. It's Zuri she... Can you come?

CASS

Another attack?

VOICE (O.S.)

Yes.

CASS

Shit.

She looks at the holo screens. Thinks.

The nervous newbie comes back with two coffees.

She shouldn't leave him but she has no choice.

CASS (CONT'D)

(into comm)

Will be right there.

She gets up.

CASS (CONT'D)

Cover for me. I won't be long.

NERVOUS SOLDIER

Sure but...

She exits, leaving the Newbie holding the coffee.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Engineer is ready. He types in the last few commands on the console.

The Henchman is pensive. His hand on his fire arm.

The Colonel waits.

ENGINEER

You sure? I mean I can stop it but once she wakes, she wakes, if you know what I mean.

COLONEL

Do it.

ENGINEER

She might get twitchy for a sec.

HENCHMAN

Twitchy?

The engineer removes the inhibitor.

BOOM. The young woman on the table EXPLODES as if hit with a burst of ADRENALINE. Her eyes FLASH OPEN. SHE ARCHES HER BACK. INHALES VIOLENTLY.

The Henchman recoils. Pulls his firearm.

ENGINEER

Don't shoot! Just her reboot kicking in.

HENCHMAN

She moves again and I end this.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING, CORRIDOR - DAY

Cass weaves her way down the corridor at pace. A mothers panic flutters in her stomach.

She reaches a room.

INT. MED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A little girl, ZURI, 9, is sat up on a gurney. She has a respiratory device over her face.

A NURSE tends to her.

CASS

Hey... How you doing baby?

The girl is happy to see her mother. They hug.

NURSE

She'll be fine. All she needs is a little rest.

The nurse is caring, genuine. Cass relaxes.

CASS

I know what will cheer you up.

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out the SWEET PEAPENDENT. The girl's eyes widen.

CASS (CONT'D)

The Colonel said you were to have this. It will keep you safe till I get back okay. I got a job to do but I'll be back I promise.

The little girl is delighted. Cass puts the pedant round the child's neck.

Cass turns to the nurse.

NURSE

Don't worry. I will take good care of her. Go, keep us safe.

CASS

Any idea what triggered her asthma?

NURSE

Kids were in the mess getting dinner. Some soldier accidentally activated a fire suppression unit. Sucked all the oxygen out of the room for second.

CASS

Which soldier?

NURSE

Don't know, some newbie...

It hits Cass. HER NEWBIE.

SUDDENLY AN ALARM.

CASS

Oh no. I'm sorry baby, I'll be back. Look after her.

NURSE

Sure.

Cass dashes out of the room.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Alarm howls.

HENCHMAN

What the hell? That's the perimeter alarm.

ENGINEER

Guessing that's a bad thing.

The Colonel is visibly concerned.

COLONEL

Jesus Cass.

(To engineer)

How long?

The Engineer throws a holo display from his view the disks are providing him into the room.

DOWMLOAD 59%

The Henchman looks down at the young woman.

Her wounds HEALING.

HENCHMAN

Colonel, she' starting to look far to fucking healthy for my liking.

Push in on the Colonel. She's struggling. Dizzy. She reaches out an arm, STUMBLES. Grabs the table.

HENCHMAN (CONT'D)

Ma'am!

COLONEL

(snaps)

I'm fine. Continue with the download.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING, CORRIDOR - DAY

Cass tears down the corridor.

INT. BUILDING SECURITY ROOM - DAY

She reaches the control room. Bursts in.

The brash female soldier is stood over the slumped CORPSE of the newbie. HIS NECK BROKEN.

FEMALE SOLDIER
He's a fuckin cyber.

She holds up his head and we see the CYBERNETICS flicker as the life leaves his body.

FEMALE SOLDIER (CONT'D)
He deactivated cloak. We've got
drones right up our arse.

CASS
Shit.

Cass jumps into action.

CASS (CONT'D)
Perimeter one... Perimeter one!

Static.

FEMALE SOLDIER
This were planned. We need to start
evac now.

CASS
The Colonel.

FEMALE SOLDIER
Get her out. I'll sort this mess.
Go!

Cass bursts out of the room.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The console BLEEPs. Alarms wail.

DOWNLOAD 89%

The young woman's injuries have FULLY HEALED.

HENCHMAN
Colonel, we're out of time.

He puts his pulse gun to the K-20's head.

COLONEL
DON'T!

ENGINEER
Nearly there...

The console beeps frantically.

DOWNLOAD COMPLETE.

ENGINEER (CONT'D)
Done!

COLONEL
Get the inhibit--

She stumbles again. Her henchman catches her. A look of horror on the Colonels face.

COLONEL (CONT'D)
No.

The young woman on the table OPENS HER EYES.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING, CORRIDOR - DAY

Cass is flat out. PANIC everywhere.

It's a fight. Then, the door. Cass CRASHES through it.

Her eyes. Wide. TERROR. TOO LATE.

FADE TO:

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

TITAL CARD: TEN YEARS LATER

Rain lashes down.

A MAN dressed in military fatigues dashes through the mud toward a tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

He enters. Soaked, out of breath.

MAN

Hey, Zee. We found her.

We push in on a battle hardened YOUNG WOMAN sat on the edge of a bunk.

She looks up. CYBERNETIC implants flicker in her eyes.

And a PENDANT with SWEET PEA around her neck.

FADE OUT.

THE END.