

Countermeasure

written by

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1 EXT. NIOPOLIS STREETS - NIGHT

*SPLASH!* Footsteps rush down an empty street. Police sirens wail in the distance. A man jogs, he takes slow deep breaths, unnatural for someone exerting themselves. He turns down an alley and puts his back up against the wall.

The sirens grow louder as red and blue lights flash across the wet road. The man gets off the wall and runs further down the alley. He slides around a dumpster and squats behind it. He holds his head. His face is filled with fear and his eyes are wide and watery.

The red and blue lights grow brighter and a police car drives by the alley. The man sighs and sits down against the dumpster. At the other end of the alley, a small drone flies in, flashing a green light. It turns red and starts blaring an alarm. The man skitters onto his feet and starts running back down the alley.

A police officer turns the corner behind him and aims a rifle towards the man. *POPOPOPOP* he fires a flurry of bullets. The man stiffly flinches and his eyes flicker in and out of black, settling on black. He collapses.

The perspective of a bodycam shows the officer's view. The officer sounds delighted.

POLICE OFFICER  
Sim down! I got him!

The officer walks towards the man's body. The perspective zooms out to reveal a news broadcast lower third showing the headline "DEVIANT SIMULANTS GET TAKEN DOWN"

2 INT. BAR - NIGHT

Light Jazz music fades in. The news broadcast shows on a television in the corner of a room. The sound of a bottle being shaken. A glass slides across a counter. A liquid gets poured.

CUSTOMER  
Thanks.

The television grows distant. A gulp is heard.

The man's hand falls onto the counter, holding an empty shot glass. A bartender picks up the glass.

The customer's hand rests on the counter where the glass stood, his fingers bending inward in unison.

The bartender slides up his sleeve to check the time.

The bartender walks down the counter, away from this customer. He enters a back room, where a brawny middle-aged man sits at a desk. The bartender takes off an apron and folds it up.

RAY

I'm off.

MANAGER

Ay-ffirmative. Thanks Ray.

Ray puts on a jacket and leaves the room.

3 EXT. NIOPOLIS STREETS - NIGHT

RAY (25) walks down a sidewalk with a confident strut, hands in his jacket pockets. Bright neon signs and screens for different businesses line every meter of the building he is walking along. One shop has a woman with gold skin, an extravagant dress and shiny hair standing in front. She runs a hand through her hair as Ray walks past.

GOLD WOMAN

Hey you.

Ray walks right past her and enters a small convenience store.

4 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Ray snatches items off several shelves, barely slowing his walk as he does so. He dumps it all onto the front counter, where a man frantically scans all the items, shoving them into a plastic bag.

STEVE

\$152.38 this time.

Ray waves a smartphone in front of a small black box. A green light draws a line into the shape of a dollar sign on top of the box, and it makes a quiet dinging noise.

RAY

Thanks Steve. See ya.

Ray picks up the plastic bag with everything in it and walks away.

STEVE

Thanks for coming by, Ray.

5 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

On the handle of a door, a red light switches to the color green, and it slides open, revealing Ray.

RAY

I'm home.

He steps into the apartment and looks at ANDY (late 20s) standing in the corner of a kitchen, looking out a window. Andy wears a casual dress. Ray keeps his voice down.

RAY (CONT'D)

You put June to bed?

ANDY

Just a bit ago. She might still be awake.

Ray tosses his grocery bag onto the kitchen counter and takes off his jacket, walking towards a short hallway. He carefully slides open the first door and peeks inside, looking at JUNE (12) lying in bed, sleeping soundly.

RAY

Sweet dreams. I love you.

Ray steps back out into the kitchen to see Andy putting the various items of the bag into different cabinets.

RAY (CONT'D)

I can put everything away, Andy.

Andy closes a cabinet she had just put something into and turns towards Ray.

ANDY

Please rest. You just got back.

RAY

Yeah, yeah. I got a new chip for you, though.

Ray points to a packaged chip labeled "2PB".

6 INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andy sits on a chair and Ray stands behind her. He carefully holds the chip with a pair of tweezers. He places it into the back of Andy's skull, where a small patch of hair has been lifted to expose an array of card slots.

RAY

This should be the last time we  
need to do this.

ANDY

I don't *NEED* it.

Ray slides Andy's hair back into place and lightly scratches  
her scalp.

RAY

Upgrades are always nice, aren't  
they?

Andy's eyes flicker green then fade back to normal.

ANDY

I suppose. Thank you.

Andy looks at a table she's sitting next to. It's covered in  
miscellaneous scraps, computer parts, and tools.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Speaking of upgrades, are you ever  
gonna finish your little project  
over there?

RAY

Eh, there's always more parts I  
need to get... and I'm tired.

Ray walks over to the bed in the room and lies down.

RAY (CONT'D)

How was she today?

Andy walks over to the bed and sits beside Ray. She chuckles.

ANDY

She was adorable as always. She's  
excited for middle school, and  
always coming up with things for us  
to do.

RAY

Like what?

ANDY

She came up with some new game  
where you have to pick two  
superpowers and argue which one  
wins a fight. It's challenging for  
me because she's so creative.

RAY

Probably thanks to you.

ANDY

Did you drink tonight?

RAY

Pfft, come on, let's try it.  
Healing factor against...  
invisibility.

ANDY

Hmm. Healing factor can get hit all  
over and be fine, so the invisible  
one will lose eventually.

Ray thinks for a moment.

RAY

Maybe the invisible guy can sneak  
attack a punch to the head, knock  
him out.

ANDY

Fair point.

They sit in silence for a moment. Ray lightly punches Andy's arm.

RAY

Come on, try harder than that.

ANDY

Healing isn't very combative, but  
maybe he could use a whip that he  
whips all around himself. Would be  
hard for the invisible guy to get  
close.

RAY

Yeah. Maybe nanowire would work  
even better, you can't see it.

ANDY

If you're not a Sim.

RAY

Yep. A sim would be able to avoid  
it easily, especially with a chip  
like that new one.

FADE TO BLACK.

7 INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Ray walks out into the kitchen and a television is playing the news, talking about a popular summer vacation spot. June sits at a table eating a plate of breakfast with eggs, sausage, and bacon. Andy is washing a pot.

RAY  
Morning.

June swaps her gaze from the television to Ray.

JUNE  
Hi Ray! Do you work again today?

RAY  
Yeah, it'll be you and Andy again tonight.

June lets out a disappointed whimper.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Buuut, maybe we can go see a movie today.

JUNE  
Oh, yay! I want to watch something PG-13!

Ray chuckles sits down at the table next to June. He pulls out his phone.

RAY  
I don't knoww, but let's see...

The newscast on the television cuts to the footage of a riot. Small fires burn past a crowd of people running down a street, ransacking everything. A headline appears, showing the text "VIOLENT SIMS FILL STREETS"

NARRATOR  
Hundreds of Sims have gathered in the streets of Niopolis, Karrington smashing up cars and starting physical altercations.

Ray looks at the television and watches the footage.

RAY  
Those sims are crazy.

NARRATOR

The government is planning to take steps to prevent this from becoming an uprising.

JUNE

Andy, when you take over the world, just make sure to keep us alive.

RAY

(jokingly)

You're not planning to kill us, are you?

ANDY

Never. You don't live very long anyways, and you've never hurt me-- can you please change the channel?

June pouts and taps a small remote next to her plate and the television zaps to a cartoon depicting teenagers at school.

JUNE

Just like mom all the time. It's basically PG-13 anyways.

Andy puts away the pan she was cleaning and walks towards the table with a plate for Ray.

ANDY

It's not only that. They make all of us look bad. It's easy for the police to get rid of us, and don't compare me to your mother. We're different.

JUNE

Close enough.

RAY

Dad was the one that didn't like fighting. He never let me watch wrestling.

JUNE

Eh, wrestling is stupid, anyways.

June stands up and moves closer to the television. Ray sighs and starts eating his bacon.

RAY

Maybe you need to discipline her more while I'm gone.

ANDY

She's behaved enough... but what if  
they take me away?

Ray hesitates to respond.

RAY

...We'll see.

8

INT. BAR - NIGHT

VOCAL CUSTOMER

They're already starting to replace  
us! The cops need to be quick.

DISHEVELED MAN

I paid good money for my Sim. Those  
crooked senators are being  
ridiculous.

Ray wipes down the inside of a glass as the customers argue  
behind him. The television plays footage of people dressed in  
business being escorted out of a building with stone pillars  
in front of it. A news caption reads "GOODEN TURNS TO SUPPORT  
FOR AI COUNTERMEASURE CALL"

VOCAL CUSTOMER

Once it goes through, you'll be  
sorry you died trying.

DISHEVELED MAN

Those dirty cops just want control.

Ray keeps his eyes on the TV, but decides to interject.

RAY

Why would cops take your sim? Have  
they been in the riots?

DISHEVELED MAN

It's that bill! Congress is gonna  
ban all sim models, wipe 'em out.

VOCAL CUSTOMER

Better them than us, and it gets  
losers like you to contribute  
anything. Sims are just terrible  
product.

The Disheveled Man turns and grabs the Vocal Customer by the  
collar. Ray diverts his focus from the television and leans  
back from them.

DISHEVELED MAN  
Shutcha mouth. My sim is surely  
worth more than your bloodline.

VOCAL CUSTOMER  
Ain't that pathetic.

Vocal Customer spits on Disheveled Man's face and gets shoved to the ground. Ray leans over the counter then makes his way down to an open end. Vocal Customer shuffles onto his feet and lunges at Disheveled Man, knocking him off his stool.

RAY  
Hey! Stop!

Ray pulls Vocal Customer back and pushes him away from Disheveled Man. Ray gets close to the Vocal Customer's face.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Drop it.

Ray's manager comes out from the back room with a frantic expression.

MANAGER  
Hey! What's going on?

Ray takes a step back from Vocal Customer and helps Disheveled Man up off the floor.

RAY  
Emotions are high tonight.

Ray looks back at the television to see two commentators on a call. Vocal Customer rushes out of the bar.

VOCAL CUSTOMER  
I hope your bot gets shot.

The door into the bar can be heard creaking closed then back open. Disheveled Man gets back on his stool.

FEMALE COMMENTATOR (T.V.)  
How many will we let them kill  
before we finally decide they're a  
threat? It's an uprising!

Somebody else sits down at the bar and clears his throat to get Ray's attention. Ray turns to see a middle-aged man sitting next to Disheveled Man. ROYCE (45) has half-black half-gray hair and a dad-bod.

RAY  
Apologies. Welcome in.

Ray gets back behind the bar and leans towards Royce.

ROYCE  
Ale, please.

Ray pulls a few bottles out of a minifridge and begins concocting a drink.

ROYCE (CONT'D)  
You got a sim at home?

Disheveled Man takes a sip of his drink.

DISHEVELED MAN  
Uh, yeah. She just helps around the house.

ROYCE  
I can help you keep her. It won't be long till she actually does get shot. Mine already did.

Ray finishes mixing the drink and pours it into a glass. He places it in front of Royce. Ray picks up Disheveled Man's old glass and starts cleaning it at the back of the bar.

DISHEVELED MAN  
A defect?

ROYCE  
No. The cops get paid to kill them. We were out and about, he didn't do anything to warrant it. I've been helping a few people. It feels good to stop it from happening to others.

Ray looks down at the glass he's cleaning, listening closely.

DISHEVELED MAN  
Okay... What's your number?

Ray puts down the glass and discreetly takes out a small notepad. He writes down a phone number.

9 INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ray sits on the side of June's bed. Andy watches them from the doorway.

RAY  
He wasn't really strong. I stopped the fight quick.

JUNE

Sims are way stronger. I heard  
they're hurting a lot of people.

RAY

Please stop watching the news.

JUNE

I wasn't! Just heard online.

RAY

Don't get too sucked up in it.  
Goodnight. Love you.

JUNE

Love you too. 'Night.

Ray stands up and walks towards the door.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Goodnight Andy. Love you.

ANDY

Good night.

The door closes behind both of them and Ray walks towards the kitchen. He sits down on the sofa and turns on the television. It's set to the news channel. Andy stands in the back of the room.

RAY

Do you know anything?

ANDY

I... I don't. I'm not acquainted  
with any sims.

RAY

I heard they're passing a bill to  
have all of you taken away.

ANDY

Why all of us? What if something  
bad happens to June while you're at  
work?

RAY

I don't know... Have you ever  
thought of hurting June?

ANDY

No. NO. I would never.

Andy moves closer to the couch and sits next to Ray. The television starts playing a commercial for a passenger drone. Ray sighs turns off the television. He goes to his room and shuts the door, leaving Andy on the couch.

Ray lies on his bed alone, staring at the ceiling. Close to his eyes, the background behind him changes from his bed to outside.

10 EXT. NIOPOLIS STREETS - NIGHT

Ray walks down the sidewalk of a street with minimal traffic. Flashing red and blue lights emanate from an alley he's approaching. He crosses the opening of the alley, noticing a lot of bits of metal and wiring at his feet. He moves his gaze across the bits down the alley and sees two policemen standing between a car and the body of a sim.

A great chunk of the body's head is gone, evidently turned to the bits of technology Ray is standing over. A spherical drone suddenly whizzes over to Ray and strobos a green light onto him for a second. The strobing stops, keeping a green light on Ray. It lets out a low pitched *BEEEP*.

Ray looks at the drone then to the policemen, confused. One of them sees his expression.

POLICEMAN  
It just checks if you're a sim!  
Move along!

Ray looks back down at the head of the body next to him. It's wide eyes look right to Ray, staring at him, motionless. Ray refixes his gaze in front of him and lets out a nervous exhale.

11 INT. BAR - NIGHT

Ray shakes a metal bottle, mixing a drink. He looks at a television as he shakes and sees the headline. "OPERATION COUNTERMEASURE UNDERWAY"

Ray stops shaking the bottle and focuses on the narrator.

FEMALE REPORTER  
...by the end of next month.

MALE REPORTER  
Yes, the N.P.D. is going through  
with the countermeasure very  
swiftly.

(MORE)

MALE REPORTER (CONT'D)  
 They are currently focusing on sims  
 in the streets, but some are  
 looking deeper throughout the city.

Ray's eyes widen, he puts down the bottle and speed walks around the counter, rushing into the bar's restroom.

He pulls out his smartphone and sends a text message to a contact labeled "Andy"

RAY (TEXT)  
 Apparently the cops are going to  
 wipe out all sims. We might need to  
 move out.

A small speech bubble with three dots appears on the screen, soon replaced by a message.

ANDY (TEXT)  
 How soon? And what about June?

RAY (TEXT)  
 ASAP. And she'll go to a different  
 middle school.

RAY (TEXT) (CONT'D)  
 The timing's good, actually.

ANDY (TEXT)  
 Okay, I'll tell June.

RAY (TEXT)  
 I'll come home early. Hide unless  
 you hear me knock 2 times.

Ray steps in front of the restroom's sink and turns the left nozzle, letting it run. He lets it run for a bit and steam begins to rise from the sink. He puts his hand under it a few times then splashes it into himself, lathering the hot water all over his face.

Ray steps out of the restroom, face red, he puts one hand on the side of his head like he's holding it up. He drags his feet and stumbles into the back room, where the manager is sitting.

CUSTOMER (O.S.)  
 Where's my drink man?

MANAGER  
 What's up Ray? ... You good?

Ray slowly shakes his head, still holding it in his hand.

RAY  
I-I just v-vomited in the restroom.

MANAGER  
Lord kid, did you make a mess?

Ray shakes his head.

RAY  
Cleaned it. C-Can I go?

MANAGER  
Sure. Take some pills and come in tomorrow.

RAY  
Thank you.

Ray walks past the counter and makes his way out.

CUSTOMER  
Hey. Come on, dude!

The manager steps out behind the bar. He starts washing his hands at a sink.

MANAGER  
I've got you covered, just one moment.

13 EXT. NIOPOLIS STREETS - NIGHT

Ray walks down the same block he did previously. All of the signs and advertisements are brightly lit once again. He walks past the building that had a golden woman in front and she is absent. Ray stops in front of the building for a moment as he recognizes her absence.

14 INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Ray grabs a few things off the shelves and brings them to the front counter.

RAY  
Steve out today?

The cashier starts slowly scanning Ray's items.

CASHIER  
Cops shot him. He's a sim.

Ray leans back in surprise.

RAY  
He's a sim? Did he join the riots?

CASHIER  
Nah, the cops came by this morning and dragged him outside. One of those drones just showed up out of nowhere and started blaring when it scanned him.

RAY  
Aw man, I liked him.

The cashier scans the last item and tosses it into a bag.

CASHIER  
It is what it is. This'll be \$40.30

Ray holds his smartphone up to the reader. He snatches the bag and walks out.

15 INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

THUD THUD. June and Andy both gasp to the sound.

RAY  
(muffled)  
It's me.

A light by the handle turns green and door slides open. Ray steps into the apartment. He tosses the grocery bag onto the kitchen counter and faces Andy.

RAY (CONT'D)  
We need to figure out a way to hide you.

ANDY  
Okay.

Ray grabs Andy's hand and leads her to his bedroom. June follows behind them, eyes wide.

JUNE  
What will they do to her?

RAY  
Don't worry about it. They won't do anything if she doesn't get caught.

Ray rolls onto the floor and pulls himself under the bed. He gets out his phone and uses the flashlight to look at the underside of the bed. He slides around wood planks on the bedframe to make space on one side.

RAY (CONT'D)

June, grab the big knife from the kitchen.

June leaves the room and Andy's gaze follows her.

ANDY

Anything I should get?

RAY

Come hold the light for me.

Andy gets on the floor beside Ray. June comes back into the room, holding a large kitchen knife. She hands it down to Ray, and he carefully flips his grip from tip to handle. June sits down in front of the bed.

RAY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna cut a hole out the bottom. You can climb up and hide inside if they show up.

Ray stabs the knife into the bottom of the mattress and starts cutting into it. Andy takes the light and follows his hand with it. The mattress is tough, making his cutting jagged and sporadic.

ANDY

I can cut it if you'd like.

RAY

I... want to do it.

Ray continues cutting a line up the mattress, exerting more with each motion. His exertions sound frustrated. After cutting across a couple feet, he pulls the knife out and catches his breath. Andy looks at him with slight concern.

ANDY

(teasingly)

I can do it.

Ray puts down the knife away from Andy as levels his breathing.

RAY

Just give me a second.

ANDY  
Are you scared of me?

Ray hesitates. Ray turns his head to look at Andy. His eyes get watery and his lips tighten. He gives her a fierce look of suspicion.

RAY  
I... don't know... Just let me do  
this.

Andy moves her finger up to the cut and slides her finger further down the line. It starts to tear along her finger. She moves it along a few inches then stops.

ANDY  
You don't have to protect me. I'm  
not a person.

June leans in towards them.

JUNE  
Andy! You're a person. Please don't  
let them take you!

Andy moves her hand out and puts it on June's leg. She starts to caress it.

ANDY  
I don't know why so many of us  
killed people like you, but what if  
that happens to me? I don't want to  
hurt you.

JUNE  
You're not hurting us! Y-You're  
like mom now.

ANDY  
Stop saying that, June.

RAY  
Either way, we need you. I can only  
do so much. Can you cut this?

Ray drops the knife and pulls himself out from under the bed.

ANDY  
Yes, I would love to.

Andy picks up the knife and starts cutting a body-sized hole into the bottom of the mattress. Ray gets next to June.

RAY

You know, mom used to build forts with me and we would lay down under the super big bed she had. It was even bigger than this.

Andy burns up bits of debris with her hot finger and pulls herself up into the hole.

RAY (CONT'D)

Dad would play with us, too. He acted like a customer and mom would help me sell the house to him.

JUNE

Haha, did he complain that it was too expensive?

Ray chuckles. He goes from a grin to a tight-lipped frown.

RAY

Of course... when he was in the hospital, he wanted me to turn off the life support because it was expensive. He was so bitter about it.

JUNE

Oh. I don't really remember it that well.

RAY

That's fine. He should've been going to doctors before, but "too expensive". Anyways...

Andy slides out from under the bed and holds the knife out to Ray, handle towards him. Ray looks at Andy.

ANDY

I fit. You'll have to get something to cover the bottom, though.

Ray takes the knife and grabs June's arm, shaking her teasingly as he gets on his feet.

RAY

Thank you, Andy.

ANDY

It was your idea.

JUNE

Now you have your own room, heehee.

RAY

PFF, this is her room already.  
Anyways, I need to make a call.

Ray puts the kitchen knife back into the knife block slot it fits into and gets out his smartphone. He goes back into his room alone and dials a number. A ringtone starts buzzing off as Ray puts the phone up to his ear.

ROYCE (PHONE)

This is Royce.

RAY

Uh, hey Royce. I'm... Ray, the bartender from Serevanna. I heard you can... help with sims?

ROYCE (PHONE)

Heh, whaddaya mean?

RAY

I have one I need to keep safe.

ROYCE (PHONE)

Great, great. Just one?

RAY

Yeah. What can you do for me?

ROYCE (PHONE)

There's a lot I can do, but getting you over to Nova Elton might be the best option for ya.

RAY

Past the northern border?

ROYCE (PHONE)

Yessir. Sims have rights up there. You'll want to immigrate. Have family you'd bring along?

RAY

I have a little sister, but that's all.

ROYCE (PHONE)

Good. I can drive you all on Friday, sound good?

RAY

That would be great, thank you!

ROYCE (PHONE)

At a price, though. Six grand cash.  
Maybe a tiny more for a briefcase.

RAY

Oh... of course. I can make that  
work.

ROYCE (PHONE)

It's dangerous business, but you  
can count on me... I'll message you  
on Thursday, better start getting  
ready.

RAY

Got it. Thanks Royce.

Ray ends the call and goes out into the living room, where June and Andy are sitting on the couch. He gets his laptop off the kitchen counter and sits on the couch between them, opening the laptop.

A browser window opens, mouse to the search bar. "Nova Elton" types into the box. The web page refreshes and shows a search engine with a list of sites and images of buildings, rivers, and farmland.

Ray looks at the screen eagerly, fidgeting with his fingers.

RAY (CONT'D)

Nova Elton. We can go there. June,  
you're switching schools anyways,  
so it'll work out perfectly!

June leans in towards the screen.

JUNE

Wait, what about my friends? Jared  
and Alli are going to the same  
middle school as me.

RAY

Would you rather lose Andy?

JUNE

But- can they come over one more  
time?

RAY

I'm not sure. Let's talk about this  
later. They can probably still  
visit Nova Elton.

JUNE

I guess... What's it like there?

RAY

Let's see...

Ray slides his finger on the laptop's mousepad and clicks a few times.

ANDY

It's another big city. Maybe not as tall as Niopolis, but definitely wider. Sims can even get jobs there, but it's really expensive because of that.

RAY

We can go on Friday, but I can do some more research for now. June, you should get ready for bed, it's getting late.

JUNE

Ugh, but I'm not tired. Don't make all these choices without me!

ANDY

Let Ray work. He's right. I'll tell you a story.

Andy gets up and stands next to June. She puts her hand out, inviting June to hold it so she can be led away. June grabs her hand in reply and smiles.

JUNE

What story?

ANDY

Come on.

Ray looks at June's glowing smile. The two girls leave the room and continue talking.

JUNE (O.S.)

Oh! Remember the one about the ugly and pretty people?

Ray turns his head to look out the window next to the couch. The sky is a dark purple. A massive storm cloud approaches the city, looming over the array of lit skyscrapers and the headlights of cars sliding along the ground.

16

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Raindrops spatter onto the window. The sky is blanketed by gray clouds. Andy sits on the couch, Ray sleeping with his head on her lap. A message tone rings off, lighting up the laptop sitting on the coffee table. Ray eyes jolt open and Andy leans back and looks at the laptop.

ANDY

It's from your guy.

Ray yawns, slowly sits up, and moves the laptop onto his lap. He taps the laptop touchpad a few times and looks at the screen.

A message reads: "You'll want to find a good place for us to rendezvous. Somewhere discreet. Remember to bring what I asked for and we'll be on our way!"

Ray looks at Andy and raises his eyebrows.

RAY

It's expensive, but it'll work. You can get a job there and pay it back, right?

ANDY

Of course. I'll find something to do while June is at school. Shouldn't be too difficult.

Ray gets up and goes into his room. Andy goes up to June's room and peers through the door. June is sleeping peacefully. Ray comes out of his room with a filled bag. He gets next to Andy and looks at June, then to Andy.

RAY

(whisper)

I'll be back quick. Hopefully this'll be enough for it.

Ray lifts up the bag. It's filled with miscellaneous tech parts and trinkets. He walks out of the apartment.

17

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

PAWN BROKER

A thousand's the most I can do for ya.

Ray stands in front of a pawn shop counter with all the contents of his bag laid out across the counter.

RAY

Seriously? You're rounding down.  
There's gotta be at least 90 more  
in this.

PAWN BROKER

I'm rounding up, kid. You don't  
want lower, do you?

Ray sighs frustratedly.

RAY

All this stuff costed me nearly two  
grand, I need as much back as I can  
get... Just 90 more.

PAWN BROKER

Ten-fifty. Final offer.

RAY

Ugh... 60.

The pawn broker gives Ray a tired expression.

PAWN BROKER

FIFTY.

RAY

Fine. Deal.

18

EXT. NIOPOLIS STREETS - DAY

Ray walks down a sidewalk with a briefcase in one hand and a phone in the other. He looks at a map application on his phone then looks across the street and focuses on a security camera on the side of a building. He looks back at his phone scribbles a red X onto the spot where the camera is.

Ray turns a corner and looks at another camera. He marks another red X on his phone. He gets to the same alley where he previously saw cops and a dead sim. It's empty now.

Ray looks back at his map and draws a line, twisting through several blocks. He leads his finger to a point that looks like the block he is standing at, and he draws a big circle at the end of the line. He texts an address to Royce, then walks away.

19

INT. BAR - EVENING

Light jazz music plays. One man sits at the counter. Ray pours beer into a large mug, letting the liquid seep out of his glass until it fills the very tip of the mug. He slides the mug to the customer and turns around.

Ray begins to wash the glass he poured out. *BZZZZT BZZZZT BZZZZT*. His phone is ringing. He pulls it out of his pocket and sees the name "JUNE" displayed. He rushes around the counter into the restroom and picks up the call.

RAY

Hey, what's going on?

JUNE (PHONE)

Ray! There's police cars outside.  
They might come for Andy!

Ray's eyes widen.

RAY

Okay-okay. I'll come home. Is Andy hiding?

JUNE (PHONE)

Yeah, she's right here. What if they come in?

RAY

Don't open the door. Just stay in your room.

JUNE (PHONE)

Ray, I'm scared.

June is breathing heavily.

RAY

It'll be okay. I'll stay on the phone. Give me a second.

Ray presses a button and puts his phone in his pocket. He leaves the restroom and walks by the bar. The beer mug he poured is left on the counter, now empty. There are no customers. Ray steps into the back room and tosses his apron inside.

RAY (CONT'D)

Gotta go, sorry!

MANAGER

Come on Ray! Call out if you can't work!

Ray pulls his phone back out as he wraps around the counter.

20 EXT. NIOPOLIS STREETS - EVENING

RAY

Okay, I'm here. I just left the bar.

Ray rushes out of the bar and turns down the sidewalk, walking long and fast.

JUNE (PHONE)

Please hurry.

RAY

I am. Take deep breaths, okay?  
Let's do it together. In.

Ray brings in a long exhale. June does the same.

RAY (CONT'D)

Out.

They both let out a long exhale.

JUNE (PHONE)

Ray...

RAY

Again. In.

Long inhale from both of them. Ray is still walking swiftly, having passed multiple blocks already.

RAY (CONT'D)

Out.

They both exhale again.

JUNE (PHONE)

They're shooting. I want to be with Andy.

RAY

I'm almost there. Just lay in bed.

JUNE (PHONE)

Okay.

June takes another slow, deep breath.

RAY

I'm going to hang up now. See you  
in a minute.

June takes another deep breath.

JUNE (PHONE)

See you.

RAY

Love you.

Ray stops the call and turns a corner, he starts jogging towards a building with several police cars parked in front of it, blue and red lights flashing.

21 INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

Ray rushes into the apartment complex and runs up to an elevator. He presses an up arrow button next to it several times and it glows red.

Ray rapidly taps one of his feet until a ding sound plays from the elevator.

22 INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING

The elevator door slides open and he steps inside. He presses a button marked "10" and frantically presses a "close door" button below it.

The elevator rattles and a display shows the number 1 begin to count up. Ray catches his breath and starts tapping his foot again. The display suddenly stops at 8. Talking can be heard on the other side of the door.

Ray gasps as the elevator makes a ding noise. The doors slide open to reveal two policemen with a drone floating between them. Ray steps away and presses his back to the wall of the elevator. The policeman with the nametag "WILSON" points his rifle at Ray.

WILSON

Don't move!

RAY

Hey, chill! I'm human!

Ray puts his hands in front of him, showing them to the two policemen. He starts to breathe more heavily.

WILSON  
Just wait for it to scan you.  
You'll be fine.

The drone floats in front of Ray and repeats what he had seen before. A green light strobes onto him for a second, then lights up green, then a low pitched *BEEP* plays.

Wilson lowers his gun and Ray slowly lowers his hands. The two officers step into the elevator with Ray and the more scrawny of the two, named JAMES, presses the "9" button.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
That was easy now wasn't it?

Ray swallows and nods.

RAY  
Mhm. The gun was unnecessary.

JAMES  
These sims are crazy, man. Can't be too careful. One broke both my partners arms with his bare hands.

Ray inhales frustratedly.

RAY  
I see.

The elevator dings and the two cops walk out. Ray stands still as a statue as the door closes and moves up to the next floor.

23 INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

Ray steps out and walks down the hall until he gets to a certain door. He knocks on it twice.

RAY  
It's me.

24 INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

The door slides open and Ray goes inside. He walks over to June's room.

RAY  
I'm here. I'm here.

He goes into her room, where June stands up from her bed. Her face is pink and her eyes are watery. She steps towards Ray and they embrace each other.

Ray holds her face in his chest. *POW!* A muffled gunshot blasts from below. June squeals and more tears come out of her eyes, making Ray's shirt wet. He softly rubs her head and turns towards the door, keeping her at his side.

RAY (CONT'D)

I want to check on Andy. They're not on this floor yet.

June sniffles.

JUNE

Why a-are they shooting?

They walk over to Ray's bedroom.

RAY

They're scared, but we're not scary.

Ray gets on the floor and lies under the bed where Andy's hiding spot is. It is covered by a thin poster paper.

RAY (CONT'D)

Andy?

ANDY

Hi Ray.

RAY

Feeling fine in there?

ANDY

Yes. Tape up the cover so I can hibernate. I'm not sure I'll keep my grip on the cover, but I can hold myself up.

RAY

Alright.

Ray gets up and opens a drawer under a desk in the room. He pulls out a roll of packaging tape and gets back down under the bed. June lies beside them.

JUNE

Tape it really good. They CAN'T find her.

Ray begins taping around the edges of the poster paper.

RAY

Don't worry. This'll work.

Ray tapes all the way around the poster board.

RAY (CONT'D)

Okay, you'll hold?

ANDY

Yes. Just leave me. You'll see me  
in a minute... June, I'm proud of  
you.

Ray gets up and leads June out of the room. They go back into June's room. Ray sits June on her bed and takes a seat next to her.

RAY

They have a drone. It will flash a  
green light on you and then beep.  
It's not scary, just let it scan  
you.

JUNE

What's it for?

RAY

It checks if you're a sim. You're  
not, so you're fine, and it won't  
see Andy.

Ray hugs June.

THUD THUD THUD

WILSON

N.P.D.! Open up! We have a warrant.

Ray stands up, grabbing June's hand. They leave the room and walk out into the kitchen.

RAY

(whisper)

Stay behind me. It'll be okay.  
One second!

Ray opens up the door and the same two policemen from the elevator stand in the doorway. The drone zooms quickly floats in front of Ray and starts its scan.

WILSON

You again. Just let it scan.

RAY

I know.

The drone beeps and the policemen step through the doorway. Ray steps back, one hand in front of June.

RAY (CONT'D)

Hey, do you really need to come in?

Wilson leans to the side to get a better look at June.

WILSON

She your kid?

June steps back, more behind Ray. She looks at the floor.

RAY

Sister. Cops uh, killed mom and dad. Just leave us alone!

The drone floats around Ray and scans June from behind.

WILSON

That's a shame, but to answer your question, don't worry about it. We're just trying to protect you.

The drone lets out its beep, then floats around the kitchen, flashing its green light all over the room.

JAMES

Anyone else living here?

RAY

Just us. You can leave now.

Wilson walks over to the short hallway that leads to the bedrooms.

JAMES

Can't be too careful. Wouldn't want to hear a sim was hiding in your vents to kill and rob you. You know, the virus going around.

The drone floats from room to room, scanning each one. June digs her face into Ray's back.

RAY

You're scaring her. Can you please leave?

JAMES

This is more serious than some  
kid's feelings. It's life or DEATH,  
you'll be happy she's still alive a  
year from now.

The drone suddenly lets out a different noise, chirping  
quickly. James raises his rifle to Ray. June lets out a  
frightened moan.

RAY

Hey! Put the gun down!

He crouches down and hugs June tight as Wilson steps into one  
of the bedrooms.

JAMES

Just don't move.

WILSON (O.S.)

Come out!

Ray kneels down to June and shushes into her ear.

RAY

Shhhhh. It's okay.

James steps back out into the hall, holding a small device.  
The drone floats behind him.

WILSON

False alarm! Just a radio.

JAMES

Haha, Those things have big  
magnets, you know. Always trips out  
the drone.

RAY

Please LEAVE.

The policemen and the drone stroll to the door.

WILSON

Lucky you.

They walk out and the door closes behind them. Ray lets go of  
June and makes sure the door is closed properly. The light by  
the handle turns red.

RAY

Good job June.

June stands before Ray, tears still running down her cheeks. Her lips are tight and trembling. She opens them and starts breathing heavily. Ray walks back over to her and kneels down to her level.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Let's wait a little bit for them to go away.

Ray and June walk over to his bedroom and sit on the floor next to Andy's hiding place. Ray puts an index finger in front his lips and he leans into the wall at the back of the room.

Muffled voices fade in as he presses his ear up to the wall. One of the policemen raises his voice.

WILSON  
(muffled)  
Get in the corner! Hands up!

Suddenly, a loud shout comes from the other policeman, then three gunshots. BANG, BANG BANG. Ray jolts and sees June also physically shaken. He scoots over to June, hugging her again.

RAY  
They won't hurt us.

JUNE  
(sobbing)  
I want to talk to Andy.

Ray pulls himself under the bed and slowly pulls the tape off. He moves the poster paper off to reveal Andy lying in a fetal position, eyes closed. Ray puts his hand behind her ear and Andy's eyes open and flicker green for a moment.

RAY  
(whisper)  
Shhh. Come out, but be quiet.

Andy lowers herself to the floor and pulls herself out from under the bed. Ray follows after her. She looks at June with a look of concern.

ANDY  
(whisper)  
Oh June, I'm right here.

The three of them hug kneeling on the floor. Another muffled gunshot goes off, further from last time. Ray leans back from the hug in reaction.

RAY

Their drone got set off by something I forgot to sell off. I wish we could go tomorrow, but we have to wait another day.

Ray gets out his phone, dials a number and puts it up to his ear.

ROYCE (PHONE)

Hello.

RAY

Is there any chance we can go tomorrow? Cops showed up at our place today.

ROYCE (PHONE)

Yikes, how'd it go?

RAY

It went fine enough. I don't know if they'll be back, though.

ROYCE (PHONE)

Sorry brother, but I've got another ride scheduled for tomorrow. Not enough room.

RAY

Is there time for two trips? The border isn't that far.

ROYCE (PHONE)

It'll cost another grand, wouldn't you rather wait one more day?

Ray lets out a light growl.

RAY

...We'll wait.

ROYCE (PHONE)

Understood. Friday at 8.

RAY

Okay.

Royce ends the call from the other end. Ray sits down on the couch, defeated, and Andy steps back into the room.

ANDY

Just one more day.

Ray lets out a long sigh then stands up.

RAY  
I need to sleep.

He walks to the bedroom and closes the door behind him. Andy moves to the kitchen and starts wiping down the counters.

She notices a small device on the side of the front door, but brushes it off with a shrug.

25 INT. BAR - EVENING

Ray stands behind the counter of an empty bar. He watches the news on a television in the corner of the bar. It shows a report about the police clearing out apartments.

A pie chart appears on the screen displaying the amount of sold simulants "disassembled" at 24%, out of 100 million.

Ray's phone starts ringing. He answers it behind the counter, facing away from the back room door.

RAY  
Hey, what's up?

JUNE (PHONE)  
(sobbing)  
Ray, we heard gunshots again... I think they're coming back.

RAY  
What? They cleared us yesterday, though. That's probably from the next complex.

JUNE (PHONE)  
(sobbing)  
No, Andy can tell. She's hiding, but please come home. I want to let her out.

RAY  
Don't. I'll be right there. Wait for me.

Ray walks out of the bar. The television behind him shows footage of a legless simulant being pulled out of a car at a border checkpoint. A skinny man gets held back as he shouts at the officers pulling out the simulant. It gets pulled onto the road and shot in the back of the head by two guards. A man that looks like Royce stands behind more guards on the other side of the car.

26 EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

Ray walks by a building and glances at a few police cars parked in front of it. He picks up his pace, rushing into the building.

27 INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

Ray frantically presses a call elevator button, pacing in front of the door as it dings. It opens and he quickly presses the "10" button.

28 INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING

The elevator stops at floor 6 this time. Ray gasps then sighs in reaction.

RAY  
(whisper)  
Again?

The door opens to the same policemen from the night before. One of them raises his gun then lowers it once he recognizes Ray.

WILSON  
You again? You're here early.

RAY  
I... got off early today.

The drone scans Ray again as the cops step in beside him.

WILSON  
We'll come with you this time.

Ray's eyes widen. He looks at the floor number display as it counts up towards 10. Ray snaps into a more composed state.

RAY  
Oh... thanks?

WILSON  
Mhm, we missed a lot yesterday.  
Can't be too careful.

RAY  
Unfortunate... At least you're back again.

WILSON  
Heh, yeah. Good thing, right.

The elevator dings as it gets to floor 10. The door opens.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
Go on.

Ray inhales and steps past the policemen.

29 INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING

The two policemen and their drone follow behind Ray.

JAMES  
You said your parents were killed  
by cops, right? What happened?

Ray's breathing is uneasy. He starts to sweat, trying to keep his eyes forward as the policemen loom behind him as he lets out his lie.

RAY  
I'd uh... rather not talk about it.

Ray turns to face a door and knocks three times. I'm here with them, June. He waves his phone to the door handle and the red light on it turns green.

30 INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

The apartment door opens and Ray steps through.

RAY  
June? Come to the kitchen.

Ray looks to his room. The door slowly cracks open.

RAY (CONT'D)  
It's okay. Come here.

Ray moves towards her and she squeezes through the door. She runs into Ray and embraces him. The drone floats in front of them and does its scan.

WILSON  
Does she always cry when you leave  
her here? How old is she?

RAY  
She's 12. You people shooting up  
our neighbors is what scares her.

WILSON

Sure. Go take a seat on the couch.  
We'll be quick.

James follows the drone into June's bedroom and Ray and June sit on the couch beside each other. Wilson starts opening the kitchen cabinets.

WILSON (CONT'D)

You... don't have a sim, do you?

RAY

Clearly not.

WILSON

Okay. Have anyone else over here?

RAY

Visitors?

WILSON

Maybe. Someone's been here since  
last time, it seems.

Ray gulps.

RAY

Um. I had a date come over. Trying  
to get June a sister-in-law to help  
out.

WILSON

I see... did you have a sim for  
that before?

RAY

No. They're killing people. Would  
be dangerous.

WILSON

Exactly. Good.

Wilson starts closing cabinets. James is taking longer than last time to search the bedrooms.

RAY

Is he almost done back there?

WILSON

He's ensuring you two'll be safe  
here. Don't worry about a thing.

JUNE  
(crying)  
We are. We are safe. Just go away.

JAMES  
Seems clear! Let's go.

James walks back into the kitchen and takes the small device Andy noticed earlier off of the wall.

WILSON  
Well, good luck with your date.

The two policemen leave the apartment. The door closes behind them. Ray hugs June.

RAY  
We did it. We'll leave tomorrow.  
It'll be okay.

31 NIOPOLIS STREETS - DAY

Ray walks down a sidewalk with June and Andy right behind him. It's a clear day. As they walk, the two policemen that searched the apartment suddenly appear in front of them. Wilson points his gun at them and the drone floating with them plays its alarm tone, flashing a red light.

WILSON  
HANDS UP!

Ray stops his walk and is stunned.

RAY  
Hey, you don't wanna do this.

The policeman fires a shot and Ray flops onto the ground. June screams.

ANDY  
Why would you do that?!

The policeman fires off a flurry of shots into Andy and her body spazzes out, then crashes to the ground.

JUNE  
Andy!

(Ray's POV) Ray looks up at June, crying profusely.

RAY  
June.

(Ray's POV) June's crying grows louder and his vision fades to black.

32 INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Ray's eyes open and he gasps. Andy sits beside the bed, eyes closed. He begrudgingly sits up and taps Andy on the shoulder. She opens her eyes and faces him. Her eyes flicker green as she gains attention.

ANDY

You okay?

RAY

I'm... fine. Dream about anything?

Andy chuckles.

ANDY

Electric sheep. You?

RAY

...Cops... Do you want to wake up June?

ANDY

You can.

Both of them get out of bed and Ray goes into June's room, looking at her sleeping soundly. He turns the blinds on a small window at the back of her room and kneels next to her bed.

RAY

Hey June.

Ray places a hand on her head, petting June's hair. She groans and rolls over to face him.

JUNE

Hi Ray.

RAY

Andy's making breakfast. You ready?

JUNE

Ready for food.

Ray laughs as June rubs her eyes. He stands up and walks to the kitchen, where Andy is heating eggs and bacon on a pan. She flips it onto a plate and slides it across the counter as Ray sits down.

RAY

Thanks.

Andy quickly tosses more bacon and cracks an egg on the pan.

ANDY

How's June?

RAY

Like any other day. I don't think  
she'll miss this home much... I  
won't.

ANDY

Well, home isn't a place.

RAY

Philosophical today, huh?

ANDY

I guess I've been thinking a lot...  
What if this doesn't work?

Ray takes a moment to reply as he eats his food.

RAY

It will. We need it to.

June enters the room and sits next to Ray.

JUNE

Hi Andy... Hey, did you ever leave  
Niopolis before?

Andy flips the pan onto a plate and serves it to June,  
leaning in towards her.

ANDY

Maybe I did, but I don't remember.  
I just got powered on when Ray got  
me.

June starts eating her food and Ray puts down his fork.

RAY

She's only really been to your  
school and the bar a few times.  
Once we get to Nova Elton, we can  
go out everywhere together. There's  
so much to see.

Ray eats his bacon and goes back into his room. Andy gets  
more bacon and eggs ready.

ANDY

Since I can work there we can go to  
the movies and go shopping a lot.

JUNE

Yeah! That'll be fun!

Ray comes back into the room holding a small bag, a  
briefcase, and a jacket on his arm. He looks at June.

RAY

Get your stuff and we'll go.

JUNE

Okay, thanks Andy.

June stands up and walks to her room. Andy uses her hands to  
pick up the bacon and eggs off her pan and she eats them. Ray  
puts the briefcase on the counter and tosses the jacket to  
Andy.

RAY

Make sure to wear the hood. I'll go  
get the elevator.

Andy puts on the jacket and Ray grabs the briefcase and walks  
out of the apartment. He looks down both sides of the hall  
then walks towards the elevator.

33

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - MORNING

Ray walks up to an elevator and presses the call button. He  
looks around nervously. The low whirring of the elevator  
rises up to the floor Ray is on. June and Andy come out from  
the apartment holding hands and they walk over to Ray. Andy  
is wearing the jacket with the hood on.

34

INT. ELEVATOR - MORNING

DING. The elevator doors slide open and the three of them  
step inside.

Ray presses the first floor button and takes his phone out.  
He pulls up the map he previously drew on as the elevator  
descends. They stand in silence the whole way down.

They get to the first floor and walk out together. They walk  
down a short hallway and get outside.

35

## EXT. NIOPOLIS STREETS - MORNING

Rain pours. The overcast sky sheds a shade of grey over the city, the tops of skyscrapers obscured by clouds. Many cars and people fill the streets, walking past and driving along with Ray, June, and Andy.

RAY

Stay around twenty feet behind me,  
but follow closely. Hold hands with  
each other.

JUNE

Okay.

ANDY

Got it.

June and Andy take each other's hands as Ray speeds ahead of them. Ray takes out his phone and opens the map he drew previously.

Andy holds June close to her. She keeps her eyes locked onto Ray as he constantly shifts his attention between the phone and everything around him.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Did he say where we're walking?

ANDY

He just said we're meeting  
somebody, someone that can take us  
to Nova Elton.

JUNE

He doesn't have very many friends.  
How do you think he found the  
person?

ANDY

It's not hard to find people for  
service. Everybody's looking for  
something to do. It's probably the  
real reason they want to get rid of  
me. We can do their jobs better.

Ray turns a corner. Andy and June follow.

JUNE

But Ray works a lot.

ANDY

There's one friend he had, his boss  
there. His job is very special,  
too.

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)  
It's cheaper to pay someone than  
buy a sim that's a good  
bartender... not that you can do it  
anymore, anyways.

JUNE  
Did he ever make any drinks for  
you?

ANDY  
Yeah. It was good. I'm glad I can  
eat and drink. It's really  
interesting.

Ray turns another corner, then comes back around it. Facing Andy and June, he points towards the building they're walking along. Andy turns into an alleyway and Ray gets back to them.

RAY  
There's a cop car. We'll just wait  
for it to pass.

The girls stand on the inside of the alley and Ray stands on the outside corner, leaning on the wall. Ray keeps his gaze in the direction of the corner he returned from. A police car rolls up to the intersection and its right turn indicator flashes. Ray turns towards the girls.

RAY (CONT'D)  
It's turning this way.

June clings onto Andy; Andy wraps her arms around June. They step further into the alley, Andy making sure to face away from the road. June whimpers.

ANDY  
Don't worry.

Andy looks down at June, holding her tightly. Behind them, the police car slowly rolls by. It stops right in front of the alley. Ray turns into the alley, looking at his phone. He leans on the wall next to Andy, making a barrier between the car and Andy.

The police car continues driving and leaves view from the alley.

RAY  
Let's just go through this way. It  
should be fine.

Ray heads past June and Andy. The girls follow behind once he gets far enough.

JUNE

That was scary. Do you think they  
saw you?

ANDY

They didn't.

The three get out of the alley and cross a street with much less people than the previous one. Ray continues to lead them and stops at a dark alleyway. He motions the girls to go over to him and they walk over.

36

EXT. ALLEY - MORNING

ANDY

Do you have a plan B, Ray?

RAY

Don't need one.

Ray sends out a text message on his phone saying "We're in place." A reply comes quick. "Come down the alley"

Down the alley, a sedan turns around a corner, headlights shining brightly at Ray, June, and Andy.

RAY (CONT'D)

This is our ride.

The driver's door opens and Royce steps out.

ROYCE

Hello my passengers! I'm Royce, and I'll be driving you through the path of freedom today.

Ray rolls his eyes.

RAY

Let's just get going.

Ray puts down his bag and puts the briefcase onto the hood of the car. He cracks it open to show Royce, who reaches inside and takes out a bundle of twenty dollar bills then tosses it back inside.

ROYCE

Great job. Allow me to show you my special seating.

Royce looks over his shoulders and walks to the side of the car and waves his hand towards Andy.

ROYCE (CONT'D)  
Come on now.

37 INT. CAR - DAY

Andy walks over to Royce and he opens the back door. Ray and June go around and look in from behind. June pops the trunk and starts putting their luggage inside. Royce leans into the car and pulls a flap off the back of the passenger's seat.

ROYCE  
You should be able to fit your body  
in there, but your legs...

He leans towards the car's floor and pulls another flap off the bottom of the back seats.

ROYCE (CONT'D)  
Will need to go down here.

RAY  
Her legs, really?

ROYCE  
There's only so much hollow space.

ANDY  
I'll be fine.

Andy gets into the back seat and starts fidgeting with her upper thigh.

RAY  
June, get in around the other side.

June goes around the car and Andy pops a leg off. Ray leans in to put it under the back seat while she works on her second leg.

ROYCE  
Just like that. Make sure to press  
the Velcro tight.

Royce walks around to the driver's seat and Andy's second leg pops off.

ANDY  
I'll have these back on in no time.

Ray puts it under the seat for her as she pulls herself into the backside of the passenger seat.

RAY  
First class.

ANDY  
Comfy as the bed.

Andy pulls the flap up to cover herself and Ray secures it into place. Ray sits down behind the driver's seat.

ROYCE  
Ready?

Ray leans in between the front two seats and nods at the Royce.

ROYCE (CONT'D)  
Off we go then.

Royce shifts the car into drive and they roll out of the alleyway.

June sits behind the seat Andy is in and leans into it.

JUNE  
Is it comfy in there?

ANDY  
It's fine. I miss my legs, though.

JUNE  
How will you run if they catch us?

ANDY  
Don't think about that. I'm here, and we're okay.

June sighs, then sits up straight and looks at Royce.

JUNE  
How long are we gonna drive?

ROYCE  
Ha, not long at all. The highways here are really good! We'll zoom.

RAY  
It's not very far. Just too far to walk. The few blocks to the meeting spot were risky enough.

Royce looks at Ray through the rear-view mirror as the car goes up an on-ramp to a raised highway. The car gradually accelerates to a breakneck pace.

ROYCE

Speaking of, you might want to hibernate her pretty soon, in case we get stopped... But anyways, what's got you all together?

RAY

Me and my sister are orphans. I need Andy to take care of her while I work.

ROYCE

Ah! Has CPS been on you for being a single guardian? Wouldn't want a girl that young to be left alone so much, it's dangerous here.

Ray cringes his brow.

RAY

Yeah, that's what she's for... You had a sim, right?

Royce keeps his eyes on the road and tilts his head in reply.

ROYCE

Yep, I would let him run errands for me, but he got followed home and shot by some cops. Sucks.

Ray's phone vibrates on his lap and Ray picks it up to read a message.

ANDY (TEXT)

There are scratch marks in this seat. Like someone was dragged out.

June sits up, looking at Royce curiously.

JUNE

What was his name?

ROYCE

Mark. I did have him insured so I got most of my money back, but it's still a shame.

Ray slowly looks up from his phone.

RAY

How many times have you done this so far?

ROYCE

Oh, just a few times. You're my fourth ride so far. It's been going great. Border patrol's nice to all my riders, so this should go smoothly. It was easiest with that one guy from the bar.

RAY

Have they been using those scanner drones up there?

ROYCE

Yeah, they use them, but they don't get through these compartments-BUT I've been saying to hibernate just in case.

Ray's phone lights up again.

ANDY (TEXT)

I don't think that's any safer.  
Remember at the apartment?

Ray types a text back at her.

RAY (TEXT)

Yeah. Better safe than sorry tho.

June leans in towards Andy, resting her head on the seat.

JUNE

Andy. What do you think we'll do when we get there?

ANDY

Lots of things. We can go shopping, see an aquarium, a concert.

JUNE

Oooh, I've never been to a aquarium. Do they have seals there?

ANDY

Maybe. They usually have sharks, those eat seals.

JUNE

That's bad. Seals are nice.

RAY

They are prey. Sharks eat them because it's easy.

JUNE

I just want to see a seal.

RAY

We can find somewhere with them.  
We'll need to save up first. And  
you're starting middle school there  
first.

ROYCE

Nova Elton has got plenty of things  
to see. All those sims run the  
economy wild, been building a lot  
under and over ground.

Ray looks out the window, rain is still pouring. Faded  
skyscrapers rush past, fluorescent tones from windows glow  
through the rainfall.

RAY

We're really out of Niopolis.

ROYCE

Never left? I'm glad to be leading  
you out. I'll make it really worth  
the money.

Ray keeps staring out the window.

RAY

It's not about the money.

ROYCE

A new life is worth plenty.

38

BORDER CHECKPOINT - DAY

The car starts to decelerate, and it approaches a line of  
cars. Royce turns towards the outermost lane on the left side  
of the highway.

ROYCE

A new life starting real soon.

Royce grins, looking towards a group of guards standing at  
the end of the lane.

RAY

You should switch lanes, less  
guards.

ROYCE

It just looks that way. This lane  
has been doing me wonders.

Ray looks at the seat Andy is in, then June, then the guards ahead. The car moves forward along with the line. Five cars ahead, a drone flashes a fast red, beeping loudly.

The guards surround the perp car, pointing their guns at it. They each shout obscenities and one guard opens the back door of the car. He reaches in and grabs an arm that pulls back against him.

Ray puts his hands on June's arms.

RAY

June. Look at me. Think of a seal.  
Swimming in a tank.

Ray slides his hands up to June's ears and leans in to rest his forehead on hers. June cringes and closes her eyes.

JUNE

Okay, okay.

RAY

Swimming around, it waves to you.

JUNE

Hi seal.

Ahead, the struggle continues. Another guard still pointing his gun fires into the car, BANG the sound echoes through the whole highway. June flinches to the sound. The arm goes limp.

Ray wraps his arms around June and holds her head into his shoulder.

RAY

The seal starts swimming next to you, like it's dancing... You want to dance with it.

ROYCE

I hope she's hibernating.

Ray looks up at Royce and scowls.

RAY

We need to change lanes.

ROYCE

That'll raise suspicion. Relax.

RAY

Has this really gone smoothly? I  
don't want GUNS pointed at my  
sister again!

A body is dragged out of the car ahead and it drives through  
the gate.

ROYCE

Even if, you'll get through.

June breathes heavily under Ray. He pets her head.

RAY

June. The drone won't see Andy.

JUNE

But what if it does?

The car moves forward as another car gets through the gate.  
Rainfall subsides as they pull under a covering.

RAY

We'll get through.

Ray looks at the seat Andy is hidden in.

The three sit in silence as the car moves forward again. Some  
of the guards make eye contact with Ray. The drone scans the  
front car and flashes green. The car moves forward and they  
follow.

39

EXT. BORDER GATE - DAY

The car pulls in between the group of guards, and one leans  
into the driver's side window. Royce presses a button to  
slide all the windows down and he holds three passports up to  
the officer leaning to him. The officer grabs the cards and  
examines them.

BORDER OFFICER

Royce Poulsom?

ROYCE

That's me.

A drone scans through the window of the car and gives Ray and  
June the green light. June's face is dug into Ray's torso.

BORDER OFFICER

(whisper)

Good to see you again.

Ray looks to the officer as he hands Royce the passports. The officer takes a step back from the car.

BORDER OFFICER (CONT'D)  
Step out for a second. All of you.

Royce puts the car in park, opens the door, and stands up. He walks past the officer and gets behind a guard. Ray watches Royce, perplexed. June looks to the open window behind her, her face is red and tear-stained. Ray is stunned and struggles to keep his voice from shaking.

RAY  
Huh? H-how come?

BORDER OFFICER  
You know why.

The barrel of a rifle raises up on the passenger side door. June gasps and leans into Ray's chest again, wailing.

JUNE  
No... no...

RAY  
Hey! The drone scanned us, don't point that at her!

BORDER OFFICER  
Step out then. We need to remove the sim safely.

The rest of the guards raise their rifles at Ray and June.

RAY  
Stop it! She's just a kid.

Royce still stands past the officer. The officer leans in through the open door, holding a pistol towards Ray.

BORDER OFFICER  
Just get out of the car. Now.

Ray scowls at the officer, holding June tightly. She starts crying into his shirt.

RAY  
You IDed us and scanned us. Leave us be.

BORDER OFFICER  
We did, and you need to step out.

ROYCE

Listen to them, kid.

RAY

Just lower the guns, for God's  
sake!

The border officer sighs and lowers his guard. He waves his pistol in the air, then looks back at Ray.

BORDER OFFICER

Stand down!

Now get out.

The guard pointing through the window lowers the gun. Ray lets out a long sigh. He looks around at each of the guards, then to the road ahead.

June's screaming from his nightmare last night fades in.

JUNE (O.S.)

Andy!

Ray looks at the seat Andy is hiding in and lets out a long exhale.

RAY

June?

Ray unbuckles his seatbelt and puts his mouth up to June's ear. He whisper's something very discreetly to her. He sits up straight and looks into her eyes.

RAY (CONT'D)

Okay?

Ray unbuckles her seatbelt and June shakily nods her head to him and turns towards the door she's next to.

BORDER OFFICER

Don't have all day!

RAY

Coming, coming!

Ray taps June's shoulder, then kicks his legs up between the front seats. He throws himself into the driver's seat. June grabs the back of her neck and crumples onto the floor behind the passenger seat.

BORDER OFFICER

STOP!

ROYCE (O.S.)  
GET THEM!

The officer points his pistol to Ray and the guard over June thrusts his rifle through the back window, pointing at Ray. Ray shifts the car into drive and stomps on the gas. The car jolts forward.

BANG! Gunshot. Ray and June scream. Andy's hand rips out from the back of the passenger seat and shoves the rifle barrel into the ceiling. It fires another shot into the ceiling then flies out of the car as it zooms forward.

Ray ducks his head. THUD! The checkpoint gate knocks across the windshield. The officer unloads his pistol at the car, shattering the back window. Andy lowers her torso over June as broken glass then rain pours onto them.

40 INT. CAR - DAY

Ray groans and lets out a sharp cough. Andy lifts her torso between the front seats. Ray has his left arm wrapped around his torso. Andy hoists herself between the front seats.

Ray's right arm is grasping the steering wheel, a splash of blood covers his wrist. He veers the wheel right and Andy puts her right hand on the wheel to straighten it. Ray painfully wails her name.

RAY  
Andy!

ANDY  
Shh. Just step on the gas and breathe.

The car approaches a second gate letting cars through much faster than the previous one. Andy focuses ahead and veers the car around a pickup about to go through the gate. A loud honk is heard as they zoom away from the border.

Andy holds onto the steering wheel and runs her finger down the front of Ray's shirt. The shirt splits open. Ray wails and slouches forward as Andy takes the shirt off. June gets up and looks out the back window, still sobbing.

JUNE  
What's happening?

RAY  
We're \*cough\* running.

ANDY

June, I need you to get my legs.

Andy wraps the bloody shirt around Ray's back and ties it with one hand, making a tourniquet. She leans over Ray to pull the chair's handle. The chair leans back as June pulls one of Andy's legs out from under the backseat.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Ray, just keep your leg pressed down. Roll over.

Ray grits his teeth and rolls onto his side, keeping his foot hard on the gas. Andy switches hands on the wheel and opens the glovebox. She digs through it for a moment then pulls out a small stack of napkins from a fast-food restaurant. She stuffs them under the tourniquet.

RAY

A healing factor would be really nice right now.

ANDY

Focus on breathing.

June holds up one of Andy's legs. Tears continue to stream down her face and she whimpers, trying to hold in wails.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Thank you June.

Andy pulls the leg onto the passenger seat and twists it into place on her body. She quickly repeats the action with her second leg and poises herself onto the space between the front seats.

The car jets down a highway as Andy steers to avoid rear-ending any of them. Some of them honk as they drive by. June keeps sobbing. Ray looks at the ceiling, breathing shakily.

RAY

The cops... Are they coming?

Andy looks around and turns off an exit ramp.

ANDY

Not yet. Off the gas for a second.

Ray lifts his foot and the car decelerates. Andy leans forward to pull a lever under the driver's seat and slides Ray backwards. She moves both her legs under the wheel and brakes the car as they take a sharp right turn.

At the end of the block, Andy turns the car into an open parking garage. She scans the cars, then quickly halts the car.

41 INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Andy gets out of the car and opens the trunk of a green hybrid car. She moves to the back of their car and opens the trunk. She takes a wad of cash out of the briefcase then quickly tosses everything else they brought into the new trunk. She opens the back door of the hybrid then the back door of the old car.

ANDY

You need to help Ray get in.

June sniffles and nods her head. She gets up and gets next to Ray. He sweeps his legs out of the car and plants them on the ground. SMASH. Andy shatters the driver's window of the new car and it starts honking. She quickly opens the door and leans in. The car stops honking as June helps Ray stumble towards the open door.

The new car's engine starts up as Ray lies across the back seat. Ray lets out a long groan as he leans back. June sits inside at his legs.

RAY

June... We're in Nova Elton now. We made it.

Andy steps out of the hybrid and the old car is heard driving away. Ray breathes deeply through gritted teeth.

JUNE

But you're hurt.

RAY

Don't worry about me. Just Andy.

JUNE

Ray... I'm scared.

Ray lets out a pained groan, then Andy gets into the driver's seat of the car. She shifts the car to reverse and pulls out of the parking space, turning out of the lot. Distant police sirens echo.

RAY

It's okay, June.

ANDY

Stay awake, Ray.

The car turns in front of the garage's exit gate. Andy grabs a ticket from the car's dashboard and inserts it into the kiosk. She shoves some of the cash she grabbed into the machine, then the gate lifts. The car turns out onto the road.

42 EXT. NOVA ELTON STREETS - DAY

ANDY  
Just breathe.

Ray's breathing is extremely shaky. He turns his head away from June and coughs more blood into the seat in front of him.

JUNE  
Ray! Please don't die.

Ray doesn't respond. He struggles to breath.

ANDY  
We won't let him.

After a few blocks, June looks through the back window and sees a police car with its lights flashing turn the corner towards them. She ducks her head as it turns.

JUNE  
The police!

ANDY  
We're in a different car. They  
won't recognize us. Stay down.

The police car turns into the parking garage they had just exited.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
See?

Andy turns into a small strip mall parking lot and leaves the car, grabbing the wad of cash. Ray raises a hand to June. She leans closer to his face in reply.

RAY  
June... I want to see you smile.

June's eyes are water-soaked. She sniffles.

JUNE  
I-I can't.

RAY

Think of a seal. Swimming around.  
It waves to you.

June desperately looks into Ray's eyes. Her eyes flutter as tears run down her cheeks.

JUNE

Hi seal.

Ray puts a hand up to June's cheek. He wipes a tear with his thumb. His lips curve into a smile.

RAY

After this is over, we can go see  
the seal together.

June smiles.

Andy gets back to the car with a grocery bag in her hand. She takes out a bottle and cracks it open. She takes out a few pills and holds them up to Ray.

ANDY

Swallow these.

Ray opens his bloody mouth, and Andy drops them in. Ray slowly swallows then coughs the pills out.

Andy tears the blood-soaked shirt tourniquet off of him and starts wrapping a white cloth around his chest.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Try again.

Andy gets out fresh pills and drops them into Ray's mouth.

JUNE

Please, Ray.

Ray tries to swallow but groans and coughs them up again. Andy cuts off a piece of cloth and gets out more pills. Ray shakes his head.

ANDY

Ray... You don't even live that long. You should've just let them take me!

RAY

I couldn't... You need to live.

ANDY

YOU do. I'm not alive.

RAY

You are.

JUNE

Both of you are!

Ray turns to look at June. He smiles.

RAY

I love you both... so much.

JUNE

Ray...

RAY

June. Smile.

Ray's slightly squinted eyes look into June. June slowly bends her lips upward.

RAY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Ray's squinted eyes relax and go still. His breathing stops.

JUNE

Ray?

Andy stares at Ray. She drops the pill bottle and pills fly out across the floor of the car.

ANDY

Why me?

JUNE

Ray? No. Ray. Please.

June's eyes flood with tears and she starts shaking his shoulders.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Ray. Say something.

Andy leans in towards June and embraces her. She wails and sobs into Andy's shoulder. Andy stares straight and her eyes tear up.

Andy stamps down a patch of dirt in front of a small tree. She puts her finger up to the tree's trunk and scorches "RAY" onto it. June stands behind her, staring at the ground.

June places a bundle of flowers at the trunk of the tree. Andy sits up and hugs June. They both embrace in silence.

Andy looks up to the woods around them.

(Andy's POV) Ray stands in Andy's peripherals. Her view turns towards him and he vanishes in the motion blur.

Andy gasps softly.

44 INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX LOBBY - NIGHT

RECEPTIONIST

2501. Thank you for joining us.

Andy holds hands with June. They stand in front of a reception desk. The receptionist slides a card across the desk towards Andy. She grabs it and leads June away from the desk.

45 INT. SHODDY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andy and June step into a cramped apartment. It just has a kitchenette, a bed, and a bathroom. June tosses her bag of luggage to the side and jumps onto the bed, looking through the blinds of a window behind it.

JUNE

Nova Elton seems nice.

Andy stands still by the front door, holding onto her luggage, including the briefcase.

ANDY

It does. Go take a shower.

June pulls herself away from the window and walks into the bathroom, closing the door behind her. The shower turns on.

Andy's eyes start to fill with tears. She lets go of the luggage and it thuds on the floor. She lowers to her knees and starts to sob.

RAY (V.O.)

You need to live.

Andy gets down on her elbows. Teardrops fall onto the floor.

ANDY

(whisper)

How do I live?

46

INT. DARK VOID

The light around Andy slowly fades and she is left in a pitch black void. Her limbs separate from her torso and float a foot away from her.

ANDY

I'm not alive.

RAY (V.O.)

You are.

ANDY

You should be. Not me.

RAY (V.O.)

We'll meet again. Make June's life better.

The sound of the shower fades in. June begins to sing, her voice a distant echo in the void.

JUNE

(singing Apollo by Last  
Dinosaurs)

All things in time, will fade away  
but I by design, will never stray  
from knowing this life, it's not  
the one for me.

RAY (V.O.)

There's so much to see... Smile.

47

INT. SHODDY APARTMENT - NIGHT

(Andy's POV) Andy is back on the floor of the apartment. She glances up and sees legs standing in front of her. She blinks and looks up to see nobody there.

Andy gets back on her feet and walks over to the window as June sings.

JUNE

(singing)

Oh, I'm ready to be, somebody  
else... I'll forget how to feel the  
things I've felt.

Andy looks out the window and sees a wide and tall city, several buildings, domes, neon signs sprawl across. She smiles under her tears.

ANDY

There's so much to see.

Andy looks closer, noticing a family walking around a park.

A man playing fetch with a dog.

A man with a baby carrier on his torso.

A group of girls singing in a car.

A couple laughing together.

A group of teenagers going into a store together.

Andy's reflection comes into focus. She smiles as a tear drops down her cheek.

June comes out of the bathroom wearing pajamas. She walks up to Andy, who turns to look at her.

JUNE

I've never seen you cry before.

ANDY

June, I'm so sorry.

Andy hugs June and cries into her shoulder. June wraps her arms around Andy and they cry together.

48

INT. AQUARIUM - DAY

1 YEAR LATER

Andy and June hold hands. They step in front of a massive water tank. Small groups of fish swim along the glass panel over the girls.

A seal swoops in up to June. It rolls over in front of her and she giggles. Its eyes squint, smiling at June. It flaps one arm around in a wave, then swims away. June gasps delightedly.

JUNE

Bye, seal.

Andy watches the seal in awe. As it swims away, she focuses on the reflection of the glass and sees Ray standing behind them. She turns her head and nobody is there.

49

EXT. VARIOUS

Moments of Andy doing things with June flash by.

Birthdays, walking in the park, aftermath of a breakup, cutting June's hair.

June grows to an older teen. Andy helps June and a boy with schoolwork.

June is older. She celebrates an email. She graduates university. She gets married. Andy stays by her side.

June holds a newborn in a hospital bed, then has three kids. One of the boys sits in front of a cake.

ANDY

Happy birthday Ray!

June grows old. Andy serves her and her husband food.

JUNE

Thank you, Andy.

50

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

80 YEARS LATER.

Andy walks up to a massive tree, holding an urn. "RAY" is scratched onto the trunk, the letters have been stretched out, but it is recognizable.

Andy opens the urn and spreads ashes around the base of the tree. It sinks into the grass and Andy sits down in front of the tree.

ANDY

Thank you... I love you.

Andy sits. She closes her eyes. The sunlight subsides then returns again, rolling around her face over, and over, and over again.

RAY (V.O.)

Live.

Andy opens her eyes. Ray and June stand behind her, out of focus. They turn around and walk away. Andy stands up and looks to the sky. Leaves rustle in the wind as birds fly by, chirping to each other.

ANDY

I will.

Andy walks away.

THE END