

Human Era
(Act 1)

By

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OVER BLACK:

TALK-SHOW HOST

Does this man look like a man with
a moral conscience?

CUT TO:

INT. HOOPER MANSION - NIGHT

An image of President WARREN KESSLER (age 50) appears via a futuristic projection emitted on the wall. Watching the program is ROLAND HOOPER (mid 30s). The program cuts to the TELEVISION HOST (black, 30s) along with footage of the K.E.R.N.A.L towers.

TALK-SHOW HOST (CONT'D)

Warren Kessler has done some
despicable things in his rule so
far, but nothing...nothing as
sinister as this. He's
single-handedly putting hundreds of
thousands of people into a position
of certain death. How is this
possible? Who gave him such power?
We did. The people. He promised us
a solution and this is *not* it! It
benefits the rich and only the
rich. We cannot sit back and watch
as he harvests our heat and our
light and our electricity! Tonight
is our last chance. Fuck Kessler
and fuck everything he stands f--

Roland abruptly changes the channel with a quick wave of his hand as soon as he hears a noise outside the room. IRENE FIELDING (brunette, early 30s) drags a luggage into the room.

IRENE

Last one!

Roland helps Irene lift the luggage onto the bed. She empties out drawers and begins packing. Grabbing hygiene supplies from the bathroom.

ROLAND

I'm getting really nervous.

Roland's hands are trembling.

IRENE

Don't be. We're only about to have our faces projected on every tv in the city and everyone out there hates our guts. What's there to be nervous about?

ROLAND

I'm having second thoughts about things.

Rolands lies back on the bed.

IRENE

What? Don't. If we don't go, we'll die like the rest of them.

ROLAND

I know.

IRENE

I mean, what other option do we have? We're too far into this.

ROLAND

What about your father? You can't leave him alone.

Irene stops packing for a moment.

IRENE

I already said goodbye this morning. I don't want to talk about it. It's not like I want to leave him behind...it's our only choice if we want to survive. By staying in those towers, at least we'll have food and proper heating...grab me any specific shirts you wanna bring with us.

Roland sits up and leans on his elbows.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Hurry up, they'll be here any minute.

Irene waves her hand in the air, changing the channel to a live newscast from a helicopter of military vehicles driving through streets of riot groups, protesters, and activists. Irene notices Roland with a worried look.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Hey. We're in this together.
There's no turning back. We won't
have anywhere to go if we stay. You
know how efficient Kessler
is...he's got towers up in every
city right now.

Roland remains silent.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Roland, talk to me. What's wrong?

He opens up his sock drawer in the nightstand and pulls out
a letter from the bottom. His eyes water.

IRENE (CONT'D)

What is that?

ROLAND

It's a letter from K.E.R.N.A.L
admissions.

IRENE

...mhmm...

ROLAND

...Your payment wasn't cleared.
You...it says you can't come.

Irene snatches the paper from his hands and stares at it,
wide-eyed.

IRENE

What do you mean my payment wasn't
cleared? When did you get this?

ROLAND

Yesterday morning.

IRENE

Why the fuck didn't you tell me?

ROLAND

(starting to cry)

I didn't know what to do. I didn't
know how to tell you.

IRENE

Well, you shouldn't have put it in
your drawer, I can tell you that!

(beat)

...What...what am I supposed to do?
I'll freeze to death like everyone

else out here. I'm not ready for
this Roland...why the *fuck* didn't
you tell me...

The projection on the wall shows the military convoy turn
onto a wide street with gated mansions.

ROLAND
I'm gonna to figure this out.

Irene sits on the bed, running her hands through her hair.

IRENE
It's too late for that Roland!
...there's nothing for us to do
now!
(beat)
...you're not still going, are you?

Roland looks at her.

ROLAND
I...I paid, Irene...

IRENE
Wait...*what*? What happened to "we
live together, we die together"?
Whether it's in that fucking tower
or out here, we stay as one. What
happened to that?

ROLAND
If the tables were turned, I'd tell
you to go.

IRENE
I wouldn't move a muscle and you
know it.

ROLAND
I have no choice but to go, baby,
please understand.

Roland attempts to hug her. She slaps his face hard. it
stings.

IRENE
Understand what? That a life of
luxury is more important to you
than your wife? I can't believe
you...Who did I marry? ...You are a
materialistic piece of shit, you
know that? Get the fuck out of my
face.

ROLAND

Ire--

IRENE

GET OUT!

The doorbell rings. The newscast projection shows a group of military men outside their beautiful mansion. Police and military with riot gear blockade the entrance to the home from hundreds of angry protestors. Roland starts zipping the luggage shut. Irene stands up.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Leave. Now.

Roland leaves the room. Irene watches the projection as Roland exits the house, being swarmed by military men and sheltered in the back seat of a vehicle. Irene takes the admissions letter, reads through it once more, then rips it, as a tear falls down her cheek.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - TWO YEARS LATER

DR. FIELDING (male, 65, mute) trudges through knee-deep snow, passing dozens upon dozens of tree stumps. Behind him, he pulls an old plastic sled with a dull axe resting on top. He reaches a tree at the edge of the clearing and hoists the axe up, chopping the tree with as much energy as he can exert (which isn't much). In the distance, waiting for him, a pack of random feral dogs are harnessed with scrap ropes and are attached to a rickety wooden carriage. They look on as Dr. Fielding hacks away at the tree. At long last, the tree tips over with a loud crack and lands on the snow with a deep thud.

EXT. ABANDONED COTTAGE - DAY

Driven by Dr. Fielding, the feral dog-led carriage pulls up in front of an old abandoned-looking cottage in the forest. He herds the dogs into a hand-made kennel attached to the outside of the cottage. Inside the kennel are piles of large and small yellowing bones, which the dogs attack and gnaw on.

INT. ABANDONED COTTAGE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dr. Fielding stacks and lights the chopped firewood under a few large metal vats, boiling a pinkish, cloudy liquid inside.

He walks down the hall and drags a human corpse out from a room. Chunks of its body, namely area with high concentrations of fat, are missing. He hoists the body onto a large tarp in the middle of the floor and exhausts himself using his dull axe from before to chop through the body, struggling to break through each bone.

The blood from the body has been drained, so this is not a messy process. However it is a long, disturbing, and drawn out one. Each dismembered piece is tossed into the boiling liquid.

Dr. Fielding sits by the fire under the tank and rubs his hands together for warmth.

INT. ABANDONED COTTAGE LIVING ROOM - DAY - LATER

Dr. Fielding removes the swollen, steaming body parts from the liquid and puts them onto a table where he removes the flesh from the bones. He takes the bones to a small hole in the wall and dumps them through. This hole leads into the kennel for his dogs, who growl and bark, attacking the fresh bones.

Using a small, solar powered blender, Dr. Fielding blends a batch of the meat and organs into a thick purple sludge, which he pours into a large glass jar. He adds in a spoonful of a mysterious grey mixture from a paint can, though it is clearly not paint. A chemical reaction takes place where sediment immediately forms and settles to the bottom, leaving only a clear pink syrupy liquid on top.

He scoops some out using a small measuring cup and pours it into the opening of a curious looking scrap-metal mechanism about the size of a dictionary, then twists on a cap over the hole.

He brings the jar of liquid into a room full of hundreds of other identical looking jars, stacked and scattered. He then returns to the table in the living room.

He flips a switch on the mechanism. Suddenly a tube on the side flickers and lights up.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

The tube on a similar mechanism remains unpowered. GIL (mid-30s, skinny) tinkers on it. We are inside the back room of a drab, ransacked Chinese food restaurant, separated by purple curtains. Deteriorating cultural decorations and paintings line the walls of the space and the entrance is barricaded.

Gil works in candle-light, screwing two parts together. Irene (now blond) enters through the floor boards and unloads her backpack onto a pile of scraps near Gil. It has lots of mechanical gears, scrap metal and broken plastic. She also pulls out a toaster.

IRENE

Look what I found. Couldn't dig up much else under the snow though.

Irene's hands are bandaged and dirty, purple from the cold. Her breath is visible. Gil never takes his head up from the device.

GIL

Any bodies out there?

IRENE

Looks like there's a lady about a half mile north of here, on Chesscreek. Looks like she was maybe caught in the storm last night. I didn't have the sled. Hopefully she's there in the morning.

GIL

We're gonna need more bodies. The sooner the better. We're all burning too many calories.

IRENE

Hopefully Paulo can slip us a few extra packs of oats tonight. He owes me. I gave his family an extra candle last week.

Gil looks up from the device and gives her a demeaning glare.

IRENE (CONT'D)

...what? He said he would owe me one.

GIL

We're running out of literally everything. Now isn't the time to be liberal with our supplies. What if he doesn't have an extra pack of oats? We'll be down a candle and adequate nourishment.

IRENE

Sometimes I wish you wouldn't use your head...

GIL

My head is what will keep us alive. Check the candles.

Gil grabs a rusty screw from the pile of parts and he fits it into the device he's putting together. Irene goes to the kitchen of the restaurant. Fifteen to twenty homemade candles in different sized jars and cans are on the counter, next to a couple empty jars with naked wicks.

IRENE

Thanks for setting these ones up Gil.

Irene uses a ladle to pour clarified fat into the empty jars.

Simultaneously, Gil finishes engraving: "SILA" into the metal with a sharp knife, then removes a section of the wall to reveal a large room behind it. He adds his completed mechanism to a pile of similar looking mechanisms. Also on the floor of this room are dozens of jars of the pink human fuel. Near the opening, there are a few paint cans, several energy bars, and two gallons of water. He takes a paint can, two energy bars and one gallon of water and puts them into Irene's backpack.

GIL

I'm ready when you are.

IRENE

I really don't want to go back out there. But I don't want him waiting for us like last time.

Irene grabs the backpack Gil packed then disappears back under the floorboards. Gil blows out his candle, grabs his coat and hat and follows her.

EXT. ABANDONED COTTAGE - EVENING

Dr. Fielding harnesses his dogs to his homemade wooden carriage. He puts jar after jar of human based fuel into the back of the carriage and climbs on top. He is very skinny and has trouble pulling himself up. Once aboard, he covers himself with a blanket. He uses knotted ropes as a whip and his dogs pull the carriage through the snow, struggling with the weight.

EXT. CLIFFTOP - EVENING

At the edge of the forest, there is a headless statue and a few benches overlooking the dark city. Everything is covered in a fresh layer of snow. Glowing golden in the dark are a set of three towers at the heart of the city. These are the K.E.R.N.A.L towers. There is a large physical wall surrounding them, fortifying the towers from the rest of the city.

Out from the forest, Dr. Fielding and his dogs emerge. He pulls back on his ropes to take a look at the city in the darkness, lit only by moonlight.

Irene and Gil trudge up the snow-laden path along the edge of the forest, uphill.

IRENE

Dad!

Dr. Fielding turns around. When he sees Irene, he stumbles off the carriage into the snow and hobbles over to her. They share a sentimental hug and he kisses her forehead. Gil watches from behind.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I have something for you.

Dr. Fielding's face lights up. Irene pulls out the paint can from her backpack and hands it to him.

IRENE (CONT'D)

More hexelectrofluorate. Bill Price gave it to us for a few extra candles.

GIL

I'm sorry to give you so much work Dr. Fielding. I know how hard it must be, especially with the cold, but this will benefit us in the long run.

Dr. Fielding closes his eyes and nods in appreciation and understanding. He walks back to his carriage, waving his hand for Irene and Gil to follow. They do. They exchange supplies and Dr. Fielding gives them as many jars of the human fuel as they can carry.

IRENE

Dad, how much have you made so far?

Dr. Fielding makes an "expanding motion" with his hands.

IRENE (CONT'D)

A lot?

Dr. Fielding nods.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Do you think you can bring them to the restaurant by yourself?

He nods again, but points to his stomach to signify he is hungry.

GIL

We'll have more food by the time you bring the fuel. We'll make sure you're well fed. For now, here are some energy bars and a gallon of water.

Gil gives them to Dr. Fielding, who shakes his hand then hugs his daughter again, holding her head close to his chest. Dr. Fielding climbs back onto the carriage. He gives Irene and Gil a bittersweet smile and waves, steering his dogs back into the forest, disappearing under the snowy canopy. Gil puts his arm around Irene and they look out over the dark city. She leans her head on his shoulder.

IRENE

I hate seeing him alone like that.

GIL

He's strong. He needs you to be strong too.

IRENE

I wish my mom was still around.

GIL

She sacrificed herself to save us. Without her willingness to let your father experiment, we never would have made the discovery...

IRENE
...those fucking towers.

GIL
We should get back. Paulo's
bringing oats tonight.

Irene hugs Gil tightly.

INT. K.E.R.N.A.L APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Roland Hooper slowly awakes in a beautiful room. He's in a large bed with creme, silk sheets. He waves his hand once through the air. The lights fade on, giving a warm, golden glow. On the wall is a large, animated projected logo that reads:

"K.E.R.N.A.L. - KESSLER ESTATE OF REGIONAL NESTING
ACCOMODATIONS, LTD."

Roland yawns and sits up slowly. A camera in the corner of the room follows his movements very closely. The lights flicker briefly. He looks up, but it does not phase him. He gets up and goes to the bathroom.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - MORNING

Irene and Gil sleep together on a mountain of blankets on the floor. A loud knocking is heard and Irene opens her eyes. Gil turns over in his sleep. She gets out of bed, bundled up in thick, warm clothing to see what the noise is from.

She creeps quietly to the corner of the restaurant and wipes a small circle of condensation with her sleeve. A YOUNG BOY (15) is banging against the door frantically.

YOUNG BOY
Is anyone in here!?

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

He doesn't wait long before running to the store front across the street and trying there as well. TWO MEN (tall, skinny, late 20s) approach the boy, carrying pieces of sharp, broken metal. They have british accents.

MAN 1
Ey boy. Why you so plump?

MAN 2

Yeah kid. How've you got so much meat on them bones, huh?

YOUNG BOY

Help!!

MAN 1

Stop screamin. There ain't no one out here gonna help you, ya lil freak.

MAN 2

Tell us where ye keep yer food.

YOUNG BOY

Somebody please!

MAN 2

Tell us or you'll be our food.

The boy bangs on the door so hard, the glass cracks, cutting his hand.

MAN 1

Shut your goddamn mouth!

Man 1 grabs the boy's arm. He tries getting free.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)

Quit your squirming!

Man 1 throws the boy to the ground and kicks him in the gut.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)

You gonna talk or what?

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Irene watches through the window. The boy screams and the men beat him over the head. They until the boy dies in a vibrant pool of red blood that melts the snow around him.

The men drag the boy's body through the street leaving a trail of blood in their wake. Irene returns to Gil.

INT. K.E.R.N.A.L TOWER - LOBBY STAIRCASE - DAY

Roland is well dressed, but has dark circles under his eyes. He makes his way down the lavish, ornate staircase, meeting GERRY(65), an older, charismatic gentleman at the foot of the steps. Gerry walks with Roland.

GERRY

Roland!

ROLAND

...Hey Gerry..

GERRY

You eat anything yet?

ROLAND

No.

GERRY

Teddy and the guys are in the Main Hall, same table as last week.

ROLAND

I'm not all that hungry Gerry...

GERRY

Man, you really gotta get your spirits up. We've got the best life we can get and you're moping around, feeling sorry for yourself all the time.

ROLAND

I dont want to talk about it.

GERRY

You never want to talk about it, but whatever, I'll leave you alone. Just know that you're always welcome to play cards with me and the guys.

The lights flicker again.

ROLAND

Thanks Gerry, I'll keep that in mind.

GERRY

Hey, your lights flicker this mornin' too?

ROLAND

Ya. I'll see you around Gerry.

GERRY

Note taken.

Gerry exits, going into the Main Hall. Roland walks to the large glass entrance. He leans on a bench there and observes the armed security guards talking to each other, who stop to stare at him. He looks at his watch, then walks back to the Main Hall, full of well dressed, nicely groomed people.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

It's snowing. Irene hugs the walls as she walks amongst permanently parked cars and looted storefronts. She holds a knife at the ready and pulls a sled with her backpack on it behind her. She looks up at the street sign: "Chesscreek Ave". She digs in the snow with her feet, looking for something.

IRENE

She was here yesterday...

She sees a spot in the snow up ahead that looks like a bump. She plods forward and kicks something frozen: the DEAD BODY. Irene pulls the body up from under the snow. Her face looks as though she was at peace at the time of death. Irene brings the sled and hoists the body onto it.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Come on...

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gil is alone. He's working in the dark, in candle-light. He's begun working on another device, sorting out parts from the pile of scraps. Irene excitedly bursts into the room from the floor boards.

IRENE

You wont believe what I found!
Swear on my life, I found a hot
plate a few blocks away in an old
car. Everything was frozen shut.
Let's see if it works. Also, dead
girl from yesterday's under the
floor right now...just gonna wait
for her to thaw before I take her
fat for more candles. But yeah, hot
plate!

GIL
Let's test it.

Gil happily takes the hot plate and grabs one of his Sila mechanisms from inside the wall. He opens up a jar of human fuel and scrunches his face at the stench.

GIL
Don't breathe. It smells gross.

He pours a little of the syrupy liquid into the Sila, closes the cap and flips the switch.

Suddenly, the blue tube on the side lights up and a pulse of electromagnetic energy is emitted into the room. Every light and electrical device in the room turns on.

IRENE
I still don't understand how this thing works, but it does and I love you for it.

Irene kisses Gil.

GIL
Get the oats.

INT. K.E.R.N.A.L APARTMENT - NIGHT

Roland leans against his window, looking out over the absolute darkness of the city. He notices a small area down below where street lamps and building lights have been turned on.

His lights turn off for a few seconds. He looks around, puzzled. They turn on again. Suddenly, an entire wall of the apartment lights up with a live feed from tower cameras.

NEWS REPORTER
Suspicious activity has been reported outside K.E.R.N.A.L tower two. Officials will soon be dispatched and will look into the situation further. This does not seem to be related to any incidents regarding current K.E.R.N.A.L power supply. We will report again later tonight.

The projection ends. Roland raises a hand in the air and makes a fist, which brings up a computer interface. He uses more hand gestures to swipe and select his photo albums,

then opens one and scrolls through the photos within it. He stops on one with he and Irene. He stands, looking at the projected photo, getting closer to it, to the point where his head blocks the projection, basking Irene's image in his shadow. He closes his eyes and rests his head against the wall.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gil flips the Sila off and immediately, every electrical device turns off. Irene takes her pot of hot oats and pours them into small chinese serving dishes from the kitchen. They "cheers" their spoons of oats and take a bite.

IRENE
(nodding)
Hot oats...

GIL
Think we can start trading these yet?

Gil looks at his Sila mechanism with a proud smile.

IRENE
I don't know. Think we'll have enough? We have just under two hundred? How many people do you think are out there now?

GIL
A hundred for sure. We can check what Bill thinks when he comes to pick up his candles in the morning.

They finish their small portions of oats, both licking their dishes clean.

IRENE
Do you think we can turn it on tonight? The heaters will work and we won't have to sleep under a hundred blankets for once.

GIL
No, the moon is out. We will be singled out immediately. It was already risky enough to have it turned on to make the oats. Who knows who saw our lights on.

IRENE

Isn't it worth the risk?

GIL

We've been fine until now. If we trade the Sila mechanisms tomorrow, everyone will have one. All the lights in the city will be powered. No one will come looking here.

Gil locks the floor board entrance. Irene gets up, blows out the candles and tucks herself under bundles of blankets.

IRENE

Tomorrow can't come soon enough.

INT. K.E.R.N.A.L APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Roland opens one eye. The wall still has the photo of him and Irene projected onto it. He immediately becomes frustrated and whips his pillow across the room, knocking over a lamp.

ROLAND

I'm in a goddamn prison!

The camera in the corner of the room zooms in on him. Roland notices.

ROLAND

(to camera)

What are you looking at?

The camera keeps its fixed position. Roland gets up and goes to the bathroom.

INT. K.E.R.N.A.L APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roland strips down and turns on the shower. A twenty-second countdown appears inside. Roland makes sure to wet his entire body. The water shuts off. The timer restarts at twenty seconds. He lathers on the soap and shampoos his hair. The water turns back on for another twenty seconds before it turns off entirely. A clean towel is dispensed from above. He stares into the camera watching him.

ROLAND

I didn't rinse my armpits!

EXT. ABANDONED COTTAGE - DAY

As Dr. Fielding loads the carriage with as many jars of fuel as he can, he hears a dog whimpering and checks out the makeshift kennel. Inside, one of the dogs has been ripped open and the others are lapping up its blood. Dr. Fielding takes a step back in horror.

He takes the remaining dogs and harnesses them to the carriage, leaving the dead one alone inside. Dr. Fielding gets on top of the carriage, out of breath, and whips the dogs, coughing. His nose is red. He is pulled on the carriage, looking very weak. The sounds of jars rattling behind him.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Irene is in the kitchen using her knife to finish cutting off fatty tissue from the now-thawed naked dead body. Blood drains from the body into the drain of an industrial sink. Gil prepares their backpacks with a bunch of small Sila mechanisms and jars of fuel.

IRENE

You have no idea how excited I am
to finally be warm tonight.

GIL

Tonight will be the night we've
been dreaming of for a long, long
time.

Irene wipes her hands on her pants and walks to Gil, who stands up, swinging his backpack over his coat. Irene picks hers up too.

IRENE

Gil, I'm so glad I met you. I
wouldn't be alive today if it
wasn't for you and I don't thank
you enough for that.

Gil blushes.

GIL

I'm just doing what I need to do to
survive. I'm glad I can protect
someone else in the process. Makes
me feel like I'm worth something.

IRENE

You're more than just something.
You're about to be a superhero,
using your brain to benefit the
world.

GIL

For the record, I'm using other
peoples' brains. And other parts.

IRENE

Whatever. You even have a kick ass
sidekick.

GIL

(sarcastically)

Your dad?

IRENE

No. Me, asshole.

They laugh and share a quick kiss.

GIL

We should probably head to 7th and
Aberdeen first. We'll get the
largest reaction there.

IRENE

I'll follow your lead.

INT. K.E.R.N.A.L TOWER - MAIN HALL - DAY

Roland is sitting at a table with Gerry, Teddy, a
mafioso-type (60s), LESLEY, Teddy's wife (40s), Wallace
(50s) and KWASI (50s). They're all playing poker. Everyone
is laughing. Roland looks uneasy, as if he really doesn't
want to be there.

TEDDY

I'll never forget that last day: I
go outside my house to pick up my
newspaper, and what do I see? I see
a hundred reporters standin' in my
front yard, askin' me a hundred
questions, pointing their cameras
and microphones. I don't understand
one of 'em.

The game cycles around the table to Teddy. He taps his
knuckle twice on the table.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Check.

(beat)

Anyway, they're all jib-jabbin' away, askin' stuff about going to the dark side or somethin', and I'm standin' there like a bakala in my purple bathrobe, the one my wife wanted me to throw out decades ago, and all I could think about is "I'm on TV in this shabby thing. My wife's gonna kill me!" But then I think, TV? Ma- what TV? The TV's gonna be dead in less than 24 hours! What the fuck do I care about TV anymore? So I flashed 'em. What're they gonna do? Most of em are dead now anyway!

They all burst into laughter. Roland wears an awkward smile and looks away. The next hand is dealt and Roland picks up a king and queen. Both hearts.

KWASI

I took my yacht out on the water one last time. I knew I had to leave her, so I had to make sure I left her with a good memory. She was such a thing of beauty. Who knows what happened to her. Maybe the homeless are living the dream.

They all laugh again. Roland pushes his chips into the middle, throws his cards down and walks away.

GERRY

Roland! Hey, wait up buddy! Where' ya going?

Roland turns around and is forceful with him.

ROLAND

Gerry. You don't understand me. You don't understand what it's like for me in here. I don't like playing cards with you guys. It isn't enjoyable for me. In fact, I really dislike all of you. The only person I would like to be with right now is on the other side of the fucking wall.

GERRY

If you're talking about your wife, buddy, it's two years too late. She's probably a goner. You know that. You gotta stop being so bitter about it and start loosening up in here. We're in here for the long run. It's what we're paying for.

ROLAND

We're paying to be imprisoned is what we're doing. Full day surveillance, pre-determined schedules, timed showers, no escape...

GERRY

Roland, Roland, Roland. You fail to see the luxury in it. Sure, we're confined, but we're free to do whatever we please. No handcuffs or community service for anyone. Believe me, this place is heaven compared to being out there.

Roland takes off running out the doors to the Main Hall.

INT. K.E.R.N.A.L TOWER - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Roland bee-lines towards the main glass entrance, passing idle security guards who chase after him.

SECURITY GUARD 1

Sir! Excuse me sir, You're not allowed out there! Military personnel only!

ROLAND

My wife's not in the military, she's out there!

Roland reaches the door. He grabs the handle and tries to open it, but it's locked. He throws his fist against the glass of the door as the two security guards catch up and apprehend him.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Irene peeks her head out from a plywood door cover at the bottom of a set of stairs leading into the basement of the restaurant. She makes sure the coast is clear before emerging completely, with Gil in tow. They quietly emerge onto the street, crouching as low as they can, behind cars.

EXT. EMPTY CITY STREETS - DAY

Gil and Irene walk through the snowy streets, filled with garbage. They walk in a pathway made from others' footsteps. They reach an intersection and walk to the middle. Suddenly, a distant noise is heard from down one of the streets. The two men with sharp metal weapons from earlier appear from behind a vehicle. Their shirts are bloody. They walk towards Gil and Irene.

MAN 1

Ey. Lookit these two ripe slim pickin's.

MAN 2

I reckon we don't gotta ask where you lot are comin' from. Cause frankly, we don't give a fuck.

MAN 1

Oy, listen mates, we ain't got nothin' to trade wif you, but I tell you what. You give us those there backpacks, and we'll let you go without a scrape.

The men get closer and closer to Gil and Irene.

IRENE

We don't have any food. Just a bunch of scrap metal.

MAN 1

Prove it then. Go on.

Irene looks at Gil, who nods. She takes off her backpack and empties it onto the snow in front of her. A dozen or so Sila Mechanisms fall out.

IRENE

This is all we have.

MAN 1

Your mate's got a big bag too.
Empty it r'else I'll have this rod
through his juggular in no time.

Gil apprehensively takes his bag and places it down gently.
He opens the flap and takes out jars of fuel.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)

What is that?

GIL

I'm going to be as honest as I can
with you. It's a chemical fuel for
those mechanical devices on the
ground.

Man 2 is fixated on Irene and it makes her incredibly
unfomfortable everytime she catches his unflinching glare.

MAN 1

Okay...who cares?

GIL

We can show you what they do.

MAN 2

(to Irene)

Ey, I recognize you, lady. I saw
your face in the window the other
day. Fanks for not helpin' that kid
out. Smart girl you are.

Irene looks away.

MAN 1

Is it food?

GIL

No.

MAN 1

So if it ain't food, we don't want
it.

IRENE

We have nothing else.

MAN 1

Oh, but you do, dear. You got a
body.

GIL

Hold on. Let us show you what these
can do. I'm sure you'll want one.
We'll give you one, free.

MAN 2

(to Man 1)

I fink we should give 'em a chance.
This lady helped feed us yesterday.

MAN 1

Show us.

Gil picks up a Sila mechanism and opens a jar of fuel.

GIL

It works like this: You pour the
fuel in this opening. There's a
miniature motor in each one that
spins a metal coil here on the
inside. It's based off of an
evolution of the Tesla coil. It
emits an electromagnetic pulse that
--

MAN 1

I ain't got time for a history
lesson. Shut up and show me us.

GIL

Alright. When you flip this switch
here, it will activate the
electrons within most electric
circuitry, allowing them to run
like new, without needing to be
plugged in. This means light and
heating devices. Here, watch.

Roland flips the switch. A wave of energy pulses out and, in
seconds, the street lamps, building signage, lights within
buildings, and generators all hum to life.

MAN 1

What in God's name?

GIL

Here. This one's yours.

Gil hands the man the Sila mechanism. People living inside
the buildings wander out into the intersection curiously. No
more than 10 people. The two men look at the device like
it's witchcraft.

MAN 1
(to Man 2)
Do you reckon we could trade these
for food and water?

Man 2 nods in areement.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)
Give us all of 'em. We want all of
'em.

GIL
I already gave you that one. That's
all you'll need.

MAN 2
Don't make me shove this pipe
through yer neck, mate. He said all
of 'em.

IRENE
Give them up Gil.

Gil reluctantly repacks the jars. Irene puts all the Sila mechanisms in her backpack. The men grab their bags and run off down the way they came. The radius of energy follows them. Irene comes close to Gil.

IRENE
We have more. These people have
seen what the Sila can do. Let's
tell them where they can find one
for themselves and word will spread
quick.