

ENTER YOUR PROBLEM

WRITTEN BY

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EXT./INT. XSESS SOUND TECHNOLOGIES OFFICE TOWER - MORNING

RUPERT HILDEBRAND, 50s, observes his shiny black shoes. Not the shoes, it's the low EARTHQUAKE RUMBLE he feels. The pavement cracks at his feet.

From shoes to suit to his neatly trimmed beard, he's well turned out. His back obliquely faces an Amish WOMAN, 20s.

She's frail looking. A blue triangular scarf tight about her head where a stubborn piece of red hair falls loose by her blue eyes. The matching blue dress makes her look like she fell from the sky.

It's blue today too, she sees, as she gazes at it, tucking her hair into her scarf.

She notes the man again, waiting-- in contrast to busy PASSERSBY.

Many have headsets, all look dull, automated, munching chips, drinking Xsess Diet Cola. A FAT GIRL BURPS after a good chug. She tosses the can.

It rolls near the foot of a PUNKY BOY in dirty rumped clothes. He KICKS it. It lands near the Woman, knocking her from her reverie. Appalled by the sight of the boy, she turns her gaze back to Rupert.

She tries to sip her coffee. It spills. She watches as her hand tremors.

Rupert turns, sensing he's being watched. Makes eye contact with the Woman. She turns away, heads toward the entrance.

Rupert gives a quick glance upward. The architectural masterpiece of stained glass that is the Xsess Tower.

He pursues the Woman rapidly approaching the circular rotating door.

Just in time, he catches up, squeezing in the same compartment with her.

INSIDE THE ROTATING DOOR

Time freezes as they have a close moment.

Time resumes. The door continues its revolution into the

LOBBY

As they enter, the sound muffles, pleasant ELEVATOR MUSIC softens the air. A haven from the outside. Peace.

Two SECURITY GUARDS converse near a bevelled mirror at the back wall. To their left, a mildly busy check-in desk.

To their right, promotional blue and gold Xsess banners hang outside a gift shop.

Persian rugs adorn sections of a highly polished golden marble floor. The Woman pauses, struck by its beauty, lost again in reverie.

Rupert reaches for her, she turns.

RUPERT

Excuse me, but may I ask you a question?

He looks toward the desk noting the security guards.

WOMAN

Alright.

He guides her to the right past several white columns then through a narrow corridor, to pause in respect at a painting: Anton Marconius, kingly, in Russian military regalia.

INT. SUN LOUNGE - MORNING

A massive modern depiction of GODDESS ISHTAR. Inset in her stone body are eyes of blue glass. She wears a purple cape.

Rupert looks at the Woman studying the statue.

RUPERT

She was commissioned in memory of Anton Marconius.

It's obvious she doesn't know who that is.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

He was a famous artist, poet. Philanthropist. Fond of Ishtar.

She's a fish out of water, blinking in curiosity.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

I guess you haven't seen the news let alone heard of the ancient tales of a fertility goddess. Well.

WOMAN

You had a question?

RUPERT

Are you feeling good about today?

WOMAN

I think so. Not bad. Except I spilled my coffee.

Rupert hands her his unique phone, a crystalline gem.

RUPERT

Can you put this to your ear?

The Woman looks at it first, then listens. Rupert takes her free hand, places it in the statue's HAND.

WOMAN

Am I supposed to hear something?

Rupert watches her. Says nothing. The Woman turns nasty.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Who the hell do you think you are?  
Get out of my way.

Rupert fights to pull the phone from her hand. He pushes a button. She blinks, a vacant stare in her eyes.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, what did you say?

RUPERT

You have a pretty dress.

WOMAN

Thanks.

She traces back the corridor into the lobby. He trails her.

LOBBY

Rupert catches up, touches her arm lightly.

RUPERT

I don't think you should sign up.

WOMAN

Excuse me?

RUPERT

Here, at Xsess. Being an Insider isn't what you think. Go back to your colony, group, whatever it is.

She hesitates, carries on. Rupert can only watch.

His eyes tear, the room turns watery for a moment. He notices the full SHOE BIN on the floor beside the desk, hears the hollow sound of VOICES, the CLACKING of computer terminals.

DESK

ENTRY DESK GIRL

Welcome to Xsess. How may I help you?

The woman pulls out a paper, hands it to the girl.

WOMAN

I received an invitation to become part of the Xsess Group.

ENTRY DESK GIRL

And you're certain you understand the terms?

The Woman removes her head scarf, places it on the counter. She removes her shoes, drops them in the bin assuredly.

Rupert breaths a loathsome sigh.

ENTRY DESK GIRL (CONT'D)

Alright then. Name?

She prepares to type up her file into the computer.

WOMAN

Elenore.

ENTRY DESK GIRL

Your new name is Dee.

She writes it on a paper and sticks it on her shoulder. DEE looks down at the sticker, second thoughts.

DEE

Maybe--

A metal bracelet slaps around her wrist by an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT 1

Enter your problem.

DEE

I've come to find my father.

ATTENDANT 1

Come inside.

Rupert watches Dee follow the Attendant 1 down a long passage receding into the distance on a movator... almost...

ATTENDANT 1 (CONT'D)

Your father is not here. He sent you here to be reformed.

Gone. Rupert surveys the lobby's details, an emotional last look moment, but it's not sadness anymore. He gives it THE FINGER, walks to the elevator, speaks into his phone.

RUPERT

My name is Rupert Hildebrand and I'm finished. I can't hurt people any longer.

The elevator dings. He enters. A MAN inside drinks a can of Energy Xsess. The door closes. They rise, 2, 3, 4, 5...

RUPERT (CONT'D)

I worked at Xsess for just shy of thirty years.

The man nods. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10...

MAN

Quite the stint.

RUPERT

I'm quitting today.

MAN

Sorry. Or congratulations?

RUPERT

Sorry that I ever worked for a company that lies and steals and cheats and retards people. They're creating a dystopian nightmare!

The elevator opens on the seventeenth floor.

Man's POV: Rupert leaves the elevator. The door closes.

MAN

But being an Insider has its perks.

INT. RUPERT'S OFFICE - MORNING

A WHIRRING sound secludes the office from externals.

Promotional stuff clutters the shelves. Rupert packs his coffee cup into a box. Everything else-- the trash.

A faceless clock WHIRS instead of ticks.

LOLLY, 30s, chews gum, a sad look out the window. Storm clouds manifest before her eyes.

LOLLY

Don't quit. It's just the weather.

Rupert turns, RAIN SPATTERS the window. Odd.

RUPERT

It's not the weather, Lolly. It's my phone. My conscience. The whir of a clock that's supposed to tick!

WHIR, WHIR, WHIR. Lolly's eyes widen like a doll's.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

Years ago this company stood for something. But when Anton died, everything changed.

LOLLY

I heard they're putting a new chapel downstairs.

RUPERT

For us, Lolly. Not on the outside.

LOLLY

Their decisions are for the best.

RUPERT

You believe that?

Lolly doesn't look too certain.

RUPERT (CONT'D)

Anton told me, before he died--

FLASHBACK - INT. DARK ROOM

A small light illuminates ANTON MARCONIUS' face. Wise dark eyes. Could be Rupert's brother.

Rupert passes him a glass of water, attentive. Anton drinks, sets it down, grabs Rupert by the collar.

ANTON

Do you know what's in it? The food you eat? The stuff you drink? The SOUND of my voice?

Rupert turns suddenly, throws up.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
I did that, Rupert. I know their  
secrets. And soon...

Rupert wipes his mouth on his sleeve.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
...they will kill me for it.

Anton hands him an inch long BLACK NEEDLE with a coiled top.

ANTON (CONT'D)  
Look after this for me.

RUPERT  
What is it?

ANTON  
It's my soul.

INT. RUPERT'S OFFICE - MORNING

Rupert sits down in his chair, opens his phone, pulls the  
Soul Pin out, looks at it, puts it back.

RUPERT  
I've tried to ignore what's going  
on but I can't anymore.

Lolly stares. He looks a little crazed.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
You know those Zombie movies? The  
undead? Well look around you.

She does. Nobody there but them. He moves her to the window.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
Down there. The people eating  
Cheezos and drinking that swill.

LOLLY  
But our people are better than  
that. At least we try to be.

MARK BURNS, 19, enters eating a bag of CHEEZOS. Lolly takes  
them away, puts them on the chair next to her purse.

LOLLY (CONT'D)

The company frowns on poor health choices and the use of chemical modifiers. You should know better.

MARK

When it's law I'll quit. You?

Mark notices Lolly's Xsess gum on the chair next to her purse. He picks it up, waves it in her face.

LOLLY

It's helped me quit smoking.

MARK

Trading bad for bad. They say the fake sugar in that stuff can cause hallucinations, seizures, cancer.

Lolly stands rock-like, unable to speak, staring at Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)

(antagonizing)

But you can't quit can you?

RUPERT

We endorse this crap!

LOLLY

But it's safe here.

Mark takes his Cheezos back.

MARK

I just wanted to remind you of the meeting at eleven. Don't forget it's Karen's birthday.

He bounces off carelessly, dropping Cheezos on his way.

RUPERT

No more meetings.

LOLLY

Think he's right about the gum?

RUPERT

Just this morning I saw the ground crack beneath my feet. The earth shook. No one noticed!

Lolly's facial expression questions his sanity.

LOLLY  
You're pale. I can call someone.

RUPERT  
No! Don't call anyone.

He pulls out a pistol. Lolly backs up.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
No! This is protection.

Rupert kisses her on the cheek.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
You need to get out of here too.

LOLLY  
But where will you go?

He pulls out his phone.

RUPERT  
I've had this phone connected to me  
for years. They know where I am by  
it. If it's here, I'M HERE.

He shoves it in her hands.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
I need you to buy me time enough to  
get out of here. Twenty minutes.  
Then put it on sleep mode.

Lolly shakes her head, "no".

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
Anton's soul is in this phone.  
I need you to take care of it. Once  
it's asleep, boot it the hell outta  
here. And don't EVER come back.  
Or... It's not even an option.

LATER:

Lolly presses sleep mode. She jams it in her pocket, exits  
the office into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY 1 -- FLOOR 17

Lolly sprints, reaches the elevator. OTTO VEERUS, 20's,  
appears from around the corner wearing his headset.

OTTO

Where are you going? Don't you usually lunch in the lunchroom?

LOLLY

I left it in my car.

OTTO

I can buy you lunch. Save the trip.

He grabs her arm, leads her off. They walk several uncomfortable steps as Lolly's face succumbs to fear.

LOLLY

My pills. I'm on antibiotics.  
They're in my lunch.

She pulls away from Otto. He watches her, noticing her nerves are shot. She doesn't wait for the elevator. She dips into

THE STAIRWELL

Out of sight from Otto.

HALLWAY WITH OTTO

OTTO

Lolly's on her way, bring her up.

High heels clack down the stairwell. Her breathless rush echoes off the empty walls.

She reaches the floor of the lobby, brushes her self off, gathering composure before entering.

LOBBY

Lolly's face is full on panic as a SECURITY GUARD approaches.

INT. OTTO'S OFFICE - LATER

Bare walls. Lolly sits on a stool.

OTTO

What are you hiding from me?

INT. REFORMATION ROOM - MORNING

Dee wears a plain white smock, her bare feet on an ugly cement floor. Nothing like the lobby. A paper cup sits on a wooden table along with numerous pint sized radio devices.

She watches as ATTENDANT 2 turns the dial on a RADIO.

SMASH! It explodes. Dee screams. Rupert points the gun.

RUPERT  
(to attendant)  
Take that cup and drink.

Attendant 2 does nothing.

DEE  
What were they doing?

RUPERT  
Get on your clothes!

Dee hurries to change.

RUPERT (CONT'D)  
Comply.

The magic word. Attendant 2 drinks. A fire alarm RINGS.

MONTAGE:

A -- Otto, looks up, casually notes of the sound. Walks around Lolly. Hands her a sack. The ALARM STOPS.

B -- The Attendant 2, falls. He's pale, dead. A Pinocchian piece of wooden flesh. Yet he speaks his last words.

ATTENDANT 2  
Anton Marconius lives.

C -- Rupert and Dee escape down a corridor.

D -- Lolly examines a wad of cash in the sack.

OTTO  
Six hundred thousand enough for  
this little piece of crystal?

He shines the phone with his sleeve. Lolly nods "yes".

E -- Lolly exits Otto's office.

F -- Outside, Lolly TRIPS on the CRACKED PAVEMENT. Xsess gum falls from her purse. A MOTORCYCLIST SWERVES to miss her.

G -- Lolly reaches for her ankle in pain.

H -- Rupert and Dee drag her from the calamity into a van.

I -- Otto opens the phone, pulls out the Soul Pin.

