

HUGS

Written by

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NATURE VS. NURTURE

Sci-fi, bait shop, fitness trainer, dog bone

FADE IN:

**INT. LAB - DAY**

Windowless. In the corner near the door, a bedroom setup. Behind it, rows of supercomputers run the length of the wall.

ETHAN LOPEZ (19), a specimen that puts Schwarzenegger to shame, does squats with a female FITNESS TRAINER. He wears a skull cap with wires, tethered to a mainframe.

A BUZZ, and the door opens. EVIE LOPEZ (22), petite, in a felt jogging suit, enters. She's burned on half her face.

EVIE

Hey. He's doing that wrong.

The fitness trainer turns toward Evie, hands on hips.

EVIE (CONT'D)

I own a gym. His knees are caving.  
Ethan? Hi! I'm your sister, Evie.

ETHAN

Nice to meet you.

EVIE

It's so great to finally meet you!  
They told you I was coming, right?

Ethan nods.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Okay if we take a ride?

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

DR. ALLAN (55), bearded and bald, sat behind his desk, watches the lanky, dour NSA AGENT SHANK (45) peruse a file.

DR. ALLAN

This man is God. You don't  
liquidate God, agent Shank.

AGENT SHANK

You went against N.S.A. guidelines.

DR. ALLAN

Look, I am one of twelve people who  
knows he exists. And what he is.

Shank flings the file onto the desk.

AGENT SHANK

What was the mission, doctor? The boy is, what, nineteen? I mean, I can count. I know who the President was in two-thousand-one.

DR. ALLAN

Have you read The Republic, agent? After nine-eleven our directive was to create philosopher-kings. Our team went a bit literal. We've kept the boy in a semi-conscious state and fed him all the knowledge ever recorded. We estimate eighty-eight percent of all human data has been downloaded to his brain. Socrates. Shakespeare. How to rebuild a carburetor. You name it. The brain is quantum. And we're learning its capacity may be nearly infinite.

AGENT SHANK

And you woke him up.

DR. ALLAN

Every project has a payoff. Race riots. Pandemic. This was the solution. And that was my call.

AGENT SHANK

And now it's my call, and neutral-

Dr. Allan raises his hand to silence Shank.

DR. ALLAN

Don't. He can hear you if he's nearby. He's well-versed in remote viewing. Reiki. Anti-gravity theory. Telekinesis. We had no idea how powerful he'd become. He can kill you without touching you. He's decided we're a pestilence. And he wants to hasten our extinction.

**EXT. SHOPPING CENTER - GYM - DAY**

Evie and her Golden Retriever ANNIE stand alongside Ethan outside FORCE FITNESS.

EVIE

So, this is my business. No one can go in yet, though. You've heard about the sickness in the world?

Ethan nods a regrettable yes.

EVIE (CONT'D)  
They said that's why they woke you.  
But you don't want to help?

ETHAN  
Humans should cease to be. The  
species evolved incorrectly.

A spontaneous, hearty chuckle escapes Evie.

EVIE  
I'm certainly not going to argue  
that point. But come with me first?

**INT. PETE'S SPORTING GOODS AND BAIT SHOP - DAY**

A masked Ethan stares at a refrigerated bait case. A masked Evie sneaks up behind him. He turns, and touches her cheek.

ETHAN  
What happened to you?

EVIE  
I was burned. As a baby.

DR. ALLAN (V.O.)  
Rosa Lopez, single mother. Couldn't  
care for both her children.  
Answered the ad for the experiment.  
Got a sizeable sum for it.

EVIE  
(pointing)  
Those are -

ETHAN  
Minnows, also known as killies.  
Used for catching fluke and perch.

Evie smiles, and grabs a bag of the small fish from the case with one hand, and hands Ethan a dog bone with the other.

EVIE  
Try this. Annie, come here, girl!

Annie latches onto the bone and shakes her head. Ethan is stiff at first... then starts to pull on the bone, delighting the dog... and himself. He kneels to wrestle with the canine.

ETHAN  
I am... having fun!

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

DR. ALLAN

Rosa was designated a liability.  
Evie survived. Burned on thirty  
percent of her body. Adopted at age  
four. Led a normal life since.

AGENT SHANK

The girl you to attempted to murder  
is your last hope? Are you insane?

DR. ALLAN

We didn't have a choice. Ever try  
to bargain with a supreme being?

**EXT. PETE'S SPORTING GOODS AND BAIT SHOP - DAY**

Evie, Ethan and Annie exit the lakeside shop, fishing poles  
and bait in hand, and walk down a dirt path toward the water.

**INT. OFFICE - DAY**

AGENT SHANK

I'm sorry, doctor, that you  
miscalculated in bringing your  
Frankenstein's monster back to  
life. I'm not convinced we're in  
the amount of peril you've stated  
here. But to be safe, the agency  
will clean this. With prejudice.

**EXT. LAKE - PIER - DAY**

Evie and Ethan dangle poles in the water, Annie nearby.

ETHAN

Explain why this is pleasurable?

Evie laughs.

EVIE

It's peaceful. It allows you to  
hear what's going on in your head,  
you know? The world goes away.

ETHAN

I have eighty-eight percent of the  
world's knowledge in my head. I am  
not certain I have ever experienced  
peace.... I do enjoy it. Peace.

The RUMBLE of engines causes Evie and Ethan to turn. They see Humvees and heavy artillery at the top of the path.

U.S. Army soldiers begin to creep down the embankment.

Ethan stands. He extends his hands. A GRAVITY WAVE causes a SONIC BOOM, knocking the soldiers to the ground.

The gun turrets and rifle barrels begin to twist and melt.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You will all survive, for you have family. Please do not attack again.

Evie hyperventilates. Annie rushes over, jumps up and licks her face. Ethan pets Annie. He smiles reassuringly.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

It's okay. I am pleased to have met my sister. And her animal, Annie.

Evie calms herself down... she rubs Annie's neck.

EVIE

We're glad, too.

ETHAN

You have been treated so poorly in life. Why do you believe the best about humanity?

EVIE

(shrugging)

I'm not sure? You know, a lot of people are worse off than I am. There are a lot of good people out there. We're all in this together. And... my adopted family gave me lots of hugs?

Evie opens her arms wide, beckoning Ethan forward... he steps into her embrace. They sway, protected in each others' arms.

They each take a step back. A tear runs down Ethan's cheek. And then, an emotional flood lets loose, one that's been dammed up in Ethan's mind for what must seem like eons.

Evie puts her hand over her heart. Annie jumps up on her. Evie rubs Annie's head. Ethan latches on to both of them.

ETHAN

I believe hugs can save the world.

FADE OUT.