PROJECT: REEDEN

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. DREAMY WOODLAND - DAY

Light filters through trees and woodland, fading in and out. The branches sway gently, a breeze flowing through them.

    REEDEN (V.O.)
    We moved around a lot when I was young. From system to system, tropical planets to cold space stations. My parents never seemed settled, until we found a tiny planet. Dangerous, but in the right way, so they said, real freedom. I think it was more dangerous than they expected.

    SHANI (V.O.)
    But you learned quickly.

We explore the ethereal woodland, settling on two GRAVES with an INSCRIBED STONE in the centre, “Two loving parents, we miss you - Reeden and Braith”. The lettering is sloppy. A small boy places a flower in front of the stone.

    REEDEN (V.O.)
    Not quickly enough.

REEDEN 18, skinny and scruffy, places his hand on his brothers shoulder, tears in his eyes. SHANI 23, tall, strong but elegant, consoles REEDEN who collapses into her in tears. BRAITH looks sad but a little confused.

The screen begins to break down and distort into a blue noise.

    REEDEN (CONT’D)
    But life kept moving, for me and Braith, my brother. We weren’t left with much.

SHANI appears on the fuzz gazing lovingly but sadly into the camera.

    SHANI (V.O.)
    You had me.

    REEDEN (V.O.)
    Did I?

Her eyes drop slightly, looking past the camera.
It was never simple, but life never stands still. And when it changes--

SHANI looks directly into camera.

SHANI (V.O.)
It happens-- suddenly.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - NIGHT

REEDEN screaming pain, hands covered in blood. Implants and metal sticking out of arms. Sat in a dark room, a bright light beaming down on him. TWO MASKED DOCTORS appear and restrain him violently.

CUT TO:

1. Black
2. Images of Earth uniting under a single banner.
3. Emerging S.E.A logos and propaganda.
4. Marches and festivals
5. International government meetings (U.N.)

REEDEN (V.O.)
Long ago, we finally developed the technology to travel between the stars. The Earth united as we took our first unsteady steps into deep space.

6. Images of the changing solar system.
7. A colonized moon
8. Colonized Mars
9. Giant factories on other planets

REEDEN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
We harnessed the resources of the Solar System under the banner of the Solar Earth Alliance, the S.E.A, A “democratic” world government.

10. Protest marches
11. Anti S.E.A banners

12. Terrorism

REEDEN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Of course, not all of Earth was happy with this new peace. As we began to colonise other worlds, those people were given the chance to leave, forming long surviving colonies all over the galaxy free of S.E.A rule. The dream did not last however.
(beat)
Eighty seven years ago, the Earth was destroyed. Today, few of those early colonies still exist. They have been systematically wiped out.

FADE TO:

INT. NEWS BROADCAST

The NEWS REPORTER, female, has a distinctive style, speaking in a personal tone, slight condescension. She stand on a video background segmented into news options. Explosions and images of battles are layered.

NEWS REPORTER
On this, the 87th anniversary of Earth, assaults on the non S.E.A outer colonies suspected of harbouring terrorists continue as more are apprehended. See our heroes in action?

STATIC.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT’D)
Intelligence confirms we are closing in on the violent terrorist Edwin Blake, mastermind of a grave series of attacks against our people. Senator Gerart has issued this statement to all regions of S.E.A space.

GERART, an tall imposing man, wears an S.E.A symbol proudly. He stands at a podium during a presidential style press conference.
GERART
Anybody who has had contact with Edwin Blake MUST report to the nearest S.E.A outpost. Do not approach, he is considered armed, dangerous and wanted alive. He must stand trial for his crimes against humanity and solar civilization.

STATIC.

NEWS REPORTER
Edwin Blake is accused of taking over three hundred civilian lives. See Edwin Blakes crimes?

The news reporter smiling, filling half the screen with a hypnotic S.E.A symbol.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)
This report brought to you from the Solar Earth Alliance, for your safety and a peaceful future.

CUT TO:

SPLIT SCREEN - INT. MEDICAL FACILITY/EXT. ORBIT NEW EARTH

TITLE OVER:
Gilese-C (New Earth)
Solar Earth Alliance Territory
Earth Year 3263

REEDEN lays on a metal table unconscious. Circuits and scars run all over his pale veiny body. We explore them slowly.

NEW EARTH, fading in closer, into the atmosphere, across the city, purple hue sky, a large building.

SHANI (V.O.)
I can’t stay here, not for you, not for dad, I need my life Reeden.

REEDEN (V.O.)
It’s the things you don’t truly see that I miss. The way branches and leaves sway in the wind, the formations of birds in flight, the tiny movements and emotional twitches of people you love.

(MORE)
On my adopted planet I was a hunter and a scout; spy and assassin.

SHANI (V.O.)
Hot headed and over confident.

REEDEN (V.O.)
Yeah I was good. Maybe it’s why I was chosen?

SOUND ONLY - EXPLOSION. PLASMA GUNFIRE, MULTIPLE EXPLOSIONS, SCREAMING and SHOUTING fill the air, the sounds of a large scale assault on a populated area.

ALARMS sound muffled and distant.

BRAITH
REEDEN! REEDEN!!

SOUND ONLY - A nearby EXPLOSION and GRINDING METAL deafens. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS as the building is stormed.

REEDEN twitches and turns on the hard metal table top, flinching to his nightmare. The circuits in his body occasionally flash blue with life.

The ALARMS are more audible getting closer.

SOLDIERS
(militaristic, electronic)
ON THE GROUND! FACE DOWN, HANDS ON HEAD! DO IT, DO IT NOW!

REEDEN
Braith stay calm, get on the floor and don’t move, it’ll be okay.

SOLDIER 1
Grab the kid.

REEDEN
DON’T TOUCH HIM!

BRAITH
(dragged off)
GET OFF! GET OFF ME!

SCUFFLING.

SOLDIER 1
PIN HIM.
REEDEN
BRAITH! I’M COMING, I PROMISE!
(muffled)
Braith!

A SMACK of a gun butt. ALARMS swelling.

5
INT. MEDICAL LAB - NIGHT

REEDEN throws open his ELECTRONIC EYES, they move and WHIR frantically. ALARMS are piercing our eardrums. SHANI appears over him as if from nowhere, frantic.

SHANI
Reeden wake up, we have to go now!
Come on!

Shani helps haul him up and drags him towards the dark.

REEDEN (V.O.)
It happened fast. When the S.E.A arrive, there is nothing to be done. Fight and die, cooperate and live.
(beat)
I have no issues with dying.
(beat)
But I’m not the only consideration.

SHANI (V.O.)
But I’m free from that now Reeden, surely you can understand that.

REEDEN (V.O.)
No. I don’t.

6
EXT. URBAN STREETS - NIGHT

ALARMS are fading into the distance. REEDEN and SHANI race through the streets. Its claustrophobic and blurred, arms flail and feet move frantically as they escape. CCTV CAMERAS watch every movement and warp REEDENS vision painfully.

REEDEN (V.O.)
In hindsight we got away too easily.

LOUD NOISES and MEDIA overwhelm REEDEN. Fast cuts of various media, communications, adverts, web conversation, fiction etc. REEDENS eyes are wide and flickering with activity.
SHANI
Come on! Reeden, focus on me, we
have to go, they’re coming.

REEDEN (V.O.)
I couldn’t handle it, all the noise
in my head, infiltrating every
synapse. My eyes no longer my own.
But then it changed.

EXT. DARK ALLEY – NIGHT

They escape from under the street lights into a dark alley.
The light seeping in casts long shadows as REEDEN collapses.
SHANI crouches down over REEDEN, touch him gently.

SHANI
You’re going to be fine.

REEDEN
(gasping)
I can’t--
(beat)

The noise in REEDEN’S head slowly dissipates. Sensing
something REEDEN hauls himself up. A shadowy figure emerges
from the dark. REEDEN instinctively protects SHANI and
approaching the shadow. Behind him, SHANI disappears.

JANNINGS
Patient 149534, Reeden, be calm. Do
not be afraid, I’m here to help
you.

JANNINGS reaches forward and injects something into REEDEN’S
neck. REEDEN passes out.

FADE TO:

INT. JANNINGS BUNKER – NIGHT

REEDEN lays in bed in a dank windowless room. LIGHTS flicker,
ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT litter the surfaces. JANNINGS, 50+,
limping and self neglected, sits across the room humming a
HYPNOTIC TUNE next to a RADIO playing music. MONITORS strewn
everywhere.

JANNINGS
Ah you’re awake.
(beat)
Don’t worry, you’re safe here,
you’ve been through a lot.
REEDEN
(coughing)
Really.
(V.O)
Despite his penchant for pointing out the obvious, he was a clever guy. Ex S.E.A. science.

JANNINGS limps over to REEDEN's bed.

JANNINGS
Bio-Electronic engineering.
(beat)
My name is Jannings. I invented you.

JANNINGS helps REEDEN up. He notices the CCTV camera in the corner causing flashing pain.

JANNINGS (CONT'D)
You've been engineered Reeden, the latest in a line of bio-electronic operatives they've been perfecting for decades. I believe maybe now they have achieved it. Maybe now it will stop.

REEDEN
The engineering?

JANNINGS working work frantically, on his equipment, his eyes tired.

JANNINGS
Lives have been lost to create you Reeden. Many lives.

REEDEN (V.O.)
It seems rumors of the S.E.A Were not exaggerated.

Images of MASS GRAVES, human farming and testing, S.E.A horrors flash by quickly. JANNINGS looking disturbed, distraught, sitting alone in his lab coat.

JANNINGS struggles to his feet and places a hand on REEDEN's shoulder. They carefully inspect REEDEN's alterations together, JANNINGS scribbling hundreds of notes.

REEDEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I couldn't hate him. Who knows how long he'd been hiding alone down there. Was he misguided? Ignorant? Scared? It hardly mattered now.
(MORE)
REEDEN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
(beat)
He showed me my implants, taught me how to use them.

SHANI (V.O.)
And how to reach me.

REEDEN (V.O.)
But it got worse.

After much study, JANNINGS turns to REEDEN.

JANNINGS
You can control any electronics from a distance, interrupt energy flow, see through any cameras, receive any wireless transmission AND it seems you can alter your skin pigments. Hm, that part’s new.

REEDEN begins to switch monitors on and off with his mind. He takes control of the CCTV, dimming lights before a video monitor takes his attention.

REEDEN approaches, gazing into the monitor. Endless monitors twist and move like opposing mirrors.

JANNINGS (CONT’D)
Reed your eyes are like a camera. Your visual feed travels straight to them. Outside of this bunker everything you see, they see, and they can make you see whatever they choose.

JANNINGS flicks a switch. SHANI appears over REEDEN’s shoulder, flickering and slightly transparent, like a bad video signal.

SHANI
Reed. I miss you.

REEDEN (V.O.)
But it wasn’t really her. If it had stayed like that I could deal with it. Still, I was drawn to her, always have been.

JANNINGS
Who is she?

REEDEN reaches out to SHANI, he can touch her, feel her skin. She reacts to him, wanting to be held.
Shani. She was always so ambitious. Always wanted to get here. Become a real doctor.

SHANI (V.O.)
I’m sorry.

REEDEN (V.O.)
You’re not.

JANNINGS
She’s still alive Reeden, so is Braith. You’re supposed to find them, it’s in your programming, but you aren’t supposed to know what you do, what I’ve told you.

REEDEN
This is going to get better isn’t it?

JANNINGS
There’s only one way to stop them controlling you. I can sever the connection.
(beat)
But you will lose your natural sight.

JANNINGS flicks a switch, SHANI disappears. REEDEN stands alone, mortified, JANNINGS distant behind him.

JANNINGS (CONT’D)
I want you to fight them Reeden. I want you to end it. This planet is sick. Figure out how; why can wait. Once you figure it out, find Edwin Blake. He’s the key.

Sometime later, REEDEN is getting onto the operating table, preparing himself for the surgery. JANNINGS straps him down tightly.

REEDEN (V.O.)
That name again. Edwin Blake. It won’t be the last time either. I hate him already.

JANNINGS
Sorry, this may be uncomfortable.
REEDEN screams in pain from the operation. JANNINGS leans over him, pulling down a pair of goggles. SPARKS fly, JANNINGS leans over him, lit up by the surgery.

FADE TO BLACK.

JANNINGS (CONT’D)
Find your brother Reeden, go to the holding facility on the far side of the city, they’ll know you’re coming.

REEDEN
What about you?

JANNINGS
They will find me soon.
(beat)
Reeden, have you ever noticed how quiet it is?

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Blue noise POV. A control panel opens up on the fuzz. We see through a CCTV camera. The streets are empty.

REEDEN (V.O.)
On the street, only the cameras could guide me. Every inch of space watched constantly, the silence horrifying. I set to work on the planets “sickness”.

VIDEO communications are slowed down, the NEWS BROADCASTS are pulled apart revealing HIDDEN MESSAGES. Subliminal signals telling people to stay indoors accompanied by the same HYPNOTIC TUNE.

REEDEN (CONT’D)
The realization. The people of New Earth weren’t just quiet,
(beat)
They were completely enslaved.
(long beat)
...But I could use this to my advantage for now. Finding my brother would be the easy part.

REEDENS eyes glow, as he tenses. VIDEO and communications warp and shutdown, CCTV is cut and ends whenever REEDEN passes by.
RADIO panic fills the airwaves from the military abuzz with stories of, media shutting down, an augmented soldier gone dark. Citizens beginning to filter out into the streets, freed from their digital shackles.

Again the screen fades to a BLUE FUZZ.

REEDEN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
It’s never easy, compromising yourself. Here I am though. Utterly compromised, but alive. I have what is most important to me.

SHANI steps out of the fuzz and gently kisses REEDEN.

REEDEN (V.O.) (CONT’D)
But lost more than I gained.

SHANI looks apologetically into REEDENS eyes.

SHANI (V.O.)
You didn’t lose me.

REEDEN (V.O.)
You’re right. You lost me.

REEDEN disappears and she is left alone, shrinking into the BLUE STATIC.

Navigating himself using the CCTV and MAP, REEDEN eventually makes his way to the front of the holding facility.

EXT. HOLDING FACILITY - MORNING

The holding facility is large and derelict. In the front of it stand a group. SHANI is stood next to GERART, holding BRAITH reassuringly. Armed officers point guns at the blind but dangerous escaped patient.

GERART
You made it. We made a large investment in you Reeden. No matter where you go, we’re there, watching.

REEDEN
--What’s the deal?

GERART
It’s simple really. There’s an orphan colony we will put you in contact with, take Braith.

(MORE)
HE will live safely, no danger and you can stay there with him, no harm done.

REEDEN
Apart from my disfigurement you mean--

GERART
In return you report back to us about every tiny little detail about that colony, especially one Edwin Blake.

BRAITH is released and runs to REEDEN's side.

REEDEN
--And Shani?

GERART
Sure thing, Shani, go ahead.

SHANI looks imploringly at REEDEN.

SHANI
Reedn they offered me complete medical training, they said I'm gifted. I have opportunities here--

REEDEN
...Shani, look at what they've done to these people, what they did to ours, to me! This is what their science and medicine has provided.

SHANI
I'm sorry, I've waited for this. I promise I'll find you when I'm done.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. SHUTTLE - ORBIT

The small shuttle leaves the atmosphere for orbit of the planet. REEDEN stands over BRAITH, a calming hand on his shoulder.
REEDEN (V.O.)
So here we are. Me and Braith,
seeking Edwin Blake. The key...
apparently.

REEDEN looks down at his brother.

REEDEN (CONT’D)
We’re going on an adventure right
Braith?

Braith
Right! --What about Shani?

REEDEN
--I have a feeling we’ll be back.

FADE OUT.