

SANCTUARY  
by  
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INSERT

Login details are superimposed on the void. The year is 2017.  
Two computer systems make a connection.

INT. BLAKE'S SPACE (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAY

This is the virtual world. A small untidy arrangement of floating icons, computer windows, and photos is up ahead in the void. More objects materialise on approach. This is personal online space of the future.

A maze of official looking windows contains what looks like police records on a woman in her late twenties, short black hair, athletic build. Someone hums.

CD, a crudely-drawn stick figure guy wears bunny slippers in the maze. His back is to camera. He hums to himself as he defaces the woman's police records with crude mugshots, smiley faces.

CD turns with a start, sheepishly covers his groin.

CD  
(to camera)  
Knock first my friend. Let me get  
some textures on.

CD slides an oversized postcard showing an Australian bush landscape in front of him. Our view is sucked into it. The screen flickers then explodes into static.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WIRRUMBURRA SANCTUARY - DAY

Aerial view of the real world. Look down on a wildlife sanctuary, a bush reserve, encroached on all sides by unending urban sprawl. To the right, Canberra's Black Mountain tower. To the left, Sydney's Centrepont tower. The two cities have merged.

MAIN TITLES

A bug-like transport vehicle flies in from the direction of Sydney. Very fast. Backwards.

TECH #1 (V.O.)  
Stop.

The image freezes.

TECH #1 (CONT'D)  
Any sign of her?

INT. CONTROL - NIGHT

In a control room somewhere, a monitor displays a view of the wildlife sanctuary from ground level. The burning wreckage of heavy logging equipment has transformed dense bush into hell. Someone has been playing with explosives.

TECH #2 (V.O.)

Nothing.

Time-code on the monitor image flies backwards as the source footage is rewound.

INT. AVATAR GALLERY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - NIGHT

Blade's green eyes stare forward blank. Reflected in them is a vast chamber filled with thousands of humanoid figures suspended in a grid pattern - the avatars. Avatars float out of rows into a molecular pattern.

TECH #1

We missed something. Go back.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

The transport vehicle zips into shot backwards, freezes and then moves forward slowly overhead. The Department of the Environment and Network Resources (DENR) logo - a tree whose roots blend into integrated circuitry - is marked clearly on its underbelly.

A gunshot rings out. BLAKE, a rough and ready sixteen-year old riot grrl, drops to the ground against a tree, breathing deeply.

'Love Life, Hate State' is graffitied on a chain-saw contraption nearby.

TROOPER #1 (O.S.)

(through loudspeaker)

Come out in the open. Put your hands in the air.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA VISITOR'S CENTRE - DAY

Through the trees, several uniformed and helmeted State TROOPERS herd together a group of unkempt ACTIVISTS. A trooper steps forward. He prods and thumps an activist with his gun.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

JON, the grizzled leader of the activists and his geeky protege, MARK, are crouched down behind a fallen tree near a chain-saw. Troopers are visible through the trees in the distance.

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JON  
(whispering)  
Time to move. This is going to get  
ugly.

MARK  
Give me a minute. We need a  
diversion.

Mark draws patterns on his forearm sleeve with a finger as though it was a PDA. Further up the sleeve, the fabric resembles a mobile phone screen.

Blake lies on her belly nearby, watching Jon and Mark. She clutches her own mobile/PDA, aims it towards the activists.

Mark's sleeve screen scrolls through a list of codes and repeatedly shows "Dialing", as if going through an address book.

JON  
That's it. We're pulling out.

Jon starts to get up. Mark grabs his jacket, his eyes fixed on his sleeve.

MARK  
30 seconds.

Onscreen, the Department of the Environment and Network Resources (DENR) logo - a tree whose roots blend into integrated circuitry. "Verifying user name and password"

Mark is ecstatic.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Yes!

Onscreen, the logo explodes into static.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

Blake's PDA shows the same view of static. Blake rolls her eyes in exasperation.

Blake's screen comes alive. A list of names like DOUBLE TWIST, PROJECT MAYHEM, HELLO BOYS, STEALTH BOMB, EXPLODING FIST flick past.

JON  
Time's up.

MARK  
I know. I know.

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INSERT

Onscreen, 'EXPLODING FIST' is dialed.

BLAKE (O.S.)  
Don't try this at home kids.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

A trooper scans the bush for signs of life. A branch cracks. Jon and Mark spin around in Blake's direction.

Blake winces in her hiding place and holds her breath.

On Mark's sleeve screen, the cycle of numbers and dial-up attempts speeds up. Multiple rings and phone voices become audible, volume builds up till this is a cacophony of sound.

JON grins, slapping MARK on the back.

JON  
Onya Mark!

Mark looks perplexed.

MARK  
It wasn't me.

Blade seal crawls out of sight through the undergrowth.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA VISITOR'S CENTRE - DAY

An armoured car blocks the entrance to the sanctuary. TROOPERS, in riot gear, herd a small group of unkempt ACTIVISTS out of the forest at gunpoint.

Trooper #2 surveys the clearing through a Heads-Up display inside his helmet. A movement sensor alarm goes off. The phone noise gets louder.

TROOPER #2  
There's more out there.

The troopers swivel around, weapons ready.

TROOPER #1  
Bring 'em in. Transport's on its way... arrgghh

The noise of phones and angry voices is very loud now. The trooper's H.U.D. is distorted with static and overlapped read-outs. The trooper drops his weapon and clutches the sides of his helmet.

TROOPER #1 (CONT'D)  
What the fuck?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All the troopers are likewise affected.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

Blake scrambles upwards through the bush.

BLAKE (V.O.)  
And please, remember to turn off  
your phone during any  
demonstrations.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA VISITOR'S CENTRE - DAY

A trooper struggles with the release catch of his helmet.

BLAKE (V.O.)  
Remember phone wars from primary  
school? Step 1. Make the calls.

The view from within the helmet is a DENR logo'ed interface  
states 'OPS - Operator privileges granted.'

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Step 2. Fool each receiver into  
thinking you own it.

Onscreen, a cycle of hexi-decimal numbers and address book  
readouts scroll past rapidly.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Step 3. Tell each phone to dial  
every number in its address book.

The transport ship halts in mid-air and swivels around.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Viral infection. It spreads like  
wildfire.

The transport ship lurches dangerously towards the ground,  
its servo-engines strained.

BLAKE (CONT'D)  
Step 4. Don't get caught.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA VISITOR'S CENTRE - DAY

The activists see that they are unguarded. The troopers are  
still dazed. Activists flee in all directions. Troopers make  
feeble attempts to grab them.

BLAKE (V.O.)  
Who says WAP is crap? These old  
phone protocols are great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Trooper #1 rips off his helmet and tosses it away with a snarl. He runs his hand along his upper trouser leg - it comes alive with readouts and controls. He traces a command out with his finger.

He picks up a gun and takes aim at a fleeing activist.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

Through the trees, Blake sees the troopers open fire and activists fall. Her eyes widen in shock.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA VISITOR'S CENTRE - DAY

A trooper leads a DOG on a leash out of the armored car. The dog has a wrap-around mirrored visor for eyes. It sniffs the air.

STATE TROOPER (O.S.)  
(through loudspeaker)  
Come out in the open and put your  
hands in the air.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

Blake sprints through the trees.

BLAKE (V.O.)  
OK I admit it. I'm obsessed.  
Obsessed with the idea that I can  
make a difference. Nothing too  
unhealthy. Just your average  
teenage aggression. But this is out  
of control.

A NANO-BAT, a tiny surveillance robot hangs from a branch, starts recording as Blake runs by. A gunshot. The nano-bat drops into the air.

Jon and Mark run through the trees. Jon gestures, summoning another nano-bat. The bat's head swivels to face him. It's a flying webcam.

JON  
(to bat-cam)  
They're going to kill us. Run!

He collides with Blake, grabs hold of her and yells in her face.

JON (CONT'D)  
What are you doing here Blake?! Go  
home!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The nano-bat is shot out of the sky. Blake pulls free. The activist turns to see a DOG, with a wrap-around visor for eyes. It leaps at Jon.

Blake stares in horror as Jon is mauled. She spies another dog. The dog sees the world in infra-red. Blake runs off but can't outpace it. The dog leaps at Blake. The dog rips into her jacket arm, Blake squirts its face with a spray can. The dog gags on the paint.

Blake runs towards nearby burning wreckage. The dog wipes its visor clean with a paw and bounds after her. The dog sees the surroundings as glowing with heat. Blake hurdles the wreckage and disappears from its view.

STATE TROOPER (O.S.)  
(through a loudspeaker)  
Nobody move.

Blake looks around desperately, shielding her face from the intense heat. The flames crackle merrily. Gunshots and screams as the troopers open fire on Jon and the activists.

INT. BLAKE'S SPACE

The perspective of someone moving through the collection of floating windows towards one displaying a family portrait in the distance. Just before the faces become clear...

CD steps into view and shoves our perspective (cameraman) back from the portrait roughly.

CD  
How'd you like me poking around  
your space? Ya snoop! Get outta  
here!

The view erupts into static.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

Fires have broken out around a logging vehicle whose gas tank has exploded

INT. WRECKED VEHICLE - DAY

Blake crawls into the wreckage. She looks up anxiously as the wreckage creaks. The dog's feet come into view. The dog's infra-red view of the world is disrupted by a wall of heat from the flames.

The dog sniffs around, moves close to Blake's hiding place. Blake extinguishes flames licking at her clothing. She gasps.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

The dog looks up and scans the wreckage, its nose sniffing the air. A high pitched whistle. Blake watches the dog's feet disappear.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY AERIAL VIEW - DAY

Jon and several activists lie dead.

INT. BLADE'S SPACE (VIRTUAL WORLD)- DAY

Looking at Blade's State file. Blade is re-classified as a wanted fugitive; illegal avatar, unregistered bot owner, terrorist, data vandal, virus...

CD pokes his head into the frame.

CD  
You're out of line buddy. Access denied!

CD pulls down a screen of static.

INT. CONTROL - DAY

The same file is onscreen. According to the details, the book has being thrown at Blade but her real world details are all unknown. The mug-shots on file are crude facial sketches. They wink at us.

TECH #2 (V.O.)  
She's here.

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

The aerial view of Jon and several activists lying dead as before.

A new view from ground level of the same scene. Blake's perspective, trembling.

INT. AVATAR GALLERY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - NIGHT

Blade's face contorts in anguish. She mouths the word "Jon".

EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY - DAY

The transport vehicle rises up out of the smouldering forest and speeds away towards the skyline of Sydney in the distance. The horizon to each side is highlighted by a massive tower, Sydney's Centrepont and Canberra's Black Mountain tower respectively.

STATE TROOPER (V.O.)  
(through intercom)  
Murra 9. This is control. All clear. Ready to proceed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The sound of heavy machinery starting up. The logging recommences.

EXT. BARGO MAIN STREET - DAY

Moving down along the edge of the bush into suburbia. Blake limps out of the bush visibly upset and in pain.

INT. AVATAR GALLERY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - NIGHT

Blade, the avatar, twitches.

EXT. BARGO MAIN STREET - DAY

A CCCD camera across the street catches Blake's eye.

INT. CONTROL - NIGHT

On-screen, the CCCD view of Blake.

TECH #1

Zoom in.

The view zooms in on her face.

TECH #1 (CONT'D)

Got it. That's her.

Blake's face moves alongside mugshots of the activists. An image of Blade slides on top of it.

TECH #2

It can't be just a kid! Why would they have put a fucking kid in here?

INT. AVATAR GALLERY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - NIGHT

Blade's green eyes stare forward. Her face morphs into that of Blake's.

TECH #1

Shut up and run it again. We better be sure.

END TITLES