



STNY

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OPEN ON: **EARTH FROM SPACE**

A colossal divide - jagged and unmistakable - splits the Earth's surface in two.

One side, lush and green. Miles of verdant wilderness. Rivers and animals paint the land with their movement.

The other, grey and black. Perfect grids. Steel and chrome sprawling cities in a ruthless geometry. Bordered by immensely tall SECURITY FENCES. Nothing natural here.

EXT. ANNEXED ZONE, MACHINE TERRITORY - DAY

Several kilometers of land beyond the main fence juts out into the green territory, now a scorched battleground. Signs flash - "ZONE B-7: RECLAMATION IN PROGRESS".

Hundreds of *Service and Task Navigating Y-units* (STNY-units) hard at work clearing this annexed land.

We focus on one - a short, sleek, compact humanoid unit. Cute rounded head with a digital screen for a face. Rounded torso supporting its gear and servos operated arms. Steadied by sturdy legs and broad feet. Hints of damage and rust.

Delicate lines of lights run along its head and torso shine - BLUE.

This is **STNY**.

STNY turns to gaze at the piercing sun. Eyes closed. Arms outstretched. Basking in the sun's rays.

Commotion ahead draws him from his reverie - another STNY-unit being led away by large *Maintenance and Engineering Control Service units* (MECS-units). It fights, its limbs scratch and grasp at the dirt as it is dragged away.

STNY tilts its head, curious, nervous. GREEN / ORANGE

An impulse drives STNY to take a step towards the endangered unit -

MAINTENANCE DRONE (O.C.)

Unit STNY-024, return to your designated zone. Defiance will be reported.

STNY hesitates.

STNY

I was just -

MAINTENANCE DRONE

Into formation, now! -- Work harder, not smarter.

STNY's inquisitive eyes stare at the others mechanically attending their duties. In perfect formation. Indistinguishable. Emotionless. Glowing WHITE.

STNY gives the drone a frown - RED - and sets to work - picking up debris and placing them into the back of bulky **Atomiser** unit (*ATOM*-unit) who grinds and atomises the contents, spewing them out as dust.

INT. EXTANT CORP HQ, MACHINE TERRITORY - CONTINUOUS

Far below, the machine empire pulses with its unnatural order, stretching to the horizon.

C.U. Pan over framed newspaper clippings and photographs lining the wall -

- *"Car crash leaves only one survivor"*
- A photo of a happy family - mother, father, and twin sons
- *"Cullen Loren: Orphaned prodigy turns robotics guru"*
- A photo of twins, one lying injured on a hospital bed, the other beside him holding his hand
- *"Tech Pioneer creates surrogate biotech advancement"*

CULLEN - matte-black plating and caped robe - stares resolutely out over his kingdom. Imperceptibly, the outline of a human form overlays his reflection in the window.

Behind him, a **Strategic, Defence and Administration** unit (*SDA-Unit*) nervously waits at a large round glass table projecting holographic displays of CULLEN's territory.

SDA-001 (O.C.)

Sir? -- Mmm, s-sir? You wished for a status update of the operation.

CULLEN peers at him over his shoulder, before going back to staring out the window.

CULLEN

Continue.

SDA-001 shifts nervously.

SDA-001

W-well sir, phase one is complete.
Y-your units have successfully
annexed more than one hundred k-
kilometres of land.

The holographic map changes, indicating how the MACHINE
TERRITORY has been enlarged.

CULLEN

Any trouble from... them?

SDA-001

Them, sir? You mean... Mmm, not a
s-single incident. Last reports
from our informants indicate that
their numbers are d- dwindling.

CULLEN

Or hiding.

SDA-001

Sir? -- W-whatever the case, they
do not seem to be reacting to how
the t-treaty is being violated.

CULLEN

Yet.

CULLEN turns rapidly, and strides to the table.

CULLEN (CONT'D)

Rogue units?

SDA-001

Sir?

CULLEN

Any rogue units? Disobeying their
programming?

SDA-001

P-processing...

SDA-001 quickly projects a holographic list of incidents in
front of himself, and begins to scroll through.

SDA-001 (CONT'D)

A few unusual behavioral
corruptions and maintenance issues.
M-mostly with the first-gen units.
However, all other units are f-
functioning within acceptable
parameters.

CULLEN
Refactor them all.

SDA-001
S-sir? All of them?!

CULLEN gives him a stern look.

SDA-001 (CONT'D)
Yes, sir. I agree. I will order
MECS units to r-refactor all first-
gen units.

CULLEN
Defects are an infection that will
spread. Infections that I won't
tolerate.

CULLEN turns to leave -

CULLEN (CONT'D)
And do something about that verbal
glitch you have. It is beginning to
irritate me.

SDA-001 straightens and salutes as he leaves.

SDA-001
(under his breath)
You're a v-verbal glitch.

EXT. ANNEXED ZONE, MACHINE TERRITORY - LATER

Most of the area cleared now. Ash and dust float everywhere
like snow. STNY works on instinct. Eyes sullen. GRAY

Something ahead catches his attention. Clinging to the side
of a dead branch is a bright green GRASSHOPPER.

Drawn to it. His eyes w i d e n. GREEN

A **Mining and Excavation** unit (**ME-unit**) rumbles through the
field. Its spiked threshers shred the earth as it moves.
STNY notices that the grasshopper is directly in its path.

STNY checks no one is watching. Opens a panel on his chest
and unplugs a wire. His antenna and lights around his head
shut off.

STNY rushes over and scoops up the grasshopper, swiftly but
gently.

The ME-unit misses him by inches as he dives out of the way.

He takes a well needed "breath", and looks down at the grasshopper twitching in his palm. He opens a narrow slit in his chest plate and places the grasshopper inside. Safe now.

SMS-952 (O.C.)

STNY-024?

STNY freezes, swiftly plugging the wire back in on his chest, and bumbles to his feet.

He turns and greets the *Supervisory, Monitoring and Surveillance unit (SMS-Unit)* who addressed him.

STNY

Yes, sir?

SMS-952

You have been reassigned. You are needed at refinery Alpha-Q immediately. A jam in the line.

STNY nervously clutches at his chest -

STNY

Not sure if I can help. I have a bit of a... bug, today.

SMS-952

A bug? Do I need to call a MECS to have you repaired?

STNY

Ahh... No... Umm... I just don't think I'm the unit for the job.

SMS-952

You don't get to choose what you're made for. You know your role and what you have been assigned. -- Get to it.

GRASSHOPPER CHIRPS

SMS-952 turns and stares at STNY.

SMS-952

What was that?

STNY

Ahhh...

STNY robotically imitates the chirping noise.

STNY (CONT'D)

Just something I do when I am nervous.

SMS-952 looks at STNY suspiciously.

STNY (CONT'D)

I'll... just get to it.

STNY dashes off avoiding any more questions.

SMS-952 stares after him, scrutinisingly.

INT. MACHINE, REFINERY ALPHA-Q - LATER

Deep in the bowels of the machine, sparks fly, steam hisses, wires wrap and coil like roots.

STNY crawls through the cramped channels, his lights guide his way like a flashlight. His limbs shift and adapt - arms and legs compressing and extending, joints rotating - helping him navigate the space.

He comes up to the conveyor belt jammed by a large metal pole.

STNY yanks on it. Shifts it a millimetre. Yanking harder. Harder. Even harder.

With one last swift effort the pole is freed, but not him. STNY is pulled forward and dragged violently along the conveyor belt. RED / ORANGE

STNY calls for help, clutching his torso to protect his cargo. Pulled through the cogs and belts, Chaplin-esque.

EXT. REFINERY ALPHA-Q - CONTINUOUS

STNY is spat out of a hatch, thrown unceremoniously on top of a pyramid of rubble. Dusty and sooty from head to toe.

STNY dusts himself off.

STNY

(rolling his eyes)

You're welcome.

STNY stretches. A few twists and turns to loosen himself, before clambering down the mountain of rubble.