

NO MAN'S LAND

written by

Julian von Nagel & Gathering Marbet

Renee Missel Management
filmtao@aol.com

ALTERNATE UNIVERSE -- 80'S CYBERPUNK AESTHETIC

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Open on a tall, bulky machine with CLUSTERS OF KNOBS, switches, and several monitors precariously stacked on top of each other. The uppermost screen, ducted to the ceiling, casts a SICKLY GLOW while emitting a RELUCTANT BEEPING.

Rusted tubes hang, thick with murky liquid, from behind the monitors. Each tube administers a specific drug through NEEDLES that puncture the back of a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN'S HEAD.

She's lying motionless on a heavy framed hospital bed, eyes open and slack-mouthed. OPEN SORES litter her pale skin.

The CLICK of a lock being opened.

The woman's eyes shift in a painful attempt to locate the noise: the window bulges, stuck inside its frame, then SWINGS open.

Enter ELI, early twenties with tussled brown hair. Resilient in spite of himself; the cautious gene just isn't there. A LEATHER SATCHEL slung over his shoulder, he wears subdued street-crawler clothes.

He hops down from the sill and dusts himself off. Crouching at the bedside, he pulls a MAKESHIFT DEVICE out of the satchel.

ELI

Look...

Eli presses a button. The device HUMS ON and glows an electric-blue.

ELI (CONT'D)

Thanks to those poor rats, I'm pretty damn close.

He rolls up her sleeve. Her sores PULL on the fabric.

ELI (CONT'D)

(wincing)
Ow...sorry.

Eli switches off the device and tucks it away in his bag.

He rummages a bit and pulls out a SMALL BOTTLE. He unscrews the DROPPER and begins to administer liquid to every sore he can find.

ELI (CONT'D)

I would've come back sooner, but they tightened things up after they chased me out last time. But you know me... You never kept me out of anything. How many times did you have to lock up the lighter fluid before you gave up and got me gloves and a face shield?

His mother groans, still motionless. She wants to tell him *something*.

ELI (CONT'D)

Hey, don't worry about me. I'm not gonna blow myself up, I promise. You just gotta know I'm getting you out of here, so...

FOOTSTEPS echo from down the hall. Eli looks to the open doorway, then back at his mother.

ELI (CONT'D)

...hang in there.

He slips out the window.

A THIN PIECE OF METAL appears through the crack of the frame, hooks the lock back into place, and slides out.

A nurse walks in.

PULL BACK on the nurse, gradually becoming the POV of a surveillance camera: GRAINY and MONOCHROMATIC.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

PULL BACK continues through a MONITOR and opens onto a dark room illuminated only by a WALL OF SCREENS.

A seated security officer looks up over his shoulder at QUO, (Japanese) ageless, unreadable and effortless in his efficiency. He wears a tailored black suit.

QUO

However he's getting in, don't block it. I don't have room for oversights.

The guard nods; Quo exits.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Quo enters into an empty stairwell from the hall and begins his ascent. He presses a BUTTON under his lapel and speaks.

QUO
It turns on.

A voice answers from his EAR PIECE.

VOICE (O.S.)
And...?

QUO
And nothing. He's experimenting
with rats. I'll get eyes on that.

VOICE (O.S.)
Yes. Do. And still no sign of his
father?

Quo reaches the top of the stairs and walks through a door.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOFTOP - NIGHT

He steps out onto the roof and walks to the edge.

QUO
If he's alive, we'd have him by
now.

VOICE (O.S.)
He knows we're watching. He
wouldn't risk showing himself
unless he's certain he's found the
cure. However, if the kid's right
about what he has...

Quo watches as Eli disappears into the streets below.

QUO
I'll pick him up.