

SCENE 1

INT - CELADON CARBONATE

SFX: An alarm fades in, blaring over the system. We hear droids, masses of them, swarming around the complex, searching for the two figures we now hear running across the metal bridge.

DROIDS:

Eliminate threat. Eliminate threat.

SU-JIN:

Down this way!

SFX: More running.

CAINE:

The door!

SU-JIN:

Hold tight, I've got a card key that should-

SFX: Bad beep.

DOOR:

Access denied. Lockdown protocol initiated 17 minutes ago.

CAINE:

Try again!

SU-JIN:

I know!

SFX: Bad beep.

DOOR:

Access denied. Lockdown protocol initiated 17 minutes ago.

CAINE:

(TOP)

Okay, out of the way.

SFX: Bzzt! Plasma knife cuts through wires. Good beep.

DOOR:

Access g-g-g-grrrrrrraaaanntt-tt-

SU-JIN:

That was very risky!

CAINE:

I'm aware! Let's go!

SFX: They run out.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Celadon Carbonate, the...*top* supplier of POTEN Co., didn't hold back when it came to their security system. In the short half hour that I'd been in there, I saw camera feeds everywhere, thermosensors, and nigh uncrackable codes. You needed exactly the right gear to sneak your way in there: which in my case, meant a plasma knife and what I wish I could call an attitude ready to brute force its way through...but really is better described as a panic that rose all the way up into my throat. In just thirty minutes I'd been cornered, along with Su-jin, who for all I knew was still trying to get the core from me—all because I just *had* to fix my damn bot.

SU-JIN:

This is our exit!

SFX: Door opens.

SU-JIN:

Alright, I'm pulling up a map. We're gonna take two turns left and where are you going.

SFX: Footsteps.

CAINE:

To my car. Come on.

SU-JIN:

These droids don't have perimeter limits, so it'd be easier to lose them by driving! Smart.

SFX: Car door slamming and buckling up. The car revs.

SU-JIN:

Okaaaay, why are you driving towards the droids? Caine?
Caine?

CAINE:

Well, how else are we gonna get the core?

SU-JIN:

We're driving into dangerous territory! You seriously think you're fast enough to avoid this many droids on *their* turf?

CAINE:

`Course I am.

SFX: The car revs again.

CAINE:

I'm the fastest driver in the Metropolis.

SFX: A crash!

SU-JIN:

You just drove through a doorway!

CAINE:

(DEFENSIVE)

I said I was the fastest, not the most elegant!

SFX: Tire screech.

SU-JIN:

(DELIVERED IN SAME CADENCE AS ABOVE LINE)

Although I have to admit, that turn was pretty impressive!

CAINE:

(SAME)

Thank you!

DROIDS:

Eliminate threat. Eliminate threat.

CAINE:

Got a ray gun?

SFX: Ray gun starts.

SU-JIN:

No, I'm just happy to see you.

CAINE:

Pfft. Think you can take out some of the droids tailing us?

SU-JIN:

Which ones?

CAINE:

Five and eight o'clock are too close for comfort.

SU-JIN:

I have a ray gun but no power pack. She's probably only got six shots on her.

CAINE:

Then just take out eight o'clock. I'll lose the other.

SFX: Caine rolls down the window. Zoop! A tire screech.

CAINE:

SU-JIN:

The droids are probably bringing the core back to their docking station. They don't ever restock stuff unless it's actual shopping hours.

CAINE:

And do you know where that is?

SU-JIN:

I was kind of thinking we were gonna come get it after a couple days or something when everything would've been back in place.

CAINE:

Yeah, but it's the last one. It'd probably get pulled off the shelves after they realized that was what we were after.

SU-JIN:

Good point.

SFX: Droid laser fire.

SU-JIN:

Oh, *fantastic*.

CAINE:

Hang on. Can you hit its optics?

SU-JIN:

What?

CAINE:

When I stabbed one before, when you compromise just their optics? They head back to the docking station.

SU-JIN:

They must be dumping the salvaged video feed and then decommissioning. We'll just follow them, then!

CAINE:

Get ready 'cause here comes one more.

SFX: A droid flies up near them.

SU-JIN:

(GRUNTS AS THEY FIRE)

SFX: They miss. They fire and miss again.

SU-JIN:

Dammit! We're moving too fast.

CAINE:

I can't just stop the car!

SU-JIN:

You're going to have to if you want me to be able to make this shot!

CAINE:

Urgh!

SFX: We hear Caine slam the brakes. Su-jin opens the car door.

CAINE:

Why are you getting out?!

SU-JIN:

Some fresh air. No, I need a better view.

SFX: Laser fire.

SU-JIN:

(DODGING LASER FIRE)

CAINE:

What are you waiting for?! You're gonna get yourself killed!

SU-JIN:

The right moment! I only have three shots left!

DROID:

Eliminate threat.

CAINE:

(TOP)

Just shoot it already!

SFX: Zoop!

DROID:

Optics system compromised. Returning to docking station.

SFX: Car door slams.

SU-JIN:

Let's go!

SCENE 2

INT - DROID DOCKING STATION

SFX: A low humming noise from the droids surrounding the station.

DROID:

Returning to docking station.

SFX: Powering down.

SU-JIN:

Looks like we're clear. All the other droids up here are powered off too. They must be reserve.

CAINE:

Oh, thank God. The core's right here.

SFX: Caine grabs the core.

CAINE:

Alright, let's-

SU-JIN:

Whoa, whoa, wait. Check this out.

CAINE:

The *wall*?

SU-JIN:

No, there's a seam right here, see? (beat) Listen.

SFX: Bang, bang.

CAINE:

It's a door?

SU-JIN:

Don't know where it leads, but we won't know till we try it.

CAINE:

Do we really need to do this? Shouldn't we be more concerned with, I don't know, getting out of here?

SU-JIN:

(TOP OF SFX)

Sure. But also, it might be a good idea to look for an alternate route out of here. I'm not exactly keen on running into more droids while we're escaping.

SFX: Su-jin rifles through their bag and finds the key card again.

CAINE:

Your keycard didn't work last time, what makes you think it will now?

SU-JIN:

Oh, no, I'm just taking a page from your book. Slide this into that seam and..

SFX: The door opens.

CAINE:

Wh...wait...how did that...never mind.

SU-JIN:

These touch-to-unlock doors sometimes have sensors where if you block them, they'll just let you in anyway. Kind of makes you wonder if what's behind this door's even worth...looking at...oh.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Behind the door rose a single spire, one that made your head spin as you watched it disappear into next floor, high above it. Along the wall were studded memory drives, blinking lights that illuminated the room in erratic bursts. Wires in neat rows snaked their way underfoot, then shot up along the tower in the middle.

SU-JIN:

The security in this place is the WEIRDEST thing in the world.

CAINE:

I don't think people usually try to follow their droids.
What is all this?

SU-JIN:

It's the central processing system for their security.

CAINE:

So...no alternate route.

SU-JIN:

No, no, we can pull up a map from one of the central
terminals here. The thing I'm more concerned about is...what
are all of these drives for?

CAINE:

I have had a very long day and if we're going to spend the
last hours of it deliberating on "what all of these drives
are for", I might actually start crying.

SU-JIN:

Here, you download the map coordinates and I'll go look at
them.

SFX: Beep boop beep.

CAINE:

Okay, I got it. Um, I'll upload it to Jet in a sec and
he'll be able to plan our route out of here given the
security measures... Su-jin?

SU-JIN:

It's video storage.

CAINE:

What?

SU-JIN:

It's security footage and we're on so much of it. I totally
forgot our signal scrambler got taken offline.

CAINE:

Oh no.

SU-JIN:

This is not good.

CAINE:

Hah, yeah, I noticed! Neither of us is exactly supposed to be here!

SU-JIN:

Okay, we need to take this back to Lola and Vic. They'll know what to do with it—software's not exactly my area of expertise.

CAINE:

Fine. You get the tapes and we'll bring them back to...whoever you just said. Come on, let's just do this quick.

CAINE:

CAINE:

What's it to you?

SU-JIN:

Nothing, I'm just surprised. I thought you said you weren't from Glasshouse?

CAINE:

I'm not.

JET:

Estimated wait time: 17 seconds! 18 seconds! (beat) 17 seconds!

CAINE:

Thank you, Jet!

SU-JIN:

This little guy's just very sophisticated.

CAINE:

I scrapped him a couple years ago but at this point he's basically custom built. I wrote his personality core pretty much all on my own and his navigational skills are part of an algorithm I helped with. I mean, he still doesn't have enough power to activate all of that personality core, but...

SU-JIN:

You just keep impressing me, you know that? Wow.

CAINE:

I...wh...I, uh...

JET:

Finished! Your route should show up on your overhead display!

CAINE:

Uh, great, awesome! Let's hit the road.

SU-JIN:

What?

SFX: Engine revs hard and goes off.

SCENE 4

(NARRATING)

As we pulled up to the coordinates that Su-jin had given me, I was surprised. Maybe it was the half-hearted dreams of someone who wanted to believe in the crazy revolutionary group that they'd been talking about...or maybe I just expected more than a closed down radio station. It looked a lot like the one I grew up around—a small shack with solar panels studding the top. Around the roof were plants, reaching up towards the transmission tower, some with leaves that spilled down, suspended like green raindrops over the doorway. It somehow looked both out of place and right where it belonged. Either way, if I hadn't been told where to look, I never would have guessed there.

JET:

Arrived at destination! Thank you for riding with Navsys
ID: Jet and have a nice day!

SU-JIN:

Alright, I contacted Vic and Lola, so they should be here
any second!

SFX: Engine off. Su-jin opens the car door. Footsteps and a door
slamming open.

VIC:

Su-jin!

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

I thought for a second that he was mad at Su-jin—surprised that they didn't flinch away. But then he just threw his arms around them in a hug.

VIC:

CAINE:

C'mere, haha!

SU-JIN:

OOF! Hey, Vic!

VIC:

Aw, I was so worried about you! Geez, your signal disappeared and then the second you called on the comms again I seriously could have died. I cannot believe you pulled that stunt without me man! Damn! Haha!

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Vic suddenly turned towards me, brushing the shock of bright pink hair out of his eyes—revealing a jagged scar running down his left one. He extended a hand towards me, gloves covered with oil and grease.

VIC:

Oh god, I totally ignored you. Whoops, haha! I'm Vic Vass. And you are?

CAINE:

Caine.

SU-JIN:

Not to interrupt this introduction process or anything, but I have some big news for you. Let's go down and talk to Lola. Caine, you should take Jet with you.

SFX: Door creak. Footsteps. And then, an elevator starts up.

CAINE:

An underground passage...?

VIC:

Well, yeah. You didn't think we just holed up in this little shack, now did ya?

CAINE:

...No.

SFX: Elevator door slides open and they all step inside. Then, we hear it descend. Ambient noise of computers beeping. Footsteps.

LOLA:

I heard we have guests.

SU-JIN:

Guest, singular. This is Caine.

Uh, guests, *plural*. This is Jet. He's my all-purpose bot.

LOLA:

Nice to meet you, Caine and Jet. I'm sure my name has preceded me. I'm Lola Sunn and, if you choose to believe it, this is the base for Zero Zero.

SFX: A mechanical noise as she extends her hand for Caine to shake.

CAINE:

(NARRATING)

Her eyes were intense--objective and focused with so much clarity. I felt like I was the only person in that room, filled with monitors and prototypes. The arm she had extended to me was mechanical--both of them were. Smooth and polished with a shine that screamed "Glasshouse". Advanced tech that was too intricate, too elaborate to have been scrapped together. I hesitated. Caught between trusting her eyes and feeling wary.

LOLA:

Well, if this introduction gave you pause, I'll attend to my other businesses while you recover if that's alright with you. Su-jin?

SU-JIN:

Okay, I grabbed as many as I could. These are tapes from Celadon Carbonate--they've got images of me and Caine on it. I was hoping we could start wiping these drives and backtrace it to wipe the rest.

CAINE:

VIC:

Hey, wait, what the hell happened to my scrambler?!

CAINE:

It's busted. You didn't think that big warehouse would have way more advanced security than some signal interrupter?

VIC:

(OFFENDED)

I was kind of counting on it. What would you know about it anyways?

SU-JIN:

Vic...

LOLA:

Please. Both of you. What matters is that we retrieved the core and that Su-jin is unharmed. ...You *did* get the core, right?

SU-JIN:

Right. Yes. Uh, Caine?

CAINE:

I'm not giving it to you.

SU-JIN:

But we need it.

CAINE:

Okay, look, I'm sorry that I'm not totally cool with some random people who barely have told me what the whole point of all of this is! No, I'm not willing to sell or give or whatever my only friend's life for people I don't know!

LOLA:

Caine.

CAINE:

What?!

LOLA:

Did you use the core for Jet?

CAINE:

I...yeah. But why do you care?

LOLA:

Caine, I see that we clearly haven't gotten your trust. I want to explain Zero Zero to you if you'll let me. And if you don't want to listen, you can walk out right now, with your bot, and we won't follow you, won't trace you or

anything. But if you do decide that what we say is worth it, then I would be honored if you would join us.

CAINE:

You have a lot of nerve.

VIC:

But you haven't left yet.

CAINE:

I will if this all turns out to be bullshit.

LOLA:

Zero Zero fell apart the first time because it didn't have people like Vic, Su-jin, and me. When I was still working for POTEN Co., I wasn't much older than you, I had heard horror stories—about the union Zero Zero and people who didn't believe in "the mission" of POTEN Co. The company was everything to me. It owned more than just my biomedical research, it owned *me*. I didn't even think how much control

I had given them over my life. That's how deep in I was. The day I saw that all they had done with my work was sell it to the highest bidder was the day I finally snapped out of it.

CAINE:

Heh. Yeah. 'Cause who cares about us 86ers anyways, huh? Apparently, none of us deserve to live.

LOLA:

That's exactly what I understood in that moment, what Zero Zero had meant. A future for everyone, where no one gets left behind just because someone at the top says so. That's what we're trying to make. From zero, from nothingness, we rise and break the system. We bring it crumbling down to zero. And from there, we get to start over because everything's equal. I ran away for a new start. This movement has been five years in the making and we're getting close to something that could change everything. There are societies hidden, outside of the Metropolises, ones that if we unite together, we can

overthrow POTEN Co. We think we picked up the trace for one of them and if we can get a core, we can power our systems to find it faster.

CAINE:

God. You sound like my brother.

SU-JIN:

Caine? Are you okay?

CAINE:

He was always, um...he was always going on about getting out of Metropolis West.

LOLA:

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say something that would hurt you.

CAINE:

No, no no no. I mean...I know why he wanted to get out so bad. I know why Valeria never believed, but I think—I think I did. No, I think I *do*. I never thought he was stupid or crazy for wanting to run towards something. Hell, I'm starting to want that too.

SFX: Jet beeps.

JET:

You seem...excited! Navsys ID: Jet will...go where you want to go!

CAINE:

(LAUGHS)

VIC:

So, you're joining the team?

CAINE:

Yes. Let's do this.

LOLA:

Caine...

CAINE:

It's, um...It's Caine Alon Reyes.

LOLA:

Well, Caine Alon Reyes and Jet, welcome to Zero Zero.

END OF EPISODE 1.

Hi, Eli Ramos here, creator and editor of Under the Electric Stars. If you liked this episode, share it with your friends. You can find our social media in the episode notes. Follow us on twitter and tumblr for updates on episodes and updates on our Patreon launching soon. Our voice talents are as follows: Rhea Anne as Caine Reyes, Christine Kim as Su-Jin Yi, Robin Guzman as Jettison, Kevin Paculan as Vic Vass, and Chaitrika Budamagunta as Lola Sunn. Additional voice talents and the brief soundtrack you heard were provided by yours truly. Thanks for listening and see you in Metropolis West soon.