

## Butterfly Soldier

In a world, where you can't see the forest for the lack  
of trees, everyone is left gasping.

INT. RENEW DAY SPA - DAY

ROHAN, mid-30s, muscular, with a facial scar, enters a pristine white reception area. A plaque with "Renew Day Spa" sits behind the reception desk. HAYLEY smiles warmly at him.

On her screen, a camera sizes up his face. Text reads: ROHAN BOYD, 36, EMPLOYEE, PARADISE FOUND PROPERTIES. CURRENT EMOTIONAL STATE: GRIEVING. INSTABILITY ALERT.

Hayley frowns at this detail. But gives Rohan a big smile.

HAYLEY

Mr Boyd? Come with me.

INT. COSMETIC THEATRE - DAY

Dim lighting in a sterile, yet calming room. Rohan, in surgical gown, sits on the bed, as Hayley consults with him.

HAYLEY

That's a nasty scar you've got.

ROHAN

I'm a lumberjack. At least, I was while there was still lumber to be had. (gestures) This was one of the trees fighting back.

HAYLEY

Easy fixed. And would you like any other augmentations? Tighter neck, more prominent cheekbones or brows?

ROHAN

Brows? Like a caveman?

HAYLEY

Some people like it.

ROHAN

Okay. How about new cheekbones then?

HAYLEY

(taps screen)  
Like that?

Holographic cheekbones appear in Rohan's reflection.

ROHAN

No need to be too subtle.

She taps again, for a more dramatic look.

ROHAN

Okay. And what about a new nose? I've never really liked mine.

She superimposes a nose on his reflection. He nods, pleased.

HAYLEY

We could massage your memory, if you-

ROHAN

(grips her arm)

Don't touch my memories. Got it?

Hayley nods. Rohan lies back. She puts nodules on his temples. From his POV, she blurs, lights glare behind her.

HAYLEY

Now go to your happy place.

Darkness. Silence. The sound of a chainsaw starting up.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rohan looks up at the trees, in awe, before sawing into the bark. When he's done, he inhales the scent deeply. He's happy among the other lumberjacks. Nearby, a small group of protesters hold signs: SAVE THE FORESTS. WHAT ABOUT OUR AIR?

At breacktime, Rohan has coffee with the guys. He smiles as Mr KANE, well-coiffed, 50s, comes over to them.

MR KANE

Good job here, Rohan. There'll be a cold one for you at the club tonight.

ROHAN

Thanks, Mr Kane.

Rohan's eyes drift to the protesters. Kane notices.

MR KANE

Not many protesters. Not like the old days. Where's the staying power?

INT. PARADISE FOUND CLUB - SUNSET

Club members drink and chat on a balcony over an expanse of grass. Kane raises a glass to Rohan across the crowd.

CASSIE

Does that shirt meet club dress codes?

CASSIE, 30s, regards Rohan's work outfit, unimpressed.

CASSIE

You'll get away with it, though, because you're the chief tree assassin. Congrats by the way, on murdering the oldest forest on Earth.

ROHAN

Trees live on in the world we create,  
(MORE)

ROHAN (CONT'D)

Ms...?

CASSIE

Cassandra. But what about the birds, the butterflies. Where will they go?

ROHAN

Well, Cassandra. If Mr Kane didn't utilise that forest, someone else would. You can't stop progress.

CASSIE

Even if you should?

ROHAN

No argument there.

Cassie seems surprised.

ROHAN

What is it you do?

CASSIE

I'm an aerobiologist working on new ways to reoxygenate the world. I'm pretty busy these days, thanks to you.

ROHAN

I'm only a tool for hire. (grins at Cassie) No jokes please. You should really talk to my boss.

Rohan takes her hand as he leads her to Kane. They make introductions and talk.

Outside, a MAN mows the grass. A GARDENER works in the flower beds. At a bus shelter nearby, half a dozen people wait.

MR KANE

You know I could use someone like you at Paradise Industries.

Cassie's confounded and about to answer, when people start to gag and clutch their throats. Glasses smash to the ground.

MR KANE

Everybody inside! NOW!

They rush for the clubhouse doors. Two people fall. Rohan and Cassie help them up. Doors are locked behind them.

Through the glass, they watch the lawn man and gardener drop down. At the bus-shelter, people stagger and collapse. Club members sob. Cassie and Rohan exchange looks of horror.

Later, patrons are rumped from the wait and the grief. Screens float mid-air around them, broadcasting the news.

## NEWS READER

It's safe to go outside again. The cloud of oxygen-less air, dubbed The Choke, has passed. Scientists say it's not the last of the deadly smoke.

INT. COSMETIC STUDIO - DAY

Rohan twitches in his sleep. Hayley notices and rubs his temple nodules before continuing to sculpt his new nose.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. BUS-SHELTER - DAY - MONTAGE

- An storage tank with O2 on it is placed on the roof.
- Workmen drill holes on the ceiling. Oxygen mists through.

EXT. PARADISE FOUND CLUB - DAY - MONTAGE

- A siren blares. Club patrons on the balcony hurry inside.
- A group of poor people, shabbily-dressed, run for the open door. Security guards use batons to keep them out.

## CLUB PATRON

If we let everyone in, there won't be enough O2 for any of us.

Outside, people choke and drop. Cassie cries, Rohan hugs her.

- A second "All Clear" alarm sounds. The doors reopen.

END MONTAGE

INT. PARADISE INDUSTRIES FACTORY - DAY

Rohan saws through a metal tree trunk, realistically-detailed. Behind him, are piles of similar sculptured trunks.

## CASSIE

How's it going?

## ROHAN

Let me show you.. the Forest of Dreams

He taps the keyboard and a hologram forest of rainbow colours appears around them. They walk through it as they talk.

## CASSIE

Wow. It's gonna be amazing.

## ROHAN

Almost as good as the real thing?

Cassie looks askance at him, and studies a hologram trunk.

CASSIE

I can put holes here, here, with O2 misting out at regular intervals.

ROHAN

Will that save people in The Choke?

CASSIE

It's hard to say.

ROHAN

What about a compartment in the trunk with an oxygen tank and mask?

CASSIE

Not a bad idea. For a blunt instrument.

ROHAN

Praise indeed... from a sharp tool.

CASSIE

But will the butterflies ever return?

They kiss in the forest as Mr Kane arrives.

MR KANE

Ah, the dynamic duo. This looks great. I'll give you a ride back to the club.

CASSIE

I need to finish something. I'll shuttle back after.

INT. PARADISE FOUND SHUTTLE - LATE AFTERNOON

A driverless glass bus. Kane and Rohan ride up front.

MR KANE

What if I told you...we hadn't liberated the last forest. My scouts have found one more. A real beauty. Fancy firing up the chainsaw again?

ROHAN

But won't that upset the O2 balance?

MR KANE

Hardly at all. And I'll plant a dozen trees for each one lost. Two dozen. But you can't tell Cassie about this.

ROHAN

Why not just leave the forest as is?

MR KANE

I'd like to my friend, but someone else will take it if I don't. Think of it! The last wood on Earth. All the

(MORE)

MR KANE (CONT'D)

good we can do with the price we get.  
Your personal bonus would set you and  
any future family you had up for life.

The Choke alarm sounds. Rohan sees Cassie in the car behind.  
At the bus shelter, fighting breaks out. Screams, a gunshot.  
A small GIRL runs across the green. Her MOTHER follows.

MOTHER

Mathilda! Stop! Please, Honey!

Cassie gets out of her car, runs over and scoops up the girl.

MR KANE

What's she doing?

Rohan tries to open the bus door. It won't budge. He sees  
Cassie is almost back at the car, when she clutches her  
throat and falls. He pounds the OPEN DOOR button on the  
console. No go. And tries to smash through the glass.

MR KANE

Stop that! You'll kill us all.

When the ALL CLEAR alarm goes and the door unlocks.

EXT. PARADISE FOUND CLUB - DAY

Rohan runs to Cassie, hugging her dead body as the sun sets.

INT. COSMETIC CLINIC - DAY

Hayley sees a tear running down Rohan's face. She wipes it  
away. A message appears mid-air, with Kane's face on it.

MR KANE

Kane here. You're with Rohan Boyd? I  
need to know if you've seen any signs  
of instability. He's on a project for  
me. We need to be sure he's up to it.

HAYLEY

No signs so far.

MR KANE

Remember to upload his new profile  
image when you're done.

Hayley gets the camera and turns. Rohan's behind her. He  
covers her mouth, then presses a sleep nodule to her temple.

ROHAN

Go to your happy place.

Her eyes close. He pulls his hood over his face and exits.

INT. COSMETIC OFFICE - DAY

As he exits, a camera angles on him. Text: NO FACIAL MATCHES.

EXT. COSMETIC BUILDING - DAY

On the street, a camera spots him again: NO FACIAL MATCHES.

INT. TRANSPORT - DAY

Rohan is in a driverless transport, head down. A screech of brakes makes him look up. A camera captures his new face clearly: NO MATCHES. UNKNOWN SOCIAL PROFILE.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - DAY

He straps an O2 tank to his back, gets out and jogs away.

INT. PARADISE FOUND - DAY

Kane's office overlooks the green. He's on the phone.

MR KANE

So he left without any image uploaded?  
(hangs up and talks to computer)  
Locate Rohan Boyd.

COMPUTER

No visual match found.

MR KANE

Great! He can fly under the radar now.  
We won't have a clue where he is.  
Though, I think I know where he'll be  
going. Get me an air transport! NOW!

EXT. COUNTRY FACTORY - DAY

Rohan hides behind a box, watching a transport, like a drone with a seat. When all is clear, he jumps in and flies off.

INT. AIR TRANSPORT - DAY

Rohan has numbers on his hand. He instructs the computer.

ROHAN

Call all media outlets. Message: New  
forest found. Co-ordinates as follows.

Below, he sees the forest, smiles, and begins to descend.

INT. AIR TRANSPORT - DAY

In a more plush micro-air transport, Kane is impatient.

MR KANE

Can't you go any faster?

COMPUTER

Negative. Air resistance strong. Due to absence of vegetative ground cover.

Kane rolls his eyes, and sits up as he sees the forest ahead.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Kane finds Rohan among the trees and aims a gun at him.

MR KANE

Rohan. I'm disappointed. And not just by those cheekbones. I thought you were a sane man. A reasonable man.

ROHAN

I reasonably helped you to destroy the last of the forests, so thousands perished. Now I've sanely decided to stop you doing more harm.

An alarm goes off on Kane's phone.

MR KANE

The Choke...is coming.

As Kane fumbles a personal O2 tank, Rohan knocks his gun to the ground. With a hand-saw, he cuts the cord to the O2 tank.

MR KANE

Fucking idiot! You'll kill us both.

ROHAN

Trust the trees to keep you safe.

Kane hugs a tree, so he's practically kissing it. ROHAN snaps a pic and uploads it to TWINKLE: ASH KANE, TREE HUGGER.

The two stay close, breathe in and out until an ALL CLEAR rings on the phone. Kane and Rohan dive for the gun. Kane grabs it, but notices journalists with cameras approaching.

MR KANE

You gave the press this location?

ROHAN

You can be a hero here. Protecting the last forest on Earth. And all of humankind. Or.. a destroyer? It's up to you.

Kane glowers at him, then turns to the press, all charm.

MR KANE

Great news friends!

Rohan sits against a tree, with 4 CASSIE, carved into it. A beautiful butterfly lands on his arm. He smiles.