

Kid Needs

written by

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INT. CLINICO'S BIOEXCHANGE CENTER - NIGHT

The camera pans across a disturbingly sterile waiting room. A frail child sleeps curled inside a chair thought to be too small with a thermal blanket cast over her. To her right, juxtaposed against its bland surroundings, sits a check-in window with various neon holograms reading CHECK IN, NO WEAPONS, and ALL CLIENTS WILL BE IDENTIFIED OR REMOVED.

REM Nia (22) - angular and sharp - stands in front of the check-in counter clutching a torn flyer at her waist, staring into the smudged bulletproof glass. Behind the pane, a CLINICO brand automaton mirrors her stance.

REM Nia

I'm- I'm here for ProtocolA24... from the flyer?

She holds up the tattered paper, loosening her grip to make it legible. The camera catches a glimpse of "Live Organ Donation".

CLERK 09

(scanning)

ID Remnia Fortain. No criminal markers. Health status... Viable. ProtocolA24 is a voluntary government program to supply low credit citizens with lucrative rewards. In exchange for their generous participation, of course. Compensation is... 300,000 credits. Proceed with caution. Fatality risk is 97% before primal age is reached.

REM Nia

Shh-yep, tha- that's fine. What do you need?

CLERK 09

Signature and identification for the recipient of payment. A small deposit will be granted upon signature to provide reassurance. Full payment is processed upon final procedure.

REM Nia fidgets uncomfortably. She glances towards the child then back at the automaton. She pulls out an ID card and slaps it against the glass.

CLERK 09 (CONT'D)
 Lylah Fortain. Confirmed.
 Authorization code for minor
 support... accepted. Funds will be
 transferred to account upon
 signature.

A metallic arm slides out from the wall and presents a sleek,
 glass stylus. Behind REMNIA, LYLAH stirs, surfacing
 consciousness from the sound of her name.

CLERK 09 (CONT'D)
 Sign to confirm.

REMNIA stares at the stylus. Hesitates. A nervous whisper
 escapes her lips.

REMNIA
 Is it quick? How long will I have?

CLERK 09
 Every participant's life expectancy
 is dependent on the needs of the
 potential patients. In order to
 harvest effectively, CLINICO has a
 tentative guarantee to avoid vital
 organ retrieval unless presented
 with a mass casualty. The longer
 you live, the more you give!

The automaton's words send chills down REMNIA's spine. The
 feeling only worsens when a small bony finger suddenly digs
 into her thigh. Startled, she spins around to see LYLAH,
 drowsy and entangled in her blanket, her chair now empty.

REMNIA
 Oh! What are you doing up
 sleepyhead?

CLERK 09
 Do you have any more questions?

LYLAH
 (rubbing her eye)
 What's a mass cash-ty?

CLERK 09
 A mass casualty is a medical
 incident involving an overwhelming
 amount of-

REMNIA
 (to the automaton)
 GAH! Stop!
 (MORE)

REM Nia (CONT'D)

(to LYLAH)

Nothing, kiddo, nothing. Sissy is just signing us up for a sweet deal, that's all. It's gonna help you...and...and grandma y'know, get food. Like those marsh-mellows you like.

LYLAH

Heps you too?

REM Nia chokes back tears.

REM Nia

Yeah, um, yeah, helps me too. But you gotta go back to sleep so I can finish, ok? I might have to go in the back for a bit, but they'll watch you while I'm gone. If you sleep, you won't even notice.

LYLAH nods, still sand eyed from before and ready to return to her dreamy hourglass upon the chair. REM Nia spins back around to face her decision. She picks up the stylus, holds back the kindling of a cry, and signs her name.

CLERK 09

Accepted. Welcome to ProtocolA24. Please proceed towards the side door, a nurse will assist you with your blood profile.

REM Nia moves to leave, but stops.

REM Nia

Keep an eye on her, please.

CLERK 09

She will be cared for. Your contribution ensures it.

REM Nia approaches a frosted glass door and pulls it open. A brief wave of bright surgical light washes over her face, then swallows her.

EXT. CLINICO'S BIOEXCHANGE CENTER, STREET VIEW - NIGHT

The camera pans up a grimy concrete wall with CLINICO's blurry visage in the background. Freshly tagged, the wall crudely reads HOPE IS PAID IN FLESH.

As the camera pans out, an automaton can be seen dragging a body bag towards the alleyway's dumpster.

FADE OUT.