

INT. INTEROGATION ROOM - DAY

A dark, chrome, windowless room, with a stark wooden table in the centre. Letha is re-shackled, the chains around her hands fix to a metal prong in centre of the table, her feet to a metal prong beneath her metal chair.

Zeal remains at the back of the room, behind Letha. The other guard leaves to be shortly replaced by ELLIS (40's) a bubbly, brightly dressed woman. Her make up and nails are elaborate, almost clown-like against the grey of their surroundings.

She smiles as she approaches Letha, a scalpel in her hands, which she flips from one hand to the other throughout.

ELLIS

Letha. Such a pleasure.

LETHA

Ellis.

ELLIS

Good timekeeping, well-dressed,  
professional conduct.

She grasps Letha's hand, who strongly shakes it in response, although it's painful.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

A strong shake. You'd definitely  
get the job. But seems you wouldn't  
pass the background check.

Zeal watches on, uneasy.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

We've had a few little electronic  
flags ding about you. Know what  
that might be about?

LETHA

No.

ELLIS

Talkative as always. It would  
really help me if you talked. 215  
days of this little--

ELLIS (CONT'D)

(to Zeal)

What would you call this?

ZEAL

(uncomfortable)

Understand McKenzie called it re-education, ma'am.

ELLIS

Ma'am. I'm... Wow I'm hurt Zeal. We've stood in these trenches day after day, month after month. It's always been Ellis and to my mind you've always been skulking in the background.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

(to Letha)

Hasn't he?

LETHA

I don't recall.

ELLIS

Well don't blow your load all in one go. We hadn't even gotten to the juicy stuff.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

(to Zeal)

You hear that she doesn't recall.

Zeal is silent.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

See much as I love the rapport we have going. Our little dinging electronic flags intrigued me. You want to know what set off these little flags?

LETHA

I don't know what you mean.

ELLIS

That doesn't surprise me. Know why that doesn't surprise me? No? Seems you tried to use HAB-U's recall function this morning. Funny, right? Did you have a great evening, last night, in your locked room, in your sealed house, under guard awaiting your imminent death penalty?

LETHA

I don't understand.

ELLIS

That's sweet. What did you have to recall, that you couldn't?

LETHA

I don't know what you mean.

ELLIS

Still doesn't surprise me. Funny thing is when we tried to access your historic data, there was nothing to be found. Like a clean sheet in a fresh breeze. Can you picture that, a freshly laundered sheet, drying on a clothes line, out in a green garden. Clean, fresh, unmarked. Can you picture it?

Letha blinks rapidly.

LETHA

I don't... I don't know what you want from me.

Letha shifts, the metal of her feet shackles shrieks against the metal bar, and the metal chair scrapes across the floor.

Ellis gets up close to Letha's face.

ELLIS

Night of heavy drinking turn your memory to mush? See I was starting to think that you really can't recall, because there's nothing buried in there. Nothing on the top level. It's all deep down, under layer after layer. We need to unburden you, dig beneath the surface to find what's hidden.

She grasps Letha's chin tightly.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Say it again.

LETHA

(gulps)

I don't understand.

ELLIS

Uh-huh. Re-education. So lets start from the beginning and dig deep into that frazzled memory of yours.

(MORE)

Emily Cracknell

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Lets see what you're really hiding.  
Or if there's anything left.

She nods to Zeal. He sidles up behind Letha and holds her shoulders, pressing one fist sharply just above one of her shoulder blades.

Letha flips her hands over, Ellis smiles and cuts into the rubber pads with her scalpel.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Wasn't so hard was it?

Letha leans back and cements her eyes to the ceiling which mirrors a series of hollowed out cubes lined up--

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: Five years earlier

One lit office-cubby in a warren of messy, self-constructed cubicles, a seemingly never-ending room, within a glass skyscraper, that looks out onto a cityscape.

Letha, her hair down, wearing a smart red jacket, sits across from a harried, mousier Kate McKenzie, the not-yet newscaster. Kate leans against her desk, flipping through Letha's file.

Behind her the desk appears to be collapsing under her other case files. Everything is definitively low-tech.

Kate is going through the motions. There is no honey to her tongue.

KATE MCKENZIE

You've been cleared by everyone,  
and I have to say it isn't easy, so  
I want to thank you for your  
commitment and your time.

LETHA

(smiles)

Where do I sign?

Kate adds Letha's file to the giant pile, and slips into a more official pose, behind the desk.

LETHA (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

The electric lights flicker overhead.

KATE MCKENZIE

Well firstly I have to indicate that you are of course under no obligation to join with us at the compound.

LETHA

There's been a whole barrage of tests, I am definitely... This is what I want to do.

KATE MCKENZIE

We understand of course. It's a big undertaking, a complete overhaul, you know, we have to be sure you have all the facts and that everything was made in sound mind, and under no duress.

LETHA

The legal spiel.

KATE MCKENZIE

(smiles)

The legal spiel. I mean, to be frank, this is a serious decision and we like to give everyone 24 hours to really think it through.

LETHA

What's to think about? Security, healthcare, food and water, job progression --

The lights above them sputter and shut down, section by section, over each empty cubicle, culminating in the big glass windows darkening as the world outside loses power. Kate whacks a battery-operated light by her desk on.

KATE MCKENZIE

And the lights stay on. I mean you'll have a home, a safety net. But it means saying goodbye to a lot of things too. It's a substantial contract, and a step down.

LETHA

A step down for a step up though, right?

Kate gives a thin smile, that's what it says on the motivational poster behind her.

KATE MCKENZIE

Think it over, and if you want to continue, come back at 18.00 tomorrow. We'll get you signed and in compound ASAP. If not, no hard feelings and I wish you good luck in your future endeavours.

The two stand and shake hands, revealing both their wrist are free of monitors and incision marks. Letha looks around at the darkened office building.

KATE MCKENZIE (CONT'D)

Shit, yes, we've got all your battery operatables at security. The lift'll be out as well.

She looks around, caught out a little.

LETHA

Could you lead me out?

KATE MCKENZIE

Of course, of course. Or we could call security... No, no it's fine.

She picks up the battery-light and points Letha to follow her. They walk in awkward silence for a little while, till they reach the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Kate flashes the light down the darkened empty stairwell. Letha tries to make small talk.

LETHA

Are you enjoying compound-living?

KATE MCKENZIE

Me?

She waves her wrist at Letha.

KATE MCKENZIE (CONT'D)

I'm an outsider at the moment, you know gathering flock. Once I've led in the brightest and best, then I'm considered for advancement inside.

LETHA

Why not simply sign up?

Kate clams up.

LETHA (CONT'D)

I didn't mean anything by it--

KATE MCKENZIE

No, no, I guess it's a fair question. You do service inside the compound, I do it outside. Once I make it in there I start a little higher on the pay grade.

LETHA

Thought it was an equal footing...

KATE MCKENZIE

It's the same anywhere. What's equal? We've all got different strengths.

They're back to an awkward silence as they make their way down the few levels to security.

LETHA

How did you get involved, I mean on this side of things?

Kate is slow to answer, she'd rather be silent.

KATE MCKENZIE

Circuitous route really, wanted to be a journalist. Still get to interview you know, dig through a little dirt. Not that you - you know, you were crystal. Maybe a little too squeaky clean, if I think about it. Anyway, use my skills here, get my rewards within the walls.

They've reached the security desk, a lone table where a SECURITY GUARD sits, lit by another battery operated light.

KATE MCKENZIE (CONT'D)

Can imagine you'll let loose in compound.

Letha laughs, the Security Guard, hands her back her tagged knapsack. She rummages through, in search of a light.

He grasps her hand. She jerks backward, then smiles.

SECURITY GUARD

Not till you're outside ma'am.

LETHA  
(nods)  
Right. Of course.

Kate and Letha shake again, awkward.

KATE MCKENZIE  
I'm sure you'll make the right  
decision.

Letha leaves through the dark glass doors, Kate watching.

EXT. FACELESS GLASS BUILDING - NIGHT

Letha exits into a cacophony of sound, smoke, people and rubbish. Battery powered lights are being turned on along bright market stalls hawking their wares, bike couriers dart between stalls, people young, old and loud shuffle against each other, bustling through.

She looks over her shoulder, and gets lost in the flow.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- Letha disappears between two haphazard food-stalls. She briskly puts her hair up, and slips off her jacket, turning it inside out from a bright red to a dull grey.

- She marches through a laundromat, people bashing the machines to get out their washing, as she slips her jacket back on.

- She ends up in a candle-lit speakeasy, going out the back way, into an alleyway, she gives a glance around.

- It's clear, she hops over the mid-height wall.

- Wanders through a communal garden, with washing strung every which way, a clean white sheet whips into her face. She leaves via a walled gate.

- Back into the throng, across from the glass skyscraper

- She slips into a nearby bar, walks upstairs, which looks as if you're walking into someone's flat.

- Instead it's a tiny Japanese-fusion restaurant.

END SERIES OF SHOTS