

The Sanctuary

Scar, black, 13, wise beyond his years.

Rex, Hispanic 15, the leader of the group, stubborn.

Twig, black, 13, brother of Scar, dumb beyond his years.

Kaye, white, 14, usually a lone-wolf, but enjoys the boys company.

Scene 1 – an abandoned room, Nevada Desert, 2590.

The stage is dark, a lot of dust hangs in the air covering the contents of the room. All of a sudden, we can hear voices above the room. There is the sound of some banging, it is rhythmic, as if it were being struck by a hammer. All of a sudden, a hatch in the ceiling SL comes apart and falls to the ground - the drop is at least 14ft. From the hatch a bright beam of light shines through illuminating parts of the room. We can see the debris of worn machines, and cables are scattered over the floor, the dust shoots up through the hatch.

All four of the voices are coughing.

Rex (OS) Whoa! Nice work Scar.

A small head peaks through the hatch. It is Scar, he shines his torch down through the room , surveying it.

 What can you see?
Twig (OS) Is it a ruin?
Scar Nah, don't look like no ruin I've seen.
Twig (OS) What is it, then?
Scar Can't tell. Kaye you got that rope?
Kaye (OS) Yeah.

Scar takes his head out. And now a rope is thrown through the hatch and can be seen hitting the floor.

Scar (OS) Kaye, hold it. Twig hand me that marker.
Twig (OS) What do you need this for?
Scar (OS) See how far the drop is.

A small hand reaches into the hatch and marks the rope at its highest point. The rope is then pulled out.

Rex (OS) Look it's over three times the size of us.
Twig (OS) We can tie it on that old rusty car and then hoist ourselves down.
Rex (OS) All right let's do it.

After a moment, the rope is once again thrown down into the pit.

 You're up Scar.

Two small legs poke through the hatch, and Scar descends down it. Scar is thirteen; he's wearing a bandana that covers his mouth and a camo backpack. He's wearing brown shorts and a striped orange top. Once he steps into the light, you can see a scar across his cheek.

 You there?
Scar I'm here. It's safe, next one.

Rex comes down the rope next, he is bigger than Scar, he wears long black trousers and wears a pair of goggles on his forehead. An army jacket covers most of his chest, that and a vest. Scar has already started looking around.

 What is this place?

Rex Can't tell. You got the light?
Scar Nah Kaye's got it.

Twig is next to descend, he loses his footing half way down. Twig has thick black hair, and wears a hoodie; he's called Twig due to his frame, lanky. He's wearing military boots and shorts.

Twig Hey you sure we can get back up?
Scar Course.

Kaye is next to come down the rope. She has dirty blonde hair and wears a baseball cap. She wears a long military t-shirt, camo and boots. She's also the only one with a pistol.

Rex Kaye you got that light?
Kaye Here.

Kaye throws the light to Rex, he catches it. The light from the torch is shone around the room and into the audience, it is very very bright. The room is a bit more clear now, old machines stand idle, dust covers them head to toe. The kids don't know what they've found.

Rex Scar, Twig, break out the glowies.

Both boys get into their bags, inside they find glow sticks which they snap and then spread around the room. It becomes brighter and the glow from colours of the sticks illuminate it.

 What is this place?
Kaye Doesn't look like anything we've seen before.
Rex Scar, any clue?
Scar It's old, whatever it is.
Kaye Think there's anything worth to scrap?

Pause. The kids individually start looking around.

Twig Pap used to say there was an old city here, full of people and light. He said that places like this is why the war started, because of money.
Scar This were a bank?
Twig Nah, yeah, sort of.
Kaye What d'you mean, nah, yeah sort of?
Twig He said they made money, but didn't give any back.
Rex You can see why people stopped using it.

Scar approaches the machines and searches them.

 I told you guys we'd find something here, what did I say?
Kaye What have we found exactly?
Rex Something old, and that always fetches a price in the commune.
Kaye Yeah, but not so old that it don't work no more.
Rex Then we've got it fix it, right Scar?
Scar Yeah, that shouldn't be too hard either.
Twig What do you need?
Scar Power.

Scene 2 – the next day, the same.

A small generator is being hoisted down into the room, Twig and Scar are ready to catch it once it lands, it's pretty easy going until someone on the surface let's the rope slip. The generator falls slightly, but a tug of the rope holds it. The generator swings.

Scar Whoa! What's your problem?
Kaye (OS) Rex's sweaty hands.
Rex (OS) Kaye's fat hands.
Scar Well whatever's going on, hurry up and lower it down.
Rex (OS) You try saying that when you've got it, it's so damn heavy!
Twig Come on!

The generator starts to move again and it settles on the floor, whilst Scar and Twig look it over, Rex and Kaye come down the rope.

Twig Did you see anyone on top?
Kaye A few soldiers in the distance passed by but they didn't see us.
Twig Patrol?
Kaye Peacekeepers.
Twig What? Are you serious, out there?
Rex Relax, they won't know where here. We'll be quiet as a-

Scar gets the generator working, it's loud.

Rex Fuck Scar! Switch it off.
Scar No way man, I just got it started, it might not have enough juice to turn back on.
Kaye It'll be fine Rex, we're underground, no patrolman will see us.
Twig Are you kidding me, they could hear this back at the commune!
Rex Shit, Scar anyway you can make this silent?
Scar I'm trying.
Rex Kaye, get your pistol ready just in case and aim up at the ceiling.
Scar Twig, Rex, help me push it.

Twig, Rex and Scar push the generator upstage into a small alcove, it has a curtain and it is slightly pulled to cover the noise. It is only slightly dampened. Scar works on the generator. Rex goes back over to the hatch, Twig picks up a rusty pipe and the three of them look up at the hatch.

Twig We should've closed the hatch.
Rex And risk getting stuck no way.
Twig What about the rope? We pull it down.
Rex Twig, shut up, how would we get out.
Kaye Quiet, both of you.

Long pause.

Nothing happens.

Rex Maybe they were too far away, wind up top probably blocked the sound.
Kaye You sure?
Rex They'd of found us by now if they had.
Twig Good, I don't want to get beaten for stepping out again.
Rex We won't get beaten Twig. We've learnt since the first time.
Kaye It's a fucking stupid rule if you ask me, get flogged cus' we go outside the patrol routes?
 What criminal stuff could we actually commit?
Rex Protection and imprisonment are pretty similar things Kaye.

Kaye nods, and holsters her weapon.

Scar Hey guys a little help?
Rex What's this for anyway?

Scar (Scar gestures to all of the machines) These, my friend. I noticed yesterday all of these machines could be activated by power, and most of them all lead to the same source. So if we can connect the previous source to this generator, we can get whatever they are running!

Kaye And what are these again?

Twig We have no idea, but I can't wait to find out.

Rex I bet there store food.

Twig I bet there make premium scrap

Kaye No way, this has got to be some 1st class military armory.

Scar Who knows, but I'll need your guys help if we want to find out.

Rex All right Scar, it's on you, tell us what to do.

Scar Okay, Rex, grab this cable and run it over to that box on the wall.

Rex goes over to the box.

Now open up the box.

Rex tries to open it, after a struggle he pries it open.

Okay, now Twig, hand Rex these clips, attach one to the cable and one to the wires in the box. Make sure all the wires are touching. Kaye, do the same with this cable, and go over to the box on the far side.

All the kids follow Scar's orders. They link up the cables.

Long pause.

Kaye Now what, was something supposed to happen?

Scar Umm, yeah I thought they'd all just activate.

Rex They're clearly old Scar, this was never gonna work!

Scar Hey at least I tried, if it did work, imagine, we'd be swimming in credits by now.

Rex But it didn't, and we almost got caught out because of this stupid generator.

Scar So what?! They won't know we got out.

Rex Yes they will, do you not realise what happens to people like us when you step out? They always know Scar! And now they'll find us for sure.

Scar But if we can get it working, we can sell all this off, and the patrol will escort us back in the front seat of their cruisers!

Rex You're so deluded!

Whilst the kids argue, Twig notices a lever and decides to pull it. Suddenly four main house lights come on. The whole room is now visible. The machines are revealed through the light; just underneath the dust it is clear to see this is an old arcade.

The sound of the generator is at full capacity, it activates every single machine in the room. Bright neon flashes grow out of old bulbs, and the retro sound of arcade games brightens the once dull backdrop of the desert. Archaic hoverboards and primitive VR tech come alive. Photobooths and movie makers begin to showcase contents from the past. This is a long forgotten room of happy memories. All of the kids react with sudden amazement and wonder.

Kaye What, what is this?

Rex What are these Scar?

Scar I think, Twig, are they what I think they are?

Twig This is an arcadia. And these machines, they're games.

Rex What?

Kaye But, this all got destroyed, right?

Rex That's what they tell us, obviously not this one.

Scar It's so magical, I can't believe this.

Kaye I didn't know these existed still! Consoles, headsets! I thought stuff like this were just relics.

Rex This is so rad!
Scar My pap used to tell me stories about how our ancestors socialised and spent their days. They could all be together, wherever they were in the world. And meet in one place. They would drive cars and shoot at each other, but for fun. And this is where it all happened.
Twig Shotgun that shotgun!

All of the kids run over to test out the machines, Scar however just walks by them and solemnly observes them. Twig plays on a shooter machine; he is now wearing an old helmet, placing him in a virtual world. Kaye has been lifted into the air and is surfing on the hoverboard, following a screen's instructions. Rex is harnessed to an exo-skelton and is boxing a robotic opponent. Scar now stands there in awe. It is almost too much, this was once high-tech for their ancestors and now it is lost, forgotten.

A long pause filled with sound of laughter, and noise. Scar goes over to the hatch. He listens, and walks back over to the machines.

Scar Guys, stop.

It takes some effort to stop the kids.

Scar Stop, now! Guys, listen to me!

Kaye and Rex stop what they're doing and turn to Scar, Twig can't hear and is still haulin' ass. Scar goes over to him and pushes him, Twig goes crashing to the floor, and his helmet falls off.

Twig You son of a bitch what was that about? I was enjoying myself.
Scar Pay attention.

There is a silence from them, whilst in the background, the chatter of the arcade continues.

 We can't scrap this, we can't. We need to protect this place, at all costs. We can't just enjoy ourselves now and sell it later. This is important, this is history.
Rex But Scar, I mean, we're having a blast and that but, in the end we kinda have to.
Scar Why do we? So we get escorted back safely? So we get given a shitload of credits, and then what? What do we buy with them? We're the lowest class we can't go any higher unless we marry or some shit. And that's a long way off. I have never, ever, seen you guys this happy before, and it makes me sad. We have to keep this a secret, and that means we let the Peacekeepers win. They can beat us, lock us up, but we cannot sell this place out. It's beautiful, it's incredible.

The kids take it all in. Pause.

Kaye You're right. But what happens when we're older? We sell it then right?
Scar No, we never sell it; this place is too special for scraps. This is our secret, and this will be our children's secret. The world up there now is too damn dry, there's too much order there's nothing colourful anymore, nothing bright! I don't think I've ever even seen some of these colours, or heard these noises. Or witnessed Kaye fly! We've grown up to be so serious, but for the first time in my life, I see us for what we are. Kids. And I think that's more important than any credits we could earn.
Twig But Scar, we can't just keep coming back. We left technology decades ago, before even ma was born. It killed the Earth, it killed so many people.
Scar That's cus they forgot the joy of it. It's all they knew.

Pause

Kaye Rex what do you think?

Pause

Rex Scar...I love this place...but, if we scrap it. We never have to scrap again.
Scar Then what do we live for?
Rex We live for the community, and we fight for the community. We don't need this tech
 anymore, look at what good it did to those poor saps, they atom'd each other to shit!
Scar Look around Rex, these aren't weapons.
Rex But, we, could scrap this for food, for water! For a better life!
Scar We could have a better life, we could forget. Just for a bit.

Scar walks over to Rex and puts a helmet on him, Rex gets transported to another world.

Rex Just for a bit.
Scar We're not scrapping this place. This is our sanctuary now.

-End-