

KEY TO PARADISE

By Janet E. Swainston

EXT, CITY STREET, PRESENT DAY

We see a busy street with pedestrians and traffic.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The world you live in today is not
the world of tomorrow.

Slowly the traffic, both human and machine fades and the same street is then empty and abandoned and much shabbier than before. Debris lines the curbs and the occasional citizen wanders by in shabby clothes.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The world will move on and it will
happen faster than you could ever
predict.

More people begin to shuffle down the street. All of them wearing the same grey rag uniform. The day begins to fade into night and the human traffic thins to nothing.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The global community will become
just that, global, with one
government to watch over a whole
planet.

The empty street is now populated by men in actual uniforms; short red jackets leading squads of five men or women dressed in similar uniforms of yellow. There are no civilian citizens at all in sight.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Law and order will be kept by a new
department called the Judicial
Enforcement Authority. And the men
and women who run the department
will bring justice swift and sure.

A citizen in grey rags runs down the street and is pursued by the Yellow Coats as a crowd of Red Coats stands nearby laughing.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Crime will change and retreat even
further underground than in the
past. The gap between rich and
poor will grow ever larger and the
middle class will become those who
keep order amongst the citizens.

A man holding a tazer gun is herding a restrained dirty citizen in grey down the street.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The Bounty Force will arise and be made up of two person teams that will work for the Judicial Enforcement Authority on a for hire basis. They are beholden only to themselves and the more successful the Bounty Cop team is, the more they can earn.

A bounty cop in short red jacket over a grey uniform slams a citizen up against the wall as his partner begins using the tazer gun on the victim.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The laws will soon allow that Bounty Cops are autonomous and can use whatever force they wish to bring criminals to justice.

The street is empty again except for some garbage blowing in the wind.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The paradise that the earth once was will have disappeared completely, while the rich and powerful leave the dying planet to the slave class that the poor will have become.

The day fades until there is barely a glimmer of light.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Now, the worst crime you can commit is to hope. The year is twenty two ninety-three.

EXT, CITY STREET - NIGHT

Street lights flicker on and off, giving the dingy city the feel of a night club. The street is completely empty and the buildings we can see are dirty and dilapidated.

Only one doorway is in sight and it is the type of door that leads to an industrial warehouse.

The door suddenly opens and two men come out. They are carrying between them a large planter with flowers in it.

They struggle to place it just outside the door, while a third man follows them with a battery powered sun lamp.

The men place the pot and the man with the lamp puts it down beside the pot, adjusting the lamp head to shine on the flowers. He then switches it on and it bathes both the planter and part of the street in a warm glow.

The men then glance around and return through the doorway, letting it shut behind them.

Two men appear from around the corner and quietly observe the door, the plant and the lamp. One man is **ABEL KANE**, he is a tall man with a broad solid body, not someone you want to fight with.

The other man is not quite as tall, and much thinner and fragile looking. The second man is **ROBERT "KIP" KIPLING**, Abel's partner.

Both men carry weapons on their belts and are dressed in dark red uniform bomber style jackets.

They circle the planter and pause for a moment to consider it.

ABEL

Why flowers?

Kip leans in to smell the red flowers.

KIP

Why not? I think they're beautiful. Add a bit of color.

ABEL

But flowers are useless. They serve no purpose.

KIP

No purpose? No, you're wrong. They are a joy to the eye in this artificial rats nest we live in. And besides, these flowers are a symbol.

ABEL

A symbol? Of what?

KIP

These are poppies. Poppies were used to make opium, a very strong hallucinogenic.

ABEL

Yeah, so? A flower that could be turned into a drug. How is that a symbol.

KIP

Opium? Opiate of the masses? Keep the people calm and they won't fight back?

ABEL

I'm not following.

KIP

You can be so literal Abe. This place is a DNA den.

ABEL

I know that. That's why we're here. To raid the place.

KIP

Yes. And a DNA den supplies it's customers with the opportunity to be someone else for a short while. They can be a celebrity or a rich person or really anyone they want.

ABEL

Yeah, but I'm still not getting your point.

KIP

Never mind, just think of the flowers as pretty.

ABEL

We don't have time for pretty and in this world, pretty doesn't stay pretty long enough to matter. It's just a waste.

Kip shakes his head and carefully plucks a flower. He sniffs it as Abel scans the street. He hears a noise and cautions Kip.

ABEL

Shhhh. Come on.

Abel quickly dashes across the street and into a shadowed doorway. Kip follows him more slowly as he studies the flower.

The two men settle themselves into the shadows as a figure sidles down the street.

A young man with bad skin nears the doorway with the poppies.

The young man stops and glances around before he knocks on the door. The door is quickly answered and the young man is rushed inside.

EXT CITY STREET, SHADOWY DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

Abel pulls his weapon from its holster and moves quickly and quietly across the street. He pauses at the door and glances back at Kip, gesturing for his partner to follow. Kip joins him at the doorway where they lean their heads together.

ABEL

You ready for this?

KIP

Aren't I always?

ABEL

Just checking. You take the kid and I'll handle the other three, plus the technician.

KIP

Whatever.

Abe sees Kip still holding the flower.

ABEL

And get rid of that. Don't waste time mooning over something like that. We have a job to do.

Abel takes the flower from Kip and tosses it into the street.

Kip gazes at it briefly before turning back to his partner.

Abel has carefully placed his hand on the handle of the door and is taking deep breaths.

Kip unholsters his weapon and taps his partner on the shoulder.

Abel doesn't turn but nods once and pulls open the door. The two men charge into the building.

INT WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Abel stops abruptly as soon as he has entered the dimly lit warehouse. Kip sidles up behind him as they study the interior.

The warehouse has been sectioned off. Directly in front of the two bounty cops is a blank brick wall with a single door. Faint noise comes from behind the wall; the sound of industrial techno music. The single door is a sliding door with a lock. There is no-one around.

The two men glance at each other and Kip puts his weapon away. Kip removes his jacket and turns it inside out. Abel settles himself on the wall just beside the door as Kip knocks.

The door slides open and one of the guards from before opens it.

GUARD #1

Hey.

KIP

Hey.

GUARD #1

You here for the party?

KIP

Why else would I be knocking on your door?

GUARD #1

You a cop?

KIP

No.

GUARD #1

Okay. Come on in.

KIP

Can I bring my friend?

The guard looks around.

GUARD #1

I don't see any 'friend'.

KIP

He's hiding.

GUARD #1
Why?

KIP
Shy.

GUARD #1
Is your friend a cop?

Abel steps from hiding and trains his weapon on the guard.

ABEL
Yeah. I am.

The guard raises his hands.

GUARD #1
Great.
(to Kip)
I thought you said you weren't a
cop?

KIP
Does that really matter now?

GUARD #1
I guess not.

Abel puts his weapon to the guard's face.

ABEL
Enough chatter. Take us to the
specialist.

GUARD #1
Right this way.

Kip and Abel follow the guard through the door.

INT, WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A party is in full swing. A melee of lights and noise
assault the senses as the common folk let loose.

The guard leads Kip and Abel around the dance floor to
another door. There is a line up outside this doorway where
another guard stands.

Kip slips his weapon out of it's holster and presses it
gently against the second guard's side.

The guard looks startled as he glances at his fellow guard.

GUARD #2
What the hell is this?

GUARD #1
What does it look like?

ABEL
Can the chatter and get this line
of morons out of here.

The second guard turns to the line of people.

GUARD #2
Hey, you guys can get lost. The
specialist is done for the night.

The crowd groans, but disperses. The two guards are left
with Abel and Kip. Kip grins at the second guard.

KIP
In case you were wondering, this is
a raid.

GUARD #2
Yeah. I guess so. How bad are we
going to be charged.

ABEL
You won't be charged.

GUARD #1
We won't?

ABEL
No. You'll be killed.

Abel fires his weapon and the first guard collapses. Abel
slips him gently to the floor to rest against the wall.

GUARD #2
Shit. That's kind of extreme,
isn't it?

KIP
My partner hates paperwork and
taking you in under arrest is just
too much writing for him. Sorry.

Kip fires his weapon and Abel helps him lower his victim to
the floor. The two men then holster their weapons again and
Abel tries the door.

It opens easily and they both slip inside.

INT WAREHOUSE, BACK HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kip and Abel are in a short empty dingy hallway. About midway along the right hand wall is a plain door. Abel cautions Kip to stop and let him approach.

Kip takes up position flat against the wall on the right side while Abel stands directly in front of the door. They can hear muffled voices from within.

Abel readies his weapon and gestures for Kip to keep his weapon holstered but ready. Abel moves off to the left and lets Kip open the door.

INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kip steps into the room, looking around nervously. There is no sign of Abel. Inside the room is the third guard, the DNA specialist and a customer, the young man from before with the bad skin.

The young man is being held onto a modified dentists chair by the third guard, while the specialist is leaning over him and working on his eyes.

SPECIALIST

Now hold still while I insert this lens in your eye.

YOUNG MAN

I don't know how much longer I can hold still. Can't you go faster?

SPECIALIST

Not unless you want to go blind.

The young man jerks around a bit but the guard holds him in place. The specialist pauses and then returns to his work.

YOUNG MAN

Shit. That freaking hurts man!

GUARD #3

Yeah, but it'll all be worth it when it's done. Now you heard the Doc. Stop fucking moving!

YOUNG MAN

I'm paying for this, so you don't have to talk to me like that.

Kip moves forward just as the specialist is sliding something into the cornea of the young man.

KIP
Excuse me?

Everyone jumps and the young man yells out in agony.

GUARD #3
What the fuck are you doing in
here? You're supposed to wait your
turn.

The young man screams in the background as the specialist tries to calm him. Kip walks towards the guard as the guard tries to herd Kip back to the door. As the guard puts his hands on Kip, Abel steps through the doorway with his weapon drawn.

KIP
I think it is my turn.

Kip pulls his own weapon and points it at the specialist and the thrashing young man, as he moves out of the way of the guard. Abel moves into position.

GUARD #3
Who are you?

ABEL
Bounty Officer Abel Kane, badge
number 8944.

GUARD #3
Shit.

ABEL
Your other guard friend said the
same thing.

GUARD #3
Where is he? How did you get past
him.

ABEL
He's in the other room. And I shot
him.

Kip moves in on the specialist who has stopped trying to calm the young man writhing in the chair. The specialist is now standing against the far wall with his hands up.

GUARD #3
This sucks.

ABEL

Yes it does.

GUARD #3

Are you going to shoot me too?

ABEL

Yes.

Kip keeps his eye on the specialist as he calls out to Abel.

KIP

Are we shooting this one too?

SPECIALIST

Oh god. Please, don't shoot me.
I'm a doctor. Someone will notice
if I'm gone.

ABEL

You should have thought of that
before you broke the law.

SPECIALIST

But, but, you guys are supposed to
take violators in, not shoot them
in the field.

KIP

Yeah, but you see, with my partner,
accidents have a way of happening.

GUARD #3

I bet. So, can we get this over
with. If I'm going to die, I'd
like to get it over with.

KIP

Is the suspense killing you?

ABEL

Kip. That was in very poor taste.

KIP

Sorry, Abe. Forgive me.

ABEL

Don't let it happen again.

Abel glances over at his partner and the specialist. He nods towards the Doc as the specialist pulls a scalpel and flings it at Kip. Kip dodges it.

KIP

Now that wasn't nice. But then it also constitutes that you attacked me first so, me shooting you will be in self defense.

SPECIALIST

I used a knife. You have a disrupter weapon.

KIP

Yeah. Shame about your luck.

Kip shoots the specialist. The guard makes a jump at Abel, who shoots the man. He and Kip survey the scene.

The young man is still writhing around and calling for help.

YOUNG MAN

Help me. I can't see. It's all red. Please help me.

Abel glances at Kip and then points his weapon at the young man. He fires and the young man dies.

KIP

Why did you kill him?

ABEL

Because, he was in pain and he asked for my help.

KIP

We could have got him fixed up by a real doctor.

ABEL

What would be the point? He'd only be blind and worse off than he was before this fuck up. He's better off dead.

KIP

If you say so.

ABEL

Well I do, now lets get out of here.

KIP

Should we call the clean up squad?

ABEL

No. We'll report it when we get
back to the Bounty House.

Kip glances back at the dead young man and the specialist, his face wearing an expression of sadness. Abel steps over the dead guard, not waiting. Kip follows with a sigh.

EXT, BOUNTY HOUSE - LATER

A truck pulls up to the curb in front of the Bounty house. Kip and Abel jump out and another team take the keys to the truck and drive off. Abel and Kip enter the building.

INT, BOUNTY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Abel and Kip make their way into the building, they walk past other Bounty teams who are handling their captures, yelling at them or attempting interrogation. The place is bedlam as they make their way to the common area.

Abel stops at a cage with a window. Inside the cage are two Bounty officers who are handling weapons and taking reports. Abe steps up to the window and hands over his weapon.

ABEL

Hey Bud. Need my weapon checked.

Bud, an aging Bounty Cop with only one arm, steps up to the window and takes the weapon.

BUD

Your weapon's been discharged.

ABEL

Yeah. And?

BUD

Was it discharged in the line of
duty, Officer 8944?

ABEL

Yeah.

BUD

Did you shock the monkey?

ABEL

Yeah.

Bud laughs and tosses the weapon into a bin behind him, and then grabs a new one from another bin, shoving it through the window to Abel.

BUD
You're something Kane. Nobody does
a bust with extreme prejudice quite
like you. You are really
something.

Abel just shrugs and takes his new weapon. Kip steps up to
the counter.

BUD
Officer 9991? Did you discharge
your weapon in the line of duty?

KIP
Yup. He attacked me first.

BUD
Did he?

KIP
Oh yeah. I felt afraid.

BUD
Boys like you always do.

Abel overhears the comment and leans through the window.

ABEL
Shit like that attitude doesn't go
down anymore, Bud. That's old
fashioned thinking and isn't
tolerated anymore. You do know
that, right?

BUD
Yeah. Sorry. Sorry Kip. Didn't
mean nothing by it. I know you're
a stand up guy.

Abel pulls himself out of the window and waits until Bud
hands Kip his new weapon.

ABEL
Oh, yeah. Send a clean up crew
over to the Blade Runner warehouse.

KIP
Yeah. We left behind a bit of a
mess.

Bud shakes his head as Kip and Abel leave. They walk to the
door that leads to the common area.

INT. LAW HOUSE, BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Abel leads the way as he and Kip enter the Bounty Cop's common area. There are huge screens on all walls transmitting information on wanted criminals, recent captures and on one screen, the twenty-four hour newscast.

The room goes very quiet as Kip and Abel enter and the men and women inside begin to study the screens again. Kip makes his way to the locker he shares with his partner as Abel sits down in front of the news screen.

NEWS CASTER

This morning's top interest story concerns something out of our past. One of the original ten missile bases that were placed on the moon facility has been discovered to be still active. Government officials are currently seeking a way to shut the facility down and deactivate the missiles still housed under the moon base's surface operations.

Everyone in the common area begins to chatter to each other. Kip has changed out of his uniform and sits next to Abel.

KIP

What do you think of that?

ABEL

What?

KIP

That news cast. Come on. Don't you think that's kind of exciting to find active missiles after all this time?

ABEL

No.

KIP

What? You used to be interested in things like that all the time. What's going on with you?

ABEL

Nothing. Kip, I'm just not concerned with history. I like to live in the present.

KIP

Yeah, I know. No past, no future,
just now.

ABEL

Well, why not? It's safer that
way. You don't feel bad about what
you can't change.

KIP

You can change the future.

ABEL

No, you can't. Whatever happens is
meant to happen.

KIP

That's very fatalistic.

ABEL

It's realistic. Now come on. If
you're ready to go, I'm starving.

Abel stands up just as all the Bounty House screens show an
image of the Chief Judicial Enforcer, Eve Johnson. Everyone
stops talking and watches the screens.

EVE JOHNSON

Good morning everyone. I'm sure
you've just seen a newscast about
the abandon active missile base on
the moon. We've been asked by the
government to assist in this
operation. All interested teams
are to report to Moonbase Apollo by
zero nine-hundred hours tomorrow.

The crowd begins to murmur.

EVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

The successful team will be richly
rewarded with early retirement to
an undisclosed off world paradise.
A special request goes out to the
following Bounty Teams; Raye and
Willson.

A two person team stands up and starts shoving at each other,
playfully.

EVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Sharma and LaRue.

Another team rises and begin wrestling with the first team.

EVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)
And Kane and Kipling.

Kip turns to Abe as Abe shakes his head.

EVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)
Those three teams are specially
requested to appear for this
briefing. All others are welcome.
You may return to your duties now,
ladies and gentlemen. Good day.

The Chief Judicial Enforcer disappears from the screen and the images return to their normal transmission. Abe stands and turns to Kip.

ABEL
Let's eat.

Kip frowns at his partner but follows him out.

INT. GEORGE'S MANDARIN CHINESE FOOD EMPORIUM - LATER

Abel enters the almost empty restaurant followed closely by Kip. A waitress waves at them and they seat themselves at a table in the back.

As they sit, Kip stares meaningfully at Abel.

ABEL
What? What are you staring at me
for?

KIP
You don't want to say anything
about the announcement from
Johnson?

ABEL
What's to say?

KIP
Lots. There's lots to say. I
mean, we've been requested to go.

ABEL
I know.

The waitress reaches their table and smiles charmingly at them. She is not Asian.

WAITRESS

Hey guys.

ABEL

Hey. We'll have the usual.

KIP

Hold on. Don't I get a say?

ABEL

We always get the same thing. We don't like anything else on the menu. Remember?

KIP

Who says?

ABEL

You did. Last time we were here, which was yesterday.

KIP

Right. Fine. The usual.

WAITRESS

Okay. Beer?

ABEL

Yeah.

KIP

Water for me.

Abel gives his partner a look but Kip glares back at him. The waitress leaves and Kip continues his questioning of Abel.

KIP

Okay, so we have food coming and drink. Can we talk about tomorrow?

ABEL

What's to talk about Kip?

KIP

Are we going?

ABEL

I don't know Kip. Do you want to?

KIP

Yeah. And so do you.

ABEL

Of course I do. I'm a good little
Bounty Cop.

KIP

No. You're a hard line asshole,
and an ugly one at that.

ABEL

Ugly? Me? I thought I was the
pretty one.

KIP

Nope, that's all me.

The waitress brings their drinks. Her smile falters a moment
until Kip puts a hand on her ass.

KIP

You know, you can bring me a beer
too.

WAITRESS

Okay. Will you promise to put your
hand on my ass again?

KIP

I thought your ass was in my hand?

The waitress giggles and leaves again, glancing back at the
table. Abel shakes his head.

ABEL

You're such a whore.

KIP

Well, one of has to get laid
occasionally or those rumours about
us just might come true.

ABEL

Just keep your hand off my ass.

Kip laughs and the waitress returns with Kip's beer and their
food.

INT. MOONBASE APOLLO DOCKING STATION - THE NEXT DAY

The docking station is busy as the shuttle docks. The doors
slide open as the announcement sounds.

STATION ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Moonbase Apollo, gateway to the galaxy. The time is oh eight hundred hours and thirty minutes. We hope your trip was comfortable. Enjoy your stay at Moonbase Apollo and thank you for travelling with us.

A crowd of bounty cops hustles out of the shuttle, most of the teams chattering together. Kip and Abel are last to disembark and they follow the crowd towards the directional screens.

At the wall of directional screens everyone pauses and mills around. Finally, Kip approaches the wall and speaks into the microphone.

KIP

We're here for the Judicial Enforcement Authority briefing.

Immediately a beautiful woman's face appears on the screens above the microphone.

INFORMATION FACE

Please follow the green lighted directional arrows.

On the floor, a line of green lights begins to flash and flow down a hallway. Everyone moves in that direction.

INT MOONBASE APOLLO, CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The crowd of bounty cops has arrived at their destination. The doors of the conference room slide open and they file in, taking seats. Kip and Abel sit at the back off to the side.

As soon as everyone is seated, a door at the back of the room slides open and a young Asian woman walks through it. She pauses and then gestures behind her as if someone is to follow. Chief Judicial Enforcer, Eve Johnson walks through the door and approaches the podium.

She glances around the room, her gaze settling on Abel and Kip briefly before she gestures to her assistant. The lights lower except for a soft spotlight glowing over the CJE.

The screens light up and show an image of an abandoned missile base.

EVE JOHNSON

Good morning everyone. What you are looking at is one of the ten missile bases that were established on Moonbase Apollo eighty years ago. Today, all the bases are abandoned and almost all of them have been dismantled.

The image changes to show a different view of the facility.

EVE JOHNSON

It was discovered that the missiles at this base were never shut down.

Bounty Cop Sharma stands up.

SHARMA

You mean the missiles are still armed and active?

EVE JOHNSON

Yes. That's exactly the problem.

Another cop stands up. This time Raye.

RAYE

So, why not just shut them down? What do you need us for?

EVE JOHNSON

I'm getting to that Miss Raye. If you would all save your questions for later, please.

Both cops sit down and the view on the screens shows the inside of the missile base command centre.

EVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

As you can see from the images, this facility is operated on the old computer key lock system. The problem is that we no longer possess the key to this particular lock.

The image changes again to a man, white haired, thin and obviously over sixty years of age.

EVE JOHNSON

The man you see on the screen now is the last known person to possess keys of the type we require.

(MORE)

EVE JOHNSON (cont'd)

He is also the last known person to have had access to this particular facility.

Kip stands.

KIP

Who is he?

EVE JOHNSON

His name is Nikolai Ivanovitch. He is a Russian historical scientist. He was employed by the Unified World Committee as of three years ago but has since disappeared. The UWC's efforts to locate him have come to nothing.

The image on the wall fades and the lights come up.

EVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

This is why we need all of you, who are willing, to find this man. It is of the utmost importance.

LaRue stands up then.

LARUE

What's so important?

EVE JOHNSON

Haven't you been listening Mr. LaRue? This is an active system and if we don't shut it down permanently, those missiles could decide to launch themselves.

LARUE

So?

Kip stands up.

KIP

Don't be obtuse LaRue. You obviously don't know your history. Those missiles are aimed at Earth. They were to be the last defense in case of alien invasion, before we found out that so far, we're the only ones out here who are interested in this ass end of the universe.

Kip sits down as the room goes very quiet. CJE Johnson gazes approvingly at Kip. The CJE's assistant begins to hand out envelopes with Ivanovitch's picture and some written information.

EVE JOHNSON

Very good Mr. Kipling. Now Alicia here will be handing out the most current photo of Doctor Ivanovitch and your written orders on where he might be found and what to do when you find him. The first team to bring him to me, with the key, will receive the reward of early retirement.

WILLSON

Does it matter if he's dead or alive?

EVE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Alive of course. Good luck ladies and gentlemen. Good day.

CJE Johnson leaves the podium and moves towards the door she originally entered through. At the door she pauses to exchange a look with Alicia, who nods and approaches Abel and Kip.

Kip smiles at the lovely young woman and holds out his hand for their info package, but she takes his hand instead.

ALICIA

The Chief Judicial Enforcer would like you to come to her office and receive additional briefing.

Alicia releases Kip's hand and retreats to the doorway at the back of the stage. She stops at the open door and waits for them.

KIP

I guess we go with her.

ABEL

Sure. But watch yourself with the her. She's very clever with words. Don't say anything she might want to use later.

KIP

Like what?

ABEL

I don't know. You'll know if you do it.

KIP

Great.

ABEL

Don't worry, I'll watch out for you, Robert. Don't I always?

KIP

Yes. And don't call me Robert.

The two men regard each a moment before following Alicia through the doorway.

INT. CHIEF JUDICIAL ENFORCER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

CJE Johnson is sitting behind her desk, chair facing the large window that shows a darkened moonscape with the earth gleaming above. Alicia stops at the door and gestures for Abel and Kip to enter. They do and Alicia exits.

Abel walks slowly to stand before the desk and stops, hands behind his back, at ease. Kip follows his example as they wait for the CJE to acknowledge them.

She doesn't turn before starting to speak.

EVE JOHNSON

It's beautiful, isn't it, the Earth I mean?

ABEL

Yes Ma'am.

She swivels her chair around to face them.

EVE JOHNSON

Is that all you have to say Mister Kane?

ABEL

I didn't think any other response was needed. I agreed with you.

EVE JOHNSON

Yes you did, but do you feel the same way?

ABEL

About what, Ma'am?

EVE JOHNSON
Why the Earth, of course.

ABEL
I think you feel that way about the Earth.

EVE JOHNSON
And you don't feel that way?

ABEL
Does it matter, ma'am?

EVE JOHNSON
It does to me, Mister Kane. So, please, speak freely.

ABEL
I think the place has turned into a rat pit, a cesspool, barely able to sustain human life.

Kip glances at his partner, concerned.

EVE JOHNSON
I see. And you, Mister Kipling? Do you share your partner's feelings?

KIP
Sort of, ma'am.

EVE JOHNSON
Elaborate, please.

Kip glances at Abel again who ignores him and stares straight ahead.

KIP
Well, I guess I sort of see it the same way, but I also see that it was once a beautiful place and could be again.

EVE JOHNSON
Really? So you see it for what it currently is and what it could be? The dark and the light of it, as it were?

KIP
Yes ma'am.

EVE JOHNSON

Interesting, considering who your partner is?

KIP

I don't understand.

EVE JOHNSON

Simple really. Do you know, Mister Kipling, the origin of your partner's names?

KIP

Not exactly, no ma'am.

EVE JOHNSON

He does. And yet he's never told you.

Abel exchanges a look with Kip.

KIP

Maybe he has his reasons not to tell me?

EVE JOHNSON

I don't think that's very fair. It's quite easy to see that he's a man at war with himself and thus he's aptly named.

ABEL

He doesn't know the historical significance, ma'am.

EVE JOHNSON

Shall I enlighten him for you then?

ABEL

At your discretion.

EVE JOHNSON

Indeed. Mister Kipling, the origin of your partner's names can be found in an old religious text. The Christian bible to be exact. Have you ever studied old Christianity, Mister Kipling?

KIP

No ma'am.

EVE JOHNSON

Then allow me to quickly educate you. Cain, a different spelling than your friend's last name, and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. "And Cain rose up and slew his brother Abel." So you see, brother's at odds with each other and a man at odds with himself. Would you agree, Mister Kipling, that your partner is at odds with himself.

KIP

I wouldn't like to say.

CJE Johnson leans over her desk in an effort to intimidate Kip.

EVE JOHNSON

I would like you to say, Mister Kipling.

Kip glances at Abel who shows no emotions.

KIP

I think it's hard for him sometimes to enforce law and order on a world that is in the midst of chaos. Is that what you mean, ma'am?

EVE JOHNSON

Yes, that sounds about right.

ABEL

If I may interrupt.

EVE JOHNSON

Oh please do Mister Kane.

ABEL

What does this have to do with us going after the fugitive?

EVE JOHNSON

Why everything Mister Kane. If I am to send you to find the man who can save the world, I have to know I'm sending a man who sees the irony of using force to bring about peace.

ABEL
Would it speed things along if I
just said I do understand?

EVE JOHNSON
You are eager to do your job.

ABEL
Yes ma'am.

EVE JOHNSON
Fine then. You are the best hunter
around. Not one of the other
bounty officers past or present can
beat your record of arrests.
Wherever you go, crime is unable to
flee.

ABEL
I live to serve.

EVE JOHNSON
Yes. You and Mister Kipling are to
do everything you can to bring this
man in, dead or alive.

KIP
Dead?

EVE JOHNSON
Yes Mister Kipling. He is a
fugitive. We have attempted to
contact him and he has ignored our
requests. And the with the fate of
Earth at stake, he should have been
more than eager to assist us. He
has not. You must find him for me
Mister Kane.

ABEL
Just point me in the right
direction.

EVE JOHNSON
Of course.

CJE Johnson pushes a button on her desk.

EVE JOHNSON
Alicia, send in the intel operative
please.

CJE Johnson leans back in her chair, watching Abel and Kip as the two men stand at ease. In moments a young woman enters the office.

This is **CHARLI BOYD**, a sturdy young woman, wearing a Bounty Cop uniform with one variation, her jacket is black instead of red, denoting that she is superior in the Judicial Enforcement Authority.

Kip turns to glance at her as she stands beside him, also at ease

CHARLI
Reporting for duty, Justice
Johnson.

EVE JOHNSON
Excellent.
(to Kip and Abel)
This is my best intelligence
operative, Charli Boyd. She will
continually feed you up to date
information about Doctor Ivanovitch
and his supposed whereabouts.

ABEL
I thought you said we were the
best?

EVE JOHNSON
Oh you are. But even the best need
to know where you are going. You
did say to point you in the right
direction. Consider Miss Boyd to
be your blood hound. Any good
hunter needs one.

ABEL
Thank you ma'am.

EVE JOHNSON
Just bring me the key and that's
thanks enough Mister Kane. You are
all dismissed.

Abel and Kip salute. Charli scrambles to follow their lead and has to run to catch up with them as they both stride quickly out of the office.