

ZOE

By

Tom Batt

INT. BAR, TOILET CUBICLE - NIGHT

THEO (30) sits on the toilet seat staring at a gun in his hand. He has a five o'clock shadow and sad eyes.

\*FLASHBACK\*

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

Theo's wife lay in bed. She looks pale and tired. Theo sits bedside holding her hand tight. She turns to him.

THEO'S WIFE

I don't want to go alone.

THEO

You're not alone, I'm here.

She turns away. Her eyes slowly close. Theo hangs his head.

\*END FLASHBACK\*

Theo takes a deep breath and puts the gun to his head. He tries to pull the trigger, but his finger won't move. He grits his teeth as tears run from his eyes, but he gives in and lowers the gun. He wipes his eyes.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The bar is quiet save for a few patrons. Soft music plays in the background.

Theo approaches the bar and holds up a note. He places it down on the bar. The barman places a shot glass on the bar and fills it, then swipes the note away. Theo downs the drink.

He turns and walks away.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Theo walks slowly down a dark dank alleyway. His hands shoved deep in his pockets, his collar turned up around his neck. He stares at the ground as he walks.

A rustling amongst some nearby bin bags catches his attention. He turns to look, but sees nothing in the darkness. As a car's headlights pass by they light up the face of a young WOMAN. Her eyes like a scared rabbit.

Although she looks human, there are visual hints that give away her robotic nature, such as the joints between her body parts.

Theo looks down at her confused. She wears a vest top and underwear.

THEO

Hello?

He steps closer.

THEO (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

She looks up at him scared. Theo holds out a hand. She sinks further into the bin bags.

THEO (CONT'D)

It's alright. I'm not going to hurt you.

He smiles, but it isn't enough to reassure her. He pulls back his hand and nods.

THEO (CONT'D)

Okay.

Theo turns and starts walking away. The Woman climbs out of the bin bags and stares at him. Theo stops and glances over his shoulder. He smiles.

He continues walking. The Woman follows him.

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Theo walks down the corridor to the front door of his apartment. The Woman follows him. He opens the door and steps inside.

The Woman stops. She cautiously approaches the door. Theo pops his head through the threshold, startling her.

THEO

Are you coming in?

He disappears back inside. The Woman enters the apartment.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Woman slowly enters looking around the room. Theo closes the door behind her. She turns to look at him, a nervous look upon her face. He smiles.

THEO  
Feel free to sit down. Make your  
self at home.

She stands and watches him as he disappears into a kitchen. He comes back with a glass of whiskey and downs it. He looks at her.

THEO (CONT'D)  
I'm Theo. Do you have a name?

She continues to stare at him, confused.

THEO (CONT'D)  
You're not much of a talker, are  
you?

He steps closer to her. She takes a step back. He holds out a hand defensively.

THEO (CONT'D)  
It's okay.

He looks at a number tattooed on her neck, "203".

THEO (CONT'D)  
Two-oh-three. I think I'll call you  
Zoe. How does that sound?

She doesn't react. Theo frowns.

THEO (CONT'D)  
I'm going to need some help.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT - LATER

A knock at the door. Theo opens it. RIZ (30) pushes his way inside. He is stylishly dressed with ponytail, goatee and tinted glasses.

RIZ  
So what's so special you couldn't  
tell me over the phone?

Theo closes the door. He points at Zoe, still standing in the middle of the room. Zoe looks at Riz.

Riz's eyes widen.

RIZ (CONT'D)  
That's a robot.

THEO  
I know it's a robot.

RIZ  
But these have been outlawed. Where  
did you find it?

THEO  
In an alley. In the trash.

RIZ  
Lucky bastard.

Riz walks around Zoe admiring her.

RIZ (CONT'D)  
I've never seen something as  
advanced as this.

THEO  
Well, she can't be that advanced.  
She can't even talk.

RIZ  
Oh no, I doubt it. Not yet anyway.

THEO  
What do you mean?

RIZ  
It looks fresh out the packaging.  
It probably doesn't have much  
information in its memory yet. It  
learns just like a human. It needs  
to be taught.

THEO  
I have to teach it to speak?

RIZ  
Well, I'd be happy to take it off  
your hands. I wouldn't mind taking  
a more in depth look at it.

THEO  
No, that won't be necessary.

RIZ

Theo, come on. This thing is illegal to own. You could get into a lot of trouble.

THEO

So could you.

RIZ

Yeah, but I'm planning on taking it apart. Therefore, it'll cease to be a robot.

THEO

You're not taking it apart.

RIZ

I'll give you a good price.

THEO

She's not for sale.

Riz looks at Theo, his eyebrows raised.

RIZ

She? I think you're getting a little too attached.

THEO

I'm not, just...look, thanks for your help. I've changed my mind, I can deal with this myself.

RIZ

I'll give you one thousand.

THEO

No.

Theo pushes Riz toward the door.

RIZ

Two thousand.

THEO

No, sorry.

Theo opens the door and pushes Riz out into the corridor.

RIZ

Theo, come on.

Theo slams the door in his face.

RIZ (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
You're going to regret this.

Theo shakes his head and walks over to Zoe.

THEO  
So, you need to learn to speak? I  
think we can do that.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT - LATER

Theo exits the bedroom with a set of books. He sits down on the sofa.

THEO  
Sit down.

Zoe stares at him. He looks up at her.

THEO (CONT'D)  
You don't know what that means, do  
you?

He puts the books down on the coffee table and stands. He carefully places his hands on Zoe's arms. She backs away from him. He holds up his hands to calm her.

THEO (CONT'D)  
It's okay.

He slowly places his hands on her arms again. He then pushes her down carefully onto the sofa. She sits.

Theo sits down next to her and picks up the books. He shows them to her. They are children's books.

THEO (CONT'D)  
My wife was a teacher. She used  
these. Maybe they'll work for you.

He opens the first book and shows Zoe the page. It depicts a man walking and says "walking" in big letters underneath.

THEO (CONT'D)  
Walking.

Theo waits for Zoe to repeat, but she just stares at him.

THEO (CONT'D)  
Walking.

Again she continues to stare at him. He sighs.

THEO (CONT'D)  
It's getting late. Maybe we should  
try this tomorrow.

Theo puts the book down on the coffee table.

THEO (CONT'D)  
You can, stay here I guess.

He gets up and enters the bedroom.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Theo sits down on the bed. He looks over at a picture of his wife on the bedside table. He takes the gun from his shoulder holster and places it inside the bedside table drawer.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Zoe looks around the room. She gets up and wanders, playing with items on shelves and looking at pictures. She stares at a framed photograph of Theo and his wife.

She continues to make her way around the room until she reaches a television on the wall. She touches it and it turns on. She stares at the glowing screen and is mesmerised by the pictures on it.

She watches a man and woman talk. They kiss passionately. Zoe runs her fingers over her lips.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Theo exits the bedroom to find Zoe sat on the sofa still watching television. She turns to him and smiles.

ZOE  
Hello.

He freezes, staring at her surprised.

THEO  
Hello?

Zoe grins. He smiles back.

THEO (CONT'D)  
Have you been watching television  
all night?

Zoe nods.



THEO (CONT'D)  
And you understand what I'm saying?

She nods again.

THEO (CONT'D)  
Whatever works.

Theo sits down on the coffee table in front of her.

THEO (CONT'D)  
So can you tell me where you came  
from?

Zoe shakes her head.

ZOE  
I don't remember.

THEO  
You don't remember how you ended up  
in an alleyway?

Zoe shakes her head. Theo exhales in frustration.

THEO (CONT'D)  
Okay.

Zoe stands and walks over to the picture of Theo and his  
wife.

ZOE  
Who is this person?

THEO  
That's my wife.

ZOE  
Where is she?

THEO  
She died.

ZOE  
Why?

THEO  
She was ill.

Zoe is distracted by what's on the television. A man and  
woman are ballroom dancing. She walks over to the screen to  
take a closer look. Theo watches her.

ZOE  
What are they doing?

THEO  
That's called dancing.

ZOE  
Dancing.

Zoe starts to sway her body to the music. Theo smiles at her. He stands and approaches her.

THEO  
Come here.

Theo takes Zoe's hand and places his other hand around her waist. They rock gently together.

THEO (CONT'D)  
This is dancing.

ZOE  
We're dancing?

Theo nods. Zoe grins. Zoe stares into Theo's eyes and looks down at his lips. She leans in and kisses him. Theo kisses her back.

A knock on the front door startles Theo and he pulls away from Zoe. He looks over at the door.

THEO  
Who is it?

FRANK (O.S.)  
It's Frank.

Theo turns to Zoe.

THEO  
You should hide.

ZOE  
Why?

THEO  
Just hide.

Theo takes Zoe's hand and leads her over to the bedroom. He pushes her inside.

THEO (CONT'D)  
Stay here and keep quiet. I'll get rid of him.

Theo closes the door. He rushes over to the front door and whips it open. FRANK (30) stands before him.

FRANK  
You took your time.

THEO  
I was getting dressed.

FRANK  
Mind if I come in?

THEO  
Sure.

Theo lets Frank enter. He closes the door behind him. Frank looks around the apartment.

FRANK  
How have you been, Theo?

THEO  
Coping.

FRANK  
I was sorry to hear about your loss. I would have been at the funeral, but work has been pretty hectic.

THEO  
Don't worry about it.

FRANK  
Have you given any thought about returning to the force?

THEO  
Right now, that's furthest from my mind.

FRANK  
Understandable.

THEO  
Is that the only reason you came here? To ask me that?

FRANK  
Actually, no. This isn't a personal call. A body was found a few days ago. The body of a professor. Where the body was found we also discovered robotics parts.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

We believe he was building something and whatever he built killed him and escaped. No real loss, the guy was dying anyway, but we still think there's a dangerous robot out there.

THEO

I don't understand what this has to do with me.

FRANK

We recieved a tip off you were in possession of a robot.

THEO

Whatever you heard, I'm not.

FRANK

You wouldn't lie to me, would you, Theo?

THEO

No, I wouldn't. Why the hell would I bring a robot home? They're illegal.

FRANK

They are and anyone in possession of one would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

THEO

I'm not hiding anything.

A noise comes from the bedroom. Both Theo and Frank look toward the door. Frank rushes over to it and opens it.

THEO (CONT'D)

There's nothing in there.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

Frank enters the empty bedroom. He looks around, but there is no one there. Theo appears behind him, surprised to see the room empty.

THEO

See. There's nobody else here, Frank. It's just me.

FRANK  
Okay. Well, if you hear or see  
anything, give me a call.

THEO  
Of course I will.

Frank smiles.

FRANK  
I'll see myself out.

Theo watches Frank head out the front door. He turns back to  
the bedroom.

THEO  
Zoe?

A wardrobe opens and Zoe peers out.

THEO (CONT'D)  
It's okay, he's gone.

Zoe rushes over to him.

ZOE  
I'm sorry. I made a noise.

THEO  
It's fine. He didn't find you, but  
I think he suspects something.  
He'll be back, with more officers  
and a search warrant. You need to  
leave before they get here,  
otherwise they'll take you away.

ZOE  
Why?

THEO  
They think you're a threat. They  
claim you killed someone. Did you?

Zoe thinks.

ZOE  
I don't know. I think so, but I  
didn't want to. He made me do it. I  
don't want to hurt anyone.

THEO  
Either way, you're a robot and it's  
illegal for you to exist.

Zoe frowns with confusion.

ZOE  
What's a robot?

THEO  
An artificial being. You were  
created by someone.

ZOE  
Then what are you?

THEO  
I'm human.

Zoe looks at her human like hand.

ZOE  
I'm human.

THEO  
No, you're not.

ZOE  
I am.

THEO  
Look.

Theo takes Zoe's finger and places it on his wrist.

THEO (CONT'D)  
Human's have a pulse, like I do.

He then takes her other hand and places her finger on her  
opposite wrist.

THEO (CONT'D)  
You don't have a pulse.

Zoe pulls her hands away.

ZOE  
No, I'm human.

THEO  
You're not.

ZOE  
Yes, I am.

Zoe slams her fist down on a dresser and it breaks. She looks  
at her fist in surprise. Theo is shocked.

THEO  
You need to go. Please, before they  
find you.

ZOE  
Come with me.

THEO  
I can't, they'll be looking for me.  
You need to disappear. I'll only  
give you away.

Zoe looks into his eyes. She places a hand on his cheek.

ZOE  
I don't want to go alone.

Theo freezes as he hears the words. He looks at Zoe sorrowful.

THEO  
Okay, I'll come with you, but we  
need to leave now.

INT. APARTMENT CORRIDOR - DAY

Theo leads Zoe out of the apartment and down the corridor. She is wearing leggings and a leather jacket. They reach the elevator. Theo pushes the button. The doors open and they enter.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - DAY

The elevator doors open. Theo leads Zoe out and they turn a corner. They find Frank waiting for them with four police officers wearing heavy duty riot gear. Helmets and bullet proof vests.

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK  
Oh Theo, what have you done? Hand  
it over.

THEO  
She's not a threat.

FRANK  
It doesn't matter. That thing is  
illegal. (To Officers) Take it.

Two of the police officers walk toward Zoe. Theo steps in their way to stop them.

THEO  
Stop, please.

One of the officers punches Theo in the stomach and he collapses to his knees. They continue toward Zoe.

She grabs the first around the throat and lifts him toward the ceiling. She knocks the second across the room, he thumps against the wall. She then slams the first down into the floor. They both lie on the floor in pain. Zoe looks at her hands, wide-eyed, in shock.

She turns to Theo, he looks up at her.

ZOE  
I don't want to hurt anyone.

THEO  
You don't have to.

ZOE  
What if I can't control it? I have to go with them.

The two other police officers approach her cautiously. They grab her arms and cuff her.

THEO  
No.

Zoe stares at Theo as they escort her out of the building.

ZOE  
I'm sorry.

Theo gets up to chase them, but Frank blocks his path.

FRANK  
Don't, Theo. You're lucky I'm not arresting you as well. I suggest you go home.

Frank turns and exits the building.

INT. THEO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Theo enters the apartment and slams the door behind him. He heads straight for the bedroom.



INT. THEO'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

Theo sits down on the bed and picks up the photo of him and his wife. He stares at it momentarily before putting it back. He then opens the bedside table drawer and takes out the gun, he stares at it before putting it to his head.

FADE OUT.