

GENESIS STRAIN

Written by

Timothy Shireman

EXT. ARMY BASE - EVENING

SUPER: Basra, Iraq - 2009

Behind razor wire and barricades, 4 soldiers stand huddled together outside the canvas barracks. A lighter's spark reveals they are smoking hashish from a makeshift bowl.

Combat medic AYANA Jordan (20BF) exhales as Pvt. BRANDON Moss (19BM) keeps an eye out. The crumpled soda can is passed to the left and Lt. VIRGIL Mendoza (22HM) takes a toke before handing it off to Sgt. RED McGinley (27WM).

RED  
Oh man, that's tasty.

AYANA  
Afghani, am I right?

VIRGIL  
(nods)  
Pashtun goat herder sold it to me.

BRANDON  
Them shepherds got us high as hell.

AYANA  
Just wait until you try this--

She presents a small dark chunk and rolls it into a ball.

AYANA (CONT'D)  
From Pakistan. Pure Hindu Kush.

BRANDON  
Hell yeah, fire it up!

RED  
I'm out. Got a report to finish.

Red leaves with a wave and the smoking session continues.

VIRGIL  
How'd you get your hands on that?

AYANA  
Always be nice to your translator.

BRANDON  
See? These hajis ain't so bad--

Alarms blare as the base comes under attack. Gunfire erupts and explosions rock the compound as mortars rain down. A 60mm shell detonates at their feet and sends bodies flying.

TITLE CARD: The Genesis Strain

EXT. FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON

SUPER: Colorado - 1954

A rickety windmill spins lazily at a small farm on a dirt road at the base of a mountain. A dog on the porch watches a black child shoo a chicken out of the lush vegetable garden.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FLORENCE Jordan (35BF) is in the kitchen making tea. She adds herbs, honey, and a pinch of dried cannabis leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Military toys and Army men litter the floor. A faded photo of a black WW2 soldier in uniform sits on the dresser next to a handful of combat medals and a folded American flag.

Florence holds a teacup to the lips of a young boy sick in bed with a raspy cough. The toddler takes a sip, swallows, and smiles weakly at his worried mother. Her face brightens.

FLORENCE

That's my brave little soldier.

EXT. ARMY BASE - EVENING

SUPER: A Chau Valley, Vietnam - 1969

Behind barbed wire and sandbags, 4 soldiers stand huddled together outside the canvas barracks. A lighter's spark reveals they are smoking cannabis from a shotgun barrel.

Lt. AARON Jordan (20BM) exhales as Pvt. MORRIS Greene (18WM) keeps an eye out. The smoldering weapon is passed to the left and nurse EMILIA Ruiz (22HF) takes a toke before handing it off to Sgt. DWIGHT Ecker (28WM).

DWIGHT

Oh man, that's nasty.

AARON

Got this in Saigon, didn't you?

MORRIS

(nods)

Some bartender sold it to me.

EMILIA

You must have been drunk as hell.

AARON

Wait until you taste this--

He stuffs a wad of sticky bud into the gun's makeshift bowl.

AARON (CONT'D)

Thailand's finest. Can you dig it?

MORRIS

Far out! Spark it up, my brother.

EMILIA

Not me, I got a report to finish.

She leaves with a wave and the smoke session begins again.

DWIGHT

(exhales)

How did you score this primo grass?

AARON

Always be nice to your cab driver.

MORRIS

If we smoke with the gooks, maybe they'll stop trying to kill us.

Alarms blare as the base comes under attack. Gunfire erupts and a hail of rockets wreaks havoc. An RPG streaks through the air and impacts the barracks as the GIs dive for cover.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

SUPER: Colorado - 2024

Mourners pay their respects as a priest ends his eulogy and the casket is lowered into the ground. A generic headstone reads: Aaron Jordan 1948-2024. Ayana (35) stands by the grave holding a folded flag. Virgil (37) joins her on a prosthetic leg and rests a comforting hand on her shoulder.

VIRGIL

You never told me your Gramps was such a badass. Bronze Star in Nam? Now I know where you get it from.

AYANA

Just wish I'd gotten to spend more time with him. After my Dad died, Mom got in a fight with his family and stopped letting us visit them.

She shakes the priest's hand and they walk to her truck.

VIRGIL

Glad you invited me. Never been to the Rockies before. It's beautiful.

AYANA

Hard to believe it's been 30 years. I still remember running around the farm, picking beans in the garden, and fetching water from the well.

VIRGIL

It's all yours now. What do you want to do? You could sell it.

AYANA

Not sure yet. I want to clean the place up a little before I decide.

They climb in the pickup, start the engine and buckle up.

AYANA (CONT'D)

Turns out he was a pack rat. Will you help me go through his stuff?

VIRGIL

Sure. He wasn't a hoarder, was he?

AYANA

More of a collector. You'll see.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Ayana and Virgil exit the truck to inspect the property. The house is rundown and the farm buildings are in disrepair. A crumbling barn houses an old tractor and a rusty car sits hidden under a tarp in the weeds of the overgrown garden.

AYANA

Well, this is it. Almost 20 acres. My great-grandfather built all this, but he died in World War 2.

VIRGIL

It wouldn't take much to get this place fixed up. Bucket of nails, a couple dozen 2x4s and a new coat of paint would do wonders around here.

AYANA

Still don't know if I'm cut out for the country life. I'm a city girl.

VIRGIL

Yeah, but farming's in your blood.

They walk through a pasture of tall grass and wildflowers.

VIRGIL (CONT'D)  
What kind of crops did they grow?

AYANA  
Wheat, barley and alfalfa.

VIRGIL  
Did your grandpa have a still?

AYANA  
Wouldn't surprise me. Mom said he  
was pretty wild back in the day.

The duo reaches a creek and sits. Virgil removes his leg.

VIRGIL  
It's so peaceful out here.

AYANA  
The quiet helps me sleep. But could  
I really live here and run a farm?

VIRGIL  
Sure. Chicken coop needs work, but  
there's plenty of room for goats.

AYANA  
Goats? Take it easy, Old MacDonald.

They share a laugh as Ayana pulls a joint from her pocket.  
She lights it and passes. Virgil takes a hit with a grin.

VIRGIL  
You've still got the best smoke.

AYANA  
Always be nice to your budtender.

VIRGIL  
I wish this was legal back home.

AYANA  
Dispensaries have been a godsend.

VIRGIL  
For me, edibles are where it's at.

They look at each other in a moment of shared inspiration.

AYANA  
OK, then. Let's grow some weed.