

PARADISE: RETURN TO EDEN

Written by

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FADE IN:

Title Card: Year 2198 after the Great Planetary Exodus.
Number of inhabitants left on earth after move to Mars:
UNKNOWN.

EXT. THE BURNT FOREST - LATE AFTERNOON

Earth has been scarred with fire and famine. CAMERA MOVES across a stripped forest with bare trees, charred and hewn down for the most part. No greenery. In fact, these times are bleak and obsolete --

On foot, DR. AUGUSTUS WATERS, (32, scientist; humble and somewhat reclusive) and GENERAL BRAWN(35, muscular soldier), treads through the abandoned area.

Brawn patrols the vicinity holding an futuristic electronic gun called the AX 2000 while Augustus kneels on the ground, rummaging and sorting the soil for some semblance of plant life. He picks up a tiny sapling and as soon as he raises it from the ground, it disappointingly WITHERS in his hand.

BRAWN
(with slight hostility)
Let's go.

Augustus stands up, him and Brawn push forward --

The two men keep moving deeper into the dark terrain. They mount up on a large mound soon encountering a horse graveyard--

They lay their eyes on the WHITE BONES of hundreds and hundreds of DEAD HORSES stretched across the miles ahead.

BRAWN (CONT'D)
Do you still believe in God, Dr.
Waters?

Augustus hangs back as Brawn descends the bank into the grave of bones.

EXT. EARTH CAMP 4901 - LATE AFTERNOON

Brawn and Augustus walk towards a small walled-in city. It is an eclectic mix of architecture - rustic buildings with futuristic additions - mainly neoclassical, renaissance and Spanish colonial styles. A few sleek, but run-down skyscrapers. Silver, orbed, dome buildings with some rust. A broken-down, bullet-shaped train levitating over magnetized tracks, at a standstill --

The two reach within the city walls -- Augustus is greeted by RICARA DWABES (32, black, beautiful) while Brawn walks ahead.

RICARA
What happened out there?

AUGUSTUS
Nothing.

RICARA
What did you find?

Augustus shakes his head watching as Brawn joins a group of SOLDIERS like himself all wearing heavy artillery.

AUGUSTUS
(solemnly)
Ricara.

RICARA
The seeds that were scattered
months ago?

AUGUSTUS
Ricara, there's nothing there.

She starts to walk away, but stops, returning.

RICARA
What are we going to put in the
reports? We've been banking on that
fertilizer for months...

AUGUSTUS
It's inconclusive! That's all!

RICARA
It's conclusive, Augustus! We
can't get a single plant to grow
these conditions and we haven't
discovered any new life forms for
years. When are you going to get
it, Augustus? Just stop playing the
fucking hero, will you?

Augustus isn't sure how to respond - nothing hopeful to say at this point. She walks off as he stands on the desert terrain alone, the city ahead.

INT. FOOD STORAGE UNIT - SAME

A tall room with hundreds of small, plastic FOOD POUCHES. CLOSE ON a few pouches: Chicken Dinner, Lobster Bisque, Mixed Vegetables, and Spaghetti --

A SOLDIER, dressed in the protocol ALL-BLACK attire holds a huge metal shovel to the pile and shovels up some packs, placing it in a metal container nearby. He shoves the container against the wall, closing it.

FEMALE SOLDIER (V.O.)

Whose next?

EXT. FOOD STORAGE UNIT - SAME

CLOSE ON a rustic well and pump. The TAP is dry and extremely rusted. An ELDERLY MAN, 70, sits nearby, seemingly dehydrated--

A long line of Camp 4901 Residents waiting on their weekly food ration. Most of their FACES are dusty and tired. They line up near the large, nondescript building --

A ruddy-looking MOTHER and DAUGHTER step up next in line to receive a handful of food packets. The mother opens up a metal conical container. She places a few packets into the container.

MOTHER

What about our water ration?

The female soldier pulls out four, tiny, clear, circular PACKETS out of a RED BARREL.

FEMALE SOLDIER

(hesitantly)

Try not to go through these so quickly.

She watches as the mother places a packet in her child's mouth. The soldier seems affected in some way.

INT. MILITARY BASE - SAME - OPERATIONS ROOM

LIEUTENANT MATTHIAS COLE, (60, gray-hair) stands among his OFFICERS looking at a DIGITAL MAP of the newly formed EARTH. All of the earth's continents have been shifted together. Some continents are missing large areas of land but they are still distinguishable.

Brawn stands among the closed group of military officials - about six officers. Another officer, GENERAL WALLACE, (40, well-built, handsome) stands by.

GENERAL WALLACE

Lieutenant Cole, we think we've detected movement in the South West. It could be another Earth Camp.

He points to a specific location on the map.

LIEUTENANT COLE

Could be a pack of wild animals for all we know.

BRAWN

All of the animals are dead, Lieutenant.

Brawn and Cole exchange a look.

LIEUTENANT COLE

And you think humans have survived the harsh conditions of the Tyrant Desert and the last floods?

GENERAL WALLACE

We've survived, why not others?

LIEUTENANT COLE

(with authority)

That's enough!

(a beat)

If there is more activity, be the first to let me know. Otherwise, I am not putting my men on a deadly goose hunt about Earth Camps that haven't been detected for decades.

The Lieutenant begins for the door.

LIEUTENANT COLE (CONT'D)

Sergeant Brawn, follow me. I need a report.

EXT. MILITARY BASE - SAME

Brawn and Cole stand side by side watching camp RESIDENTS walk through the streets and side corners in the distance.

BRAWN

The scientists have nothing substantial.

LIEUTENANT COLE

(sighing)

I thought they were making stride.

BRAWN

Sir, we can find another course of action. I know there are other earth camps out there. General Wallace believes it, Sir. I can organize a few long-term raids, take whatever spoils they managed--

LIEUTENANT COLE

Sergeant Brawn... You of all people should know that our units are organized to protect life, not threaten it.

Cole walks off, leaving Brawn to contemplate this.

INT. CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - SAME

A few RELIGIOUS PEOPLE assemble in the sanctuary. FATHER KENT, (80, priest) stands before the SCANTY congregation, holding up a Bible.

FATHER KENT

We have faced the last days. We've faced the worse of our times... and yet there may be even greater trials to some. But shall the thought of this deter our faith? Shall we be torn down or destroyed in who we are and what we believe? I say 'no,' for the trying times will only make us stronger.

Father Kent scans the faces in the crowd. His eyes fall upon Augustus who stands in the back near the exit door.

EXT. EARTH CAMP 4901 - SAME

Father Kent and Augustus walk through the dusty streets. A group of young BOYS kick a soccer ball around the rumbles. There's no form of plant life, only dust and broken concrete structures.

FATHER KENT

I haven't seen you this way in a while.

AUGUSTUS

I've been working a lot, Father.

FATHER KENT (O.C.)

What about that beautiful scientists who speaks like the tail end of a serpent? What's her name again?

Augustus smiles.

AUGUSTUS

Ricara. She's still around.

FATHER KENT

Good. Good. Someone needs to level you out.

(a beat)

Augustus, are you still dreaming?

Augustus shakes his head, soon stopping to watch the boys play. Father Kent follows suit.

AUGUSTUS

No. Not since my father's death.

FATHER KENT

Then God has yet to speak to us.

AUGUSTUS

Why are you so sure he speaks to me?

FATHER KENT

Because he spoke to your father just the same.

A stray BALL soars over to Augustus, who soon kicks it back to the group of boys -- A HISPANIC BOY catches the ball with his leading foot.

Augustus and Father Kent continue to meander through the town.

AUGUSTUS

Why do you continue to preach without a congregation, Father?

ETHAN

Because I understand the power of faith.

(a beat)

The other day one of the younger mothers asked me to look around and tell her what good was there in all this. I told her that before the evacuation, there were rampant social ills and enduring acts of evil. There were disparities between the rich and poor. Black and white. Jew and Muslim. And that although we today face hunger and extinction, we have more peace and understanding of one another more than we ever did have in the history of the world. We are all united fighting for one cause: survival. I rather live in this world than of the world remembered.

AUGUSTUS

(with resignation)

Your ideals are lofty and misplaced, Father. In five years, our food supply will be gone. In two, our water. Then what will become of your peace?

ETHAN

God will provide our needs, Augustus. He has thus far.

EXT. APARTMENT SKY RISE - NIGHT

CAMERA scales a tall apartment building at least five hundred feet high. Apartment LIGHTS are on in a few of them.

INT. AUGUSTUS' APARTMENT - SAME

It's a small studio-style apartment a few floors up. A beautiful view of the town's skyline.

A large, silver CROSS hangs on the wall. A blue couch faces the wide windows. Nearby, a sleeping cot --

Augustus stands over his kitchen sink, squeezing a dripper filled with liquid into a petri dish. He pulls a seed out of a container and places it in the dish. The seed begin to rapidly sprout, taking the form of a sapling. It sits there in the dish.

AUGUSTUS

There you are --

Augustus compares the very real sapling with one he sees in a large textbook. It's the picture of a corn plant --

Augustus places the written label "corn" on the petri dish -- He sets the petri dish next to a few other plants that sit on the window sill. All of them are wilted and dying. The new one is a ray of hope, even if it's for a short while.

INT. HOSPITAL - SAME

DOCTOR EMILY COLE, (40, beautiful) walks through the emergency doors with her clipboard in hand --

An HISPANIC MOTHER holds her TEENAGER's hand as he lies in the hospital bed with a BROKEN ANKLE. The boy writhes in pain. It's one of the kids who were playing soccer (from earlier). Emily begins to check the boy's vitals.

EMILY

What happened?

MOTHER (O.S.)

My son was playing in the fields
with the other boys.

The boy bites down on his lip, trying to hold back the painful expressions. Emily pulls out a small black case and extracts a needle. The mother watches as Emily then proceeds to insert it into the boy's arm as he takes deep breaths.

She turns to an approaching MALE NURSE.

EMILY

Take him to room 94 and put a stint
around it. Then use a spray cast.

(to the mother)

Your son will be fine. I promise.

INT. HOSPITAL - SAME - WARD

Emily watches a CHILD PATIENT (7, female) who lies in a hospital bed. She's suffering from severe malnutrition just like the OLDER PATIENTS next to her.

A NURSE touches Emily from behind.

NURSE

You have company, Doctor.

Emily looks back. It's Lieutenant Cole who soon sets his eyes on the child ahead.

INT. HOSPITAL - SAME - EMILY'S OFFICE

Emily is seated at her work desk, which is filled with paperwork. Lieutenant Cole relaxes his tall military posture as he stands in front of her.

EMILY

I haven't seen you for weeks.

LIEUTENANT COLE

I've been a little busy with the military units.

EMILY

Too busy to see your own daughter?

LIEUTENANT COLE

I'm here now.

EMILY

Yes, after eons and eons of time have passed. Which forces me to ask the question: Why are you here, Lieutenant?

Cole moves over to sit in the seat in front of her.

LIEUTENANT COLE

Emily, I need to assemble a team of doctors.

EMILY

Why?

LIEUTENANT COLE

I'm leading an expedition to the North.

EMILY

The North is flood zone, Father.

LIEUTENANT COLE

Not anymore. We've had reports of land... possibly fertile.

EMILY

(not convinced)

It's going to be dangerous.

LIEUTENANT COLE

We can't stay here and wait to die.
In five months, your malnutrition
cases will sky-rocket and, as you
can tell, the elderly and children
will suffer the most. Something has
to be done.

He recognizes Emily's burden as a doctor.

LIEUTENANT COLE (CONT'D)

We must find some answers or who we
are as humans end right here.

INT. SCIENCE INSTITUTION - MORNING - LABORATORY

Glass ceilings. Tables and tables of apparatus filled with
liquids and gases -- animal frames assembled on various
platforms --

In one corner are small solar panels attached to a solar
electric wire that sporadically exhibit electric waves. There
is also a small decayed tree in the center of the room --

Augustus and Ricara, dressed in their professional white
garb, stand with a team of SCIENTISTS looking at a table of
special PLANTS. There is a CHIEF SCIENTISTS (65) among them
who speaks to a class of YOUNGER SCIENTISTS. Augustus,
Ricara, and a few OTHERS are among the veterans. Augustus and
Ricara exchange a look. His face is soft; hers, hardened.

CHIEF SCIENTIST

(referring to the tree)

The *Oleifera* might be our last
hope. So far it has only lived to
see two years. But if we can
improve recent fertilizer
technologies, we can hopefully
extend life to about five years,
expecting a full grown tree that
could potentially produce more
sustainable seeds and plants in the
times to come.

The Chief Scientist exchanges a look with Augustus.

CHIEF SCIENTIST(CONT'D)

In the meantime, we must keep
searching for other alternatives --

The Chief Scientist talks with Augustus on the side while the
others move on to a different plant station.