

OmniScience: Purple Haze

By

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1 EXT. RUNDOWN BACK ALLEY - 3:00AM

Open with a shot of a middle-aged homeless man sitting alone in a sleeping bag against a brick wall and next to some fly-tipped rubbish. The alley pavement he sits on is cold and wet, and seems otherwise lifeless.

A SILHOUETTED WOMAN STAGGERS THROUGH THE STREET.

We see this woman, revealing her pale, drawn face, raggedy clothes and stringy hair. She is in a drunken or drug-induced stupor. She looks down and peels back her jacket sleeve, revealing some kind of device implanted in her wrist.

WOMAN:
(Slurring)
Fuck it.

The woman scans her thumbprint against the device. She momentarily disappears in a flash of light, before almost instantaneously returning to the exact place she was standing. Toppling over, she begins spasming uncontrollably, frothing from the mouth.

We see a small troupe of four young men and women, drunkenly singing and parading through the street that the alleyway opens out onto.

They consist of: a blonde man, CARLTON (age 25), a brunette woman, OPHELIA (age 24), a shaven bald man, SNAP (age 30), and a blonde woman, EMILY (age 23).

ALL FOUR OF THEM:
(Singing slurred)
"Woah, ground control to Major Tom!"

CARLTON:
"Check ignition and may... fuck... and
may god's love be with youuuu..."

ALL FOUR OF THEM:
(Imitating the beat of the song)
Bowbowbowbowbowbowbow (etc.)

OPHELIA:
(About Carlton)
He's paralytic, look at him.

CARLTON:
Well it wasn't my fault some stranger
just kept handing me jaegerbombs,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARLTON: (CONT'D)

alright?

EMILY:

(Laughing)

There's always one, it's true.

As the pack moves ahead down the street, Emily pauses and peers into the alleyway, at the paralysed older woman. The older woman seems to beg for help with her eyes. But Emily declines with a bemused, unsympathetic half-chuckle, before moving on to catch up with her friends.

A better view of the city is revealed: there is no skyline, just a curved grey wall and a ceiling with lights glaring downwards to illuminate the streets below. It's a futuristic metropolis, but what was once a clean white sheen is now rusted from neglect.

(Opening credits roll)

2 INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - DAYBREAK

Emily drowsily awakes from her bed after having been sleeping in an awkward position. The bedroom is plain with cream wallpaper and no decoration. She sits up, and we see her back; a hideous, crude metallic device is implanted along her spinal cord, covered with what looks like dried skin-coloured paint. She turns and looks at her clock, which reads 11am.

EMILY:

Bollocks.

JOHN:

(offscreen)

Language.

Emily rolls over and sees her younger brother JOHN (age 18) lying on the floor beside her bed, his head resting on a bunch of sofa pillows.

EMILY:

Feels like I should be asking questions.

JOHN:

Like what?

EMILY:

I dunno, like 'is God real?', 'is there meaning in life?'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN:

Have you heard the word of our lord
and saviour, Strongbow Darkfruit?

EMILY:

Funny. Why are you down there, you
weren't out last night.

JOHN:

You had 'pres with me, remember?

EMILY:

Oh yeah, I forgot rum shots knock you
spark out, lightweight.

JOHN:

At least I won't be at mum's next A.A.
meeting.

EMILY:

(Laughing)

Oh, fuck off!

She hits him over the head with a pillow, which wards him out
of her room. She sits still for a few moments before getting
out of bed.

APARTMENT KITCHEN

Emily enters the kitchen where her mother ALEX (age 50) is
working.

ALEX:

Well, good morning, you dirty stopout.

EMILY:

(sarcastically, grinning)

And you.

Emily goes to a counter and boils a kettle, which looks oddly
futuristic next to every other utensil.

ALEX:

You have fun?

EMILY:

Yeah. Better ring Ophelia and check if
everyone's alright. Bet they're all in
a state.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALEX:

Mmm. Hey, it's your day off today,
right?

EMILY:

Yeah, I wouldn't be up at 11am
otherwise.

ALEX:

Well, go and take the twins to that
"Say no to Haze" thing, please.

The kettle boils in what seems like an instant, and Emily begins pouring the water into a mug. She stares into it for a few seconds in a sort of trance before snapping out of it and replying.

EMILY:

Sure.

3 EXT. CITY CENTRE ROAD - DAY

Walking down a narrow, innocuous road in the vast domed citadel that seems half worn down and half clean and modern, Emily looks to her left and sees a series of posters plastered in a line on a wall, all saying the same thing. The message was impossible to miss, but repeated endlessly until it effectively meant nothing.

The poster says "HAZE KILLS". She glares at the poster series from the corner of her eye scornfully.

She arrives at a vast grey apartment complex, and stands in what looks like a regular elevator, except it is actually a teleporter. She casually uses the amazing technology without any notice, and it takes her to the 127th floor. With an utterly bored expression on her face, she exits the second teleport pod, and knocks on one of the nearby apartment doors. Her two youngest twin brothers, PABLO and CIRIMO (ages 11), answer the door.

PABLO:

Sis!

EMILY:

(Hugging them)
Hello, unwombed foetuses. I've missed
you two.

SAL (age 45), a parent of one of the twins' friends, walks to the doorway.

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EMILY: (CONT'D)

Have they been good?

SAL:

As good as can be expected.

CIRIMO:

We've been to the Land of Oz with Jacky!

SAL:

They were using Jacky's VR headset.

EMILY:

You've still got one of those?

SAL:

Yeah.

EMILY:

You should auction it. Upper level collectors would be all over vintage gadgets like that. You could move up to the next level.

SAL:

Well, maybe one day. Jacky and her friends still seem to enjoy it, plus it keeps them quiet. The alternative would be giving her a Haze implant or something!

(She laughs awkwardly, before remembering who she's talking to as she sees Emily's pained expression)

Oh, um... sorry, I-I didn't-

EMILY:

No, no, it's fine. Speaking of that though, I've gotta take these two to that talk that explains why they don't want to end up like me.

(to the twins)

Come on, let's go.

SAL:

Oh. Bye.

4 EXT. EDUCATION FACILITY - DAY

Emily and her brothers walk to the facility's large gateway

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and into the building. It has a hospital-like quality to it, with nearly everything in it's entrance hall being white and clinical-looking.

PABLO:

Do we have to be doing this?

EMILY:

Yep. You two don't realise how lucky you are to have people actually educate you about Haze. No one ever told me.

They enter a large lecture theatre, with the same white aesthetic of everything else in the building. Only a few other people were in there, seated. DR. GRASS (age 40), a tall, bespectacled dark-haired woman in a white and purple labcoat, stood at the front, preparing some kind of PowerPoint presentation at her desk in front of a holographic monitor. She stands and begins the presentation.

DR. GRASS:

Glad you could all make it. I'm Dr. Grass, and welcome to this lecture on deus transcendental displacement. You all know it better as Haze. Before we get onto the side effects of this technology, let's have a quick history lesson.

Emily rolls her eyes.

DR. GRASS:(CONT'D)

The truth is, we don't actually know that much about it. Maybe the most high-ranked individuals at the top level know more than we do, maybe not. What we do know is that the technology used in Haze's creation was "discovered" around fifty years ago. I say it like that because it clearly wasn't us who discovered it; it was just left there for us.

A hand is raised among the audience.

AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Who left it there?

DR. GRASS:

I was just getting on to that. Again,
(MORE)

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DR. GRASS: (CONT'D)
 sorry to disappoint, but your guess is
 as good as ours. Aliens? Some other
 nascent civilisation from the far side
 of the world, beyond the napalm
 wastes?... God?

Emily stifles a snorting giggle at the last one.

DR. GRASS:(CONT'D)
 When it was first discovered that this
 technology had... 'humanitarian'
 applications, there were the first set
 of human test subjects. While now most
 Haze users have them implanted from
 young ages in their wrists -- because
 some 'genius' thought that was a good
 idea -- the original volunteers had
 them grafted along the spinal column.

A diagram of a few emaciated test subjects with the same
 metal implants in their spines as Emily. Emily looks
 uncomfortably at the pictures.

DR. GRASS:(CONT'D)
 Haze was considered mostly harmless.
 Addictive, but harmless. When
 activated, a teleportation process
 occurs that takes you outside of this
 plane of reality. It's... miraculous,
 really. We still have yet to truly
 understand it.

EMILY:
 (Shouting)
 What do you know then, exactly?

Emily shrinks back into the crowd with an expression that
 shows a mix of embarrassment and pride. Her little brothers
 look at each other in amazement.

DR. GRASS:
 (Ignoring Emily's heckling)
 It has always been encouraged for Haze
 users to consume a docility pill
 before activation, otherwise they run
 serious risk of epileptic seizure upon
 re-entry into reality.

TRANSITION BACK TO EMILY'S APARTMENT

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Alex stressfully sorts out her bills. Tired and frustrated, she goes to a cabinet and takes out a pill. She swallows it with a glass of water, before activating her Haze wrist device, teleporting out of reality briefly. A glimpse of the dimension that Haze users are taken to: a dark, cloudy but somehow serene void with a purple hue and brief sparks of colour flashing all around.

DR. GRASS:(CONT'D)

(Voiceover)

If activated repeatedly without the pills, users run risk of permanent physical and mental damage.

TRANSITION TO THE RUNDOWN BACK ALLEY SEEN AT THE START

The old woman seen painfully O.D.ing at the start of the episode is seen in a catatonic state next to the homeless man against the wall.

DR. GRASS:(CONT'D)

(Voiceover)

Or death.

A pair of men spitefully throw a mostly eaten apple at the old woman, making her barely living body slouch over into the sleeping hobo's crotch. The anonymous men laugh at their cruel, self-satisfying prank. They walk all the way through that alleyway and past another alleyway nearby, where Haze users' corpses lie together in a dumpster. A grotty, robed figure drags the dumpster off the street and into the distance.

5 INT. EDUCATION FACILITY CORRIDOR - DAY

Emily is leading her brothers to the men's toilets. The walls of the corridor are incongruously plated in wood as opposed to the usual aesthetic of the building.

EMILY:

They're just down there, go.

Emily leans against a wall while her brothers run off down the corridor.

A rotund, moustached man of around 40 years, dressed in a sleek purple-lined pinstripe suit, walks out of the men's a second after the twins enter, and casually leans up against the same wall as Emily, less than a metre away from her. He readjusts his trousers and crudely rejigs his crotch. Emily glances at him with a slightly disgusted but more confused

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expression.

EMILY: (CONT'D)

Trouble?

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:

Yeah, it's the problem with these custom suits. They probably got some young intern to make this. Not my most comfortable one.

EMILY:

Right.

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:

There's no workmanship today, I'm telling you. These kids, they think if they say they're depressed it's a free pass to not give a shit. If they're not drunk, they're on weed, if they're not weed, they're on heroin, if they're not on heroin, they're on heroween - which is worse than regular heroin - and if they're not on that, well... I'm sure you know what comes after.

EMILY:

What?

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:

Haze. As I said, I'm sure you know all about it, Emily.

EMILY:

Good guess, but my name is actually "Get the fuck away from me, you purple freak."

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:

That's a beautiful name, is it French?

EMILY:

Seriously, how do you know me? From that beer bong video that went viral? I swear, I'll kill Carlton-

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:

I know you from the original Deus Transcendental Displacement project. You were one of the first test

(MORE)

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DR. VINCENT VIOLA: (CONT'D)
subjects, were you not? I also saw
your little outburst in the lecture
hall. Did Grass touch a nerve?

EMILY:
I don't want anything to do with Haze
again. I don't care about whatever it
is you're selling.

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:
That's 100% fair, I can't blame you.
But this is a desperate time. All this
"Haze Kills" bullshit? It's not
actually bullshit. At least, not in
the way you probably think. It's
actually a serious fucking problem.
That's why we need you, Emily.

EMILY:
How would I help?

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:
I'm getting to that. There's something
out there. It's waiting in the dark.
It's coming for all of us, and the
first herald of it's descension has
arrived. A plague, a sickness. It's
already paralysed most of the upper
level and it's going down the ladder,
slowly but surely. They're up there
panicking, so they relying on our
people down here in this place to do
the dirty work. We don't have a cure,
yet. We don't know what it is.

EMILY:
How many times am I going to hear that
today?

DR. VINCENT VIOLA:
What we do know is that some people
are immune; a very select few. They
will be the key. You see, this is the
first stage of an interview for a
salubrious job opportunity for you.
I'll meet you at the Libel nightclub
at 10pm. You're in on this, whether
you like it or not.

The twins appear from round the corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CIRIMO:
What's going on?

EMILY:
Did you two just take the longest
shits ever or what? Come on, let's go.

Emily grabs them by the collars and hurries them on. Viola and Emily stare at each other as they part.