

VR Troopers

written by

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FADE IN

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

CHRIS STAR (50) a greying African-American man speaks in a hushed voice into his phone in the corner of the kitchen.

CHRIS
I'm not bringing her down there,
you can see her when you get
better...

Chris is more focused on keeping a lookout for his daughter KAITLIN STAR (14) walking into the kitchen than he is to the voice on the other end of the phone.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
She's fine, she's good, school is
good, she's got a big karate thing
coming up.

Chris has his back turned to the doorway leading to the living room, where Kaitlin hides behind the frame quietly listening, trying her best to be a fly on the wall.

Chris makes a quick turn to see Kaitlin's shoulder sticking out from the doorway.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Yeah, call me next week. Bye.

Chris puts the phone down and waits for Kaitlin to "conveniently" pop around the corner. She stays still.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You hungry?

Kaitlin pokes her head out from behind the door frame.

KAITLIN
You forgot to say 'I love you'
before you hung up.

Chris purses his lips, he's at his wits end. All he can do is shrug.

CHRIS
Sorry, I forgot.

KAITLIN
Call her back. Then I can talk to
her, too.

Chris can only manage to shake his head 'no' as he pulls out a pan and places it on the stove top.

CHRIS

How about I make us breakfast for dinner?

KAITLIN

No thanks, I already ate.

Chris looks up, but she is already gone. His fingers press into his forehead trying to release the tension of the moment.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - KAITLIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kaitlin sits in front of a large office desk filled by three large high-end computer monitors and a sleek virtual reality headset.

She drags the mouse over to an icon in the corner of the middle screen. The icon reads 'Skybase VR'. As she clicks the icon she gently brings the headset over her eyes...

CUT TO VIRTUAL REALITY:

INT. SKYBASE VIRTUAL REALITY - DR. HART'S LAB - DAY

Kaitlin emerges from a towering beam of light, but as a mechanized warrior. She is covered head to toe in neon-lit metallic armor.

The room is an all-in-white design of a mad scientists lab...of the future.

Assume the futuristict Hong to be a common denominator throughout everything in 'Skybase'.

It's nearly empty aside from the wall to wall computers. This is a private chat room within Skybase VR.

JB REESE (14) the computer nerd and RYAN STEELE (14) the confident karate jock, even though that hasn't been a thing since the 1980's, are both metal-clad warriors as well, standing in the center of the room, friends of Kaitlin's obviously. They all exchange playful shoves while laughing as Kaitlin makes her way to the wall-sized computer monitor.

KAITLIN

Any new messages?

JB

Nah, got some rehashed quests we can run tonight if you want.

RYAN

Nothing good, though. They're holding out for the update patch at midnight.

KAITLIN

Hey, it's always fun kicking Skugs around.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIRTUAL CITY STREETS - SUNSET

The bustling city is neon and glowing as the sun sets. Flying cars, holographic advertisements, androids and vibrant skinned aliens.

Kaitlin, JB, and Ryan walk down the center of a crowded street. In Kaitlin's display view a small square infrared patch analyzer bounces around the screen at short intervals. It finds nothing.

Automated vendors with dialog boxes over their heads hound them as they walk by. Fellow players appear with a blue pixelated outlines drawn around their characters.

Overhead, about 20 stories up, or some equally ridiculous amount of height, the glass windows of an infinitely tall skyscraper shatters and rains down on the street below.

KAITLIN

Oh yeah! Skugs hiding in the buildings, gon' be a good one boys.

RYAN

You think there's a baby boss coming down, too?

JB

Maybe two, they sometimes do that.

A group of pathetic looking humanoid robots, SKUGS, drop in all around the three.

-Kaitlin is front-kicking a Skug into the side of a moving flying car in the street.

-JB is in an expensive looking building lobby giving a Skug a noogie to the point where it's robotic head explodes.

-Ryan is in an office building hallway firing energy shotgun blasts out of his hands at a dozen Skugs in every direction.

-Kaitlin is running up a stairwell chucking Skugs over the railings, smashing their heads against the wall, and ripping through them with her laser covered hands.

-Kaitlin kicks down the rusted metal door to the roof of a building with JB and Ryan right behind her.

-Two absurdly large, cheesy looking alien creatures growl at the trio as they run full speed, in super awesome slo-Mo, energy lasers lighting up all over their suits when...

CUT TO REAL WORLD:

INT. KAITLIN'S ROOM - NIGHT

KAITLIN

(speaking with headset
still on)

I know, I know, but I really need
sleep you guys...I'll try the new
patch tomorrow...don't, don't tell
me anything, Ryan I swear if you
say one word...

There is a knock at the door. It's a gentle knock. Kaitlin rips off the headset and dives into her bed. The door is cracked open just enough for Chris to fit his head in.

CHRIS

You sleeping?

KAITLIN

Kinda, just laying here-

Chris looks over to the computer monitors, still turned on, still logged into Skybase VR. JB and Ryan's voices could still be heard coming through the headset.

CHRIS

Looking at your computer game from
afar?

KAITLIN

Dad, it's not a computer game, you
make it sound so stupid.

CHRIS

(cupping his hands around
his mouth as he yells)

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hello, JB, hello, Ryan, you boys
should really get some sleep, like
Kaitlin is.

Kaitlin hops out of bed to turn the computer off before her
Dad can be anymore embarrassing.

KAITLIN
Thanks, Dad.

She walks over to the door and pushes against her Dad's face
with her hand until his head clears the doorway. Kaitlin
slams the door shut right as his mouth opens to say
something.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Love ya too. Night hun.

KAITLIN
Yup, love you. Goodnight Dad.

Without any more effort footsteps can be heard walking away
from the door and down the hall.

Kaitlin's shoulders drop with exhaustion and she flops face
first onto her mattress.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MR. HART (30) is an intelligent and handsome looking teacher,
and as he drops a thick dictionary on Kaitlin's desk to wake
her, he looks around the room to see their reaction.

Kaitlin slowly rises, her fists digging into the corners of
her eyes. Mr. Hart lets the class snicker and laugh for a
moment until Kaitlin's tired eyes meet his.

MR.HART
Good morning, welcome to school.
We're very glad you could make it
here today, but I think it would be
mutually beneficial if you were
somewhat coherent during class as
well.

KAITLIN
Mm...

MR.HART
You should probably go to the
office now.

KAITLIN

If I'm going to the office anyways,
can't I at least get some sleep
first.

The class loses it, and laughter takes control of everyone
except Mr. Hart and Kaitlin.

INT. CLASSROOM - END OF CLASS - CONTINUOUS

It's only Mr. Hart and Kaitlin in the room now. They are
sitting in opposite desks staring at each other--quiet.

MR. HART

You know, you can use technology,
and still function in the real
world. It's called finding a
balance.

KAITLIN

I'm fine.

Mr. Hart taps his foot impatiently, his arms cross tightly.

MR. HART

I wasn't even getting into
that...yet. I know things aren't
fine, that much is obvious. I also
know you spend too much time in
'Skybase' and not enough time
sleeping or eating.

KAITLIN

Or doing homework.

MR. HART

I could care less about homework
right now, because I'm honestly
worried about your health more than
anything else. What's going on
Kaitlin?

KAITLIN

You know, I have a dad for this
kind of stuff. All this...talking.

MR. HART

I talked with him already.

KAITLIN

Good, so you're all caught up on my
life.

Kaitlin gave the fakest, widest smile she could muster before standing up.

MR. HART

I get it, I'm on 'Skybase' a lot, too. It's addicting to get out of your skin and to be part of such a simple, black and white reality.

KAITLIN

You do not go in 'Skybase'.

MR. HART

I do, if you don't believe me, come and find me. My username is Dr. Horatio Hart. But, you have to promise me you will talk--about real problems you're dealing with .

Kaitlin walks past Mr. Hart towards the open door to the hallways.

KAITLIN

Seems like a student and a teacher meeting up outside of class would be against school policy.

MR. HART

School policy also says standardized tests should determine a students future.

Kaitlin gives Mr. Hart a thumbs up as she walks out of the room.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kaitlin walks down the empty hallway. The sounds of voices and something banging against a locker can be heard from around the corner.

Kaitlin turns the corner and sees CRAIG (17) and DUNCAN (16) the high school bullies,

They're taking turns slamming JIM up against the lockers. They laugh as Jim's face turns red and his eyes start to water.

Kaitlin marches up to the larger boys. She grabs Craig by the collar of his shirt and yanks hard to throw him off balance while her foot stomps into the back of his knee.

Before Craig can stand back up Kaitlin takes a quick step back to give her enough space to do a spinning roundhouse kick right to his...

INT, KAITLIN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris is sitting on the couch with Kaitlin. They sit at opposite ends of the couch, and Kaitlin is squeezing herself into the corner, as far away from her dad as possible.

Chris stares at her, even though she won't meet his eyes.

CHRIS

What the hell, Kaitlin?

KAITLIN

I wasn't going to let them beat up Jim. They deserved-

CHRIS

-Of course they did, but this is the real world, Kaitlin. You can't go around beating up bad guys.

KAITLIN

Yeah, I could have the teachers put them in detention, or send them on a two week vacation by suspending them.

Chris gently taps the arm of the sofa with a clenched fist. He stands up and looks back at Kaitlin.

CHRIS

What do you want me to say? You never listen to me, Kaitlin. You think you can just out punch the world.

Kaitlin stands, and starts to walk away.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

One day, it just won't work. It won't be enough, and I'm worried that once that happens you'll be in some real trouble, and you won't have any way to get yourself out.

KAITLIN

(Under her breath)

It works in Skybase.

INT. KAITLIN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kaitlin sits at her desk, she plugs in some headphones and places them inside her ear.

The sounds of garage rock—imagine Arctic Monkeys, The Black Keys, Royal Blood, I prefer 'Cold Hard Bitch' by Jet—are quiet at first...

CUT TO VIRTUAL REALITY:

INT. SKYBASE VIRTUAL REALITY - DR. HART'S LAB - DAY

The sound of the music is loud and pounding as Kaitlin walks up to the main computer wall.

Her mechanized hand reaches out and touches a button labeled 'Rampage Mode'.

EXT. MOUNTAINTOP - DAWN

Kaitlin stands on like an acre flat slab of stone that is actually a mountaintop. It's beautiful mountain ranges all around, and as you look around at the mountain Kaitlin stands on, there's something different about her beautiful mountain.

Skugs nearly cover every inch of it as they climb up towards the flat slab at the top. As the first group of Skugs makes their way towards Kaitlin, she shakes out her limbs, loosening up.

Her fists glow a bright electric blue as she punches clean through Skugs heads in chunks. After a bit of this she starts adding in question mark kicks, flying knees, backwards spinning elbows, judo throws, a whole bunch of cool martial arts shit.

When this gets old she just goes straight savage on Skugs ripping off limbs to use as weapons and even breaks out a couple of professional wrestling German suplex's.

There's some cool shoulder machine guns that come out of nowhere and fire off a bunch of rounds while Kaitlin chops up Skugs with laser swords like she's on Iron Chef.

EXT. VIRTUAL CITY STREETS - DAY

JB and Ryan can't seem to keep up with Kaitlin as she shoves her way through the crowded street. She literally shoves other players to ground, what a jerk.

JB

Is there a fire somewhere?

RYAN

Yeah, Kaitlin, you haven't said a word to us since we logged in, what's up?

Kaitlin swings around to face her friends, fists clenched.

KAITLIN

Nothing is up, Ryan. What is it with you guys? I don't need a therapy session everywhere I go. I'm walking fast, people who are slow are in my way, so I get them out of my way. Alright.

She turns back around and doubles her speed. JB and Ryan don't follow anymore, they let Kaitlin get lost in the thick crowd.

RYAN

Jeez, what was that all about?

JB

Give her some slack, you know what she's going through with her mom.

RYAN

Yeah, but she's never acted like this.

JB

My dad says when girls go through puberty they get really crazy. Going through all sorts of changes and stuff.

RYAN

Speaking of girls, I was in my dad's room the other day, you will never guess what I found.

EXT. VIRTUAL CITY ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Kaitlin sits on the ground at the end of an alleyway, it's cold, dark, and damp. Her head balances on her knees as she sits in a relaxed fetal position.

The sounds of her labored breaths are close to sobs and it seems the world around her is muted.

Just out of view a shadow stands in the alley with her. She looks up, and it's a character outlined in blue, but hidden by the shadows of the alley.

Kaitlin stands to and starts to size them up. Her internal display view goes frantic with analyzing data.

KAITLIN

Leave me alone.

Kaitlin runs at the character in the shadows, lowering her shoulder to plow right through them. Like a skillful matador the other character side-steps her and leaves his foot out to trip her.

Kaitlin goes skidding across the wet asphalt.

KAITLIN (CONT'D)

What the hell was that for Mr. Hart?

In Kaitlin's display view, the username Dr. Horatio Hart appears above Mr. Hart's character.

MR. HART

Oh, so you weren't just trying to run through me like a linebacker?

Kaitlin jumps back to her feet, and front flips towards Mr. Hart coming down on him with a front flip kick of some sort.

Mr. Hart steps backwards just enough to miss her foot, then takes one step forward locking Kaitlin in a headlock. He pulls her out of the alley by her head.

MR. HART (CONT'D)

You see, in 'Skybase' I can put you in a headlock and not get fired.

KAITLIN

Let go, now.

MR. HART

You promised we'd talk, and if I have to hold you to that promise, even in a headlock, I will.

KAITLIN

I'm serious, I'm about to go crazy on you.

MR. HART

Be my guest.

Kaitlin squirms and flails, but to no avail.

KAITLIN

Fine, let me go, and I'll talk.

Mr. Hart let's go of her head, and the second he does Kaitlin tries to throw a spinning back elbow to his head. He catches the attack and puts her back in the headlock.

MR. HART

Ok, we'll talk like this, then.

KAITLIN

No, no, let me go, I promise, this time I'll talk.

Mr. Hart let's go and Kaitlin stands to face him.

EXT. VIRTUAL CITY BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

Kaitlin is in a headlock again as they stand under the bus stop.

They don't move or speak as the bus pulls up and Mr. Hart drags Kaitlin on.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

On the bus their characters snap still, and glide to an open seat. They don't seat themselves, their characters just appear in the seats. They can't move or act on their own on the bus. They can only chat between characters.

MR. HART

So, we have five minutes. Might as well talk while we wait.

KAITLIN

What about this weather, right?

A SPAM BOT sits directly in front of the two.

SPAM BOT

XX Looking for good times and hard rides xxxxx???? Find me, you looking? Sexy so lonely!!!

KAITLIN

Looks like that new update didn't fix the bus bots problem...

MR. HART

Just mute it.

Another spam bot sits next to them.

SPAM BOT

Enlargement? Pleasure?? Both??
Please call, info, have credit card
ready !!

MR. HART

Mute both of them.

KAITLIN

Ya know, they say spam bots borrow
a lot of the same algorithms that
social media sites use to take
advantage of a users browsing
history.

MR. HART

What's going on at home?

KAITLIN

A lot, thanks for the talk, I feel
so much better now.

MR. HART

Kaitlin, seriously--

The bus glitches momentarily, Kaitlin and Mr. Hart are out of
their seats.

MR. HART (CONT'D)

What the...We're not suppose to be
able to control our characters on
the bus.

The bus is hit on its side and suddenly ripped in half by the
force of the blow. Kaitlin and Mr. Hart are thrown back into
the streets.

EXT. VIRTUAL CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Both of their bodies bounce off the asphalt and into the
brick wall of a building.

In Kaitlin's display view text fills the screen.

[Text in italics]

KAITLIN

*JB, Ryan, get out here, now. I'll
send a party invite. NOW!! CRAZY
BATTLE!!*

The message sends, and the text disappears from her display view. GRIMLORD, one helluva badass looking villain is standing over her. All black armor, sort of alienish, real scary motherf-

KAITLIN (CONT'D)

Grimlord?

Mr. Hart's entire character turns into a walking missile silo, as hidden compartments of missiles of all shapes and sizes pop out of his suit. They rip off all at once towards Grimlord.

Grimlord snaps his fingers and the missiles all disintegrate leaving only trails of smoke behind.

GRIMLORD

Where is GunsofSteele69?

KAITLIN

Uh, who?

A beam of light appears behind Grimlord, Ryan and JB jump out guns-a-blazin. Bullets bounce off of Grimlord's armor.

In Kaitlin's display view she sees above Ryan his username, GunsofSteele69.

KAITLIN (CONT'D)

Oh--

Grimlord turns to face JB and Ryan, Mr. Hart's entire arm turns into a laser cannon and fires a huge beam of energy at Grimlord. Grimlord stops the laser beam with his open hand, and sends it directly back towards Mr. Hart.

Grimlord uses a telekinetic pulse to send JB flying off into the sky, waaaaaaay out of view.

The beam of energy strikes back at Mr. Hart breaking his armor apart and leaving him flat on his back.

Grimlord grabs Ryan by his face lifting him into the air.

Kaitlin's hands glow a bright electric blue as she runs towards Grimlord. She takes a swing at him, but faster than she can even comprehend Grimlord dodges the attack slices off her arm with his own bare hand glowing with laser energy and teleports off somewhere with Ryan.

Kaitlin and Mr. Hart lay there among the wreckage.

Kaitlin's display view is flashing red.

KAITLIN (CONT'D)
*Critical health alert, transport to
base?*

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - KAITLIN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kaitlin takes off her headset, and stares at her computer in disbelief. She pushes herself out from her desk and suddenly grasps her arm, wincing and moaning in pain.

Her arm shakes for a moment, Kaitlin's head spins until she falls flat on the floor.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Kaitlin and JB are standing at the bottom of the stairs that lead to the front doors of the school. Each scan the area, looking for...

KAITLIN
You haven't talked to Ryan at all
today?

JB
No, haven't heard from him since
last night.

Kaitlin holds her arm, the one that had a spasm the night before.

KAITLIN
Last night was kind of weird--

JB
--I had the worst chest pains after
I got off Skybase. Still kinda do.

KAITLIN
My arm started to hurt really bad,
too. I kind of passed out. Weird
thing is, it's the arm that
Grimlord cut off in the game. Like,
I swear I could feel it in real
life.

JB's phone rings. He answers, his eyes go wide and the voice on the other end of the phone can only be heard in wild sobs. JB looks over to Kaitlin.

JB
Ryan's missing...

FADE OUT: