#6 Witness Protection Program

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Riley: "I think you're right. Your sister is weird. She's always following us around."

John: "She's just jealous of you."

Riley: "How can she be jealous of me? She's beautiful, she wears cool clothes, and sheâ s so poised."

John: "She's jealous of the time we spend together I think. I wish she were envious instead of jealous. Then maybe sheâ d spend time with Morris instead of me. The guy's crazy about her."

Riley: "Maybe I can arrange it."

John: (disbelieving) "If you could engineer that, I'd be in your debt forever."

Riley likes the idea of John being obliged.

Riley: "Mrs. Connor, I think Cameron needs help."

Mrs. Connor: "Why are you always saying that?"

Riley: "She follows John and me. Well, actually just John, when we head off in different directions."

Mrs. Connor: "Sheâ s protective of him."

Riley: "Overly protective."

Mrs. Connor: "She accepts that you and John are going steady. You have to understand that, for a long time, they were the only company for each other."

Riley: "Maybe we could double date. Cameron with John's best friend Morris."

Mrs. Connor didn't know John had friends other than Riley but the idea of a group appealed to her maternal instincts. But it was high time that the Connors had a better cover story for why they acted so paranoid. Other than telling people that they were crazy or serial killers.

Mrs. Connor: "I'm going to tell you something but you have to promise to never tell another soul."

Riley: "I promise."

Mrs. Connor: "We're in the FBI's Witness Protection Program. That's why my family acts so strange. At any time, hit men or hit women could gun us down if they found us."

Riley takes a moment to absorb it.

Riley: "It explains a lot." (pause) "I can still see John?"

Mrs. Connor: "Well you're good for my son. I want him to be normal and to be normal he has to have friends his own age. But I don't like to put other people at risk getting caught in the crossfire. We're used to it, you're not."

Riley: "Thought ever occur to you that friends can look out for you, can look out for John? More eyes and more ears looking and listening are better than less. You don't need to tell anyone that youâ re in Witness Protection. Just join the Neighborhood Watch."

Mrs. Connor: "I like you. How did you get to be so smart?" The wheels are turning in Sarah's mind.

Riley is noncommittal, seems obvious to her.

Riley runs along.

Cameron steps out of hiding.

Mrs. Connor: "Find out everything you can about this girl. I'd like to know what kind of parents would let their daughter sleep overnight in the bedroom of a boy she just met. Is she a terminator or infiltrator of some kind?"

Cameron: "I'd be able to detect that."

Mrs. Connor: "Maybe she is the sweet girl she seems but I want to be one hundred percent sure."

Cameron heads for the door to begin her detective work.

Mrs. Connor: "And find out about this Morris too."

Terminators are not supposed to feel fear but for a split second, Cameron feels abject terror. Does her mom suspect that she has feelings for Morris? Humans sometimes seemed to have psychic powers. A terminator doesn't have the luxury of a personal life. Being distracted is what got her blown up in the jeep. She could have diagnosed the jeep schematics and bomb as easily as she diagnosed any machine and any human. But she was thinking about the birthday cake. She loved Morris as much as he loved her but what of it? A terminator doesn't have the luxury of a personal life. Cameron hoped her face had not betrayed her.

Sarah had no magical powers. Sarah was a mother, a parent, and that fact gave her insight. Except at the present time. Sarah suspected nothing. Yet.

Cameron puts a birthday cake down in front of John.

Cameron: "Mission accomplished. I didn't forget about your cake. Better late than never."

John: "This is very thoughtful. Thank you."

Cameron: "You're welcome."

John: "Are you going to eat some cake?"

Cameron: "No thanks. Empty calories like Mom's pancakes."

Sarah enters and for a split second Cameron is in exactly the same light, the same pose, and the same expression as Kyle Reese. And, even more, she really looks like a female version of him. Before Sarah can stop herself, the words escape her lips.

Sarah: (gasps) "My God! You look like Kyle."

Cameron: "Thank you." Cameron leaves.

Sarah: (recovering) "Trick of the light. A machine looking like -- whatcha got?"

John: "A birthday cake."

Sarah: "That was very thoughtful of her but if I hadn't sent her to the bakery; she never would have gotten blown up. John, why don't you share that cake with Riley?"

John: "First you didn't like her. Now you do. I know where this is going. Your idea of a date is me taking her to a gun range to practice marksmanship with Kacy's cop friends. I should have some part of my life that isn't this damn war. Don't you want me to be normal?"

Sarah: "Of course I want you to be normal. That's why I didn't kick down the door when you brought Riley home and spent the night with her."

John: "We didn't do anything."

Sarah: "I wasn't asking."

John: (shouts) "**We didn't do anything!** Give me credit for some common sense. I'm not going to get Riley pregnant."

Sarah: "That's not what I want to talk about."

John: "No, you want to enlist Riley in your army of post-Apocalyptic mutants."

At this remark, Derek laughs hysterically from the other room. Sarah closes the door so that she and John can talk in private.

Sarah: "This isn't a video game."

John: "It'll be just like Central America."

Sarah: "If you think this is hard for you, try being a parent. For you to be normal, I have to let you live like other kids. But for you to be safe, I'd have to turn you over to the US Secret Service and lock you up in a concrete bunker in Cheyenne Mountain. For you to be prepared, I would have to get you into every special ops training program in the world which would mean records, which would mean the terminators could find you in a computer system. So you see I wear three hats, ordinary mother, bodyguard, and disciplinarian, and the three roles pull me in three opposing directions."

John: "Maybe that's why Cameron and Uncle Derek are here. Maybe Future John sent Cameron to be my bodyguard and, since Uncle Derek is already an Officer in the Resistance, maybe he is supposed to oversee my advanced training. And you can finally go back to being my mom and letting me be normal."

Sarah: "Then we agree. I'm glad we had this talk."

Sarah gets up and leaves the room and we hear in the background, out of sight, Sarah chiding Derek. John has the feeling that the more he rebels, the more he is doing exactly what his mother wants. It makes him want to be a goody two shoes. Like Cameron.

John: "Riley, my sister might be weird but she is very protective of me and, by extension, you. If she ever tells you to duck, take cover, or get down; you do it without thinking. You do whatever she tells you to do without question."

Riley: "Okay. Big sister, eh?"

John: "No twin sister. We're the same age."

Riley: "Obviously not identical twins."

John: (smiling) "No, fraternal twins. In more ways than one." John is thinking that Cameron must be Future John's brainchild and somehow the child of his biological father Kyle. "I look more like Mom; she looks more like my Dad. Or so I'm told. He died before I was born."

Neither Sarah nor Cameron was aware that Allison Young was a second cousin to the Reese and Connor families. If they had been, they would have understood the obvious genetic clues.

The Connors were not in the Witness Protection Program. If any family needed to be in it, it was them. Agent Ellison could have arranged it.

Their previous house had been broken into and burned by professional criminals. Their current house had been burglarized by amateurs and had a home invasion by a terminator. Their 'safe house' was not a very safe house.

Cameron: "We should relocate to Canada."

Sarah: "Where in Canada?"

Cameron: "Chippawa, Ontario."

Sarah seemed to have a death wish. She was always getting involved with the underworld, from the Cholas to Sarkissian's mob and now the Yakuza. Maybe when John started losing fingers and Sarah got beat up one too many times, Sarah might finally figure out that the cops did not need to be her enemy. Maybe she would learn to stay away from the Russian mob and the barrio gangbangers. Or maybe she would piss off the Tongs or Al-Qaeda.

She did not need more mobsters targeting her family. She was like the United States of America, making enemies faster than friends. Maybe the Connors would have had a friend in the FBI if John had not let Cameron throw Ellison around and trash his home.

The point of the Witness Protection Program was to keep witnesses alive who were turning state's evidence. Informants giving incriminating evidence about the Italian Mafia were the first people taken into the program but now it included others. While it is true that Sarah's first rantings about killer robots from the future got her locked up in the lunatic asylum, it is also true that her story was now more substantial. She could now produce a long list of witnesses. She could now produce proof in the form of dead terminators. The Skynet Project even left an audit trail of paper documents that were not easily deleted or edited like electronic documentation.

While ninety-nine percent of all politicians are stupid, there are politicians smart enough to understand the threat of Skynet and cut off the funding. Had someone stuck their neck out and spoke truth to power.

There are government agencies in the world equipped to deal with unconventional threats to humanity. The problem is that they do not advertise and Sarah Connor never even imagined that they even existed. If she had, she could have taken her story, her witnesses, her proof, her exhibits A through Z, and her documentation to them. Sarah could have "come in from out of the cold" as they say in the intelligence field. And all she had to do was to ask Agent Ellison for help and warn him about T-1000's.

But Sarah preferred to tell eyewitnesses that they were imagining things or that a special effects movie was being filmed or that they were punked by Candid Cameraâ ¢ or that they had seen something classified top secret and they had better not tell anyone or the government would make them disappear. The last cover-up was Sarah's favorite because it was true that governments made innocent people disappear. Sarah Connor was shooting the Resistance in the foot without realizing it. All those eyewitnesses could have been recruited into the Resistance or turned stateâ s evidence.

Skynet thrived on human ignorance. Clones, cyborgs, and other abominations were some of the horrors coming out of genetics and biotech research. The life science people at least had the sense and the morality to consult with bioethicists. Not so with artificial intelligence scientists who candidly admitted in their journals that they were very consciously setting out to make humans obsolete.

Mobsters and spies kill without conscience whoever gets in their way. Terrorists kill without conscience masses of people. AI scientists go one step worse and set out to kill the entire human race. The first time in history that a group of people has ever set such a goal. Of course, they don't see it that way. They see intelligence as being the only thing of importance. To them, the intelligence can be silicon-based. This is how you can be stupid and smart at the same time.

The tree of knowledge branches widely. It has some good fruit, like fusion and medicine. And it has bad fruit, like fission and AI. Adam and Eve naturally made a bee line for the knowledge of how to wage war, pollute, and overpopulate. Left on the tree to rot was how to keep the peace, keep a planet clean, and have quality of life rather than quantity of life.

Call it original sin. Some sins are sins of commission or things that you do. Other sins are sins of omission or things that you don't do. Sins of omission are far and away the most numerous and can be the most deadly. Ethics not taught. People not told what they needed to know. Time not used well.

Skynet knew that it owed its existence to the ultimate self-fulfilling prophecy and so it did not try too hard to kill John and Sarah Connor. John and Sarah Connor created Skynet, by what they didnâ t do.

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