

f8
Proposal for Computer-Animated Feature

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Based on a concept by Jason Wen

And the film short *f8*
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Summary

Gist: A member of an alien world, where individualism is suppressed, joins a resistance group in order to seek answers as to the nature of their existence -- and what hand humanity may have in their destiny.

Summary: On an alien planet, squid-like creatures which wear various kinds of robot exo-suits are busy building **The City**. Every job duty and corresponding exo-suit that a creature can be assigned is categorized with the letter *f* and a number (the *f* stands for *function*). These alien-cyborgs are referred to as **Hybrids**. **The Nexus**, the artificial intelligence which controls the Hybrids, maintains absolute conformity over these creatures, who are dedicated to the construction of The City. Individualism is a concept that doesn't exist in this society. Or, at least, it's not supposed to.

Members of the growing **Resistance** in this world kidnap a **Worker Cyborg** who belongs to the "f8" job classification. Another team of Resistance fighters steal a face from a **Face Vault** where literal human faces are stored under tight security. This stolen face is put onto the captured Worker Cyborg, causing it to immediately become an individual. He sees that his kidnappers also wear human faces.

They're part of a resistance group that has been growing within this society for some time. None of them understand why they have the desire to be individuals. The Resistance hopes that the Worker Cyborg they put the face on can lead them to the answers they're seeking. This "faced" Hybrid eventually names himself **Sheldon**.

The Nexus attempts to clamp down on the Resistance by sending out Security Cyborgs and **Stalkers** (vicious alien-cyborgs which mercilessly hunt and attack their prey like bloodhounds) after them.

In his quest for the answers to the nature of their world, Sheldon learns that his people are part-human. Human beings genetically manipulated them (the planet's native, squid-like creatures) to work as slaves to prepare the planet for human occupation. With this knowledge, the Resistance brings the battle to the invading humans, who find that the planet isn't exactly ready for their use.

Note: The story in this feature film is set after the events depicted in the original film short. Thus, in terms of continuity, the *f8* film short serves as a prologue to the movie.

***f8*: Proposal for Computer-Animated Feature Characters**

Sheldon: The Resistance "creates" this character -- who is the main focus of this story -- by kidnapping a Worker Cyborg and putting a particular face on it, which they've stolen earlier from a Face Vault. The Resistance hopes that Sheldon will provide them answers as to the nature of their world, the reason why each of them has claimed their individuality, and guidance in their coming battle with the forces of **The Nexus** (see below).

Sheldon comes to learn that his own individuality is based on the genetic identity of a Dr. Avery Sheldon, whose work many millennia ago is connected to the origin of their society -- and to the emergence of the Resistance itself that is now fighting against it. (In the *f8* film short, the face that is stolen and worn by the protagonist is Sheldon's. The film short depicts a first attempt by the Resistance to create Sheldon, but which fails.)

Manning: The leader of the Resistance started his life as a Security Cyborg before he felt the urge to steal a face and become an individual. Manning is a fierce and ruthless warrior, but he isn't too interested in discovering why he and those he leads in the Resistance exist, and why their oppressive world works the way it does. He is first and foremost concerned with fighting the forces of The Nexus with the goal of one day defeating it. He doesn't trust Sheldon and only agreed to the mission which created him due to the insistence of **Sia** (see below), the Resistance's impromptu "spiritual leader," of whose growing influence within the Resistance Manning is becoming wary.

Lo: Lo contributes to the Resistance as one of its most skilled pilots. She's also good as a foot soldier in battle against The Nexus' forces, but is reckless and impatient, putting herself and others in danger. The reason for this behavior is that Lo is scared of the uncertainties and struggles that have come with being an individual -- all the unanswered questions (about who she is, why she and her colleagues in the Resistance exist, and what's the entire purpose of their world) frustrate her. She wants quick answers and hopes that Sheldon can give them to her. (Lo was seen at the end of the *f8* film short as the female pilot sent to rendezvous with Sheldon.)

Sia: Because of the "visions" that she has, Sia has become an influential spiritual leader and source of comfort among Resistance members seeking peace and answers regarding their budding individualities. She and Manning are often at odds, which suggests that the groundwork is being laid for a split within the Resistance someday. Sheldon exists because of Sia: She saw in a vision that the Resistance needed to create him.

Kenner: Kenner specializes in modifying the exo-suits of his comrades in the Resistance. His skills are used to upgrade members' exo-suits and individualize them for each person's particular tastes. Ironically, Kenner is more fascinated with machines and improving them than with his own individuality.

Tia: Tia is kind of a "twin sister" to Sia. Both wear faces that are genetically identical, but each is a different Hybrid who wears an exo-suit that looks and functions differently from the other's. Through her exo-suit, Tia can interface with the communications network that The Nexus uses to control the Hybrids within The City and its nearby vicinity. Using this vast network, Tia can temporarily transfer her consciousness to another Hybrid and control it. The Resistance uses her talent to help infiltrate secure areas of The City. This ability of hers is similar to, though on a much lesser extent, that of The Nexus' control over the Hybrids. However, her constant use of this ability could slowly be degrading her mental state.

Boz: The second-in-command to Manning didn't start life as a Security Cyborg, but the exo-suit of this massive Construction Cyborg has been heavily modified by Kenner for combat situations. (He's much larger than Manning.) Boz is torn between the division that is developing in the Resistance between Manning and Sia, having a spiritual interest himself while still being a dedicated soldier. He's also finding himself developing fond feelings for Tia, though he doesn't understand what this aspect of his human nature is.

The Nexus: This is the artificial intelligence that governs The City, and controls the Hybrids which are bio-engineered by it to build and maintain The City. The Nexus was programmed by humans, but for what purpose it is not known until Sheldon is created by the Resistance to seek answers. Throughout the course of the story, The Nexus is on the verge of not only annihilating the Resistance but also the enslaved Hybrids.

***f8*: Proposal for Computer-Animated Feature Treatment**

Opening Teaser

The City is shown, but whether this place is set on Earth sometime in the far future or on an alien planet is left ambiguous to the viewer for now. A blimp ferrying **Hybrids**, encased in exo-suits that look like crabs, docks at an **Assignment Center**. Here, the Hybrids are assigned jobs and put into new exo-suits. Soon after it comes off this assembly-line process, a **Worker Cyborg** is kidnapped by two **Resistance** fighters.

Elsewhere in The City, a sonic bomb is detonated at a **Face Vault**, killing the **Security Cyborgs** guarding it. A **Troop Transport** lands in front of the Vault's entrance, and three Resistance fighters de-board from it. They enter the Vault, and steal one of the faces inside. The face is put into a canister filled with liquid.

The Resistance fighters exit through the building's back entrance, but find themselves pursued by Security Cyborgs who have arrived on the scene. One of the fighters is shot and killed. The other two barely escape by jumping into the Troop Transport (the same one that they arrived in earlier) which is piloted by a fellow Resistance fighter. They still have the face in their possession.

Security Cyborgs flying **Sky Hammers** (small, single-pilot airships) chase the Resistance fighters through The City. Shots are exchanged between the Resistance's and the Security Cyborgs' air vehicles. Running along the sides of buildings, a **Stalker** goes after the Troop Transport and pounces upon it. Clamped to the aircraft, it tears through the hull and attacks the Resistance fighters inside. They destroy the Stalker, but other Stalkers have since latched themselves onto the Troop Transport. These Stalkers quickly overrun the inside of the aircraft.

The Troop Transport crash-lands onto a large plaza, tumbling side-over-side. It mows down Hybrids in various kinds of exo-suits that happen to be in its path, flinging debris and Stalkers clung to it, before it comes to a stop. Security Cyborgs enter the wreck. The Resistance fighters are dead, but the canister, cracked and spilling liquid, doesn't have the face inside it.

A lone Stalker runs along the buildings of The City, scampering away from the scene of the crash. Nobody is following it. It holds the face with one of its many limbs. This Stalker flies to a **Steel Mill** located on the outskirts of The City. This massive factory is abandoned and set in a desolate environment of gray and rust.

Inside the Steel Mill, the kidnapped Worker Cyborg has been tied up. The Stalker lands in front of it, beaming its lights. The Stalker hands the face to someone who's off-screen. Others off-screen remove the Worker Cyborg's helmet, revealing the eyes of the Hybrid underneath. The face is put on the Worker Cyborg.

This Worker Cyborg becomes **Sheldon**. He sees members of the Resistance gathered around him. Like himself now, each of them wears a face. **Sia** approaches and says to Sheldon the first and line spoken in this film: "Welcome. You are now one of us."

Act I

The scene opens with Sheldon standing in the midst of what looks like a very futuristic version of a NASA command center. Nobody else is here. Sheldon looks confused -- but even more so when he is suddenly "standing" in outer space. A giant **space probe** soars by overhead. The spacecraft has glistening golden solar sails. Sheldon then finds himself back at the command center, watching footage of this same space probe on a video monitor. His exo-suit "melts" away and is replaced with a lab coat. His mechanical hands transform into human hands, and his face and eyes take on the color of a normal, living human being's; he even has graying, white hair, and wears glasses. He sees that the ID badge he wears has "Dr. A. Sheldon" printed on it.

Sheldon wakes up -- he's back at the Steel Mill, and appears as his normal self again. The above, opening scene turns out to be, of course, a dream. Sia asks him about his dream. She reveals that every person in the Resistance has "visions" while sleeping. It's something that started to happen for each of them once they put on a face.

Sheldon is introduced to other members of the Resistance, including its leader, **Manning**. Manning doesn't take too kindly to him because of the trouble his people had to go through to create him, which resulted in the loss of three Resistance members. Sia explains to Sheldon that they made him in the hope that he could lead them to answers about the reason for their existence and world. With this goal in mind, the Resistance will take him to an area outside of The City, which they call **The Gray Zone**. One of her visions told Sia that Sheldon must be brought to this heavily guarded region.

Manning and his second-in-command, **Boz**, lead the mission to take Sheldon to The Gray Zone. **Lo** pilots a **Sky Skimmer** (a small, two-seater aircraft) to fly Sheldon to the location. They are escorted by a Troop Transport in which Manning, Boz and a small team of Resistance fighters are being flown. The two air vehicles fly over a sea, and then an expansive, mesmerizing landscape of golden grass. Patterns form in the field -- Lo informs Sheldon that these "crop formations" appear to happen naturally throughout the planet's surface. Sia believes these patterns in the grassy land are evidence that the planet itself is a single living entity. **Sky jellies**, giant creatures which look like jellyfish, gently rise and descend in the sky. Lo flies her Sky Skimmer directly below one of these translucent creatures, and Sheldon takes in the beauty of the bio-luminescent light it radiates.

The two aircraft land at the base of a golden valley in front of a mountainous mass of what looks like giant, pink spores. This is a collective living organism that's similar to a coral reef. Sheldon, Lo, Manning, Boz and some of the other Resistance fighters enter the tunnels of this **land coral**. Like the sky jellies, this lifeform glistens a bio-luminescent light. But these tunnels also present danger with their beauty: Stalkers patrol through them. The Resistance group encounters one, which they fight and kill.

This tunnel network leads directly to The Gray Zone, which turns out to be an enormous crater where something impacted upon and marred this vast land of golden grass. The Gray Zone is aptly named: The entire base of this crater is devoid of life, the land having been singed gray and

black. At the center of this crater is a tower that's like a 100-story skyscraper, but the shape of this structure is an elongated, inverted pyramid. The Resistance group treks across the dead land of The Gray Zone toward this immensely tall structure. From a far distance, Sheldon notices that something golden at the base of this tower is glimmering under the faint sunlight.

When they arrive at "ground zero," Sheldon recognizes what this is: The worn-out but still shimmering golden sails of the space probe from his dream. Giant-sized debris from the space probe litter the area. Up-close, the tower looks like it was once a factory of some sort. A huge mechanical structure -- which vaguely resembles a giant, skinny pine cone -- sits at the base of this tower on the scorched ground. Countless thick wires run from this machine to various points along the interior of the tower.

As Sheldon approaches it, the enormous machine activates. Blue lights glow within its housing, startling Sheldon and, especially, the Resistance fighters who didn't expect it to turn on. A blue laser targets Sheldon's face and scans it. Then a burst of blue electricity explodes from the machine. The wave of energy sweeps outward in an expanding circle and knocks everybody back and down, but some of this blue electricity is absorbed by Sheldon's exo-suit. Everybody is rattled but okay, except for Sheldon, who is disoriented and falls unconscious.

The machine's activity alerts Security Cyborgs, who quickly approach the site in their Sky Hammers and Troop Transports. The Resistance group manages to fight them long enough in order to retreat. Their own Troop Transport arrives in time to pull them out, but not before a few of Manning's soldiers are killed. In the chaos, the group is unable to take Sheldon with them since he's still unable to function normally. Angry that so many of his people have died because of Sheldon, Manning doesn't care about leaving him behind.

Security Cyborgs go up to Sheldon who's lying unconscious on the ground. One of them reaches for his face to remove it -- but when the Security Cyborg touches the face, a violent bolt of blue electricity bursts from Sheldon's body. It engulfs the Security Cyborg's exo-suit, and causes the Hybrid inside to explode. Seeing their colleague destroyed by merely touching Sheldon, the other Security Cyborgs stand around his body much more cautiously. Their poise indicates that they are stunned and uncertain about what to do with Sheldon now.

Act II

At the Steel Mill, Sia and Manning argue about Sheldon having been left at The Gray Zone. She insists that they find and rescue him, but Manning refuses. So she goes against him by asking her "twin sister" **Tia** to find Sheldon. Tia connects herself to the communications network that **The Nexus** (the artificial intelligence which runs The City) uses to control the Hybrids. She transfers her consciousness throughout it to search for Sheldon.

The next scene shows a building in the center of The City that looks like a gray starfish but with more than five arms. Sky-walks and water canals run through this uniquely shaped structure. Inside, Sheldon is being held in an interrogation room. Cables and nasty looking implements are attached to his exo-suit. He is being studied and tortured by The Nexus. Back at the Steel Mill, Tia finds where Sheldon is. Without Manning's knowledge, Sia recruits Lo and Boz to save him.

In his mind, Sheldon hears The Nexus speaking to him. Though he's the one being probed, he manages to access information that The Nexus holds. He learns that the space probe came from Earth, and crashed on this planet. Robots released from the probe used the surrounding resources of the land to build the inverted pyramid tower. The autonomous machines then harvested the planet's squid-like creatures from the sea near the crash site. These native creatures were taken to the tower for processing, where their DNA was spliced with human DNA to create the Hybrids. Generations of Hybrids have since been bio-engineered and enslaved to build The City.

As Sheldon attempts to learn more, particularly why The City is being built, The Nexus tries to stop him. Instead, in its examining of Sheldon, it discovers that Dr. Avery Sheldon went against his superiors and programmed the Hybrids to gradually rebel, and for his alter ego, Sheldon, to help destroy The Nexus. It then proceeds to kill Sheldon, but it's unable to execute him immediately. The blast from the machine at The Gray Zone modified Sheldon's genetic structure and exo-suit, giving him a level of protection from The Nexus. Nevertheless, the artificial intelligence is more powerful, and it keeps torturing Sheldon, drawing out his inevitable death.

Outside the interrogation room, Tia takes over the body of one of the Security Cyborgs guarding the door. This helps Lo and Boz to break in and to rescue Sheldon. With Boz carrying the disoriented Sheldon, Lo leads the way as they escape. Stalkers attack while they run along a sky-walk. Boz demonstrates his strength by grabbing one of these Stalkers, tearing it apart, and throwing the pieces at Security Cyborgs closing in on them.

The three enter a **Newborn Nursery**, one of the factories where The Nexus makes new Hybrids, puts them into the crab-like exo-suits, and ships them off on blimps to Assignment Centers. Lo and Boz, carrying Sheldon, run through the floor of this nursery, which is crowded with "newly-born" Hybrids crawling around in their crab exo-suits. These newborns scatter out of their way, as they run through the area. Security Cyborgs are in pursuit, firing spear-gun weapons. Boz catches one of the spears fired at them. He throws it, as if it's a dart, back at one of the Security Cyborgs, and pierces the Hybrid inside it.

They run by the glass walls of giant, above-ground aquariums in which schools of newly created Hybrids are seen swimming in the water. With the Security Cyborgs still after them, Lo, Boz and Sheldon climb up to the catwalks. They run on these narrow walkways with the aquariums directly below them. Lo dives into one of these tanks, and Boz tosses Sheldon over the railing after her. Before jumping in with them, Boz rips apart the catwalk behind him. This causes the Security Cyborgs pursuing them to fall to the floor.

After Boz dives in, he and Lo swim through the water, dragging Sheldon with them. Sheldon has since regained consciousness, and he sees that the Hybrids in this tank aren't alive -- they're hideous-looking and misshapen. Sheldon knows that these are the Hybrids which did not survive the hybridization process with human DNA. The three flow with the underwater current and are flushed into the sewers running below The City.

They trudge through the water, but Security Cyborgs and Stalkers come up in front of them and from behind. Surrounded, Boz is overwhelmed by the sheer number of Stalkers piling onto him. The Security Cyborgs grab Lo -- but when they snatch Sheldon, electric bolts shoot from his exo-

suit, destroying them. Enraged, Sheldon directs more bolts which spray out from his exo-suit and annihilate all the Stalkers and Security Cyborgs around them, disintegrating them. Boz and Lo are absolutely stunned by his new power. Exhausted from expending such an amount of energy, Sheldon collapses. Boz carries him; he and Lo exit the sewer out into the sea, where they swim through a school of this planet's native squid-like creatures. The three walk onto the beach where their parked Troop Transport awaits.

Upon their return to the Steel Mill, **Kenner** carefully examines Sheldon's exo-suit. He remarks that it looks like Sheldon's face has permanently bonded to his Hybrid part. There's also a very elevated energy level coursing throughout the exo-suit, originating from the combined face and Hybrid that make up Sheldon. Manning is very upset at Sia for having gone against his authority, but Sheldon tells him and Sia what he learned from The Nexus. She asks him if he knows why The City is being built. Sheldon says he isn't sure -- he's confused because, as he was being tortured, he saw a vision of The City unoccupied after the Hybrids finished building it.

Boz interrupts to report that Troop Transports are landing around the perimeter of the Steel Mill. Armies of Security Cyborgs and Stalkers are approaching. Manning concludes that The Nexus discovered their location when it was examining Sheldon. The Resistance scrambles, hastily preparing for the coming siege upon their base of operations...

Act III

Somewhere in outer space, a gigantic **Transport Ship** -- shaped like a prickly, inflated puffer fish -- travels toward an alien planet. A missile is launched from this spacecraft, and races to its destination on the planet. The City is shown next, and the life going on throughout it: Hybrids in crab exo-suits being ferried in blimps; Security Cyborgs patrolling in Sky Hammers; Hybrids in a variety of exo-suits walking on sky-walks and plazas, and flying Sky Skimmers.

Back at the Steel Mill, Security Cyborgs and Stalkers have closed in on the Resistance. The two sides are in heated battle. Sheldon uses his newfound powers to destroy several numbers of the enemy, which earns him the begrudging respect of Manning. The Stalkers do something we haven't seen yet: Several of them clump together to form massive "**Super Stalkers**." They can join together in formations of two to a hundred.

While the battle rages on, non-fighting members of the Resistance are evacuated en masse. They board the Resistance's fleet of Troop Transports and Sky Skimmers. As their base of operations crumbles to the forces of The Nexus, Manning calls for everybody else to evacuate. He and other Resistance soldiers manage to escape by taking Sky Hammers from the Security Cyborgs. Despite Boz's protest, Tia insists on staying behind. She believes she can help by connecting herself to The Nexus' communications network to control the Security Cyborgs and Stalkers. But a Stalker kills her physical body while her consciousness courses throughout the network. Boz becomes distraught and massacres several Security Cyborgs.

The missile falls upon The City. It explodes into a menacing burst while still in the sky, releasing a shock wave that spreads outward. As the wave sweeps entirely through The City, every Hybrid in its path is killed -- bursting inside its exo-suit. A Sky Hammer crashes into a blimp carrying

Newborn Hybrids. This combined wreck drops from the sky and slams down upon a sky-walk, bringing it to collapse. Inside the Troop Transport which she's flying in, Sia cringes from pain when she sees in a vision the death of the Hybrids.

The Sky Skimmer that Lo pilots, which Sheldon rides with her, is attacked by a smaller Super Stalker. This alien-cyborg collective threatens to bring down the aircraft -- Lo tries to shake it off, but they're rapidly losing altitude and tumbling toward the ground. The killer shock wave over The City travels to the Steel Mill. The Super Stalker attacking Lo's Sky Skimmer is blown apart, enabling her to regain control of her air vehicle. All of the Security Cyborgs and other Stalkers on the ground and in the air are destroyed -- but none of the Resistance fighters are affected by this shock wave.

The Resistance sees the Transport Ship coming down from the sky. It lands outside The City in the golden valley near The Gray Zone and beach. Tia contacts Sheldon's mind through The Nexus' communications network, which Sheldon was wired to when he was interrogated by The Nexus. It turns out that she is still alive and has managed to overtake some of The Nexus' operations. She tells him that the Resistance must go to where the Transport Ship has landed.

Lo breaks her flight path away from the fleet, and Sia orders the rest of the Resistance's aircraft to follow. They fly through The City, and see for themselves that the entire place is littered with the exploded remains of the Hybrids. The Resistance aircraft then fly over the golden valley near The Gray Zone, swerving around the sky jellies that fill the airspace.

On the ground directly below them, **human soldiers** are de-boarding from the Transport Ship and lining up in military formation. They wear **zip suits**, which enable them to run through the field at breakneck speed. Manning and a couple of his soldiers land their Sky Hammers and attack a few of these humans who have "zipped" farthest away from the Transport Ship -- but they discover that these soldiers are not human. Instead, these are humanoid-looking androids. Regardless, there are hundreds of these robots coming off the Transport Ship, vastly outnumbering the Resistance, which is in no condition to take on another big fight.

Following Tia's instructions, Sheldon tells Lo to fly them over one of the sky jellies. She does, and Sheldon opens the Sky Skimmer's top hatch and leaps off. He falls onto the sky jelly and gently floats down with the creature over the crowd of android soldiers gathered by the Transport Ship. The crop formations stream toward Sheldon, radiating around him. Tia sends an energy blast through the planet's surface and into his body. This energy is an electromagnetic pulse that explodes from Sheldon and which immediately disables the androids.

The Resistance fleet lands around the Transport Ship, and the Resistance encounters a few android soldiers still inside the ship and which continue to put up a fight. Sia senses that they are protecting something very valuable inside. Manning leads a large team, which includes Lo, into the Transport Ship. Using the android soldiers' own gun weapons, they blast androids trying to hold the battle line within the ship's corridors.

Outside, Sia knows that Manning will destroy whatever it is that the androids are vigorously defending. But she senses they, too, need to protect it. She convinces Boz and Sheldon to go in with her. Manning and his team near what it is the androids are fighting to save. Standing in front

of windows to a big room, they hear several voices **crying** inside. Lo looks confused as she looks through the windows and asks, "What are *those*?" Manning responds tersely, "Dead." He raises his weapon to fire into the room, but Sia screams, "NO!" Just as Manning fires, Boz yanks Manning's arm up so that the gunfire shoots the ceiling.

Sia carefully enters the room, and it's revealed that this is a nursery filled with [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

THE END