

Microchip

A play in 1 act

## CHARACTERS

CLARA	Average counter worker. Usually very passive.
ROBBY	Clara's boss. Just trying to do his job.
DEBBIE	Homeless, suffers from mental illness.

## SETTING

A 24-hour doughnut shop.

## TIME

Early hours of the morning. Present day.

*Late night at a 24-hour doughnut shop. Center stage we see a cashier's counter. The cashier, Clara, a girl in her mid 20s, stands alone behind the counter, almost as if hiding. A-ha's "Take On Me" plays rather loudly; A homeless woman in her 40s, Debbie, is hovering near the doorway, Clara doesn't notice. She's very involved in her song. The song starts and she taps her fingers on the counter, lets her head bob a bit. Once it gets to the chorus she sings quietly, slowly, then full out all at once.*

Clara

Taaaake on meee—take on me! Taaake me onnnnnn—take on me! I'll beeeeeee gone, in a da—

*Clara's manager, Robby, enters, interrupting her. He sees her dancing around and lets out a small chuckle.*

Clara

Holy shi—you scared the shit out of me! I thought you were on your break, ha, sorry, I thought no one was in here, I—

Robby

Don't worry, you're good.

Clara

Oh god, I'm so embarrassed. I just, it's just, you know, so hard to stay awake at 3 in the morning?

Robby

Yeah, I gotcha...I'm gonna go finish that dough I've got back there. Holler if you need anything.

*Exits*

Clara

Yeah you too, Robby! Wait—shit... fuck. *Under her breath.* Faaaaaaack.

*Debbie, emerges from the shadows, startling Clara. She had forgotten she was there.*

Debbie

Damn girl, keep it in your pants, why don'tcha?

Clara

Uh, what?

Debbie

You can see your lady boner from space, hun.

Clara

Thanks Debbie. What can I get for ya? Coffee?

Debbie

Of course. You know how I like it.

Clara  
You got a cup for me?

Debbie  
*(Putting her bag on the counter)* Right here darlin'.

Debbie  
Look what I've got here for your tip today. *(Holding up a small piece of quartz)* This has incredible healing powers. It was the only thing that helped me after the government put that chip in behind me ear. When I have this thing on me, even when they flip the switch, and I go all-- *(sticks her tongue out and makes some demented noises)*, I can still remember who I am after.

Clara  
Is that so? Then why do you want to give it to me? It sounds like you need it more than I do.

Debbie  
There's no fighting them anymore. My stones don't cut it. And plus, you're my friend, that's why I can tell you all of this. I want you to have protection too. You never know who's a part of it anymore. They could be anywhere...around the corner—Robby could be after me for all I know. I gotta watch my back.

Clara  
Is that so?

Debbie  
Ohh yes. Well you know, it started when my son was just a baby. They put in that microchip and then I couldn't breast feed anymore. Just like that, my tits dried up and I couldn't feed my fuckin' kid. How could they do that to me? What did I ever do to them? Those men in the fuckin' suits with the glasses, always watching me, always five steps behind me. *(She looks out the door)* I'm safe in here though, with you. You're protecting me.

Clara  
Debbie, that's a lot of responsibility for me. I'm just trying to pay my rent, you know?

Debbie  
What are you saying? Are you turning on me too? That's exactly what Prefontaine did too, right before he died. I was in that car you know. We had just come from a party at his house, a big bonfire. We used to make love in his RV. It was magic. Then he tried to leave me. And then he died. What do you think that says?

Clara  
I don't know Debbie... that's a lot to process.

Debbie

Of course it's a lot to fuckin' process, it's my fuckin' life! I don't get a day off. That's why I always carry this around. *Takes a small gun out of her bag and puts it on the counter.*

Clara

What the hell. You know you can't have that in here, what if Robby comes out here?

Debbie

You never know when one of them is gonna come in here and grab me, you never know...

Clara

I think you should put that away, honestly.

Debbie

You know what else I have, *(unloads more from her bag, including handfuls of incense, marbles, a pack of cigarettes, a pipe, a little baggie of weed, and a pile of business cards and receipts. She clutters up the whole counter, even covering up the gun)* I know you all live off those tips, but obviously I can't do that so this'll have to do *(handing Clara two sticks of incense)*. One is sandalwood; the other is patchouli, that one's a big aphrodisiac! *(Robby enters and Debbie winks at him)*

Robby

Uhh, how we doin' out here? We all good?

Debbie

Oh yes, Robby! We're doing just fine. I was just passing along some advice to Ms. Clara here, about how to really score in the male department... wanna know the secret? This shit right here.

Robby

Woah, hey, come on, you can't light that shit in here. What do you think you're doing?

Debbie

Oh I'm just setting the mood! Mmmm isn't that better now? Can't you just feel those hormones racing? Ahhh yessss that's it! *(She returns to the counter, leaving the incense burning one of the tables nearby, and begins to pack her bag back up)*. I've done my job now I'll just leave and let the magic happen. *(Puts everything back in her bag except the gun)*

Robby

Woahhh, hey what the fuck is that?

Clara

Robby, it's nothing, just ignore it...

Robby

No, what the fuck! Are you kidding me? Get that shit out of here!

Debbie

Hey, I'm allowed to protect myself however I want! I have the right to bear motherfuckin' arms! *(She grabs the gun quickly, waving it in the air)* How else am I supposed to ward off the suit men? How do I protect myself when they flip the switch? When I go all *(makes the noises again)? (She starts convulsing, flailing her arms, and the gun, all over).*

Clara

Holy shit! Debbie! What are you doing?

Robby

Jesus Christ!

Debbie

They're gonna flip it soon! I can just feel it! Not tonight boys, not tonight! *(She points the gun at her temple)* How about that? What if I finish the job for you? It's just a matter of time, right? Until you all come for me? *(She's shouting at the sky, all around her, at Clara and Robby).*  
Gimme a knife! I'm gonna cut this fuckin' chip outta my head myself!

Clara

Debbie, please, calm down. You're safe here. It's just me; no one's coming after you. No one wants to hurt you, I promise. You can trust me—you know that.

Debbie

*(Points the gun toward Clara and Robby)* How do I know that? How do I know you're not one of them? How do I know you're not the fuckin' leader, you cunt!

Clara

Listen to me Debbie, for god's sake, you know I'm your friend, you said that yourself.

Debbie

*(Pointing the gun toward Robby)* Yeah, well, what about him, huh? What's his deal? He's too quiet! WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FUCKER?! Get that smug look off your fuckin' face or I'll shoot it off! You stole my child from me! Everything I had! How do you live with yourself? I'll blow you up into a thousand little bits! How about that?

Robby

I don't know what to say—I didn't do anything! I don't even fucking know you!

Debbie

Man up, asshole! You piece of shit!

Clara

Come on Debbie, you know he didn't do anything to you.

Debbie

There you go again! Defending him! You and I both know it's just because you want to get into his pants! You little slut!

Clara

Debbie, what the fuck! You need to stop—you need to get out of here! I'm gonna call the cops!

Debbie

Not if I shoot first! I thought you were on my side!

Clara

I am! You know that! It's just me! I'm not some secret agent, it's just Clara! Please, put down the gun!

Debbie

But Clara, you don't understand! They're comin' for me—I can just feel it, you know? I got that tingly feelin' on the back of my neck? What am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to—

*Debbie falls to the ground, convulsing, dropping the gun and hitting her head on the counter.*

Clara

Holy shit! Shit! Debbie! Deb—Are you ok? Shit Robby! What do we do! We can't just leave her like that! Debbie! Can you hear me? It's me Clara! Do you know where you are? Robby, hand me like a spoon or something, isn't that what you're supposed to do when shit like this happens?

Robby

I don't have a fuckin' clue! I'm just a fuckin' baker!

Clara

Robby, just fucking help me! What are you doing! DEBBIE! Come on, don't jump ship now, don't you fuckin' abandon me like this! Debbie listen, if you can hear me, you gotta listen, you can't leave me now. No one's coming for you, I promise. I've got you; no one's going to hurt you. I'm gonna stay with you till you're safe, you hear me? Debbie, please! I'm here, I'm here! Why is this happening, oh god! I've only worked her two fuckin' months, are you kidding me? Why me? Huh, Robby? Why fuckin' me? God, Robby, why haven't you called an ambulance yet? What's wrong with you? HELP ME!

*Robby runs off. Debbie has ceased convulsing and lies motionless across Clara's lap.*

Shit, Debbie, what's going on, come back to me! Stay awake! How could you do this to me Debbie, after all the free doughnuts I gave you, this is how you repay me? I'm not ready for this! I don't know how to deal with someone dying in my arms! I'm not old enough to have to deal with shit like this! I don't want this kind of notch on my belt, Jesus Christ! I knew it was stupid to take these graveyards! I love sleeping, I love my bed, it's so safe and there's no one having seizures in front of you! Fuck! Really, Debbie? You've got to be kidding me! This has to be a

joke! Did you overdose, what the hell happened? Why tonight? Why not when that other cunt is working! Ahggghhhhh, why??

Debbie

Ah, balls, my head hurts, what the fuck. Owwww, ahh, oh god. I can't move...

Clara

It's ok, Debbie, just stay right there. You're gonna be fine, I promise.

Debbie

Clara? Is that you? What the fuck happened? How'd I get down here and why does my head feel like it's trapped under an elephant's ass? Jesus, it hurts.

Clara

I don't know, Debbie, you just started convulsing and shaking and then smacked your head here and hit the ground...it all happened so quickly.

Debbie

I can't remember a thing...last thing I can see was givin' you my coffee cup...after that it's a blur. I'm so sorry Clara, I didn't mean to cause a scene, I'd never do that to you, you know that.

Clara

But what happened? Do you always get seizures? I'm a little confused.

Debbie

You and me both, kid.

Clara

...You really scared me.

Debbie

Sorry about that, love. Sometimes you just have to deal with that kind of shit. I mean, look at the shithole you work in—what'd you expect?

Clara

I know, I just thought...I just thought you'd turn out to be normal.

Debbie

Well that's no fun is it? Who the fuck wants normal? That's just for boring old people. Not for me Clara. At least not while I've still got this fuckin' chip in my noggin.

Clara

Oh, right. How could I forget?

Debbie

Listen, I appreciate all your help, hun, but I gotta get on my way. This lone wolf has gotta fly the coup before the whole popsicle stand gets blown up. I'll see ya around kid.

Clara

Ok Debbie, I just hope you'll be alright. Come back soon, ok?

Debbie

Of course, darlin'. You're really all I've got now...I'll be back, don't you worry.

*Debbie leaves. Etta James' "At Last" plays now in the shop. Clara is left alone taking in the events of the night. She begins to hum, then begins to sing along as the lights fade.*

***Blackout***