

The Ruins of Wieppe

by

Ken McConnell

208/863-9045
ken.mcconnell@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY

Stellar Ranger, DEVON ARDEL, a blonde woman in her mid-twenties, is walking her LERRA, (a llama-like domestic animal), out from desert shrubs into a clearing. Twin suns are blazing in a pale orange sky and her dirt stained uniform is drenched in sweat. She's following footprints that lead to the ruins of an old stone house.

There in the ruins stands a dark figure. It's a black ANDROID with a dented head and the number 88 printed on its chestplate. The Android ducks behind the crumbling ruins and is gone. Devon rubs her eye with the back of her hand. Her black, flat brim hat shades her face from the harsh sunlight as she draws her handgun. The weapon is large in her hands, definitely not standard issue.

Devon guides the lerra behind her by the reins as she holds up the handgun, ready to fire.

When she gets to the ruins she lets go of the lerra reins and cautiously walks around the outside of the crumbling rock house, pointing her handgun as she walks. There doesn't seem to be any evidence of the Android.

After checking inside the ruins she tries to pick up the footprint trail in the dirt around the ruins. The area is clean. As she squats down to examine the dirt, she hears a SOUND that spooks the lerra. Rising to her feet, she sees the animal trotting off into the desert the way they had come.

Devon grimaces and searches for the source of the sound. The plateaus around the ruins are flat and empty. She considers going after her ride and then waves it off. That SOUND again. A CLICKING and WHIRLING that suggests a mechanical device. She looks around again, handgun still out and ready, although now it's hanging low by her side.

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY.

A dog size ROBOT rolls out from behind ocha(sage brush) and halts. It looks like a domestic robot that's been cobbled together with spare parts and turned into some kind of attack machine. It has spinning blades and a menacing arm. A sensor package on a post acquires Devon and the robot heads for her across the open dirt.

Devon watches the robot approach and considers shooting it but before she can, another ROBOT appears to her right and starts heading for her. She looks around and smiles, then she takes aim and shoots the first robot.

The large caliber bullet from her handgun grazes the metal of the robot and the impact alters its path a bit as it straightens and keeps coming. Devon's confident smile is gone. She fires again, aiming at the wheels. No affect.

The second robot begins to speed up. It has some kind of barrel that points at Devon and fires. Devon ducks into the ruins. She climbs up on a crumbling wall of the house and looks back at the robot that fired at her.

It can't get a high enough angle to shoot at her so she focuses on the closer robot with the spinning blades. Another shot, this time the robot halts.

Devon takes the time to climb up another few levels, keeping her eye on the second robot. It goes to the first robot and attempts to assist it with a single mechanical arm.

Devon aims at both robots and opens fire. The second robot turns to face her and uses its clawed hand to pick up a rock from the debris. Devon realises she's too close and starts to climb higher and away from the robots.

The rock hits her leg and causes her to SCREAM more startled than in pain. She rubs her leg with her gun hand and takes aim again. But it's too late. Another rock comes sailing at her and hits her fingers causing her to drop the huge handgun. It CLATTERS on the bricks below.

Devon holds her hand and realizes it's scratched and bleeding. She takes off a silken scarf that she wore under her dirt brown leather jacket and uses it to wrap her finger up.

The robots continue moving around below her. She watches them in fascination as they begin to assist each other in climbing up the same crumbled wall that she had. She moves further away and to the highest point of the ruins. Scanning the horizon she still doesn't see the black android.

EXT. OCHERVA RUINS - DAY.

Devon takes off her hat and wipes her forehead with the back of her arm. She's sweating profusely in the glaring sunlight. It's been some time since she first crawled up on top of the ruins.

The robots are continuing their pursuit, slowly climbing the ruins heading for her. She looks down at the ground, it's a bit far to just jump down, but she could make it if she had to.

She takes out a small electronic device and turns it on.

DEVON

Hap, you there?

HAP (V.O.)

(static)

I'm still a ways out. Did you find the android?

DEVON

Yeah, but I have a problem.

HAP (V.O.)
What problem?

Devon aims the communicator towards the robots, getting closer and closer.

HAP (V.O.)
Who's your friends?

DEVON
They knocked my blaster out of my hand and I don't think they're here to clean house.

HAP (V.O.)
Hang on boss, I'm flying as fast as I can.

DEVON
Fly faster. Devon out.

Devon watches the robot's progress with concern. They appear to be stopped. They're doing something out of her sight. She crawls along the top of the wall to get a better view.

Both robots turn to face her. The one with the claw arm has been loaded with jagged rocks from below by the second robot. It rears back the arm and launches a rock at Devon.

She ducks as it hits her arm.

DEVON
Hey! Cut it out.

The rocks start coming at an alarming rate. Each one hits her somewhere with equal force. In seconds she's been hit a dozen times all over her body. The last one she catches in mid-air. Then she takes aim and nails the robot with it.

DEVON
Come on, that all you got?

The robot ignores her and starts rolling along the top of the wall, slowly making its way towards her. It's not a smooth surface and there are loose bricks for it to contend with.

DEVON
Shit.

She manages to pull herself to the end of her wall and turns to face the approaching robot. It will soon have her in range of its gun again.

Devon looks around the harsh sky and opens the comm line.

DEVON
Hap, where the hell are you?

HAP (V.O.)
Coming...(static)

Devon clicks off the communicator and looks over the edge to the hard ground below. It's not that far to jump down.

The robot makes a final adjustment and aims the gun barrel at her. She starts to jump and then realizes the gun barrel is pinched. The robot fires and the barrel burst. Devon grins ruefully.

A shot chips the rock beside her head and she rolls off the ledge to hang by her fingers. Someone had shot at her from the desert.

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY

The black android is aiming a long rifle at the rock ruins. He can't see Devon anymore, she's on the opposite side of the rock wall. It watches the robot move towards where she was.

EXT. OCHERVA RUINS - DAY.

Devon is hanging by her fingertips from the side of the rock wall. Her feet are not far from the ground. But the second robot has moved away from the wall and is heading her direction with a rotating saw blade. In seconds it has moved near enough to dissuade her from dropping down.

Devon looks up at the robot on the wall as it comes close to her fingers with its metal wheels.

DEVON
Hap!

Her scream goes unheard in the desert. The communicator falls to the rocks below as she tries to get it out. She edges away from the robot but it can move faster than she can and it starts running over her fingers. She CURSES it and tries to grab onto the robot to pull it down. She can't get a decent grip.

She's down to one hand. The spinning saw blades are under her now. She will have to push off and that will make for a harder fall on the loose stones of the ruins.

The SOUND of the robots is amplified until it becomes the SOUND of an approaching starfighter.

The Gull Scrambler hovers over Devon, blocking out the suns. Then it lowers so that one of the silver wings is under Devon's legs and she is able to stand on it. She lets go of the rock and lands sprawled out, facing the hot metal wing. Her hands are burned by the scorching metal.

HAP maneuvers the Scrambler away from the ruins and drops her off on the ground as she lands. Devon scrambles as fast as she can to the opposite side of the starfighter. The

canopy slides back so they can talk.

DEVON
(pointing)

He's over there with a rifle.

Hap looks in the direction as another shot rings out and makes her flinch. Hap is about Devon's age and has long, curly brown hair. Her expression seems locked in perpetual concern.

HAP

Get in.

Devon has already pulled Hap's regulation pistol and pushes off.

DEVON

I'm not leaving without my gun.

She bolts over to where it was laying and picks it up with her wounded hand. The robot with the saw blade starts coming at her again. Faster than before.

She shoots at it and it catches fire. The other robot is methodically making its way down from the ruins. She ignores it and heads back to the Scrambler.

Hap has moved the Scrambler behind the ruins and out of view of the black android. She waits for Devon to climb in and then takes off.

The Scrambler's engine WHINES as the starfighter gains speed and altitude.

INT. SCRAMBLER COCKPIT - DAY.

Devon looks like hell. She's dirty, bloodied and mad. Hap and her exchange looks and Hap turns the Scrambler around to look for the android.

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY

The black android watches the Scrambler turn around to come back for him. He aims his impossibly long rifle at it and squeezes off several shots.

INT. SCRAMBLER COCKPIT - DAY.

Warning SIRENS go off in the cockpit as the Scrambler's systems start failing. Hap is scrambling to keep it airborne.

HAP

I can't keep her up, we're going down.

Devon hangs on as they plummet back to the desert.

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY

The Scrambler slides across the desert shrubs near the ruins and comes to a halt in a cloud of dust. Devon and Hap get out and take cover behind it.

DEVON

Contact Haven get a pick up.

Hap takes out her communicator and tries raising their command post back in Haven.

HAP

Control this is Hap. I need a shuttle at my location, copy?

There is no response. She continues calling.

Devon pulls open an access hatch on the side of the metal starfighter and pulls out a canteen, some flares and extra ammo. She stuffs what she can into her pockets and hands Hap the rest of it. Hap gives up trying to call for help.

DEVON

Okay, let's move out. That damn thing is coming, I can feel it.

Another shot impacts the starfighter near Devon for emphasis. Hap takes her pistol and follows Devon out into the desert. They run for a while and then get low behind the ocha weeds.

HAP

What's your plan?

DEVON

Plan?

Hap shakes her head and tries to locate the black Android. It has to walk standing up, so they should be able to see it coming. She glances back down at Devon who still looks like hell.

DEVON

Kill it before it kills us. How's that?

HAP

Perfect.

Devon motions for her to go around the other way past the Scrambler. Hap nods and takes off on all fours. Devon starts crawling away from Hap through the ocha bushes.

EXT. OCHERVA RUINS - DAY.

The black Android is standing in the ruins and looking down. We HEAR Hap's voice coming from Devon's communicator laying on the ground.

HAP

I think he's in the ruins. Dev, do you hear me?

HAP

Hey, do you think he's intercepting our comm?

(silence)

Shit.

The Android turns its black head to the desert where Hap is located and then starts walking that way.

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY

Hap is trying to get under cover near some volcanic rocks. She can see the android walking towards her.

HAP

Dev, he's coming right at me!

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY

Devon is sneaking around a small ditch on her elbows and knees. She grimaces in pain from holding her big pistol with her injured fingers. She stops to adjust the bandage.

The remaining robot comes at her nearly running into her head. She bolts backwards and sits up, shooting multiple rounds into the metal beast. It takes the hits and begins to sputter. She stands up and kicks it over YELLING at it as she puts two more rounds into it.

The SOUND of gunshots in the distance causes Devon to stop kicking and turn to where Hap was. She sees the android moving off into the desert relentlessly.

Devon starts running across the flat ground around the ruins. She takes aim and shoots the android repeatedly to get its attention. It turns to look at her.

She's out in the open. No cover.

DEVON

You and me Black.

The Android starts walking towards Devon.

Devon's not sure if Hap is alive or not. She looks anxiously past the android.

DEVON

Hap, you still with me?

No reply. Devon checks her pistol, loads another clip and starts limp-walking towards the black android.

The Android methodically takes aim at her and fires his rifle. The shot clips her left leg and Devon staggers. Then

she starts shooting relentlessly at the Android.

It stops moving and absorbs the rounds into its plastic covered metal frame. The Android looks away from Devon to the sky and then starts heading for the open dessert, away from the ruins.

Devon hears and then sees the shuttle craft approaching in the sky. She starts to walk towards the ocha weeds where Hap was but can't walk and falls down.

The Android looks back at her on the ground and waves a kind of salute at her. She flips it off in return. It heads into the ocha weeds and disappears.

Devon watches it go, confused. Then she looks in Hap's direction and shouts.

DEVON

Hap! Are you all right?

HAP

(weakly)

I'm here. Still.

Devon is relieved to hear Hap's voice. When another RANGER comes to aid Devon she waves him over to Hap. The rescuing Ranger carries Hap out to where Devon is and sets her down to start caring for the gunshot wound on her leg.

Hap is in pain but she turns to see Devon.

HAP

Why didn't it kill us?

DEVON

I don't know. I feel like we've been played. The damn thing waved to me before walking away.

HAP

It did that to me too, last time I tangled with it.

DEVON

I'm beginning to hate this damn Silicant more than the pirates.

Hap agrees with her.

EXT. OCHERVA DESERT - DAY

The black Android is walking methodically through the desert. It's already far away from the ruins when the shuttle lifts off and disappears into the brilliant sunlight. The Android watches it go and then continues on its way.

FADE OUT:

