

Die and Retry

Logline: Four women wake up in a violent video game reality with no idea why or how they got there.

Characters:

Luna is a Latina with a perpetually surprised face. She is feminine, kind, empathetic, and lacking in confidence..

Echo is an Asian American woman- very smart, uses sarcasm as a defense mechanism, slow to open up.

Trinity is an African American woman. Moses Ingram type. She is funny, intelligent, highly competent and hates vulnerability.

Nix is a redhead with deep eyes. She is wise, cynical, and a hermit.

Act 1

“WAKE UP!!! WAKE THE FUCK UP!!!” Luna opens her eyes wide, inhaling deeply. She is strapped into a vehicle moving forward at an insane speed. She doesn’t know why she’s there or where she is. There are 3 female voices in her head yelling at her through her headset. On the screen in the car their pictures and names flash with a collective number 3. Above the name Echo, a video of a cute Asian woman populates. Echo talks to the team “Keep driving! Stay calm. We have to get to the tunnel but Luna, you have to make this jump! Focus!” Luna is panicking. “Where am I?!” she asks “Why am I driving? I have to stop driving. All three women yell at her to not stop driving but she is already hitting the breaks, slowing down her car. “You have to speed up! You won’t make this jump if you slow down! Speed up!!!” Luna doesn’t listen, continuing to try and slow down her speed. “Who are you? Why am I - “

Suddenly the gap appears around a bend. Luna isn’t going fast enough to make the jump- her car falls in the hole, crashing against rocks and concrete. The collision causes a boulder to

begin to roll down towards her, crushing her. From inside the car- blood comes out of her mouth as she is crushed. She dies in a painful, horrific and graphic manner.

“Fuck!” Trinity yells in Luna’s ear. She’s right back where she started- same car, same stretch of road, same dark and scary world. “This bitch is going to get us killed.” On the screen are the same 3 women, but the number now flashes 2. Luna has the traumatic memory of her violent death front and center in her mind. She throws up on herself as her car hurtles forward. The redhead named Nix speaks quietly for the first time “I can’t believe I have to do this shit again.” In her car, she pulls off an impressive trick- clearly not her first time. Echo drives adeptly. She is focused on Luna. “Luna. Luna you have to breathe. You can do this. I’ll explain everything later but if you want to get out of here you have to do this!! Okay? Listen to me. I need you to steer the car- take control of the steering wheel. Once you pass the first bend in the road- you have to floor it. Press the gas as hard as you can, but don’t lose control of the steering wheel. You understand?” Luna doesn’t say anything but does what the voice tells her to. She’s covered in vomit, shaking but trying to control the volatile machine she’s strapped into. And this time- she makes the jump! The 4 players are eventually able to make it to the tunnel where a levitating ball of light awaits them. Echo drives straight into it and-

Luna wakes up again. This time sitting still on a cold fold out chair- no seatbelt. She shakes and tries to catch her breath, leaning forward and looking down. She’s wearing army pants? She scans the room, seeing that she is now sitting in what appears to be a military briefing. A domineering salt and pepper General named General Mann is pointing to a map of an encampment- explaining where their point of entry is. Next to him is an important looking woman wearing civilian clothes- Echo! Echo stares at Luna, who is panting. Echo mouths at her “later” and motions for her to calm down. To the right of the General are several Army officers standing and facing the group. One of them is Trinity, who has also appeared to just come into this world as she leans over, grabbing her knees to steady herself. Luna watches her, but no one else pays the strange behavior much attention. Then we see Nix, also sitting in a fold out chair in the briefing. She rolls her eyes in frustration mouthing “the fuck” at no one; clearly tired of whatever this is. When the briefing is over Trinity leads the girls into a nearby utility closet where they meet each other for the first time. What the hell is going on? Who are you and why are we here? The only one who has any answers is Echo. “this is some sort of Virtual Reality video game. I know what the objective is but I can’t tell you how I know it or why we are here.” She then explains that there are 3 tokens they have to acquire to win. If one of

them dies, they all lose a life, and if they lose all their lives they lose the game. Trinity snaps them back to the mission when they begin to deeply philosophize what the stakes of losing could be and why they don't remember details about their real life here. "Look we can figure all that shit out later. Let's just win so we can get the hell out of here."

Act 2

Echo thinks the 2nd token must be somewhere in the mission they've been briefed on. After Nix announces that she works better alone, much to the chagrin of Trinity, Echo and Trinity decide to try and find the map for the night's mission in the hope they can find out where the token is. Nix is looking for clues about what year they're in and who they are fighting against. "What war is this?" Luna asks. Trinity doesn't miss a beat "The one where US corporations profit from the death of poor people". Nix smirks. Luna is the only one not given a task in the present moment. When she asks what she should do to help, everyone looks at her pitifully. "You should get some rest."

Luna ends up at the barracks where she meets a striking blonde soldier named Ryker. This man looks eerily familiar and Luna realizes with a gasp that he was one of the angry drivers from the first level! Is he a character in every game? When the 4 women meet again to share intel before the night's mission, Luna tells them about the soldier. "I can't kill anyone! What if they're real people?" Trinity responds "these are one dimensional assholes" to which Nix dryly adds "they might be real". Trinity offers the harsh reality that this is a battle game. You don't shoot, you don't win. Echo backs her up. "She's right. If this is anything like Call of Duty- we have no choice if we want to win." In the first display of emotion from Nix- she refuses to kill civilians, game or not. That's where she draws the line. They all agree.

Nighttime falls and it's time to move out. The girls gear up and board a chopper with the rest of the team. As soon as they land in the encampment, it's non-stop action. They know they have to get inside the inner room of this building.. Luna almost gets herself killed again but Ryker saves her. The mission was unsuccessful both for the girls and the whole team. General Mann leads the team to a new location- there's a possibility the target fled and is hiding there. Once they get there. The target is taken out by the team. While scouring the grounds, Nix finds a room she thinks may have the token. The girls break away from the team to check it out. They find an attic door on the ceiling of the room and climb up. The token is there! But right before they can claim it, General Mann and Ryker appear with guns aimed to kill. They are after

the token too! The girls are yelling at each other about what to do and Luna of all people takes the plunge. She dives after the token and jumps out the window killing herself, but successfully completing this level. The lives go down to 1.

Act 3

Luna wakes up again in a foreign land. This time it is a fantasy land of knights and dragons. Luna is a princess living in a small castle. But her team is nowhere to be found. Did they make it to this level? We begin to really see Luna's character arc as she has transformed from passive and overwhelmed to someone who takes action, consequences be damned. Luna takes a horse and rides out in search of her girls. She stops in a beautiful forest for water from a stream. As she sips the crystal clear water she sees a huge majestic deer right across the stream from her. A magical moment as she admires his beauty for a moment before- he is taken out by arrows. She can't mourn for long though because the huntress appears and reveals herself. It is Trinity- decked out in some robinhood attire. "Bout time you showed up" she says in true Trinity form.

Trinity takes Luna to reunite with the others. Nix is some sort of forest witch living in a cabin. And Echo is a great warrior with a lions head wrapped around her neck. They eat venison and drink ale around a fire that night while Trinity brings Luna up to speed. General Mann and Ryker are apparently back! But this time they don't seem to have any interest in tokens. Their only objective is to kill the girls. Trinity details a close call where they almost succeeded. They guess that the token in this world is somewhere in the dragon's lair. The King has heard rumor of treasure's hidden within the dragon's lair and has put out a bounty on whoever slays the creature.

As they are discussing, Nix (who is VERY comfortable in this character) stands up and announces that she should head back to her cabin. Trinity playfully grabs her leg and trips her back to a seating position. "You're not going anywhere. We need you with us." Sexual tension crackles between them.

The next morning, the friends get ready for their journey to the dragon's lair. But before they can even get started, they found themselves surrounded by a murderous crew. General Mann and Ryker have found them- and they have recruits. Thanks to a smart plan of Echo and a little of

Nix's witchy new skills, they barely escape. They ride fast and hard with General Mann hot on their trail.

After another close encounter where they escape by sliding down a mud bank into a swift river, Echo suggests they separate to increase their chances of getting to the dragon. This time Nix is the one who intervenes. "I don't want to separate. We have to stay together." So they run. They arrive at the dragons lair, muddy, covered in scrapes, in stride together. Side by side and more united than ever. This is it. They have finally, FINALLY made it to the third token. They walk into the cave and... Are immediately murdered by a slew of arrows. Ryker and the General beat them to it.

They have failed. It is over.

The four women wake up in an unimpressive university research room. They take off their Virtual Reality masks, looking around with confused expressions. A nerdy grad student in glasses is present. He hands them all forms to complete. He explains that this was a research study measuring group cohesiveness in a forced team environment. Winning the tokens never mattered. Trinity can't handle this- she lunges at him, pinning him against the wall threateningly. "This was a RESEARCH STUDY?!" Echo and Luna pulls her off. Nix inexplicably began crying, but this makes her laugh.

The four women walk out of the room, exiting through the dingy University hallway. Headed to their separate lives. Luna pauses a moment, then speaks up. "There's a really good pizza place a few blocks from here..." The women stop, all looking at her for a moment. Then Nix speaks up "Is there beer?" Luna nods, smiling. They all begin to walk together. Trinity gets the last words "I'm driving."