

Dark Trace

written by

Joshua Norton

7270 Main St., Conneaut Lake, PA
978-726-7437
Jakxcom118@gmail.com

EXT. WOODED TRAIL - DAY

A Caucasian **BOY** (around 7) and a Caucasian **GIRL** (around 18) walk down a dirt trail in the woods holding hands. A tube comes out of the girl's nose feeding into an oxygen tank on her waist. In her free hand, a **METAL TOOLBOX**.

GIRL
(singing)
Happy birthday to you. Happy
birthday to you.

BOY
Stop.

GIRL
Happy birthday, little Alyosha!

BOY
Don't call me that!

They stop at a clearing in the trees.

GIRL
Just messing with you, kid. How's
this spot?

LATER - IN THE CLEARING

The girl and boy kneel in front of a shallow hole. She slides the **TOOLBOX** over to him.

GIRL (CONT'D)
I'll let you do the honors.

He places it in the hole.

BOY
Now what?

GIRL
And now we bury it.

BOY
Bury it?

GIRL
Here.

She throws some dirt on it. He does too.

BOY
Will someone steal it?

GIRL
Not unless you give our spot away.

He gasps and shakes his head. She winks at him. He smiles and winks back.

GIRL (CONT'D)
When we come back to dig it up, our lives will have gotten so exciting!

BOY
Tomorrow?

She chuckles.

GIRL
We should give it a few years. It's extra special that way.

BOY
Wow, that's a long time. Okay, I guess.

She holds out her little finger.

GIRL
Deal?

He grabs her little finger with his.

BOY
Deal!

EXT. EARTH

A monstrous storm covers half the planet.

A *RED STARJET* BLASTS into Earth's atmosphere. It enters the storm. Lightning and rain CRASH against it.

INT. RED STARJET - CONTINUOUS

ALEXANDER KALE sleeps in the reclined seat of the dimly lit cockpit. He is an early 20's, tall, Caucasian male with flowing blonde hair, blue-eyes, and in prime-shape. He wears a MARTIAN LIBERATION FRONT PONCHO covering COMBAT ARMOR.

THUNDER CLAP. He JOLTS awake. The ship SHAKES as he wrestles the controls. It steadies. He sinks into the seat, calmer.

COCKPIT VOICE (V.O.)
Sensory mode at one hundred
percent. Warning. Speed exceeding
recommended-

He flips a switch and the voice cuts out.

A SHORT TUNE plays followed by a woman's voice. This is **JUNE**.

JUNE (V.O.)
Kale?

He pays no attention.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Kale? Alex?!

He SNAPS to.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If you crash another-

He coughs and spits on the floor.

ALEX
Yes Air Captain.

JUNE (V.O.)
That is Second Deep Space Commander
to you Kale.

ALEX
Right, I forgot.

He slows the ship down. He grabs a drink off the floor and
dumps the last few drops in his mouth. Throws it back with
the other food trash.

JUNE (V.O.)
Are you going re-entry speeds in
atmo?

ALEX
Not anymore.

She groans. He reaches under his poncho, pulls out a DRUG
VAPORIZER, and takes a drag. He coughs.

JUNE (V.O.)
You're being reassigned.

ALEX
Was I assigned?

JUNE (V.O.)
Listen to me.

He rolls his eyes and puts his feet up.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Ebisu. Shangdi. We would ask anyone
else-

ALEX
If you had anyone else. Command bit
themselves on the hand with me.
What exactly am I getting for this?

JUNE (V.O.)
We are not asking you.

ALEX
Maybe a chance-

JUNE (V.O.)
Kale, this is not a neg-

ALEX
I could just not. You realize that
right? What else can they do to me?
I'm already stuck here.

She let's out a DEEP SIGH.

JUNE (V.O.)
Fine. Maybe.

ALEX
Don't play with me on this.

JUNE (V.O.)
I wouldn't. Not about that.

He stares out the window. Smirks. The storm clears. In the
distance, a GARGANTUAN SUPERCITY glistens in the night. It's
SHANGDI.

ALEX
You are in luck. I was on route
already.

JUNE (V.O.)
You were briefed?

ALEX
Communication breakdown with
command? And you did say fine.

JUNE (V.O.)
I said maybe.

ALEX
Okay, great. Brief me, second deep
space commander.

EXT. GRASSY FIELD - DAY - DREAM SEQUENCE

A **MAN** stands in a field surrounded by thick fog. He wears a form fitting **SPACE SUIT** and **SLEEK HELMET**. He inspects his wrists and his suit.

In the distance, a rusty playground and a picnic table. At the table sits a **WOMAN**. The man walks toward the scene and stops near her.

He reaches his hand toward her. She turns. He recoils. Her face is a **BLACK HOLE**. No eyes, nose, or mouth. A gaping maw.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. CELL

ELI JOLTS awake. He is a late 20's, tall, muscular, Caucasian male. An overall **TANKY** guy. He wears **PRISON CLOTHES**. He sits on the floor of the sterile prison cell in a pool of **BLACK LIQUID**. His wrists are bandaged, soaked with the same liquid. Destroyed **FULL BODY RESTRAINTS** lie on the floor next to him.

KWIN, kneeled next to him, jumps up, startled. She is an early 20's, Korean woman, with short red hair. She wears a **SHANGDI MEDIC UNIFORM**. A **12MM PISTOL** is holstered on her waist. The contents of her **MEDIC BAG** are sprawled on the floor.

KWIN
(in Korean)
Shit! Have the courtesy to stay
dead when you die!

Eli looks at her, in a daze.

ELI
What?

Kwin collects herself.

KWIN
You slit your wrists!

He looks at his wrists. Quickly unwraps them.

KWIN (CONT'D)

No-

No cuts. Just scars. Kwin is SHOCKED, Eli confused.

ELI

It didn't... work?

KWIN

It did. You were dead!

The black liquid on Eli and the floor STEAMS and HISSES. Eli JUMPS up and stumbles back. They both stare in confusion as it violently evaporates.

Kwin pulls her 12mm pistol and aims at Eli. She trembles.

KWIN (CONT'D)

What is that!?

He says nothing.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Answer me!

ELI

You're the medic.

KWIN

How did you get out of your restraints?

ELI

I broke out of them.

Kwin gasps. Tightens her grip.

ELI (CONT'D)

Do it, then.

She grits her teeth. Lowers her gun.

KWIN

I left the room for ten minutes.

Eli shrugs and sits on the bench.

ELI

These benches have sharp edges. Had an accident.

Kwin picks up an INJECTOR off the floor. She approaches him carefully. Eli eyes her.

She sits next to him.

KWIN
Don't move.

She places the injector against Eli's neck and pulls the trigger. A loud POP. Eli flinches and rubs his neck.

ELI
What did you people do to me now?

Kwin pulls out a small SCREEN and examines it.

KWIN
An hour ago you had a BAC of .51.
Well, we got an AC anyway. No red
blood cells, white blood cells...
platelets.

ELI
Terrible habit.

KWIN
Are you listening to me?

ELI
No.

KWIN
What the hell is that black stuff?

Eli doesn't register her question. He's in a daze.

ELI
What year is it?

Kwin is flustered.

KWIN
What?!

EXT. COASTLINE - NIGHT

A massive, brutalist, tower sits amidst a floating, rickety shanty city on a coastline.

It's pouring.

EXT. TOWER ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

A DECA-GUNSHIP; a blocky aircraft with mounted guns on each corner, descends onto the roof.

A hatch on the roof opens. An **ARMORED GUARD** steps out and aims his gun at the ship as it lands. A hatch opens at the bottom of the ship.

Ten **PROSELYTES** dressed in ROBES and MASKS, step out. On each of their backs is sheathed a dark, IRIDESCENT SWORD.

The guard aims at the group. One proselyte stands out, towering over the others.

ARMORED GUARD
(in Korean)
Present access clearance! Now!
Failure to do so is an act of war!

The **TALL PROSELYTE** steps forward. The guard steps back.

ARMORED GUARD (CONT'D)
(in Korean)
Now!

The tall proselyte reaches into his robe and pulls out the CLEARANCE. He holds it in front of the guards face then drops it.

He walks by the guard, bumping into him, and enters the tower. The others follow. The guard let's out a sigh of relief.

INT. CELL

Kwin paces back and forth. She talks into a WALKIE on her wrist. Eli stands in the corner of the room.

KWIN
(in Korean)
Cell Provost? 572 reporting.

No response.

KWIN (CONT'D)
(in Korean)
Cell-

A loud BANG shakes the room. The lights cut out, then back on flashing red. An AUTOMATED MESSAGE plays.

AUTOMATED MESSAGE
(in Korean)
All Shangdi personnel. Critical
core breach. Immediate evacuation.
Scorched Earth in effect.

After hearing this message, Kwin is panicked.

KWIN
(in Korean)
Anyone?!

ELI
No one's picking up?

STATIC, then, a male voice. This is **BROCK**.

BROCK (V.O.)
Kwin?!

KWIN
Brock?!

BROCK (V.O.)
Listen to me, there's-

His voice cuts in and out.

BROCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We are at threat-

His voice cuts out.

KWIN
Brock?!

A loud BANG. She JUMPS, Eli doesn't. Kwin rushes to the cell door and stops. She holds her wrist to the door and it opens. She turns.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry!

She quickly exits. Eli RUSHES behind her before the door SLAMS shut.

INT. CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Eli SLAMS her into the adjacent wall. She falls to the floor. Eli stands over her.

ELI
Where is my suit?

She attempts to flee. Eli grabs her.

KWIN
Get off me!

ELI
 You were going to leave me in
 there?

Eli SLAMS her against the wall. She struggles, but she's
 pinned. Eli SQUEEZES her throat. She clenches his fist and
 gasps for air.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Where is my suit?!

She can't breathe. He releases her. She falls, choking.

ELI (CONT'D)
 I'll ask one more time.

KWIN
 What suit?!

ELI
 I came in with it! Your people took
 it!

Kwin points to one end of the cell block.

KWIN
 Evidence room. Three cell blocks
 down.

He runs in that direction. She collects herself.

EXT. TOWER ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The ARMORED GUARD paces next to the DECA-GUNSHIP. The
 building SHAKES. A zip-line SHOOTs up from the edge of the
 tower and plants in the roof. He sees and RUSHES to the edge.

ALEX FLIES up, over the guard's head, and lands behind him.
 The line detaches and reels into Alex's ZIP-RIFLE. He turns.
 So does the guard. He aims at Alex.

ARMORED GUARD
 (in Korean)
 Stop!

Alex raises his arm and drops his gun. The guard kicks it
 away then yells into his WRIST WALKIE.

ARMORED GUARD (CONT'D)
 (in Korean)
 B13, we have a problem!

STATIC

ARMORED GUARD (CONT'D)
 (in Korean)
 B13?!

The building RUMBLES. Alex whistles.

ALEX
 (in Korean)
 You saw them, didn't you?

The guard glares at Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (in Korean)
 How many?

ARMORED GUARD
 (in Korean)
 Ten. I think.

ALEX
 (in Korean)
 Trinity Eco.

The guard TREMBLES.

ARMORED GUARD
 (in Korean)
 Nonsense.

ALEX
 (in Korean)
 Listen carefully. I am part of
 Martian high command.

ARMORED GUARD
 (in Korean)
 Martian command?

Alex lowers his arms.

ALEX
 (in Korean)
 Shangdi is not at war with Mars.

Alex gestures to his PONCHO. The MARTIAN LOGO flaps in the wind. The guard lowers his gun.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (in Korean)
 My Korean is rusty. They gave you
 clearances?

The guard nods.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (in Korean)
 You need to listen very carefully.
 I-

Alex LUNGES at the guard and sucker punches him. The guard drops his gun, stumbles back, and slips off the wet roof SCREAMING.

Alex rushes over and looks. The guard SPLATS on the ground, hundreds of feet below. SOLDIERS on the ground rush to the corpse and look up.

Alex moves out of view. He sighs and rubs his eyes, then looks at the DECA-GUNSHIP.

After collecting himself, he grabs both guns and rushes into the tower.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM

Red lights flicker. The room is trashed. A dead proselyte lies on the floor riddled with bullet holes in a pool of BLACK BLOOD. On a table: A SPACE SUIT and HELMET, the same from the dream earlier. Beside it, a Martian X2 RAYGUN.

Eli enters. He spots the suit and grabs it. His gaze shifts to the X2. He inspects it. Voice interrupts.

BROCK (O.S.)
 (strained)
 You...

Eli grabs the gun, whirls, aims.

In the corner, a bloody corpse dangles over a flipped barricade-table.

Eli cautiously approaches.

BROCK, a battle-scarred Black male in his 30s, lies against the wall behind the table.

Blood pools around him. His fingers clutch a gory stomach wound.

Eli lowers the gun.

BROCK (CONT'D)
 Please.

Eli backs away.

BROCK (CONT'D)
Help me.

ELI
There's no helping you man.

Eli turns.

BROCK
Please.

Brock coughs up blood.

BROCK (CONT'D)
My sister... please.

Eli freezes.

BROCK (CONT'D)
There's only one way out now.
They'll never take this place. Not
after...

Eli glances at the dead body on the table.

ELI
Your sister?

BROCK
Yes. Service tunnel 33.

Brock squeezes his stomach in agony.

ELI
There's no other way out?

BROCK
There won't be. Very soon.

Eli sighs.

BROCK (CONT'D)
Please. She-

ELI
Yeah. Fine.

Eli faces Brock.

ELI (CONT'D)
If it gets me out. How do I get
there?

BROCK
 Back the way you came. Follow the
 numbers. Stay hidden from them.

A loud BOOM rocks the building.

ELI
 Them?

Brock remains silent.

ELI (CONT'D)
 She'll be there?

BROCK
 Yes. Kwin. Her name. She has red
 hair. She-

His voice breaks.

Eli avoids eye contact.

ELI
 I'll find her.

Brock nods, teeth gritted.

Eli turns.

BROCK (O.S.)
 Thank you.

Eli stops, about to speak but doesn't.

He exits the room.

INT. BARRACKS

Guard's corpses litter the wrecked barracks room.

SHINJI, an elderly Korean man wearing a SHANGDI OFFICER
 UNIFORM, leans against a table, badly wounded.

Proselytes stand around him.

Their swords are sheathed on their backs. One steps forward.

She removes her mask.

This is **IDA**, an early 30's, Japanese woman. She has long
 black hair, black scleras, and red irises. She smiles;
 teathy.

SHINJI
All for a relic?

He coughs up blood.

IDA
Shangdi's ignorance does not
dissappoint.

SHINJI
You're a demon.

Her toothy smile grows.

SHINJI (CONT'D)
Demon's burn.

She unsheathes her sword.

IDA
I pray so.

She SLASHES his neck. Blood SPRAYS from the wound. His eyes roll white. She scoffs and turns to the others.

IDA (CONT'D)
Can you taste the DARK TRACE?

They bow their heads. Raise their fist to their chest.

Ida turns and stares at Shinji's corpse. She swings her blade, splashing blood on his face, and laughs.

INT. VENTILATION SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

Alex shimmies down the ventilation shaft above the barracks clumsily holding both rifles.

Ida's laughter is heard. Alex rolls his eyes and murmurs complaints to himself. Then, loud THUMPS. Heavy footsteps.

Her laughter stops. The footsteps do to. A voice, ROBOTIC, EERIE. It's the TALL PROSELYTE.

TALL PROSELYTE (O.S.)
And this pilgrim you search for? He
has it?

Alex listens intently.

IDA (O.S.)
Yes. I know it.

TALL PROSELYTE (O.S.)
You know the adornment?

IDA (O.S.)
Yes. We do not have long. They will
level this building.

TALL PROSELYTE (O.S.)
Yes.

Alex's eyes widen.

TALL PROSELYTE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Your loud antics have stirred the
nest.

Alex frantically continues down the shaft.

INT. BARRACKS - CONTINUOUS

The room empties, leaving only Ida and the tall proselyte. He looms over her, her face glistening with a light sweat.

TALL PROSELYTE
I suggest you continue the search
as well Ida. If you are done
gloating.

She bows, then exits.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM

Alex bursts into the room, breathless and drenched in sweat. His zip-rifle rests on his back, the stolen guard's rifle in hand. He scans the room.

ALEX
What the hell am I even looking
for? Adornment? Armor?

He kicks crates and tables, pulls on lockers, looking for anything that stands out.

The body draped over the table barricade startles him. Cautiously, he approaches, rifle aimed, and peers over. Just Brock's corpse. He releases a deep breath. He leans up against a table calms himself.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(chuckles)
I should probably get out of here.

He shrugs, retrieves his drug vaporizer from under his poncho, and takes a massive hit.

INT. ELEVATOR ROOM

Massive, metal sliding doors open. Eli lumbers into the large concrete room. He wears his space suit and clutches the X2.

Kwin and two guards stand by a sparking wall module by a reinforced elevator door. They turn. The guards aim at Eli.

GUARD
(in Korean)
Stop!

Eli stops and raises his arms. Eli's voice is muffled by the helmet.

ELI
I don't speak that.

GUARD
(in Korean)
Drop it! Now!

Eli doesn't understand.

GUARD (CONT'D)
(in Korean)
Open-

KWIN
(in Korean)
Wait!

They wait.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Are you that black bleeding
bastard?

Eli nods. Kwin looks at the guards.

KWIN (CONT'D)
(in Korean)
Shoot him.

The guards take aim.

ELI
Kwin!?

KWIN
(in Korean)
Stop!

The guards groan. Lower their guns.

KWIN (CONT'D)
How do you-

ELI
Your brother sent me.

The guards exchange puzzled glances.

KWIN
What did you say?

ELI
He asked me to get his sister out.
Said her name was Kwin. That's you,
right?

Kwin nods. Eli let's out a deep breath.

KWIN
Why isn't he here himself?!

Eli lowers his arms.

ELI
He'll... meet you when we get out.

KWIN
We?!

Kwin snatches a gun from one of the guards.

GUARD
(in Korean)
Hey!

She STOMPS over to Eli and aims at him.

KWIN
I should ventilate you!

A pause.

Eli drops the X2. She looks at it, then him, and grimaces.

KWIN (CONT'D)
(in Korean)
Damn it.

She lowers her gun, walks up to Eli, and knees him in the groin. He collapses in pain.

Kwin retrieves the X2 and returns to the module. She tosses the guard his gun.

She tinkers with the module. The guards join her and speak to her in hushed tones. Eli struggles to his feet.

GUARD
(in Korean)
And him?

KWIN
(in Korean)
Once we evac, he's not our problem.

Eli walks up to Kwin.

ELI
He just wanted to make sure you got out. He-

Kwin JERKS her head toward Eli.

KWIN
I don't believe you, and even if I did, I don't need your help. Shut your mouth and let me fix this.

She connects two wires. SPARKS. The doors CREAK open.

Kwin eyes Eli's suit.

KWIN (CONT'D)
What are you wearing?

ELI
It's an EV14 suit, designed by NASA.

KWIN
A what?

The room doors slide open. It's Alex, his rifle aimed at the group, his zip-rifle slung on his back. They all turn. Aim at him.

ALEX
(in Korean)
Don't bother.

The guards tremble.

GUARD
(in Korean)
Martian...

ALEX
(in Korean)
Lower your guns.

The guards drop their guns.

ELI
Uh, what are-

KWIN
(in Korean)
What are you doing?!

ALEX
(in Korean)
You too, cherry blossom.

Kwin shoots Alex a furious glare.

KWIN
(in Korean)
Not a chance!

Alex smirks. He shoots both guards, a head shot on one, a gut shot on the other. Kwin and Eli JUMP. Kwin screams and fires a panicked shot from the X2. The GREEN, GOOEY energy projectile misses Alex. It melts a hole in the wall behind him.

Alex aims at Kwin. She trembles.

ALEX
(in Korean)
That was close. First time firing a gun?

Eli collects himself.

ELI
I hope you weren't trying to hit me asshole.

Alex side-eyes Eli, then looks at Kwin.

ALEX
That's a strange suit you're wearing. Can't speak Korean, can you?

ELI
Oh, Korean.

Eli looks at Kwin.

ELI (CONT'D)
We're in Korea?

She is frozen.

ALEXANDER KALE
(in Korean)
Drop it.

Kwin slowly lowers the gun.

ELI
Don't do it.

She drops it. Eli throws his hands up.

ELI (CONT'D)
Do you morons have training? There
were three of you!

ALEX
(in Korean)
To me.

She kicks it to Alex. Eli facepalms. Alex picks it up, still aimed at them, and admires it. He drops the rifle and aims the X2 at them.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Do you know what you slid me?

ELI
It's a gun, fucko. I think. I don't
really know what that projectile
was-

Alex scoffs.

ALEX
A Martian admiral's gun. Rare, on
Mars. This does not belong to any
of you.

Kwin remains silent, her gaze fixed on her fallen comrades as she sniffles. Alex turns his attention to Eli.

ALEX (CONT'D)
That suit?

ELI
What about it?

ALEXANDER KALE
What is it?

ELI
I wear this every day.

Alex chuckles.

ALEX
Hand it over.

ELI
You want me to strip for you?

ALEX
Now.

ELI
Not happening.

ALEX
I will take it like that or with a
hole in it.

ELI
Giant hole it is.

Alex smirks. Kwin SNAPS to.

KWIN
Give it to him.

ALEX
Smart girl.

ELI
Not happening.

ALEX
Five. Four.

KWIN
You DO want to die!

ELI
Yeah, I cut my wrists. What part-

ALEX
Three.

The module sparks and the elevator door slides open. The gut shot guard leans up and sprays his rifle at Alex. He's hit in the stomach and falls.

Eli YANKS Kwin into the elevator.

The guard frantically reloads. Alex fires, hitting the guard's head, which explodes in a red and green, GOOEY MESS. He aims, unsteady, at Eli and Kwin.

Eli kicks the door control. The doors SLAM shut. Alex fires.

INSIDE ELEVATOR

The shot BLOWS through the door between Kwin and Eli's head and through the wall behind them. The elevator drops and PLUMMETS down the shaft.

KWIN

What are you doing?!

ELI

Saving your life.

KWIN

They're dead. They- We should have done something!

ELI

I did!

EXT. DOCK - DAWN

The tall proselyte stands on a rickety dock, the massive city looming in the background. Smoke billows from the battered tower in the distance. Out at sea, a deca-gunship emerges from the fog. It flies toward the dock.

Strapped beneath it, a corroded section of a 21st century spacecraft covered in seaweed and barnacles. Proselytes gather under it as it hovers above.

The wreckage is lowered onto the dock. Ida, in her proselyte robes and mask, and the tall proselyte approach it.

IDA

The final piece?

The tall proselyte glances at her, then walks up to the wreckage. Looks it over.

TALL PROSELYTE

No.

Ida lowers her head. He walks up to her.

TALL PROSELYTE (CONT'D)
The final piece escaped. Another
failure.

IDA
But the survivors?

TALL PROSELYTE
There was one survivor.

IDA
I will find him.

The tall proselyte signals the ship above. It lands and a hatch opens.

TALL PROSELYTE
Do not return until you do.

He boards the ship with half the proselytes. It departs, disappearing into the distant fog at sea as Ida and the remaining proselytes look on.

Ida glances at the wreckage, then at a proselyte.

IDA
Have this reclaimed.

It nods. She gazes out at sea.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS - DAWN

Thousands of ratty, greasy, multi-ethnic evacuees pour out of the shanty city onto a stone platform overlooking a dirty beach along the coast.

A large CARGO SHIP is docked against the platform. Shangdi Soldiers form a perimeter around the entrance. The soldiers slowly move the crowd into the ship.

Eli and Kwin stand among the crowd and move with it. Eli holds his helmet.

In the distance, smoke pours out of the ruined tower they just escaped.

A SENTRY TURRET floats over the crowd, its robotic voice repeats a message.

SENTRY TURRET
 (in Korean)
 Remain calm citizens. Processing in
 effect.

ON ELI AND KWIN

KWIN
 What's your name?

Eli looks at her.

KWIN (CONT'D)
 You know mine.

ELI
 Aly... Eli.

She looks perplexed but nods.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Where's this taking us?

KWIN
 Likely the next loading dock. This-

ELI
 Likely?

Kwin scans the crowd and notices two GRIFS; armored, military vehicles. One is topless. They slowly push through the crowd toward the cargo ship and stop close by. Soldiers pour out. They forcefully interact with evacuees. Eli eyes the scene.

ELI (CONT'D)
 They looking for someone?

KWIN
 I don't know. Escaped prisoners?

Eli rolls his eyes at Kwin. She smirks.

KWIN (CONT'D)
 You stand out in that, but not in
 the way you think. The tower's been
 infiltrated. Shangdi won't let that
 stand. They're probably looking for
 personnel to evac.

ELI
 Shangdi?

She raises an eyebrow at him.

ELI (CONT'D)
 You don't get it do you?

She stares blankly at him. He grunts.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Aren't you personnel?

KWIN
 Yes, but... my brother and I have
 different plans.

Eli avoids eye contact, looks back at the ruined tower, and drops his gaze.

ON THE GRIFS

An evacuee SLUGS a soldier. The situation escalates and the crowd starts to panic.

FURTHER IN THE CROWD

Alex lumbers along squeezing his abdomen. He wears a BLACK PONCHO over his Martian uniform. In his free hand rests the X2. Blood trails behind him.

An evacuee SLAMS into him. He SHOVES them away, mumbling profanities.

In the crowd ahead, three robed figures. One turns. GLOWING WHITE EYES. PROSELYTES.

Alex's eyes widen when he sees them. He pushes toward them.

ON ELI AND KWIN

A **SOLDIER** approaches Kwin and inspects her uniform.

SOLDIER
 (in Korean)
 Specialist, all personnel are to be
 moved to Port Chaewon. The boat is
 going to Imugi.

Kwin glances at Eli, then looks at the soldier, standing tall.

KWIN
 (in Korean)
 No sir. I've been ordered to Imugi.
 Xin command.

The soldier squints at her.

SOLDIER
 (in Korean)
 Show me the order.

She swallows. The soldier turns to Eli.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
 (in Korean)
 You? Let's see your tags.

ELI
 Uhh...

KWIN
 (in Korean)
 He's just an evacuee sir. He-

The soldier holds his hand up to Kwin's face then whispers into his wrist walkie.

He pulls his gun and SHOVES it in Eli's face. Eli winces.

SOLDIER
 (in Korean)
 You, come with me!

KWIN
 (in Korean)
 Sir-

The soldier aims at Kwin.

SOLDIER
 (in Korean)
 Shut up! You're aiding a prisoner!

Kwin looks at Eli. Sighs.

ON THE GRIFS

Eli and Kwin are shoved against a grif by the soldier. He SNATCHES Eli's helmet and TOSSES it into the back seat. Other soldiers HERD the crowd around the vehicle.

ELI
 I won't stand out, huh?

KWIN
 There were hundreds of escapees.
 You should not have mattered.

ELI
 You're the one that stood out,
 medic.

KWIN
You're the one wearing evidence.

ELI
A prison uniform would be better?

ON ALEX

Alex tails the proselytes as they advance toward the grifs. They're close. They draw their swords from beneath their robes as they approach Eli and Kwin.

One of their swords is HUGE, a massive five feet in length, its IRIDESCENT SHEEN SHIMMERS in the moonlight.

Alex FRANTICALLY PUSHES through the crowd toward them.

ON ELI AND KWIN

Eli locks eyes with a proselyte hidden in the crowd.

ALEX (O.S.)
Move!

Alex takes aim.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Out of the way!

He SHOVES an evacuee and FIRES. The green projectile BLOWS a STEAMING HOLE in the grif. Everyone JOLTS. An uncomfortable pause.

Soldiers open fire, SPRAYING the crowd. CHAOS ENSUES.

Eli and Kwin take cover behind the grif. The crowd RUSHES the soldiers. A BRUTAL brawl ensues.

A proselyte turns to Alex before Signaling the other two toward the grifs. They nod and obey.

ON ELI AND KWIN

They lean against the grif. GUNSHOTS, SCREAMS, and VIOLENCE surround them.

A soldier rushes them, gun aimed. They flinch.

Evacuees SWARM him and fight for his weapon.

BLOOD SPRAYS. Their cleaved bodies collapse.

REVEAL; the proselyte with the massive sword stands above the remains. Blood drips from the blade. His robes drop revealing DEMONIC, ORNAMENTAL armor and a PROSELYTE helmet.

He approaches Eli and Kwin. They stare in fear. He towers over them then kneels before Eli, lowering his head. He gracefully extends his hand toward Eli.

Eli's mouth hangs open. Kwin gasps then glares at Eli.

The proselyte's head EXPLODES. BLACK and GREEN sludge splatter Eli and Kwin. The sword drops and slides under the grif.

Alex stumbles over to them. His breaths are heavy. All three lock eyes for a moment.

An evacuee CHARGES Alex, pushing him into the chaotic mob.

Eli wipes the goop off his face then peaks under the vehicle, spotting the sword.

Two proselytes emerge from the crowd and shed their robes, revealing the same demonic armor.

A soldier FIRES at them. Bullets ricochet off one's armor.

CLICK CLICK. He's empty.

They turn to the soldier. His eyes WIDEN. One LUNGES at him and cuts off his head. The proselyte turns to Kwin and approaches her.

Kwin's eyes widen. Tears roll down her face.

Under the grif, Eli reaches for the sword.

Alex YELLS, catching the proselyte's attention. He RAMS into her, knocking her down. She quickly recovers and yells to another proselyte. It's IDA. Her voice is muffled.

IDA
The traveler!

He nods and rushes Eli.

Ida swings at Alex. He dodges, but she catches him with a POWERFUL push-kick, sending him flying back.

Eli snatches the sword and grins before being YANKED out from under the grif by the proselyte.

Eli turns and PLUNGES the sword through the proselyte's chest. He stumbles back, the sword sliding out, black blood SPRAYING.

The proselyte kneels. Clutches his chest.

Kwin scrambles to the rifle of the dead soldier and grabs it. She aims at the kneeling proselyte, then at Ida, who slowly approaches a downed Alex.

A soldier RUSHES from the chaos and unloads on IDA, which cracks her armor and helmet. She turns and rips helmet off.

CLICK CLICK. He's empty. He frantically attempts to reload but is impaled through the face by her sword.

She turns to Alex and gasps. He aims the X2 at her and smirks. He FIRES, hitting her leg, BLASTING it into a green and black GOOEY SLUDGE. She SHRIEKS and collapses. Alex lowers the gun, struggling to stay conscious.

The wounded proselyte stands. Bullet's bounce off the proselyte's back. He turns. It's Kwin, gun aimed. CLICK CLICK. She's empty.

The proselyte trudges toward her. Eli SLAMS the sword down on his head, bisecting it. The proselyte stands motionless, then turns to Eli.

ELI

What the fuck?

The proselyte drops dead. Kwin is in shock. She wipes black blood off her face, looks at it, then at Eli.

IN THE DISTANCE

The sentry turret BLARES an alarm and ZOOMS toward the cargo ship. It fires indiscriminately into the crowd, now an active battle zone.

ON ELI

A large, empty perimeter now surrounds the grifs.

A bloodied soldier shuffles toward Eli, gun aimed. He yells to Kwin.

SOLDIER

(in Korean)

Medic! We're leaving! Start the grif!

Kwin, drenched in BLACK LIQUID, BLOOD, DIRT, and SWEAT SNAPS to.

KWIN
(in Korean)
Sir, stop!

He stops and looks at her.

SOLDIER
(in Korean)
Wha-

Eli YELLS and SLICES his arm off. He drops his gun, screaming, and clutches his stump. Kwin GASPS. Eli kills him.

KWIN
What are you doing?!

Eli glares at her, then rushes into the TOPLESS grif.

Kwin picks up the dead soldier's gun.

A grif SCREECHES to a halt in front of Kwin. Two **SOLDIERS** jump out. They inspect the scene.

SOLDIER 1
(in Korean)
Gods.

He touches Kwin's shoulder.

SOLDIER 1 (CONT'D)
(in Korean)
Medic, What's your status?!

She's in shock.

The other soldier notices Alex on the ground and walks over to him. Alex is barely alive.

SOLDIER 2
(in Korean)
Sir! Martian! He's still alive!

Kwin and the soldier look.

SOLDIER 1
(in Korean)
Kill him!

Kwin eye's widen.

The soldier takes aim. Kwin shoots the soldier, killing him. The other DARTS his aim at her. She shoots him. He drops.

She stands frozen. She looks down at her gun. Drops it.

Eli's grif FIRES on, startling Kwin.

She rushes to Alex's side and gently grabs his face. His eyes shut.

KWIN
(in Korean)
Shit!

ON ELI

He pushes random buttons. They do nothing. He BANGS on the steering wheel and yells.

ON KWIN

She wrestles Alex toward to grif. She stops, he's too heavy.

KWIN (CONT'D)
(strained)
E- Eli!

She collapses and surveys the chaos around her. Distant screams, gunfire, and explosions. She whimpers.

Eli peaks out from the grif, spotting Kwin and Alex.

ELI
How do I move this thing?!

KWIN
Help me!

ELI
What?!

KWIN
He's too heavy!

Eli glares at her.

ELI
Fuck that!

Eli leans back inside the grif. He gets it into gear and it jerks forward. He smirks.

KWIN (O.S.)
Eli!

Eli freezes.

 KWIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Eli?!

 FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
 Eli?!

He sighs and lowers his head.

 ELI
 Goddamn it.

ON KWIN

Tears stream down her face. She looks on as the sentry turret approaches in the distance.

A hand touches her shoulder. She jumps. It's Eli.

 ELI (CONT'D)
 Come on.

They drag Alex and throw him in the back seat. Eli rushes back and grabs the X2.

 ELI (CONT'D)
 (to Kwin)
 You're driving!

Kwin jumps in the drivers seat. Eli jumps in the passenger's seat.

The sentry turret opens fire, SHREDDING what little evacuees remain close and hitting the grif.

Kwin SLAMS it into gear and it BLASTS forward. The sentry turret chases.

Evacuees frantically dodge the grif as it ZOOMS down the platform. Some are hit.

INSIDE THE GRIF

 ELI (CONT'D)
Holy fuck! Fuck! KWIN

ON THE GRIF

It rapidly approaches the edge of the platform.

INSIDE THE GRIF

Eli braces. Kwin screams.

ON THE GRIF

It FLIES off the edge.

EXT. GRAY BEACH - CONTINUOUS

The grif SLAMS onto the beach, it's advanced suspension absorbing most of the shock.

It SPEEDS down the beach, the sentry turret tailing close.

Eli grabs the X2, leans over the seat, and aims at the sentry turret.

ON THE TURRET

It opens fire. A BRIGHT RED bullet stream hits the beach causing FIERY sand plumes.

INSIDE THE GRIF

Eli is hit through the chest. He wheezes, drops the X2, and slumps into his seat.

Kwin looks at him, mortified. She reaches back and grabs the X2, the grif swerving back and forth.

She UNLOADS a volley at the turret. One shot hits. It spins out of control and SLAMS into the beach. BOOM!

She turns back and straightens the grif out. She darts her gaze to Eli who coughs up black liquid.

KWIN

Eli! Hold on!

His eyes roll white.

KWIN (CONT'D)

(in Korean)

Shit! Don't die on me!

She looks at Alex, unconscious in the back seat, then back at Eli. She stares at the endless beach ahead. Her eyes swell. She hyperventilates.

THEN, the smoking tower in the city EXPLODES in the background.

She DARTS her gaze back to the city. The grif SKIDS to a stop.

She stares, her eyes wide and mouth agape, at the GARGANTUAN mushroom cloud. Through the smoke-filled sky, a massive combat aircraft appears above the city.

Kwin's breath is shallow. She looks at Eli. He's dead. She looks at Alex. He's likely dead too.

She slumps in her seat, overcome with shock.

After a moment and deep breath she puts the grif in gear and continues down the beach.

CUT TO BLACK.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Eli stands in a dense, evergreen forest. He wears his full suit.

He gasps, then grabs his chest. He looks down at his hand; no blood or wound on his chest. He looks up and scans the area.

In the distance, what looks like a gaping hole in the earth.

He takes a deep breath and approaches, cautiously. He stops before it and stares deep into the bottomless pit.

He kneels in front of it and leans in, looking closer.

A moment passes.

THEN, from the dark, a GIANT, GROTESQUE, ROTTING HAND shoots from the abyss attached to an elongated arm covered in maggots and decay. It snatches Eli's throat.

Eli screams.

The hand YANKS him into the void.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The house is cramped but cozy. A mix of rundown decor and futuristic tech.

Eli lies on the floor. There is a hole in his suit on his chest. Black stains surround it, though there's no visible wound.

His helmet rests on a nearby table alongside the X2. The massive iridescent sword leans against the table's edge.

Bloodied bandages and medical supplies are sprawled across the table.

Kwin sits at the table, her head buried in her hands. She is covered in grime and blood.

Alex lies on an adjacent couch, partially stripped and bandaged.

ON ELI

His eyes open. He slowly sits, dazed.

Kwin raises her head, her eyes widen. Her eyes are puffy and red, her face dirt-streaked. She scoffs, relieved and exacerbated.

KWIN

Do you ever stay dead?

Eli turns to Kwin, stares blankly at her, then scans the room. He looks down at his chest.

ELI

(silently)

Nothing?

He eyes Kwin.

ELI (CONT'D)

I WAS shot.

She nods.

ELI (CONT'D)

No bandages this time?

KWIN

You were not coming back from that.

She stands and walks over to her kitchen counter close by. On the counter is a DECANTER full of blue liquid. She pours herself a glass, turns, and leans against the counter.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Until you did.

She downs the whole glass and winces.

ELI

That looks familiar.

Eli struggles to his feet. He stumbles over to the table and sits.

KWIN
This what got you drunk?

He nods.

ELI
Probably.

KWIN
You must have had a lot.

He shrugs.

ELI
Looked like some kind of fishbowl.
Like a party bowl or something. Had
little fruits.

She raises an eyebrow.

KWIN
Yeah. Usually one per party.

ELI
I didn't ask for it.

KWIN
You stole it.

He squints at her.

ELI
I didn't steal anything.

KWIN
Why were you in our cell?

He says nothing.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Why do you bleed black?

He looks away.

KWIN (CONT'D)
The same color as those... things.
Why are you coming back from the
dead? How did you you even-

Eli SLAMS his fist on the table. Silence hangs heavy.

Kwin goes still. Emotion drains from her face - numb.

Alex groans. They both look, then Eli GLARES at Kwin.

ELI

I knew that was him! That's who
shot at us. What the fuck are you
bringing him here for?

Eli throws his hands up. Looks around.

ELI (CONT'D)

Where is here anyway?!

KWIN

Don't change the subject.

She SLAMS her glass on the counter and STOMPS past Eli. She
kneels next to Alex, carefully looking him over. He groans.

ELI

How sweet, you even bandaged pretty
boy here.

Kwin takes a deep breath. She turns and strides up to Eli.
She sucker punches him. He barely flinches.

ELI (CONT'D)

Are you out of your mind?

He stands up. Lords his size over her. She stares up at him.

KWIN

(simmering)

I must be, taking both of you back
here. What are you going to do,
choke me?

She gets right in his face.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Does it make you feel big
and strong?

A tense stare down.

ALEX (O.S.)

Just get it over with.

They both look. Alex struggles to sit up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Kill each other. Whoever wins, kill
me fast, please.

Eli murmurs to himself. He SNATCHES his helmet off the table
and storms out of the house.

Kwin takes a deep breath and collects herself. She grabs the X2 and points it at Alex.

KWIN
Don't go anywhere.

She rushes out of the house.

Alex shrugs and nods.

ALEX
No problem.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Kwin exits the house; a dilapidated collection of storage containers, painted and rusted. It sits on a rocky shore, shrouded in a thick layer of mist. Flickering lights from distant structures dance across the lake, barely visible through the haze. A dense forest engulfs the area behind the house. There is a small dock that extends into the lake.

The busted grif is parked nearby under a tarp.

Kwin scans the area. No Eli. She sighs and walks down the beach.

KWIN
(calling out)
Eli?!

She comes to a cluster of boulders and climbs on top. Her voice echoes.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Eli?!

Eli stands in a sandy clearing by the water with his helmet on. He stares out at the lake.

Kwin hops down and walks up to him, stopping a few feet away.

ELI
(muffled by the helmet)
Go on then.

KWIN
Wha-

She looks down at the X2 in her hand.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I'm not-

She inhales sharply, exhales slowly, her hand rubbing the nape of her neck. She holsters the X2 and sits down on the sand beside him.

ELI
I have no idea where I'm going.
Don't even know where I am.

KWIN
Lake Tasca.

He looks down.

KWIN (CONT'D)
This is my home.

ELI
How long was I out?

KWIN
We escaped Shangdi about eighteen hours ago.

ELI
Do you have a shower?

She looks up.

ELI (CONT'D)
Your face, you-

KWIN
I was busy taking care of a dying and a dead man.

Eli stares back at the water. She does too.

ELI
(hesitant)
Thanks.

Silence lingers between them.

ELI (CONT'D)
Are we in North or South Korea?

KWIN
We-

She shakes her head and scoffs.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Are you a time traveler?

He looks down.

ELI
Do you have those now?

She shrugs.

Eli rubs condensation off his helmet. He groans in pain as he sits down, keeping his distance from Kwin.

KWIN
Good recovery time. Those...
things. They-

ELI
I know as much as you.

KWIN
So that's it then? You're giving me
nothing. You're going to wonder off
into the woods, and I-

He groans, interrupting her. She falls silent, mouth agape, shaking her head. He looks at her, then away. He let's out big HUFF.

ELI
The Blue Gale.

She listens intently.

ELI (CONT'D)
Dumb name, I always thought. That's
the last I remember from... my
time.

KWIN
What's that?

ELI
That was the ship I was assigned
to. We-

He stops, his thoughts drift.

KWIN
Your ship?

He nods, his gaze locked on the shimmering lights across the lake.

ELI
It's calm here.

KWIN

Eli?

He leaves her hanging a moment.

ELI

There was an anomaly. We were on a long ass mission to go check it out. It wasn't what we anticipated. I went into cryosleep. Emergency procedure.

KWIN

When was this?

ELI

Hmmm. The date I do remember, my last report. That was about ten hours before I went into cryo. April 3rd, 2036. You never did answer me.

Kwin swallows.

KWIN

March fifth... 2243.

Eli looks down and sighs.

KWIN (CONT'D)

You were in cryogenic suspension for over 200 years?

ELI

Looks that way.

Kwin stands up. Wipes sand off her pants. Rubs her eyes.

KWIN

It was banned in 2112. We haven't used that in over a hundred years. I doubt most people alive even know about it. I learned about it in academy. It was a big deal when it happened. They found prolonged exposure of just 10 years had detrimental health effects. You-

ELI

Should be dead?

He stands up and stretches.

ELI (CONT'D)
Bullets usually kill people too.
And slitting your wrists.

KWIN
Bullets, sure.

She walks up to him. Pokes his chest right between the hole in his suit.

KWIN (CONT'D)
That was an anti-vehicle, tungsten round.

She removes her finger.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I could see through you.

Eli pulls off his helmet. His eyes are red. Holds it up to her.

ELI
This was supposed to be water proof.

He drops it on the sand and walks to the shoreline, as if everything she just said went in one ear and out the other. He stares out at the water.

Kwin picks it up and inspects it.

KWIN
I believe you.

He glances back at her. She shrugs, a warm smile gracing her lips.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Why not?

She holds up his helmet.

KWIN (CONT'D)
There is some water damage but we can dehydrate it.

She walks over to him, extending the helmet.

KWIN (CONT'D)
That might work.

He looks at her. A flicker of surprise and vulnerability. Her kindness catches him off guard.

He GRABS the helmet and hastily puts it on, steps back, and clears his throat.

ELI

Cool.

KWIN

Cool?

He nods. She smiles.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Cool.

She looks around, taking in the scenery.

KWIN (CONT'D)

It is calm here. Peaceful.

She relishes the fresh air. A momentary hesitation lingers before she speaks.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Last night, my life consisted of long stints in Guryong. Then I would come back here. When duty was called, I would go back. Back and forth, every few months, my whole life.

She folds her arms.

KWIN (CONT'D)

I have been here all my life.

ELI

You speak decent English.

KWIN

More proficient than you.

They both snicker. She loosens her posture.

KWIN (CONT'D)

I have no reason not to believe you. Not after last night.

Kwin reaches into her pocket and pulls out a folded piece of paper. Eli glances at it, then back at her. She scoffs, masking embarrassment. She instinctively fixes her hair.

KWIN (CONT'D)

I wrote this a while ago. No one's read it.

She scoffs again, tinged with self-depreciation.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I didn't know how to tell him. I
was going to leave this life. It
was easier to write it out.

She holds it out to Eli. He looks at it, then her.

ELI
What am I supposed to do with this?

KWIN
Please.

He sighs. Reluctantly snatches it.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I thought he would be here by now.
Stupid.

Eli looks down and away.

KWIN (CONT'D)
You did see him?

Eli nods. He doesn't look up.

ELI
Were you adopted?

She rubs her arm.

KWIN
The division is all I ever knew. I
never knew my parents. Those caught
up in the system tend to latch onto
each other.

She sniffles but keeps it together.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I wasn't trying to abandon him. I
just wanted... something new.
Exciting. Different.

Eli is stiff.

KWIN (CONT'D)
You did him a favor. And me. His
name was Brock.

Eli looks up.

KWIN (CONT'D)
The tower... It-

Kwin's face contorts, caught between a half-snicker and welling tears. Eli stands motionless.

KWIN (CONT'D)
That is avoidance if I have ever seen it. You're not good at this.

A tear runs down her face. She wipes it away. She sniffles.

KWIN (CONT'D)
We can fix that grif, get you-

ELI
Kwin.

Her lips tremble.

KWIN
I was going to ask him to go too.
We- But he's not coming.

Eli doesn't know what to say.

KWIN (CONT'D)
(teary)
He was all I had. My life-

She chokes back tears, gathering herself haphazardly.

She does a quick bow, expressing gratitude with a trembling smile. Tears stream down her face.

She turns. Eli briefly reaches out his hand and quickly pulls it back to his side, tightly clenching his fist.

She takes a few steps. Then, she freezes, hugging herself tightly before breaking down in tears. She falls to her knees, overcome with uncontrollable sobs.

Eli stares at her. He's a statue.

It starts to rain.

He looks up. Raindrops splash off his shiny helmet.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Eli's helmet, the X2, and the proselyte sword rest on the kitchen table. Mist flows from the helmet into a DEVICE with a small screen. The sound of a running shower echoes.

Alex sits on the couch, breathing heavily. The front door SLAMS open, making him JUMP. Eli bursts in, soaked in his space suit, cut logs under his arm. He drops the logs in the corner and sits at the table.

The shower shuts off. Moments later, Kwin emerges in a towel. She makes herself a drink at the kitchen counter.

Alex stares at her. Eli sneaks a glance between Kwin and Alex, shakes his head, and smirks.

ELI
Better watch out.

Kwin turns and exchanges a look with Eli. She shifts her attention to Alex, who quickly averts his eyes. Kwin rolls her eyes and heads back to the bathroom.

Eli chuckles softly then inspects his helmet. Alex mumbles under his breath.

A towel lands on Eli's head.

KWIN (O.S.)
Here.

He pulls it off. Kwin, wearing sleek designer STREETWEAR, sits across from him. She places her drink down.

ELI
Thanks.

KWIN
Thank you.

He dries himself.

ELI
Huh?

KWIN
For the wood.

Eli nods. Kwin sips her drink. Alex side-eyes them.

ALEX
Strange Shangdi holding cell we're
in.

They ignore him. He sits up and eyes the sword.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Nice sword.

Eli side-eyes Alex.

ELI
Have you figured out where we're
going to bury him?

Kwin rests her chin in her palm. She's sick of both of them.
She looks at the device's screen.

KWIN
It appears that there is about
2.38% humidity left in your helmet.

ELI
Can't you just put it in a box of
rice or something?

She ignores his comment.

KWIN
Do you know the recommended
moisture level for adequate
functioning?

Eli stares at her for a moment then leans back in his chair.

ELI
Zero?

She raises her eyebrows then presses on the screen.

KWIN
Zero it is then. Should only be a
few minutes.

She looks up at Eli.

KWIN (CONT'D)
And when it's fixed?

ELI
I was in part of my ship. Part. If
there's any of my people left,
this'll find them.

Kwin nods.

ALEX (O.S.)
These bandages seem like a waste if
that little comment was serious.

Eli scoffs. Kwin grimaces at Alex.

KWIN
I was thinking rapid cremation-

ALEX
Is that sword from one of them I
killed saving you two?

KWIN
Saving us?!

Eli looks at him.

ELI
Who are they?

ALEX
A scag and a low, totem medic
wouldn't recognize their handiwork?
I'm shocked.

ELI
Listen, buddy, I don't recognize
anything I see around here.

Alex squints at Eli. He turns and sits normally, wincing in pain.

ALEX
Soronium. That's a soronium sword.
I'll take it as recompense as per
Martian tact.

Eli stares blankly at him. Alex just said a lot of words Eli does not understand. Kwin is getting more pissed.

ALEX (CONT'D)
And I'll take the stolen Martian
contraband on the table.

Kwin's mouth hangs open, struggling for words.

KWIN
You killed Shangdi soldiers.

ALEX
So did you.

She inhales SHARPLY. GRABS the X2 tightly. Alex eyes the gun, then her. She grits her teeth. Eli looks at them both, unamused.

KWIN
(through her teeth)
I saved your life.

ALEX
(in Korean)
Amateur mistake, cherry blossom.

She stands and aims at him. Eli slightly leans back unsure of the blast radius. Alex continues to stare at her, resigned to his fate. Her hands trembles.

ELI
Kwin.

She doesn't respond. Eli stands and gently pushes her hand down. She resists, but complies.

ELI (CONT'D)
As much as it would be nice to
see...

She looks at Eli, then at Alex. Alex smirks. She STOMPS over to the kitchen counter, places the X2 down, and leans against it, back turned.

ELI (CONT'D)
That sword you like so much...

Eli turns to Alex.

ELI (CONT'D)
You have five seconds to tell me
why I keep running into you before
I start cutting pieces off with it.

Kwin turns. Huffs.

KWIN
What, you just wanted to do it
yourself?

A LOUD TUNE plays from Eli's helmet. They all look.

A little dot appears on the sleek visor, flashing and bouncing back and forth. Eli's mouth hangs open. He rushes to it, picks it up, and stares at it.

The dot disappears. The tune plays again, followed by a robotic, female voice.

HELMET
Reboot sequence complete. Working
efficiency at 57 percent.

Eli's eyes widen. He puts the helmet on.

ELI
Pace?

HELMET
Hello, Eli.

Eli breathes a sigh of relief.

ELI
I thought you were done.

HELMET
Interior circuits are damaged.
Repairs will be needed.

KWIN
Eli?

Eli turns to Kwin.

ELI
It worked.

Kwin tilts her head.

ELI (CONT'D)
Pace, are there any active distress
signals?

No response.

KWIN
(to Eli)
You WERE telling the truth?

HELMET
Last distress signal received at
1900.

ELI
Where?

HELMET
I have coordinates Eli.

Eli takes a look at Kwin then RUSHES out of the house. Kwin watches as he does then throws her hands up in confusion.

She rushes to the door, stops in front of Alex, and looks down at him. Their eyes meet.

KWIN
Don't... go anywhere.

She rushes out.

Alex eyes the door as it shuts, then the X2 on the counter.
He scoffs and shakes his head.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Eli walks away from the house. Kwin follows closely.

ELI
Point me in the right direction,
Pace.

HELMET
Yes Eli.

KWIN
Eli?

He ignores her.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Eli?!

ELI
Coordinates don't change, Kwin,
unless I'm on the wrong planet too.

KWIN
Are you going to get there on foot?

She grabs his arm. He stops and turns.

ELI
If I have to.

KWIN
You don't have to.

She releases him.

KWIN (CONT'D)
He's right. I killed...

She swallows.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Even if I wanted to go back...

Eli shakes his head.

ELI
No.

KWIN
I'm not asking you.

Eli groans.

KWIN (CONT'D)
The GS12's almost fixed. The...
vehicle. We-

ELI
And what? Go on a little adventure
together?

KWIN
We'll find your people.

ELI
And after that? You have plans?

KWIN
Do you?

Eli looks away. She has a point.

KWIN (CONT'D)
There's a place. Hanja Port. We can
unload that grif. They'll take
anything. From there, better
transport shouldn't be hard to
find. I-

Eli looks at her. She scoffs.

KWIN (CONT'D)
We could go anywhere.

Tongue clicks off screen. They both turn. It's Alex.

He aims the X2 at them, in his other hand the soronium sword.
He's hunched over, still in a great deal of pain.

ELI
(to Kwin)
You left the gun on the table?

KWIN
I- uh...

ALEX
No one is going to Hanja.

ELI
Your feet are quieter than your
mouth.

Kwin growls.

KWIN
Get it over with, murderer!

Eli looks at her, taken aback.

ALEX
I'm a soldier. I-

KWIN
You're a murderer!

Alex groans and lowers the gun. He raises the sword in the air then tosses it into the sand before them. They look at it, then him.

ALEX
Keep it.

He holds up the X2.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'm keeping this. It doesn't belong
to you and you shouldn't have it.

Eli pulls the sword out of the sand. Alex looks at Kwin.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I did what I had to. So did you,
but you didn't have to save me.
Consider us even.

Alex chuckles.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(quietly)
This mission is a joke anyway.

Kwin grits her teeth.

KWIN
You-

ELI
Kwin.

She looks at him.

ELI (CONT'D)
Quit while you're behind.

She groans and glares at Alex.

KWIN
How generous of you.

ALEX
Less messy. We're going to Dak-ho.

KWIN
We?

ALEX
Mm. Best place to sell wheeled
garbage.

KWIN
Martians really do have kind
hearts.

ELI
(under his breath)
Martians?

ALEX
We do. You get me there, we part
ways, I never see you two again.

Eli nods and inspects the sword.

KWIN
Why Dak-ho? It's further and it's
ten times the slum.

ALEX
My ship's beached there. If it
isn't stripped by now.

ELI
So, you're actually from Mars?

Alex squints at Eli, looks at Kwin, then back at Eli, raising
an eyebrow. Kwin face palms.

ELI (CONT'D)
Ok martian, you got a deal.

Kwin and Eli look at each other. He doesn't budge. She rolls
her eyes.

KWIN
Fine.

EXT. DERELICT ROAD - DAY

The junked grif races through a rocky wasteland, smoking and rattling.

In the distance sits DAK-HO, a metal shanty on swamplands. Beyond it, through thick fog, the colossal superstructures of Shangdi loom.

INSIDE THE GRIF

Kwin drives, Eli in the passenger seat, and Alex in the back. The ride is VERY bumpy.

Kwin wears a MECHANIC JUMPSUIT. Alex dons a DARK PONCHO over his martian uniform. Eli wears his full space suit.

Alex leans forward and peers out the windshield. He rests his arms on the seat. Kwin smacks his arm off.

Eli gazes at the endless expanse of garbage and ruins.

ELI

Good to see nothing's changed.

EXT. DAK-HO - CONTINUOUS

The grif ROARS into the slums, surrounded by various scrap vehicles. It SKIDS to a stop. Ratty denizens mind their own business.

In the bustling courtyard, the trio steps out. Eli draws his sword from the back.

KWIN

You need that?

Alex scans the area and eyes a bar.

ALEX

He might.

KWIN

Are you planning on starting any fights?

ALEX

Starting? No.

INT. CRAMPED BAR - CONTINUOUS

Kwin and Eli enter, amidst the chaos of multi-ethnic patrons - scavengers, mobsters, and misbegotten lowlifes. Fancy tables with high-class patrons occupy the corners.

Kwin spots Alex, seated at a crowded table surrounded by armed thugs.

KWIN
The martian. He-

Eli ignores her and heads to the bar counter.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Hey!

She follows him.

AT THE BAR

Eli squeezes between two customers, leaning his sword against the counter. One eyes it, but quickly looks away when Eli gives him a stern look. Kwin crams in next to Eli.

KWIN (CONT'D)
That's it then?

Eli eyes her.

ELI
Eh?

KWIN
The martian?

Eli glances at Alex then back at the alcohol behind the bar.

ELI
Go ask him. You seem attached.

KWIN
Excuse me?

The bartender passes by.

ELI
(to bartender)
Hey!

The bartender stops.

BARTENDER
What do you want?

ELI
You speak English?

The bartender stares at Eli. He starts to walk away.

ELI (CONT'D)
Yo yo!

The bartender stops.

ELI (CONT'D)
(making a fishbowl
gesture)
You got... it's like a strong, blue
drink?

BARTENDER
Size?

ELI
Large?

BARTENDER
One colossal Earth juice coming up.

The bartender walks away. Kwin stares at Eli disapprovingly.

ELI
Is that what it was called? Earth
juice?

KWIN
Did you ever hear the phrase son of
a bitch whenever you're from?

Eli feigns ignorance.

ELI
No.

KWIN
Because you are one.

The bartender slams the drink on the counter - a large fishbowl with straws and floating fruit. Eli's eyes widen at the sight.

The bartender waits, arms folded. Eli eyes him, then Kwin, and winks. She looks at him in disbelief then let's out a huff.

She takes out a MICROCHIP. The bartender offers a pad, and she slides the chip over it. He mumbles and walks away.

ELI
Still using touch to pay? Gracias.

KWIN
(in Spanish)
So, you do you speak something
other than English?

ELI
Huh?

She shakes her head, takes the drink, slides it in front of herself, and sips. Eli's expression is like someone stole his child.

KWIN
How did you end up in our cell?

ELI
Come on, Kwin.

KWIN
Come on, Eli.

He sighs.

ELI
I woke up off the coast in a
wrecked, chunk of my ship.

She stops sipping.

KWIN
Under water?

He nods.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Explains the water damage. Far out?

ELI
Yeah. It's not every day that
happens.

She stares at him.

KWIN
What conversation are you having?

He looks perplexed.

KWIN (CONT'D)
How goddamn far did you swim?

He realizes what she is asking.

ELI
Right. That one's on me.

He leans against the counter. Stares ahead.

ELI (CONT'D)
It was pretty damn far.

She sips. Watches him. He is deep in memory.

ELI (CONT'D)
When I went into cryo we were
closer to Proxima Centauri than
Earth.

Her mouth hangs open.

KWIN
Deep space vessels have autopilot
now. Did...?

ELI
Yeah, maybe that was it. Just took
200 years to get back. Broke apart
in atmosphere and crashed in the
sea. That has to be it, right?

Kwin turns to face him directly. Offers a soft and reassuring look.

KWIN
We'll find them, Eli.

He's taken aback by her tone. He nods. She smirks.

KWIN (CONT'D)
You washed up on the shore and your
first instinct was to get wasted?

Eli chokes on words. She laughs. He tries to hide his smile.

ELI
Wouldn't you?

She slides him the drink. They look at each other. She is happy, for the moment. Because of this, so is he.

ON ALEX

Alex glares at Eli and Kwin from across the room. They're laughing and chatting. The thugs around him continue their conversation.

THUG

Kale?!

Alex eyes the thug.

ALEX

Like I said, 1400 Ruwons. More than he paid you for my ship's location.

The thugs exchange looks. The **RINGLEADER** speaks up.

RINGLEADER

Maybe 1400 isn't enough.

Alex eyes him. The ringleader eyes the X2 holstered on Alex's waist.

RINGLEADER (CONT'D)

Maybe I see somethin' more valuable than ruus.

Alex looks down at the X2, then at the ringleader.

ALEX

Is that how you think this is going?

RINGLEADER

Uh-uh.

They glare at each other. Suddenly, Kwin, slightly drunk, SLAMS her hand on the table, startling everyone.

KWIN

(hiccuping)

You guys! Killing the vibe!

Eli stands behind her, slightly tipsy. He holds the Soronium sword. The thugs scowl at the two. Alex stares at them, mouth agape.

KWIN (CONT'D)

(to Alex)

That was an uneventful parting of ways.

ALEX

I- I said I'd get you here. Nothing more.

KWIN

(smirking)

And we brought you a present! A GS12 military thingy!

RINGLEADER

A GS12?

She looks at the ringleader seductively.

KWIN

Mmm hmm.

Alex cringes. Kwin gestures to Alex.

KWIN (CONT'D)

This Martian told us we could dump
it here.

The thugs scowl at Alex.

RINGLEADER

(through his teeth)

Martian...?

An awkward silence follows. Kwin chuckles then leans on the table.

KWIN

Oops, was that confidential?

She smiles at the thugs. They ogle her.

RANDOM THUG

(to ringleader)

Maybe we could get some other
payment?

The ringleader ogles Kwin as she moves to Eli's side. Eli squints at the ringleader. Rests the sword on his shoulder.

RINGLEADER

(smirking)

What do you say Martian? How much
is she worth?

Without warning, Alex sucker punches the ringleader, knocking him off his seat. Everyone is startled.

RINGLEADER (CONT'D)

You waste! All of you-

Alex pulls the X2 and aims at the Ringleader.

ALEX

I have a better deal for you.

They glare at each other. The other bar patrons don't pay attention. Eli scans the thugs carefully. Kwin holds her hand over her mouth.

KWIN
(concerned)
Can we not?

RINGLEADER
Listen to the girl Martian.

Alex smirks.

Another thug pulls a gun. Eli LUNGES at him and cuts off his arm. The thug screams. Kwin screams.

The ringleader reaches into his jacket. Alex turns. BLOWS his head off.

The other thugs, shocked, FLEE screaming from the bar.

The bar patrons briefly look up, unfazed, and then return to their business.

Kwin is shaken by the violence. Eli cleans the sword on the ringleader's clothes, unbothered.

Alex looks around, concerned. He spots the bartender approaching, casually holding a BIG RIFLE. The bartender stops, takes in the scene, and sighs. He looks at Alex.

BARTENDER
Gore tax?

ALEX
(to bartender)
500?

The bartender raises his eyebrow at Alex. Alex sighs, reaches into his poncho, pulls out 1400 RUWONS, and holds them out.

ALEX (CONT'D)
1400. It's what I got.

The bartender grabs it.

BARTENDER
(counting)
Mm. Get out.

Alex groans and starts walking out of the bar as he mumbles profanities. Eli follows, and Kwin trails behind.

KWIN
(to Eli)
I'm concerned about you. Kill,
kill, kill. All it is-

ALEX
(to both of them)
Shut up!

They all exit.

EXT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

All three exit. Alex stops, his eyes rolling back as he rubs his forehead. Eli stretches, clearly sober, and lets out a frustrated sigh.

Kwin grabs Eli's arm, pulling him back. She looks at Alex.

KWIN
Martian? Mart-

He JOLTS his head up at her.

ALEX
What?!

She jumps. Giggles.

KWIN
Hey. We don't even know-

ALEX
We're in Dak-ho. That was all I
said! I never promised anything
else.

ELI
What if we find your ship?

Alex glances at Eli, unconvinced.

ALEX
(teethy)
I was doing that.

ELI
Looked like they were playing you.

Eli points his thumb at Kwin.

ELI (CONT'D)
Whoring herself out didn't work
either.

Kwin scoffs at Eli, folding her arms. Alex looks at both of them and shakes his head.

Kwin SMACKS Eli in the face. He winces. She turns her attention to Alex.

KWIN
What's your name?

ALEX
Alexander.

ELI
Alexander? That's what Martians are
called?

Alex stands up straight. Stern.

ALEX
Alexander Kale. I'm-

Eli laughs. Alex grimaces.

KWIN
I'm Kwin. This is Eli.

ALEX
Fine.

KWIN
You two like violence too much!
It's scary.

Eli and Alex exchange raised eyebrows. Eli starts walking away, and Kwin follows.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Hey! Is that all you know how to
do, walk away?

Kwin continues to berate Eli as they walk away.

Alex watches them for a moment. He looks around before throwing his hands up and following.

INT. HANGER - DAY

ROSHI, a short, scrappy, bearded man, stands atop a crate, surrounded by a tough-looking crowd. Adjacent to him gleams a pristine RED STARJET - Alex's ship. He addresses the crowd

ROSHI
You won't find another one on
Earth! Are you saying 70k is all
you have?!

Higher numbers are yelled from the crowd.

Eli, Kwin, and Alex lurk behind the crowd. They peer over, sizing up the situation. Kwin rests her head on Eli's shoulder, slack jawed. She drools on him.

He JOLTS away.

ELI
What the fuck?!

She laughs.

KWIN
Wait. Are you sober?!

ELI
(wiping spit off himself)
Sadly.

ON ROSHI

ROSHI
This is a combat ready, Martian
ship you scags!

An X2 bolt BLASTS through the ceiling. The shot ECHOES loudly.

Crowd goes silent and turns. Roshi spots Alex. His eyes widen.

ALEX
Everyone get out!

Alex aims at the crowd.

The crowd quickly disperses the hanger. Roshi attempts to sneak out with the crowd. Alex YANKS his collar.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Uh uh.

Kwin looks at the starjet eye wide. She runs up to it and Fangirls over it. Eli follows her.

Alex drags Roshi over to the starjet and SLAMS him into the ground, digging his shoe into his neck.

KWIN
This is amazing!

Eli examines the ship, eyebrow raised.

KWIN (CONT'D)
These ships... You don't fuck with these!

Alex aims the X2 at Roshi's face. Kwin sees.

KWIN (CONT'D)
(to Alex)
Hey!

Alex looks at her. She STOMPS and STUMBLES over to him and smacks his hand away.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Stop it!

She glares at Alex and Eli, seething.

KWIN (CONT'D)
What the hell?!

ALEX
You don't know this-

ROSHI
(struggling to breath)
Kale, I swear-

He aims the X2 at him.

ALEX
Quiet!

He addresses Kwin.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Killing him doesn't count as killing a person, trust me.

Kwin gets right in Alex's face.

KWIN
Stop it.

Alex growls at her then glares at Roshi.

ALEX
Where's the starter?

Roshi GAGS.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Where?!

Roshi pulls out the STARTER from his jacket and holds it up. Alex YANKS it from his hand. He removes his shoe from Roshi's neck, who GASPS for air.

Alex inspects the starter for damage.

Roshi JUMPS up and stumbles out of the hanger.

Eli pats and rubs the ship.

ELI
So, our transport?

Alex stomps over to Eli and smacks his hand off the ship.

ALEX
You two aren't going anywhere in my ship. You'll get a good price for the trash we came here in. Nothing more, nothing less.

KWIN
(taunting)
We found your ship. Did a better job than you.

ALEX
Literal drunk luck.

Eli rubs the ship.

ELI
What's this bad boy run on?

Alex smacks his hand away.

ALEX
Would you know if I told you?

ELI
How will I know until you do?

KWIN
Does this has a hydron power
coating?!

Alex is fed up.

ALEX
I'll get your ruus. Then, we done?

Eli and Kwin exchange looks, then look at Alex.

ELI
Yep.

KWIN
Maybe.

Alex eyes them both and groans.

EXT. DAK-HO - SUNSET

The sky is clear, casting a beautiful glow on the desolate town square. Mysterious figures lurk in shadowy alleyways conducting nefarious business.

Alex stands next to the GS12. He haggles with a **GREASY-LOOKING BUYER**. Kwin and Eli sit on a nearby concrete barrier and watch. The iridescent sword leans against the barrier, and Eli's helmet rests beside him. Kwin is feeling sick.

KWIN
That's it. I'm sober forever now.

Eli smirks. A 'shooting star' glides across the sky; a glimmering trail of light behind it. Eli and Kwin look.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Debris or shooting star? My
favorite game.

ELI
Make a wish.

KWIN
Did you wish upon garbage in your
time? So, is Eli short for
something?

ELI
Is Kwin?

KWIN
Nope. So-

ELI
Drop it.

Kwin mocks Eli with a gesture. Eli pauses, breathes, and tries to shift the mood.

ELI (CONT'D)
Is this the "new horizon" you were searching for?

KWIN
You read it?

He nods. A slight smile crosses her face.

KWIN (CONT'D)
It's certainly different.

ELI
Yeah.

KWIN
Do you think he knew?

ELI
What?

KWIN
That it wasn't him. That I just... needed a little more.

ELI
I'm not alien. To the feeling.

KWIN
We're going to find them.

ELI
Do you always focus on others' problems?

Kwin is taken aback. A moment passes. The wind howls, carrying dust and rotted leaves in its wake. She opens her mouth to speak but hesitates.

KWIN
I'm sorry.

He looks confused.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I hadn't considered, until now, everyone else you left behind.

Eli's gaze drops.

ELI
There's no one else.

KWIN
That can't be true.

He doesn't answer. Instead, he smirks and gestures toward Alex, drastically changing his tone.

ELI
How bout' him, huh?

Kwin looks at Alex, then back at Eli. Scoffs.

KWIN
And I'm the one who deflects? Him?
I just-

ELI
I was born over 200 years ago,
Kwin.

She blushes and looks away.

KWIN
I've never seen a Martian before.
There's a lot I haven't seen.

ELI
Looks like any old person to me.
Though he is pretty.

Kwin rolls her eyes.

KWIN
What do you care anyway?

ELI
Guess I don't.

She looks at him.

KWIN
I understand walls, Eli. I get
deflection. I get all this shit.
Sometimes it's a conscious choice
not to flood ourselves with too
much at once. I see through the
ones you put up.

ELI
Great. Another psych major.

KWIN
Psych ma... I understand emotions.

ELI
Yeah, they get the best of you a
lot don't they?

She grimaces.

KWIN
I'm human-

She scoffs.

KWIN (CONT'D)
You're good at that. You almost
have me convinced you're a
heartless bastard.

He stares at the dirt.

ELI
You're seeing something that's not
there.

Alex interrupts, exasperated. They both look at him.

ALEX
2700. That's what I could get. I'd
try for more but I am beyond
dealing with any of this. Honestly
I was going to keep 1400, but...

He holds out a 2700 RUWONS. Kwin looks at it and grabs it.
Alex doesn't let go. They lock eyes.

Alex releases the Ruwons, steps back, and clears his throat.

ALEX (CONT'D)
So...

Alex's wrist communicator makes a TUNE, catching his
attention. He looks at the communicator. His eyes widen. He
shakes his head before abruptly walking away.

KWIN
Hey?

Eli and Kwin look on as Alex walks toward a nearby alley. She
turns to Eli.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I'm just going to thank him.

Eli nods and smirks.

ELI
Yeah.

She stands and backs away.

KWIN
It will be a few minutes, I swear.

ELI
Just don't get lost.

She smiles and bows, then turns and runs in Alex's direction.

Eli looks at her as she jogs toward the alley. A rare smile graces his face; he's feeling something good for once.

He looks down. His scarred wrists catch his attention. His eyes turn red. He clenches his fist and wipes his eyes.

He stands, picks up his helmet, and puts it on.

ELI (CONT'D)
Pace?

HELMET
Yes, Eli?

ELI
Nothing. I'm going for a walk. Keep track of this spot.

HELMET
Yes, Eli.

Eli grabs the sword and walks away.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Kwin navigates the filthy alley, avoiding sketchy characters engaged in nefarious activities.

KWIN
Martian?!

She stops. Looks around.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Alex?!

She sees him turn a corner. She pursues. A drunk bumps into her. She winces and shoves him away.

She stops at the corner. Alex speaks into his communicator. She hides out of sight and listens.

ON ALEX

He paces.

ALEX
Two days!

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
We are aware.

ALEX
June?! You must be in on this.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Ka-

ALEX
I am done, June!

For a moment, silence. Then JUNE comes on.

JUNE (V.O.)
Kale. We-

ALEX
What's the punchline?

JUNE (V.O.)
I'm sorry?

Two drunks making out bump into Alex. He violently pushes them away.

ALEX
(to the drunks)
Do you want to die?

JUNE (V.O.)
Excuse me?

The drunks scurry away.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(frustrated)
What's your status Kale?

Alex scoffs.

ALEX
Done. That's my status. Was Trinity Eco supposed to attack?

JUNE (V.O.)

It was a possibility. You knew that.

ALEX

A death mission?

JUNE (V.O.)

Ka-

ALEX

At this point you could have just asked! I would happily do it myself.

EXT. DAK-HO OUTSKIRTS - CONTINUOUS

Eli walks the grimy outskirts of Dak-ho, a stone walkway encircling the city. A railing separates the city from an endless sea of sludge and debris. The setting sun glimmers on the muddy wasteland.

Random people loiter nearby, engaged in various desperate activities. Eli shakes his head at the squalor.

He stops abruptly. Hunches over. He doesn't feel right.

He pulls off his helmet, drops it to the ground, and leans over the railing, vomiting. His body trembles, sweat beads forming on his forehead.

Eli hangs over the railing, shaken. He wipes his mouth then stares out at the wastes.

In the distance, a glimmer in the sky catches his eye. He stands straight and stares at it as it approaches.

EXT. DAK-HO ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Alex SLAMS his fist against a building.

ALEX

Goddamn June.

JUNE (V.O.)

Alex?

ALEX

I don't even care about coming back anymore. I-

JUNE (V.O.)

Did they say anything about a suit?

Alex pauses, curious.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A relic, perhaps?

ON KWIN, listening intently.

ON ALEX, calming down.

ALEX
What aren't you telling me? Recon
should have more intel than the
lead.

JUNE (V.O.)
You did find something?

ALEX
I didn't think so. There's...

He shakes his head. Contemplates.

ON KWIN, lost in thought.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There was this... man. I didn't
think the two were linked.

JUNE (V.O.)
You engaged?

ALEX (O.S.)
Obviously.

A low engine WHIR can be heard, getting louder.

ALEX (O.S.) (CONT'D)
They nearly-

JUNE (V.O.)
Is capture an option?

ON ALEX

ALEX
Capture?

JUNE (V.O.)
Whatever they are after is a
package deal. This is your ticket
home.

He is stunned.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Kale, is it an option?

He shuts his eyes. Sighs.

ON KWIN, a mix of betrayal and confusion on her face.

ALEX (O.S.)
Yes.

Kwin turns the corner. Alex turns. They lock eyes. She scowls.

JUNE (V.O.)
Very good, Kale. We-

Alex abruptly shuts off his communicator. He opens his mouth to speak.

Three DECA GUNSHIPS fly overhead, the deafening sound shaking the buildings. They both look up as the ships head toward the town center.

ALEX
Trinity Eco.

Kwin looks at Alex and gasps.

KWIN
Trinity Eco?! You can't be serious?
They-

ALEX
Yes.

Kwin looks back, concerned.

KWIN
Eli.

She sprints toward the town center.

ALEX
Hey!

He pursues.

EXT. DAK-HO - CONTINUOUS

The three ships descend near the GS12, kicking up dust as terrified citizens flee.

A hatch on the bottom of one opens, and the tall proselyte emerges, followed by twenty other proselytes, each carrying massive soronium swords slung over their backs. The tall proselyte looks at the GS12.

TALL PROSELYTE
(to the others)
He's here.

IN A NEARBY ALLEY, Kwin sprints toward the ships. She stops and gasps upon seeing them. She eyes the barrier where her and Eli sat. He's gone.

Alex grabs her from behind.

KWIN
Get off of me! You-

He covers her mouth and pulls them both against a wall out of view. She squirms and mumbles.

ALEX
(whisper)
Are you crazy?

She doesn't stop.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Stop! Stop. Kwin?

She stops.

ALEX (CONT'D)
That's your name, right? Listen,
these-

She bites his hand and draws blood. He winces and releases her. She runs to the barrier.

KWIN
Eli?!

She looks around, but he's not there.

The proselytes look at her. She turns and meets their gaze with determination. She reaches into her pack and pulls out a HANDGUN and aims at them.

They don't flinch. She shakes. Some of the proselytes exchange glances, impressed by her naive boldness.

Roshi scurries out from an alley toward the proselytes. He stops before the tall proselyte.

ROSHI

See? I said. A martian. I kept my word.

He points at Kwin.

ROSHI (CONT'D)

Her. She with em'. Shangdi! I know it when I see it.

Kwin scowls at Roshi.

ROSHI (CONT'D)

See, my word is good.

TALL PROSELYTE

It is.

He grabs Roshi's neck and snaps it. Roshi drops dead. Kwin gasps.

The tall proselyte eyes Kwin. She aims at him.

THEN, a zip-line pierces through another proselyte's skull.

All eyes turn to Alex, just beyond the alley, his zip-rifle aimed precisely.

The impaled proselyte yanks the line. Alex plants his feet and resists.

The proselyte unsheathes its' sword and cuts the line. It RUSHES Alex.

Kwin unloads on the proselyte. Bullets bounce off its' armor. It turns its attention to her. Black blood squirts out of the hole on its' head.

The tall proselyte gestures another to rush Kwin. It obeys. Alex sees.

He swiftly reloads and fires at the proselyte. The zip-line embeds into its torso. The proselyte stops, grabs the line, and turns to Alex.

Alex presses a button on the rifle and releases it. The gun retracts, hurtling into the proselyte.

It EXPLODES.

Black, gooey fragments spray everywhere. The shockwave blows Kwin back against the barrier. A colossal dust cloud envelops the scene.

Kwin lies on the ground, covered in dust and cuts. She coughs. Her ears ring.

ALEX (O.S.)
(muffled)
Kwin?! Kwin?!

She struggles to her feet. The dust is clearing.

The proselytes regroup, their composure barely ruffled by the blast. The tall one fixes his gaze on Alex.

TALL PROSELYTE
A tepid attempt.

He CHARGES Alex.

Alex swiftly brandishes the X2, firing twice. One shot misses, the other hits his face, cracking his helmet.

He stops. Smoke pours out. A glowing eye pierces through the haze. He rips his helmet off revealing a visage half-human, half-robotic extending to his entire lower jaw.

Alex's is shocked.

The tall proselyte LUNGES. A BLUR. Disarms Alex.

A punch to Alex's face, a shattering impact.

Alex, DAZED, retaliates. Punches the proselyte's solid, metal face. Alex's knuckles crack. He yells and grabs his fist.

The proselyte strikes Alex's stomach. Blood sprays from his mouth. He crumples.

This all happens in SECONDS.

Kwin SCREAMS.

KWIN
Alex!

She pulls a magazine from her pack. Clumsily reloads. Aims at the proselyte.

Another proselyte grabs her tight and rips the gun out of her hand. She struggles. It's futile. It's too strong.

ELI (O.S.)
Hey!

They all turn. It's Eli, wearing his full suit. He brandishes the soronium sword.

KWIN

Eli!

The proselyte covers her mouth.

Eli looks at Kwin held firm by the proselyte. He rushes at them, yelling, sword raised.

Another SWOOPS in, from out of site. Eli SKIDS to a stop.

The proselyte swings at Eli, who guards. Metal clashes. Eli fights heavy, furious, and erratic. The proselyte counters, composed.

The tall proselyte rejoins the others, stopping them from intervening. They watch the pitiful dual. He is amused by Eli's struggle and Kwin's predicament.

Kwin watches Eli, worry etched on her face. She strains against her captor, eyes darting between the fight and Alex who kneels, slumped over, blood dripping from his mouth.

Eli's energy wanes. The proselyte disarms Eli. The sword flies into the ground.

Eli eyes the proselyte, who stands still. Eli grabs the sword and charges the proselyte again. His attacks are more strained and disorganized.

He stops, out of breath.

The tall proselyte signals the one engaged with Eli. It steps away from Eli.

Eli pants, hunched over. Silence hangs in the air.

TALL PROSELYTE

The prodigal son.

Eli looks at the tall proselyte.

ELI

What the fuck?

He eyes Kwin, then back at him.

ELI (CONT'D)

Let her go.

The tall proselyte signals to the other. He SHOVES Kwin away. She falls to the ground. She scrambles to Eli then spots Alex.

KWIN
(in Korean)
Shit.

She rushes to Alex's side and clutches his battered face. Their eyes meet. His face is bloodied and bruised.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Alex scoffs, then loses consciousness. Kwin struggles to support him.

Eli stands up tall, cracks his bones, and catches his breath.

ELI
What do you want?

TALL PROSELYTE
A distress signal was picked up by
your helmet, correct?

ELI
What?

The tall proselyte gestures to others. They enter the ships.

TALL PROSELYTE
(sarcastic)
Pride swells in me seeing you bear
our blade, Eli.

A slow smile spreads across the tall proselyte's face.

ELI
What are you?

TALL PROSELYTE
You judge by appearances?

ELI
Yeah.

Eli looks at Kwin. She stares at him, a mix of concern and fear.

TALL PROSELYTE
Then maybe the name Beckett will
soothe your anger.

Eli freezes. He slowly turns his gaze to the tall proselyte. The tall proselyte slowly approaches Eli.

TALL PROSELYTE (CONT'D)
Miles. Sanchez. Miller. Need I
continue?

ELI
Where are they?

TALL PROSELYTE
I can show you.

He stops before Eli.

Kwin gently rests Alex down and struggles to her feet. She STORMS over to Eli. She stands before Eli and the tall proselyte. She nervously eyes the tall proselyte. He looks down at her and smiles. She directs her attention to Eli.

KWIN
What is he saying?

She grabs his arms and yanks it. He resists.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Eli? Are those-

ELI
Yes.

KWIN
How-

ELI
I don't know.

TALL PROSELYTE
I must admit. We set off the
distress signal.

Eli and Kwin look at him.

TALL PROSELYTE (CONT'D)
We knew you would be looking, but,
your search is over.

ELI
My crew... you-

The tall proselyte nods.

KWIN
You're not seriously...

She shakes her head. Grips his arms tighter.

KWIN (CONT'D)

No.

Eli looks at her.

KWIN (CONT'D)

You're with these people?

ELI

No.

Her eyes swell. She frowns.

TALL PROSELYTE

Those two. The martian. The medic squeezing your arm. Were you any closer to your people with them chained to you? To answers?

Eli looks at the tall proselyte.

TALL PROSELYTE (CONT'D)

What were their plans for you? She must've known.

ELI

Known what?

He looks down at Kwin. A guilty look crosses her face.

KWIN

How could he know. I-

ELI

Know what?!

She flinches, startled by his tone.

KWIN

I just overheard. It's... I didn't know.

Eli grabs her hand and pries it off his arm. She stumbles back.

KWIN (CONT'D)

I didn't know. Alex... The martian. He was going to take you. I...

Eli steps back.

KWIN (CONT'D)

I think! That's what I heard. I didn't know. I...are you with these people?

ELI

(under his breath)

I said no.

KWIN

You don't know them, they-

ELI

I don't know you!

She recoils.

ELI (CONT'D)

Two days ago I was locked in your cell! You-

He grunts and shakes his head. Kwin's at a loss for words.

Eli looks at the tall proselyte.

ELI (CONT'D)

Just leave them.

TALL PROSELYTE

These people don't concern us. You, Eli, do. Ready for answers?

The tall proselyte extends his hand, closes it, then lowers it. He turns and walks toward the gunship.

Eli is conflicted.

KWIN

Don't.

Eli lowers his gaze.

ELI

Forget about me, Kwin.

Tears roll down her face. She shakes her head.

KWIN

No.

He stands up tall and looks at her.

ELI

Go live your life.

The tall proselyte, at the ship's entrance, watches with a smile as Eli rejects Kwin's plea. Eli begins walking toward the ship.

KWIN

E-Eli?

He ignores her.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Eli!?

He stops at the ship's entrance, glancing back briefly, then enters. The hatch shuts behind him.

Kwin falls to her knees. The gunships ascend. Kwin looks on as they fly away.

INT. DIRTY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kwin sits, head in hand, on a wicker chair at a table.

On the table; the contents of her medical pouch, supplies, her gun, the X2, bloody bandages, and a screened tablet.

Across the room, Alex lies on a couch, bloodied, bandaged, shirtless. Rain beats a rhythm on the window behind him.

Alex's strained cough breaks the silence. He startles awake, scans the room, and sees Kwin.

ALEX

You're alive?

She looks up; her face tear-streaked, dirty, and red. She says nothing.

ALEX (CONT'D)

He's gone?

Kwin nods. Alex sinks into the couch. Stares out the window.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Fuck.

EXT. DAK-HO - NIGHT

Rain cascades over the expansive, lit sprawl of Dak-ho.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Kwin leans against the balcony, suspended above the city's tumult. She stares up at the crescent moon. Dirty rivulets pour down her face. She swirls a drink in her hand and takes sips.

Elusive lights flicker on the moons shadowy hemisphere. Structures of some kind.

The door behind her creaks open. Alex staggers out.

He slams against the railing and slumps over it. Kwin doesn't look. He's in a lot of pain.

ALEX

I don't know what to say.

KWIN

Me either.

ALEX

I need to get to my ship.

KWIN

What's the rush? Have to check in?
Tell them you failed?

Alex looks at Kwin.

ALEX

I haven't yet.

KWIN

Right.

He scowls and looks away.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll just leave you and take
your ship for myself.

ALEX

(under his breath)
You couldn't even start it, dumb
Earth bitch.

She darts her gaze at Alex.

KWIN

He was going to leave you to die in
Shangdi. He didn't. Neither did I.

ALEX
Should've left me.

Her nostrils flare. She takes a deep breath. She looks away and shuts her eyes.

A surge of emotion; she CHUCKS the glass at Alex's head. It SHATTERS on his skull. He yells and collapses against the railing clutching his head.

Kwin STOMPS inside.

INT. DIRTY HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kwin leans against the kitchen counter pouring herself another drink.

Alex lumbers in. Kwin turns, drink in hand. Alex holds up his free hand, placating.

ALEX
Relax.

Kwin's on the brink of tears. Alex gaze softens. She collects herself.

KWIN
Can I get you something?

Alex raises his eyebrows. She clicks her tongue and looks away.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Sorry.

Alex stumbles over to the couch and collapses onto it.

ALEX
A drink. Strong. A bandage for my skull.

She nods and pours another glass.

With both drinks in hand, she approaches Alex, sitting down beside him. She offers him a glass and sets hers on the floor.

She retrieves a HEAT SEALER and a piece of cloth from her pocket. She inches close to him, gently grabs his hand, and pulls it away from his head wound. It's quite the gash. She winces. She feels guilty.

She pads it down then quickly seals it with the heat sealer. A hiss and some smoke. He grits his teeth.

She wipes the excess blood away.

She tosses the heat sealer on the floor and picks up her drink. She downs half in one, pained gulp.

Alex eyes her, then his drink. He takes a sip and winces.

KWIN

Looks like neither of us get to go home.

ALEX

That's what happens when you save people.

She looks at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

That little rat selling my ship.

KWIN

You'd just kill everyone if you could.

He remains silent. Sips.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Just like all the men in Shangdi.

ALEX

Does it look like there's any more of me? You didn't even know their names. Same building as you, same assignment maybe, not friends.

She doesn't have a comeback.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Trinity Eco just committed about thirteen war crimes and you're blaming me.

She looks away and finishes her drink with another pained gulp.

ALEX (CONT'D)

People die. That's the deal.

KWIN

God. I get it. Enough with the speeches.

ALEX
 You're a killer too. I'm just
 honest about it.

Her glass slips from her loose grip. She screams and lunges at him, pinning him to the couch. She pants and looms over him.

A charged silence envelops them.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 First time losing people, killing
 people, or both?

She whimpers. A choked sob escapes her.

She disentangles herself from Alex and marches to the counter, leaning away from him.

KWIN
 My brother was in that tower.

Alex's mouth hangs open. She turns to him.

KWIN (CONT'D)
 Do you even know what that's like?
 The only people you care about,
 that care about you, gone?

He sits up.

ALEX
 No.

KWIN
 I can see why! Your own people want
 nothing to do with you, do they?
 And now, Eli... I just...

She lowers her head. She folds her arms and leans back against the counter.

Alex struggles to his feet. He picks up her glass and walks over to her. He tops his glass off and fills hers.

KWIN (CONT'D)
 I... I didn't do anything. I
 couldn't stop them. I couldn't.
 I'm...

He reaches for her hand gently. She tenses and looks up at him.

ALEX
 Stop.

He hands her the drink and leans up against the counter next to her.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 There's nothing you could have done. Those thoughts are going to bring you nothing but pain.

She takes a very deep breath then sips her drink.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 You're in shock. These feelings are going to come and go.

KWIN
 I know. It's easier to learn about it than experience it.

Alex nods.

ALEX
 It is. You're right.

He snickers and walks away from Kwin.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 They left me on this rock to rot.

KWIN
 Listen Alex, I-

ALEX
 No. You're right.

He PLOPS down on the couch spilling some of his drink. He chuckles.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 They don't station the best of the best here. I thought this was just basic intel gathering on the goings on of lovely Trinity Eco. Maybe some more recon on contraband movement. The usual shit I'm handed.

KWIN
 You people really don't like us do you? Or is it just you?

He doesn't respond. She sits next to him on the couch.

KWIN (CONT'D)
 Wait!

Alex jumps, spilling his drink.

ALEX
Jesus.

KWIN
Trinity Eco?!

Alex let's a deep breath and stands. He walks to the counter to top himself off.

ALEX
Yeah.

Kwin laughs. Alex turns, drink in hand. He's serious. She stops laughing.

KWIN
Those things work for Trinity Eco?

ALEX
Or are Trinity Eco.

He sits back down next to her. He rummages though his pockets.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Is it really surprising?

He sees his poncho draped over a chair at the table. He gets up and stumbles to it and rummages through it.

KWIN
Yeah. And, no. I mean what doesn't Trinity Eco stick its' hands into?

He pulls his psych-vape out. Holds it up.

ALEX
Ah-ha. Exactly.

She raises an eyebrow.

KWIN
Seriously? You're going to psycho vape? Now?

ALEX
You know what this is?

KWIN
Pfft.

She walks over to him.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Have you ever talked to an Earth
girl before?

ALEX
Have you ever talked to a Martian
before?

KWIN
You're the first.

She tugs on the psych-vape. He holds it strong.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Mind if I?

ALEX
Today has been difficult, maybe you
don't-

KWIN
(serious)
That's exactly why.

He loosens his grip. She takes it and takes a drag.

She coughs violently. Hunches over. Alex pats her back.

ALEX
Kwin, like I said...

She laughs through coughs. Pushes his hand away.

Alex reaches down and pulls it from her hand, takes a drag,
and let's out a smooth puff. Kwin stands straight.

KWIN
What were they doing in Shangdi?

ALEX
A day ago I was told Trinity Eco
was sending some higher ups to do a
security detail at tower 17. It
went from that to 17 getting
vaporized. This is not where I saw
this going.

KWIN
Those things?

ALEX
Proselytes. I don't see them too
often, thank God.

KWIN
And Eli?

ALEX
I know about as much as you. Maybe,
slightly more.

Kwin rests her hands on her knees. Her pupils enlarge.

KWIN
Whew. Fast acting.

ALEX
Yeah. Told you.

She stands up and gets real close to Alex.

KWIN
Strong tolerance, huh?

ALEX
I move around when the last thing
stops working.

KWIN
I thought Martians had purple eyes?

ALEX
This one doesn't.

KWIN
I like yours.

She smirks. She inches closer, her face approaching his. He is tense. She leans in to kiss him. He stops her.

ALEX
Kwin?

Heavy breaths fill the space between them.

KWIN
What are you afraid of?

He grabs her shoulders.

ALEX
Afraid?

She chuckles.

KWIN
You're not?

ALEX

No, I...

Her gaze softens. She guides his hands to her lower back.

KWIN

Hey.

She rests her arms on his shoulders. His gaze shifts from her eyes to her lips and back again.

He looks away and pushes her arms off of him before storming out onto the balcony.

Kwin stands alone. She rubs her arm, embarrassed. She sits down at the table.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Moonlight glistens on the still ocean.

A deca-gunship skims low over the water.

INT. DECA-GUNSHIP - CONTINUOUS

Eli leans against the cramped cabin wall in the dim interior. There are few lights and a handful of Proselytes scattered around.

The tall Proselyte grips a ceiling strap across from Eli.

Eli traces the scars on his wrists, lost in thought.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - NIGHT

Alex leans against the balcony.

The door behind him opens. It's Kwin. She wears CASUAL CLOTHES; her MEDIC POUCH strapped to her chest.

She rubs her eyes. She just woke up.

Alex turns his head slightly, then looks back out at the city.

KWIN

You haven't slept?

He says nothing. She walks up to the railing and leans over.

KWIN (CONT'D) ALEX
Sorry. I... Kwin...

beat

KWIN (CONT'D)
Go ahead.

ALEX
You first.

She looks at him, then away.

KWIN
I'm going after him.

Alex looks at her.

ALEX
What?

KWIN
I'm going to get Eli back.

Alex's mouth is open. He shakes his head.

KWIN (CONT'D)
He made a mistake. He must have.

Alex scoffs.

ALEX
Wait... a mistake? Are you saying
he chose to leave?

KWIN
Why do you think we're still alive?

Alex is in disbelief.

ALEX
Kwin, no. You- How- You're going
to- Please tell me this a joke?

Kwin looks away. Lips scrunched.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Let's assume you could do anything,
we've been looking for any traces
for years. All we have is general
pop.

She unzips her pouch. Pulls out a DEVICE. Waves it in front
of him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

We...

Alex eyes it, then her.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

She taps her fingers on it.

KWIN

Know what this is?

ALEX

No.

KWIN

All prisoner's get one. Medical tracker.

Alex eyes widen. His mouth hangs open.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Yeah. That's right.

She holds her hands up to her neck like a gun and makes a "BANG" sound.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Lucky for all of us I never had time to put him in our system, so there's one girl on this planet with his location.

She smiles. A slight smirk crosses Alex's face. It goes away quick.

He reaches out and takes her hand. She is taken aback by his gentleness.

ALEX

Don't.

She slides her hand out.

KWIN

I thought you'd be thrilled. This is a ticket home for you. Maybe a big promotion.

ALEX

Kwin, that's not...

KWIN
I owe him.

ALEX
Is that why?

KWIN
You owe him too.

Alex shakes his head.

ALEX
And what's your plan? March in
there alone, take on Trinity Eco
all by yourself? You saw what one
of them could do.

KWIN
I won't be alone.

Alex looks at her incredulously.

ALEX
Kwin.

KWIN
What?! Scared of that too! I can't
lose him! I-

She let's out a heated breath.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I can't let him go. I can't go back
to Shangdi. I can't...

She sighs.

KWIN (CONT'D)
I can do this. It's one thing I
have control over. I have to try.

Alex is conflicted.

ALEX
How do you know he wants to be
saved?

KWIN
I don't.

Alex smirks. She eyes him.

ALEX
Okay.

She turns to him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Okay.

She takes a deep breath.

ALEX (CONT'D)

We do it my way.

She stares at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

For all I know we're heading into
INNER PROVIDENCE.

Her eyes widen. He looks at her intently.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Their heart. We only know ABOUT it.
We stop leagues away and I touch
base with command. When I do that
we wait. I'm not even attempting an
evac without a squadron and I know
a few Martians itching to kill some
of those fucks.

She let's out a breathy smile. Her face goes serious.

KWIN

Will they take him?

ALEX

Yes.

Kwin nods.

KWIN

And you?

Alex raises an eyebrow.

KWIN (CONT'D)

A hero with a ticket home?

ALEX

Kwin, that's not-

KWIN

Will he be safe?

ALEX

We're not them.

A smile grows on her face. She RUSHES at him and BEAR HUGS him. He is taken off guard.

He hugs her back. They embrace for a moment.

KWIN
What were you going to say?

ALEX
I'll tell you later.

KWIN
How many people can your starjet
fit?

He smirks.

ALEX
Two.

She looks up at him and smiles.

EXT. RADIOACTIVE DESERT - DAY

The deca-gunship soars over a lifeless, irradiated wasteland, strewn with debris.

INT. DECA-GUNSHIP - CONTINUOUS

The tall proselyte stands above the pilot. Both stare out the windscreen at the desolate landscape.

TALL PROSELYTE
Gas it.

The pilot nods.

EXT. RADIOACTIVE DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The deca-gunship's hatch opens, releasing a cloud of noxious gas onto the barren terrain. In the distance, a colossal hole in the earth comes into view, encircled by statues in the likeness Eli's space suit. The ship hovers above the deep chasm. At the bottom, landing pads.

INT. INNER PROVIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

The ship descends and lands on a pad among other deca-gunships. Massive cathedral-like doors line the perimeter at the base of the deep fortress.

The tall proselyte exits, followed by others.

Eli emerges, in his full suit and looks up at the statues.

The proselytes stand before one of the doors. It opens. They enter.

TALL PROSELYTE
(to Eli)
Come.

Eli follows the him inside.

INT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

The group enters a colossal cathedral-like chamber, a fusion of stone and metal. Their footsteps echo as the doors close behind them. Rows of numbered doors line the walls. The proselytes disperse into various directions.

At the far end of the room lies the shattered remnants of Eli's ship, THE BLUE GALE; covered in mold, barnacles, seaweed, and rust. Hazmat-suited workers clean the wreckage. Nearby, a cluster of corporate figures in tailored suits engage in conversation.

Eli spots the ship and rushes to it. He stands before it, transfixed.

The corporate figures spot Eli then whisper to each other. One of them gestures the others to leave. They disperse, entering different rooms and going about alternate business in the cathedral.

This is **FALCO**; a robust, mid-40s executive in a sharp suit.

ELI
Pace?

HELMET
Yes, Eli?

ELI
Is that...?

A brief pause as the helmet processes.

HELMET
It appears to be a fragment of the Blue Gale. The fragment you woke up in.

Falco approaches Eli and stands next to him, arms folded behind his back. He admires the wreckage.

FALCO
They don't make em' like they used to.

Eli turns.

FALCO (CONT'D)
That's the saying, right?

Falco smiles and extends his hand.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Falco. I'm part of the trinity collective. Welcome to Inner Providence.

Eli looks at his hand, then him. Falco lowers his hand and walks up to the ship, sliding his finger across the caked slime.

FALCO (CONT'D)
A little elbow grease and she'll be good as new. That's 200 years of oceanic buildup you see.

He turns back to Eli.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Shame we'll never see her in one piece though.

ELI
Two hundred years?

Falco squints at Eli.

FALCO
(hesitant)
Yes?

ELI
Where are they?

FALCO
Your crew? Right to the point. You don't waste time.

A worker in hazmat gear walks up to Falco and holds out the massive soronium blade that was in Eli's possession. Falco looks at it, then Eli, then at the worker.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Bring it to reclamation.

Falco looks at Eli and smirks.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Well then. This way.

He walks to one of the doors. Above it reads "17". Falco slides an ID card. It opens. He enters.

Eli turns and looks at the Blue Gale then follows him inside.

INT. RED STARJET - UPPER ATMOSPHERE

Kwin gazes out the window, her eyes wide with wonder, a broad smile stretched across her face.

ALEX
You've really never been up this high, huh?

KWIN
Shore skidder count?

ALEX
No.

KWIN
It's amazing. The view... this ship! I...

She looks at all the trash in the cabin.

KWIN (CONT'D)
(teasing)
It's just a shame they trashed it.

ALEX
Bastards.

Alex cracks open a can, identical to the trash scattered around. He hands it to Kwin, who takes it, inspecting it and the other food wrappers. She smirks and rolls her eyes before taking a sip.

Kwin's gaze drifts to the window. She spots the moon, its surface covered in an illuminated city. She lets out a wistful sigh.

KWIN
This ship could make it there, couldn't it?

Alex looks.

ALEX
Luna?

KWIN
Mm hm.

ALEX
Uh... yeah. Definitely.

He cracks open another drink and sips.

KWIN
You've been?!

ALEX
Uhh, yeah. Like Earth in a lot of ways. Addicts, scags, the lot. More white rocks.

A pause between them.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Let's say we find your friend, save him, and all live happily ever after... there is more you want? You're not just a lost puppy.

She chuckles.

KWIN
If it counts I used to daydream flying up there. Kind of an escape I guess.

ALEX
That's a long way off the ground.

KWIN
That was the point. Could this ship make it to Mars?

ALEX
I doubt it. It's not outfitted for interplanetary travel. Luna is pushing it. Doesn't have the supplies, yadda yadda.

KWIN
You've never tried?

ALEX
I never had permission.

KWIN
Earth isn't all bad Alex.
There aren't cherry blossoms on
Mars are there?

Alex scoffs.

ALEX
No.

KWIN
There's something Earth has, right?
Unless you hate those too?

He gives a slight smile.

ALEX
They're beautiful.

Her eyes widen. She blushes and smiles.

A moment of silence. Her smiles fades.

KWIN
Do you even need this tracker?
You're acting as if you know where
we're going.

Alex remains silent.

KWIN (CONT'D)
Are you scared?

Alex peaks at Kwin, then back ahead.

ALEX
I didn't think so. Not for a long
time. But now... He chose to go
with them, Kwin. Is he one of them?

KWIN
He said no.

ALEX
What do you think?

She looks out the window, pensive.

INT. HALL

Eli walks behind Falco through a sprawling corridor,
clutching his helmet.

The walls are adorned with windows, some protected by metal grates. Rooms come into view through these windows: labs, barracks, soldiers in a gym.

FALCO
A man of few words, Eli.

ELI
I am trying to maintain my composure. I expected my crew, not to show up at some sandy trashcan.

FALCO
This is all very disorienting.

ELI
What is this place?

FALCO
Not one for detailed introductions?

ELI
You introduced yourself. I know your name. You know mine.

FALCO
Hmm.

They both stop in front of a window. They observe scientists working on crop machines in a bio-farm.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Self-propagating crops. This one was exciting.

Eli scoffs.

ELI
Yeah, they're called plants. We just won't give up will we?

FALCO
No. A hardy species, people. You could call this place a node. A place where peoples and organizations meet.

ELI
What's Trinity Eco?

FALCO
Our parent company, as dull as it sounds. They oversee everything here.

Falco resumes down the hall. Eli follows.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Even replacing lost limbs fully and naturally once felt within our grasp.

They stop in front of another window. Inside, bionic limbs are being attached to patients on operating tables.

Near the end of the hall, it widens, revealing a massive reinforced metal door surrounded by tubes and lights. Frost coats the door. On the door reads "Dark Trace".

Eli eyes the door, then looks through the window.

ELI
Yeah. I met one of your guys.
Strong. Seemed like an improvement.

FALCO
Yes. Chrome.

ELI
Chrome? That's his name.

FALCO
It is now. He would disagree about it being an improvement. Different priorities. You seem to heal just fine.

Eli says nothing. Falco laughs and paces back and forth.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Why are you here, Eli? You haven't expressed awe, or curiosity. None of this phases you.

ELI
You know why.

FALCO
Yes. A one track mind. My kind of man. How are you here?

ELI
You assholes picked me up.

Falco stops. Sighs.

FALCO
I understand we've been painted as villains.

ELI

You did that to yourself.

FALCO

Have I, or any of my men mistreated you? In fact I do believe you have killed at least one...

Falco thinks.

FALCO (CONT'D)

As far as I know. One of our men. Not too mention all of those murdered by your temporary associates.

ELI

Yeah. Good point. Some of those could be chalked up to fair play.

FALCO

Perhaps all of them.

Falco takes a deep breath and leans against the window.

FALCO (CONT'D)

We're on the brink of so much. But what's the point if our planet dies? If we're forever trapped in one star system?

ELI

Are you telling me that space travel hasn't advanced at all in two hundred years? Apparently I've been dicking around with a Martian for days. Unless that's a new country?

FALCO

Of course not. Mars was declared sovereign fifty years ago. But we can only go so far, so fast. The ecological damage this species has caused is beyond your imagination. Time is running out.

ELI

I can imagine, trust me. I heard that same bullshit 200 years ago. You said it yourself; hardy little cockroaches.

Falco is taken aback.

FALCO

Tsk tsk. A Hardy Species, Eli.
Harsh words for your own kind.

Falco chuckles.

FALCO (CONT'D)

They really don't make them like
they used to. If only we met years
ago.

ELI

I'll bite. How did my ship end up
with two centuries' worth of
oceanic buildup?

Falco rubs his eyes, sighs, and squints at Eli.

FALCO

Are you playing dumb?

Eli takes a deep breath and looks away.

ELI

Where's my crew?

They lock eyes. They are both serious now. They both know
each other know what they're both up to.

Falco turns and continues down the hall. Eli dons his helmet.

ELI (CONT'D)

Pace?

HELMET

Yes, Eli?

ELI

You're a good friend.

HELMET

I am a helmet, not designed for
companionship.

Eli moves forward.

ELI

I know but, I don't think I am
coming back from this.

HELMET

I can do a threat assessment.

ELI
That's not what I mean.

Falco stops at the frosted door. Eli stops near him.

FALCO
You have a place here if you want
it. You don't have to waste this
gift. This can be collaborative.

Eli's apathy is evident even with his helmet on.

ELI
Let's get this over with.

Falco nods and swipes his ID card on a reader. The door
hisses, releasing a blast of cold fog as it opens into pitch
darkness.

FALCO
It's going to be cold.

Falco fixes his suit and enters. Eli gazes in for a moment,
then follows.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eli steps into the pitch-black room. Stands next to Falco.

ELI
What is this?

Falco sighs and ventures into the darkness. A click, and then
sparks. Dim lights on the opposite end of the room flicker to
life, casting a glow on Falco and five massive, human-sized
tubes beside him. The tubes emit an eerie green light, their
glass surfaces frosted over.

ELI (CONT'D)
What's this?!

His voice echoes.

Eli approaches the tubes, engraved with the names: "MILES.
SANCHEZ. MILLER. BECKETT. WILLIAMS." He clears frost from
"MILES" and gasps. He places his hand on the glass and lowers
his head. Inside, through the ice, dismembered bodies float.
Miles in particular is a woman.

FALCO
I thought you should just see it.

Eli whimpers.

FALCO (CONT'D)

Your crew is here. They were brave souls but bravery is sometimes not enough.

ELI

Where are the others? There were fifteen of us.

FALCO

These five were in the best condition, of those that were found. You're it, Eli.

Falco groans.

FALCO (CONT'D)

Listen to me. What the crew of the Blue Gale found... what you found... you have so much to offer mankind.

Eli slightly turns his head.

ELI

You experimented on them?

FALCO

They were already dead.

Eli withdraws his hand from the tube. Looks up at Miles' corpse, her lower torso and right arm missing.

FALCO (CONT'D)

We had a limited supply. Now, nothing but impurity. But you, you're whole. Complete. Alive. You can't tell me you don't know. It didn't take 200 years to return to Earth and you know it. Your crew's harrowing mission-

Eli chuckles. Falco is taken aback.

ELI

Harrowing, huh? More like a last-minute gig for the ones who didn't fit anywhere else.

Falco takes a deep breath.

FALCO

I am certain your crewmates saw it differently.

ELI
We all had our reasons.

The tall proselyte, **CHROME**, emerges from the shadows behind Falco.

FALCO
How delightful, you did know.
Hiding it from everyone, even
yourself.

Eli looks down at his wrists. Clenches his fist.

ELI
If I didn't look, it wasn't real.
But now I see.

Eli looks up at Miles.

ELI (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Sarah.

Falco grins and shakes his head.

FALCO
I did say you had a place here.

He eyes Eli's crewmates.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Right next to them.

Falco laughs. Chrome **LUNGES** at Eli, **SLAMMING** him into the darkness. Falco gestures and lights flood the chamber.

The chamber, massive and bare, is filled only with the tubes. The perimeter is encircled by hundreds of proselytes. They draw their swords.

Chrome delivers a barrage of punches to Eli. Each hit should have been lethal. Eli slumps over. Chrome stops.

Black, smoky liquid begins to emanate from Eli's body and float around him. Chrome steps back. Everyone looks intently.

Eli let's out a raspy breath. cracks his neck. Looks up at Chrome and punches him in the chest. He **FLIES** back through the crowd of proselytes and **SLAMS** into the stone wall.

Falco looks at Chrome, then Eli. He smiles wide. He gestures.

Turrets fall from the ceiling. Tranquilizer darts **RAPIDLY** fire at Eli. Darts ricochet off the stone floor and stick into Eli.

Eli falls to his knees, wobbly. Falco swiftly turns to the others.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Before he moves! Go!

The turrets stop.

Proselytes rush Eli. One wields a massive, soronium sword and lunges him. Eli dodges, disarms him, and punches a fatal hole through his face.

Others charge him. He swings the dead one's sword and cleaves the entire group in two.

Falco and Eli lock eyes. Eli growls, feral.

Chrome pushes himself out of the cracked wall.

Eli eyes Chrome, the turrets, Falco, and the proselytes. He can't beat them all! He groans and holds his chest. He falls to his knees. Suddenly, in a plume of dark, glittery smoke, Eli TELEPORTS away.

They all stare where he was. Chrome wipes dust off himself and approaches Falco. Falco let's out a deep sigh.

FALCO (CONT'D)
Plan B, then.

INT. RED STARJET

Alex is asleep. Kwin stares out the window. The starjet cruises in the upper atmosphere.

A LOUD BEEP emanates from Kwin's pack, startling her. She reaches for the medical tracker and inspects it with wide eyes.

KWIN
Alex?

Alex wakes up.

ALEX
Hmm?

KWIN
It's gone.

ALEX
What?

KWIN
Eli's ping. It's gone.

Alex turns to her. Kwin gasps.

KWIN (CONT'D)
No. It can't...

She looks at him.

KWIN (CONT'D)
It's gone.

She holds up the device to Alex.

KWIN (CONT'D)
We were too late.

Alex grabs it and looks at it.

ALEX
A malfunction?

KWIN
It was in his neck, Alex.

ALEX
Kwin. Maybe-

They stare at each other. Suddenly, another BEEP.

They both look at the device.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Kwin?

He hands her the device.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I must not know how to read these.

Kwin takes it. Stares. Her mouth hangs open.

KWIN
What?

ALEX
What?

She looks at Alex.

KWIN
It moved.

ALEX
Yeah?

KWIN
10'000 miles.

ALEX
Those coordinates are accurate?

KWIN
It must be broken. I-

Alex thinks.

ALEX
No.

He grabs the device from Kwin.

KWIN
Hey, Alex.

Alex leans back in his seat. He inputs the tracker data into his control screen, then pushes the throttle. The red starjet changes course.

ALEX
They're right Kwin.

KWIN
But-

ALEX
Look, now we might actually have a chance. I think I know what's going on.

KWIN
And what's that?

DREAM SEQUENCE

Eli plummets slowly through eternal darkness, clad in his full suit. Dust particles drift around him.

He gazes up. A rectangular hole emitting a distant light. It retreats as he continues to descend into the abyss.

He looks down. A dimly lit bottom comprised solely of dirt. He gently descends. His feet make contact.

In a dark corner sits a boy. He holds a shovel. His head hides in his knees.

Eli approaches and stands above the boy who looks up. The boy looks normal.

BOY
Are you here to rescue me?

ELI
I- uh. I don't know.

Eli looks at the shovel.

ELI (CONT'D)
What do you have there?

BOY
It's called a shovel.

Eli scoffs.

BOY (CONT'D)
I'm digging my way out.

He digs.

ELI
You're digging down.

He kneels next to the boy.

A closer look reveals black veins. They bulge from the boys face and neck.

BOY
I keep digging and digging but I only go deeper.

ELI
Yeah?

BOY
Did you forget?

The boy points to the center of the floor. Eli looks. It's just dirt. He looks back at the boy.

BOY (CONT'D)
You left me all alone.

The boy scowls.

BOY (CONT'D)
You lied.

The boy stands, walks to the center, and thrusts the shovel into the ground.

BOY (CONT'D)
I'm not doing this alone!

The boys face contorts. Eli stumbles back at the site.

BOY (CONT'D)
What are you afraid of?

ELI
I can't. I'm sorry.

The boy walks up to Eli.

ELI (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I said I would. I-

Eli looks away.

MAN (O.S.)
(distorted voice)
Dig.

Eli looks up. GASPS.

The boy has transformed into a man, wearing Eli's suit, now just a shadowy silhouette. He stands above Eli, who averts his gaze.

Eli looks up again. The shadow is gone. The shovel sticks out of the dirt in the center.

Eli stands and walks toward the shovel. The shovel sinks into the ground like quick sand. Eli starts to sink. He struggles and yells as it consumes him.

EXT. OVERGROWN FOREST - DAY

Eli lies in dense ferns, surrounded by a wild, vibrant forest with overgrown flora. Next to him, lodged in the earth, is the massive soronium sword.

He JOLTS up and screams.

He breathes heavily. He removes his helmet and vomits BLACK SMOKY LIQUID. He plucks needles from his body as he stands. He puts his helmet back on, looking around, disoriented.

ELI
It... worked? I-I actually...

He stares at the forest around him, still in shock. He takes a deep breath and steadies himself.

ELI (CONT'D)

Okay!

He focuses, trembling slightly. He vanishes in a wisp of black smoke—

THUNK! He reappears halfway inside a tree. He gasps. The wood buckles and cracks around him.

The section of the tree he occupies BURSTS out violently, splinters and chunks flying everywhere. Eli stumbles free, covered in cuts and gashes from the shrapnel.

ELI (CONT'D)

What the fuck?! What the FUCK?!

He pants, eyeing the hole he left in the tree in disbelief.

ELI (CONT'D)

Pace?

HELMET

Hello, Eli.

ELI

Wha- wha- where are we?

HELMET

There are no satellite responses.

He looks up at the sky. It's clear.

ELI

Jesus Christ.

He retrieves the soronium sword.

LATER

Eli navigates through the dense, fog-shrouded forest.

HELMET

Eli?

ELI

What?

HELMET

It seems you do not fully understand this ability.

ELI

No shit.

HELMET

When conducting an updated vitals scan; on all accounts, you are dead.

ELI

Yeah? What are you reading now?

A few sounds from the helmet.

HELMET

The readings match those from Colonel Brooklyn Beckett's life support during the anomaly encounter, as well as her subsequent attempts.

Eli stubs his toe, pausing. He looks down, uncovering debris-rubble, cement blocks, and old metal scattered among the ferns. He surveys the forest; remnants of ruined buildings are scattered about.

ELI

One of us shot us back this fast?

HELMET

It appears so.

ELI

Had to be Henry. Maybe Kurt. I wouldn't aim for the fucking ocean.

HELMET

It seems they had as little control as you. Returning to Earth at all was fortunate. Are you forming a clearer understanding?

ELI

Jury's still out.

Eli pushes aside ferns and picks up a rusted street sign. He examines it. It's illegible.

ELI (CONT'D)

I know where we are.

A LOUD BOOM shakes the forest startling Eli.

ELI (CONT'D)
What in the-

Strange birds scatter from the trees. Eli heads toward the sound.

EXT. BOSTON - DUSK

The red starjet soars over the desolate ruins of BOSTON. Nature has reclaimed the city.

INSIDE THE RED STARJET

Kwin stares at the city below.

KWIN
Where are we?

ALEX
Another ruin from before. Nothing special. We're not far.

KWIN
What happened?

ALEX
Same thing that always happens, Kwin. You've never even been out of Shangdi, have you?

She remains silent.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Whatever thoughts you had about the life you're leaving... you had it good.

Kwin sighs.

KWIN
I know.

ALEX
If Eli's who we're looking for I can't believe Trinity Eco would let him go without a back up plan. We-

Alex eyes widen. A revelation.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Fuck.

He presses the throttle. The starjet descends.

KWIN

What are we doing?

ALEX

Landing.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DUSK

Eli emerges into a clearing within the forest. Massive towers stand tall, connected by powerlines running down the center. The clearing extends as far as the eye can see to the south. To the north, into a body of water that stretches past the horizon.

A loud CRACK. Eli turns. Trees on the other side of the clearing shift and part. THEN, an enormous tree larger than a redwood falls toward him.

Eli sprints out of the way. The tree CRASHES through the power cables. Sparks and dust fly into the air as it SLAMS into the ground.

The dust settles. Eli breathes heavy. He stares at the downed tree.

ELI

What the fuck!?

From the forest emerges two **LUMBERJOCKS**, clad in bulky hazmat gear and wielding FUTURISTIC CHAINSAWS and tree-cutting equipment. They observe the damage; scattered wires and bent power lines.

LUMBERJOCK 1

Goddamnit.

LUMBERJOCK 2

You fucked it now.

LUMBERJOCK 1

Hey, once they go they go.

LUMBERJOCK 2

It was supposed to go the other way!

Eli groans, dusts himself off, and approaches them. They see him and gasp.

LUMBERJOCK 1
Who the hell-

LUMBERJOCK 2 (CONT'D)
Who are you?

Eli leans on the sword.

ELI
You two assholes did this?

LUMBERJOCK 1
(eyeing the sword)
Whatchu got there?

ELI
Long story.

LUMBERJOCK 2
How are you alive? That suit you
got on filtering this air?

ELI
Air?

LUMBERJOCK 2
The air! It's toxic. All these
plants!

Eli looks around.

ELI
Pace. Are you filtering?

HELMET
No, Eli.

ELI
What?! You're a life support
system!

HELMET
There was no need.

Eli groans. Cracks his back.

ELI
You two have anything to drink?

They exchange glances, then look at Eli.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE - NIGHT

Moonlight shines off the decrepit state house's golden dome.
A gaping hole exposes its' innards.

INSIDE

Alex rummages under the starjet as Kwin watches.

ALEX

Damn it.

He emerges, DEVICE in hand.

KWIN

Is that?

SPARKS cover the Starjet and startle them.

ALEX

Damn it! Stimlocked tracker. This is going to take a minute to fix.

Kwin grabs the TRACKER.

KWIN

Alex, fix this. I'll toss it.

She turns to leave. Alex grabs her arm.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Alex...

He lets go. She leaves.

EXT. BOSTON STREETS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Kwin walks toward a ruined overlook by the water. Rusted cars and rubble line the street, nature creeping through the decay.

A DECA-GUNSHIP roars overhead. Kwin sees then hides behind a car. It lands out of sight.

She breathes heavily, eyeing her path back to Alex. She attempts to run but is ambushed by IDA, who slams her against a wall.

CHROME and other proselytes join Ida from the shadows like ghosts.

IDA

Not this time. Is that our tracker?
Where's your Martian boyfriend?

She tightens her grip on Kwin's throat.

IDA (CONT'D)
Where is he?!

CHROME interrupts, grabbing IDA.

He holds IDA up by the neck. He gestures another proselyte.
It approaches Kwin.

KWIN
Stay the fuck away from me!

A proselyte grabs her. She struggles and screams before it covers her mouth. The other reaches into her pouch and pulls out ELI'S TRACKER and gives it to Chrome.

CHROME
(to Ida)
We have what we are looking for. I will not let the Dark Trace slip through my fingers again in favor of your childish need for revenge.

He drops her. She gags.

Out of sight, Alex darts behind a pile of debris, his breath tight. He peers out, eyes narrowing as they drag Kwin away. His hand twitches toward his weapon—ready to act—but he freezes, the weight of resignation sinking into him. He watches, helpless.

EXT. FORESTRY CAMP - DUSK

Eli and the lumberjocks emerge from the forest into a bustling lumber camp. Massive wood processing machinery, lumberjocks, and LUMBERMECHS abound.

LUMBERJOCK 1
Forestry outpost C23. The FOREST MASTER will see you.

INT. COMMAND MODULE - CONTINUOUS

Eli and the lumberjocks enter a dimly lit storage crate filled with screens and equipment. A gruff, middle-aged man, stands at the table inspecting some charts. A bottle of whiskey sits beside him.

This is **BRUTUS**, the FOREST MASTER.

LUMBERJOCK 1 (CONT'D)
Sir, we had issues with the east powergrid.

BRUTUS
Was it the three-thousand-foot
cable you knocked out?

They exchange glances. Brutus turns.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)
I can't deal with you right now.
That's Jefferson's problem.

He sees Eli.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)
Who the hell is this?

LUMBERJOCK 1
He uh-

BRUTUS
I'm sure he can speak goddamnit.
Son, what the hell are you wearing?

ELI
These are my only clothes.

Brutus bursts out laughing.

LUMBERJOCK 1
He looked lost. We-

BRUTUS
There's no one out here. Alive
anyway.

ELI
I'm not lost. I know where I am. Is
this Pennsylvania?

Brutus squints. The lumberjocks are confused.

LUMBERJOCK 2
Spores must have got to his head.

BRUTUS
You two, get out!

They straighten up and salute, then exit.

Brutus sits down at the table and retrieves two shot glasses.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

Eli sits across from him, resting his helmet on the table. Brutus pours two shots of fine whiskey.

FOREST MASTER
Vintage 2216.

Eli thinks, trying to remember what year it is. He nods approvingly. Brutus slides him the glass.

Brutus holds his glass up then downs it. Eli downs it too.

BRUTUS
Beautiful.

ELI
Not bad.

Brutus chuckles and pours two more.

BRUTUS
Finest there is. I may be surrounded by morons who know nothing about history, so excuse my surprise at someone bringing up names for places that haven't existed in over a hundred years.

ELI
Ok, so I do know where I am.

BRUTUS
Uh huh. Old space suit?

ELI
Space suit, huh?

BRUTUS
Do I look dumb son?

Brutus gestures to the helmet.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)
That isn't a respirator. I also know you're still sitting here after breathing in toxic, spore-fucked air. That's just something.

ELI
Spore air?

BRUTUS
That's right. Five hundred miles that way, that way, and every way.
(MORE)

BRUTUS (CONT'D)

I'm sure at one point, right here, we were in Pennsylvania if my little history hobby is correct. Intelligence doesn't get raises but it keeps me busy. Isn't much to do out here but read, drink, and yell at these idiots.

He laughs.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)

We don't get a lot of strange company out here, son, so I'm all ears.

Brutus nudges Eli's glass to him. Eli sighs and takes a sip.

LATER

Brutus is very drunk. Eli remains stone-cold sober. An empty bottle rest between them.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)

Goddamn.

ELI

I can't explain it. Liquor hit me hard a few days ago.

BRUTUS

Must be your- problem.

ELI

You're believing this shit?

BRUTUS

It's 2237, boy. I'm not shocked by cryo sleep. Time travel would fuck with me though.

He laughs.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)

If Trinity Ecos is after you, you must've ticked them off. I like that. Need a job?

Eli is puzzled.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)

A job. I don't care about your condition, but if they're after you... They only go after the good stuff.

ELI
 People don't like those guys, do
 they?

He shakes his head.

BRUTUS
 Listen.

Brutus stumbles to his feet.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)
 Chest behind you, probably more
 comfortable clothes. I am kissing
 the sweet sandman right now. You
 can sleep in the units, I'll tell
 the men. Or pass right the fuck out
 here. You think it over. Maybe
 you'll find something here worth
 staying.

He stumbles out leaving Eli alone to think.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS STATE HOUSE - ROOFTOP - MORNING

Alex sits on the edge of the roof, the red starjet behind
 him, watching the sun rise behind the ruined city. He
 retrieves a COMMUNICATOR, hesitates, then activates it.

ALEX
 Control?

Static, then a beep. He takes a deep breath.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Control?

JUNE (V.O.)
 Alex? Alex?!

ALEX
 June why-

JUNE (V.O.)
 Alex what happened? We lost contact
 with you and-

ALEX
 June.

JUNE (V.O.)
 What?

ALEX

It's over. He's gone. She-

A brief silence.

JUNE (V.O.)

It's time to come home.

Alex is taken aback.

ALEX

June, I failed. I lost the mark.

JUNE (V.O.)

You did what you could. This goes beyond us. This is command's cluster now. I should've never involved you. I'm sorry.

Alex is disbelief. He stands up.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Alex?

ALEX

June, just give me a moment.

JUNE (V.O.)

You have a track?

Alex hesitates.

ALEX

Yes.

A sigh of relief from June.

JUNE (V.O.)

It's out of our hands now. Share his location with command and come home, Alex.

Alex struggles to get words out.

ALEX

After all that? Just like that?

JUNE (V.O.)

This isn't on you Alex. You did your best.

Alex stares at the starjet. The screen inside blinks with Eli's coordinates.

ALEX
 No, June. I don't think I did.
 What's command's plan?

JUNE (V.O.)
 Scorched earth.

Alex's breath falters.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Martian command won't settle for
 anything less. If there's a chance
 of failure...

Alex's shoulders sag. Defeat flickers in his eyes.

JUNE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Come home, Alex. You wanted this.

Alex eyes starjet, lost in thought. His eyes turn red.

ALEX
 I did.

JUNE (V.O.)
 Alex, you-

Alex CRUSHES the communicator, letting the dust fall to the roof. He gazes over the ruined city below.

He pulls out a psych-vape, pauses, then tosses it off the ledge.

EXT. LUMBER CAMP - MORNING

Eli exits the module, now clad in a LUMBERJOCK UNIFORM. He holds his helmet. He stretches and inhales deeply, savoring his first uninterrupted sleep in years.

Brutus, nursing a hangover, and a Lumberjock spot him as they pass by.

BRUTUS
 There's our rookie. Looking sharp.
 Sleep well in that chair?

ELI
 Yeah I think I did. Like a baby.
 You?

BRUTUS
 Got a hangover that could fuck an
 elephant in the ass. Same old.

Eli winces.

ELI
Uhh, yeah. Do you have a GPS?

BRUTUS
You've got some peculiar names for things.

ELI
You still know what I'm talking about though.

Eli winks. Brutus smirks and pulls out a GEO-TRACKER and hands it to Eli.

BRUTUS
Know how to use it?

ELI
I think I can figure it out. I need a shovel.

Brutus gestures the lumberjock who retrieves a shovel.

BRUTUS
Digging for treasure?

The lumberjock hands it to Eli.

ELI
Yeah.

Eli puts his helmet on and heads into the woods.

LUMBERJOCK 1
The fuck is he doing?

BRUTUS
Maybe he's taking a shit. Back to work.

EXT. OVERGROWN FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Eli walks through the forest.

HELMET
Eli?

ELI
Yeah.

HELMET

Based on recent events, is it fair to say you have an understanding of the anomalies impact?

ELI

I'm not a scientist, Pace.

HELMET

You are an aerospace engineer, Eli.

ELI

Yeah. Well. I don't know. I don't even feel like I was consciously choosing anything. It almost seemed like-

The playground from his dreams, a rusty relic overrun by vegetation, comes into view.

ELI (CONT'D)

Intuition.

Eli enters the playground and kicks at the soil. He sticks the shovel into the dirt.

Some time passes. Eli jams the shovel into the dirt in various locations, then, a THUD. He digs into the dirt and extracts an old, metal toolbox. He kneels and situates it in front of him. He opens it.

ELI (CONT'D)

It took a little longer than I would've liked.

He retrieves Kwin's letter from his pocket, places it in the toolbox, then rummages through its contents. He pulls out a polaroid picture.

ELI (CONT'D)

I came back. How about a trade?

He tucks the photo into his pocket then closes the toolbox and buries it. He sits in silence a moment, full of emotion.

ELI (CONT'D)

Bye Beth.

EXT. OVERGROWN FOREST - MORNING

Eli walks through the forest back to the camp. Then, a loud BURR from above - two Deca-Gunships fly toward the camp. He begins to run.

A BOOM. GUNFIRE. He freezes, then BOOKS it.

EXT. LUMBER CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Eli enters the camp. Two Deca-Gunships loom behind kneeling workers and Brutus, hands raised, facing thirty proselytes with drawn swords. Chrome stands ahead, Kwin kneeling beside him. Ida is beside them.

CHROME

The traveler returns.

Chrome smirks, showing a medical tracker.

Eli touches his neck, eyes flicking to Kwin, who looks away, ashamed.

CHROME (CONT'D)

I don't think you actually know how to control those powers you possess.

ELI

Call my bluff.

Chrome places his hand on Kwin's head.

CHROME

I don't have to.

He squeezes. CRUNCH. Eli tenses.

ELI

You win.

Eli steps closer, stops short.

ELI (CONT'D)

A moment with her?

Chrome nods, stepping back. Kwin, eyes red, looks at Eli.

KWIN

I'm sorry, Eli.

ELI

Why are you here, Kwin?

KWIN

I owed you one.

Eli removes his helmet, smiling.

ELI
Guess we're even.

He winks.

IDA
Now, traveler!

Eli glares, ready to strike. A SONIC BOOM echoes. All eyes turn skyward as a RED STARJET ROCKETS toward the camp.

INSIDE THE RED STARJET

Alex, drenched in sweat, fingers flying over the console.

IN THE CAMP

The red starjet opens fire. Eli grabs Kwin and vanishes in a cloud of glittery smoke. Gunfire RIPS through proselytes and workers, explosions erupting with every hit.

CHAOS! Workers scatter. Proselytes shoot back. Deca-Gunships lift off.

AT THE TREE LINE

Eli, holding Kwin, materializes right in front of a tree and smacks into it. They both tumble to the ground in a daze.

After a moment, they collect themselves. Eli puts on his helmet, and Kwin turns to him, eyes wide.

KWIN
H-How-What just happened?

She laughs nervously, and Eli shrugs.

ELI
Sorry about that. Training wheels are still on.

A massive explosion erupts in the lumber building behind them. Kwin spins around—when she turns back, Eli is gone.

IN THE SKY

The red starjet banks over the forest, heading back to the camp. The Deca-Gunships burst from the trees and open fire.

INSIDE THE RED STARJET

Alex pushes the controls to the limit.

OUTSIDE THE RED STARJET

The red starjet spins, dodging most shots. Those that hit bounce harmlessly off its armored hull.

It darts between the Deca-Gunships, then pivots.

INSIDE THE RED STARJET

Alex, dizzy, presses a button.

OUTSIDE THE RED STARJET

A red aura envelops the ship. It hurtles toward a Deca-Gunship, turning sideways, slicing through it like butter.

Straightening out, it descends into the trees, cutting effortlessly through the dense foliage.

IN THE CAMP

Eli materializes beside a proselyte corpse, grabbing a soronium sword.

In the forest, fiery, bisected trees crash to the ground, igniting the underbrush.

Brutus rushes to Eli.

ELI (CONT'D)
Believe me now?

BRUTUS
I did before, son!

A proselyte charges. Brutus opens fire, slowing it down. As it stumbles, Eli teleports—only to find himself inside the proselyte. It explodes in a spray of black blood, covering Eli and SPLASHING Brutus.

Brutus grimaces at the carnage, clearly repulsed. They both wipe themselves off.

ELI
Shit. I didn't mean to do that. You and your men need to get out of here!

BRUTUS
We're already on it. We're getting out, boys!

Lumberjacks flee into the forest.

BRUTUS (CONT'D)

The offer still stands. We could use a man like you.

ELI

I'll catch up.

He nods and joins the others.

KWIN (O.S.)

Eli!

Eli turns. Kwin races toward him, a proselyte charging. Eli teleports and beheads it, then faces Kwin.

ELI

Get this out of my neck!

Kwin pulls a device from her medi-pack and sucks it out of Eli's neck.

Above, the red starjet soars, taking a hit from a pursuing Deca-Gunship. It spirals out of control, crashing near the facility. Kwin sees and rushes toward it.

ELI (CONT'D)

Kwin!

Eli spots Chrome approaching. Kwin halts. Eli looks at her.

ELI (CONT'D)

Go!

Kwin hesitates, then runs toward Alex. Chrome charges at Eli.

A lumbermech bursts through the wreckage, sending Chrome hurtling into a debris pile.

The lumbermech revs its massive chainsaw.

Chrome bursts out, swinging at the lumbermech. He grabs the chainsaw blades with his metal arm. Sparks fly.

AT THE RED STARJET

The cockpit opens. Alex crawls out, zip-rifle in hand. Kwin rushes to help him, taking the weapon. He leans against the wreckage, wincing.

ALEX

You're alive?

KWIN

No thanks to you.

They both smile.

Kwin spots Ida sneaking up behind Alex. She yanks him aside as Ida swings her sword, narrowly missing.

Kwin and Alex stumble back.

IDA

Bastard!

ALEX

I remember you. I'm not going to beat up a handicapped woman.

Ida screams and rushes at Alex. He pushes Kwin back.

He narrowly avoids Ida's attacks, stumbling onto his back near a massive wood chipper. Ida looms over him.

IDA

I will enjoy every second of this.

ALEX

You don't have seconds.

Kwin positions herself behind Ida, zip-rifle aimed. Ida turns. Kwin pulls the trigger, hitting Ida in the chest. Ida screams, grasping the cable.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Kwin, the button! Release the tension!

Kwin presses a button. The cables slacken. They lock eyes before Kwin tosses it in the woodchipper.

Ida screams as she is pulled into the chipper and SHREDDED.

They glance over to Eli, who kills two proselytes before falling to his knees.

Chrome leaps onto the lumbermech, punches through the window, yanks out the lumberjock, and punches a hole in his head. The lumbermech topples. Chrome stands on the wreckage. He spots Eli.

CHROME

All of this. For you.

Chrome hops down and approaches Eli.

CHROME (CONT'D)

Weak. Pathetic. Wasted on you!

He looms over Eli.

CHROME (CONT'D)

Run, hide; I will chase you across
the stars. Look at you. It will
kill you first.

Chrome chuckles.

CHROME (CONT'D)

I will personally extract every
drop of DARK TRACE from your veins.

A massive tree becomes lodged in a standing tree nearby,
creaking and poised to fall. Eli notices, but Chrome is
consumed by rage.

ELI

I'm done running.

A raygun blast detonates on Chrome's back. He whirls,
spotting Alex, gun aimed, with Kwin beside him.

Another shot spins Chrome around. He catches Eli's smile.

ELI (CONT'D)

Made you look.

Eli glances at the teetering tree, then back at Chrome. He
teleports away.

Chrome turns, raising his metal arm. The massive tree CRASHES
down, crushing him and sending up a massive dust and ash
plume.

The camp is strewn with bodies and wreckage, the forest
ablaze.

As the dust settles, Eli, Alex, and Kwin exchange weary
glances.

KWIN

I have so many questions.

ELI

Join the club.

They all share a relieved laugh.

Eli lumbers over to the storage crate he slept in as Kwin and
Alex watch. Alex sighs, the cumulative injuries he has
sustained getting to him.

Despite this, he readies the X2.

KWIN

Alex?

He approaches the storage crate, waiting for Eli to exit.
Kwin stands beside him.

KWIN (CONT'D)

Alex!

Alex hesitates. Eli emerges, holding his space suit. He spots
Kwin and Alex.

ALEX

It all makes sense now.

ELI

A little more, anyway.

Alex aims the X2. TENSION.

ELI (CONT'D)

We don't have much time, do we?

ALEX

No.

ELI

Man, you look like you could use a
vacation.

ALEX

You too.

They both laugh.

Kwin stands beside them, unsure and anxious. Alex sighs,
lowers the gun, and turns to Kwin.

ALEX (CONT'D)

There's more I want too.

KWIN

What?

Eli chuckles and retrieves a soronium sword from the ground.

ALEX

He's right. We don't have much
time. Worse things than Trinity Eco
are coming.

KWIN

To pick you up?

Alex shakes his head.

ALEX

The starjet's a two-seater. Only you and I will fit. I've never been to Luna, but we can try. I don't know why I lied.

ELI (O.S.)

Yeah you do.

Kwin's eyes redden. She smiles.

ALEX

You'll come if-

KWIN

Yes!

Alex grins.

ALEX

I'll restart the driver. Pray to whoever's listening that it still works. Meet me there.

He turns to Eli. They both nod. Alex runs toward his ship.

Eli approaches Kwin.

KWIN

You're not coming, are you?

ELI

Two-seater.

Kwin lowers her head.

ELI (CONT'D)

Hey, Kwin.

She looks up.

ELI (CONT'D)

They're not done with me. But I'm not done with them. Plus, I have work now.

Kwin laughs wistfully. Eli pulls out the POLAROID and holds it out.

Kwin takes the photo. It shows Eli as a child with his sister Beth at his birthday. She flips it over; it reads, "Happy Birthday, Alyosha! You little runt!"

Tears roll down her face.

ELI (CONT'D)
He knew, Kwin. He knew.

Kwin pulls Eli into a bear hug. He returns it.

ELI (CONT'D)
You'll be alright.

They release. Eli holds her shoulders and nods. She wipes away tears.

ELI (CONT'D)
Go on. Get.

Kwin smiles, walks toward the Starjet, then turns. Eli has vanished. She slips the picture into her pocket.

AT THE RED STARJET

Alex fiddles with wires in a pannel. Kwin sneaks up behind him. He jumps. She rests her chin on his shoulder.

KWIN
All fixed?

Alex slams the panel shut.

ALEX
One way to find out.

Alex looks out into the woods then back at Kwin.

ALEX (CONT'D)
He'll be fine.

KWIN
I'm more worried about you.

She climbs into the Starjet. The engines BLAST on. Alex jumps. Kwin peeks out.

KWIN (CONT'D)
You're cleared to board!

Alex smirks and climbs up.

ALEX
A natural. Keep it up and you'll be flying soon.

He gestures to the back seat. She sits. He takes the pilot's seat. Kwin wraps her arms around him.

KWIN

I intend to.

They share a smile and lean back. Alex closes the windscreen. The Starjet lifts off and rockets into the distance.

THE END