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THE DAY OF THE LORD

By

Neil David James  
B.A., University of Louisville, 2011

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of English  
University of Louisville  
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2013



THE DAY OF THE LORD

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A Thesis Approved on

April 23, 2013

by the following Thesis Committee:

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Thesis Director  
Jeffrey Skinner

---

Kiki Petrosino

---

Michael Williams

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents

Mr. David James

and

Mrs. Marena James

Who have given me invaluable educational opportunities

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Jeffrey Skinner for his support throughout the creation of this thesis. He was very patient and supportive in his guidance. I would also like to thank Professor Kiki Petrosino for her incredible creative writing course that inspired me to begin writing this story, and for her support on the thesis committee. Finally, I would like to thank Professor Michael Williams for introducing me to film analysis in his film studies course, and for participating on the thesis committee. I do not take for granted the dedication of time that these professors committed to help me see this project through to completion.

ABSTRACT

THE DAY OF THE LORD

Neil D. James

April 28, 2013

This sci-fi screenplay confronts issues raised by the Transhumanism movement, a growing speculative science that deals with the merger of humans with technology. *The Day of the Lord* portrays a world where this merger could threaten the very soul of humanity. We follow Nathan, the protagonist, as he witnesses the political, and technological transformation of South Africa. This story envisions a futuristic Pretoria with towering skyscrapers, walkways, and hovering shuttles filling the sky. The advantage of obtaining robotic enhancements is presented through the struggle between lower class humans, like Nathan, and upperclass post-humans. Nathan's classroom friend and love interest, Sarah, is brutally maimed in a vehicular accident. Sarah's parents are left with no choice but to give up custody of their daughter to a religious order that donates the enhancements to save Sarah's life. Eventually a catastrophic event threatens to knock out the country's power, sending Nathan's world into turmoil. All post-humans are evacuated to an unknown location, leaving the remaining humans in a futuristic ghost town to fend for themselves. Nathan is compelled to make a journey North to find where the post-humans were taken and whether or not Sarah is alive.

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## **NEW BEGINNINGS**

### **INT. DURAND FAMILY HOME - NIGHT**

The Durand family sits and watches the 2146 South African presidential debate. NATHAN - age 7 - sits glued to the faulty, futuristic display. The entire house is full of advanced technology and furniture that seems to be in disrepair, futuristic antiques. Nathan's mother, MANDISA, and father, JOSIA, watch intently as they witness the two presidential candidates spar.

Incumbent candidate BARUTI HOVEN of the African National Congress represents the status quo, defending his reelection against DOMINICK KILIAN of the People's Alliance. For the first time in South African history since the creation of the African National Congress, the party could lose its position as the leading party because of wavering public support (due crippling international sanctions)...many across the country are watching and longing for a brighter future.

Open on Nathan's eyes.

Nathan's eyes reflect the television screen as he attentively stares towards the camera.

BARUTI HOVEN

How dare you suggest that we give up  
the sovereignty that our ancestors  
fought and died for?

We see the Durand family silhouetted by the light of the television and draw in slowly until the shot is filled by the TV screen.

DOMINICK KILIAN

I suggest, President Hoven, that your  
too stubborn to open your eyes and see  
that we are on the losing side of  
history. Every year we slip further  
behind, and for what? Your sheer lack  
of diplomacy...this denial of reality,  
it is eating away at the very principle  
of progress that the ancestors  
championed.

BARUTI HOVEN

Don't tell me about principles. You would have us sacrifice our freedom for security! You would have us submit-

THE MODERATOR

Gentlemen...millions are watching this historic debate...millions who are suffering from what you, president Hoven, have labeled economic terrorism. The question on many minds tonight is: "Can we recover without compromising?"

BARUTI HOVEN

These international bullies cannot break us. South Africa mustn't be forced to give in to their hostile power grab. It is for the good of all citizens that we maintain our freedom.

DOMINICK KILIAN

You would have us go the way of the United States! There is no freedom in economic oblivion...only suffering. Listen to me...

Dominick Kilian looks directly into the camera.

DOMINICK KILIAN

This administration has demonized the UE sanctions...but what many of you don't realize is that the ANC is simultaneously censoring the truth that will set us free. Citizens throughout this planet, united as one are thriving. Dominick Kilian doesn't want you to know of a technology beyond anything our county has ever seen. While we sink into obscurity, into life expectancies resembling the 20th century, the rest of the world thrives. Their global scientific efforts have resulted in a breakthrough technology that will bring global peace, and with it...very soon...eternal life.

Nathan's parents, along with the television audience, gasp at this extraordinary claim while Baruti Hoven tries to regain control of the debate in a dismal attempt.

BARUTI HOVEN

This is absurd! These are lies he is feeding you. They are the propaganda of a technocracy that would love nothing more than to put us in bondage!

**EXT. STREETS OF PRETORIA - DAY**

We continue to hear cheering for Dominick Kilian over the sound of the moderator attempting to calm president Hoven as the shot dims to black and the voice of Nathan (older) begins to narrate the following sequence.

NATHAN BARUTI (V.O.)

I was child when the South Africa  
became the 23rd province of the United  
Earth. I tried to understand the  
excitement in the streets when Dominick  
Kilian won the election...when the old  
flags came down.

From young Nathan's POV we walk down a street in Pretoria and witness hundreds of people excitedly flocking to the capital building. He turns to see a South African flag being replaced by a UE flag on a street side pole. We see his father's face waver between concern to hopefulness as they continue on.

**EXT. CAPITAL PLAZA - DAY**

Dominick Kilian is at a podium surrounded by campaign staff, family, and UE representatives. His words are greeted with uproarious applause.

DOMINICK KILIAN

My friends, today we become citizens of  
a United Earth! Today our brothers and  
sisters throughout the planet rejoice  
with us. For so long they have longed  
for us to unite, with open arms they  
welcome us into a new age of peace and  
prosperity!

It is my honor to accept this role, for I am truly blessed to open the floodgates of progress to this country. Perhaps my greatest pleasure, however, is to introduce to you all, for the first time, the man whose tireless efforts ended the third world war. He is the diplomat who united our planet in a global brotherhood. He is my friend and my leader. Please join me in welcoming the leader of the United Earth, the great Emmanuel Shaefer!

The people excitedly cheer as Shaefer shakes hands with Kilian and takes to the podium, waving at the crowd. Shaefer stands out starkly against the crowd of South Africans, a bald, pale man of German descent who looks deceptively young for his age. When he turns to the audience, his features are plainly seen on the massive screens around the stage. In a matter of seconds much of the cheering dies down as people are shocked to see the glowing blue light emanating from his pupils, some scream and some question but most remain silent. Shaefer lets out a short laugh before holding up his hands in assurance.

EMMANUEL SHAEFER

My friends don't be afraid. Though my features may be strange to you...I can assure you, these eyes have seen many wonders, wonders that I have come to share with you.

Behold! There is a world behind the curtain of denial you've suffered under for so long...a world of infinite possibilities.

Gasps of astonishment come from the crowd as aerial shots of the various Western and Eastern provinces flash before them, massive cities with towering buildings and huge flying vehicles buzzing about beginning with Germany on through several provinces of the UE.

EMMANUEL SHAEFER

Throughout our United Earth, mankind has merged with technology to turn our greatest dreams into reality. This is my home, Germany, the capital province. In 2089 we hosted the first united earth council, becoming the capital province of the West. We found the secret to peace, the evolution of mankind, the unification of humanity with technology.

Because of their refusal to unify with the global community, the US met its economic demise in 2094. The council began talks with Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia and a treaty was signed in 2104, finally the middle east chose peace despite ignorant cries for sovereignty and joined with the United Earth to form the 14th province.

This is provincial Russia, she rose from the ashes in 2112, and in only a decade became a shining example of the glorious evolution of mankind.

Each pre-unification city on the massive screens transforms into a glowing, towering cityscape.

EMMANUEL SHAEFER

My friends, this is a historic moment! This is your home. Decades of ignorant leaders have blindly led held you hostage, held you back...but today, today your evolution is at hand! This is what you have to look forward to! Johannesburg will blossom! Cape Town, Durban, and every corner of this struggling nation will emerge from the ashes into the glory that you all deserve!

The roar of the crowd is tremendous as simulated plans for the future South Africa are displayed on the massive screens. Nathan looks up at his father, trying to decipher the skepticism in his face.

In the coming months, the technology of our glorious revolution will no longer be in your distant dreams. No longer will you toil with your hands, trying desperately to put food on the table for you family. Prepare for the robotic revolution, a technological evolution that will rocket you into the new age. What you see before you now will come to pass in less than a decade. The world rejoices with you! Pretoria will rise!

The people rejoice at the sight of a glorious new Pretoria displayed on screen. The roar begins to fade. The image on the screen becomes real as we transition forward to 2155.

**EXT. SKYLINE OF NEW PRETORIA - DAY**

CUT TO TITLE: THE DAY OF THE LORD

**THE NEW AGE**

**EXT. CITY LIFT - DAY**

The camera pans upwards past different levels of the city. We ascertain that the city is busy with the many flying shuttles and crowds of people walking among robots to and fro on the many bridges that connect various towers. Finally the camera catches up to the platform of a lift and reveals a group waiting to reach their destination. The camera focuses in on Nathan Durand, he is now 16 years old. Unlike some people in the crowd, Nathan has no enhancements (evidenced by his normal eyes). He looks down near the camera and seems to be fixated on something.

The camera reveals Nathan's fixation. He is focused on the shiny metal surface on the side of the lift where we can see a reflection of the crowd, and specifically a girl on the lift who also has natural eyes. We will later learn that her name is SARAH, a girl from Nathan's class.

We begin to hear the sound of teenage students pledging to the United Earth.

**PLEDGE**

As a citizen of the United Earth, I do  
pledge to honor, serve, and respect the  
code of peace. The code is progress.

The group pledge continues during the following sequence until we

transition from the reflection into the classroom of students standing with hands over their hearts.

**INT. - CLASSROOM - DAY**

PLEDGE

The unity of the world has come. May we  
build together united as one.

A hologram of the earth floats in front of the class filling the room with a bright teal light. It fades away when the last line is spoken.

TEACHER

You may be seated.

We notice that every student uses a small personal computer, except for a few wealthy students with robotic enhancements. They are much younger than the natural human students and use holographic displays that project from their eyes.

We focus on one boy with a glowing mechanical iris that emits a small screen of blue light and steadily projects information while his human eye follows a line of floating text that lengthens as the teacher continues to speak.

Nathan glares at his computer screen, the grade for his exam flashes red with errors. He looks up to see that most of the fully human students are also frustrated with their bad grades. He looks at Sarah specifically and then to the enhanced students one at a time. There are five in the class and they are all displaying their test proudly on their retinal projections (basically bragging). The final student is Dallen, a nearby enhanced boy, the top student in their class.

Dallen smiles for a second and blinks. This closes his test results display, but his eyes still have a glowing blue hue. Both of his eyes are enhanced, able to emit digital holograms within his range of sight.

He looks at Nathan with his two glowing eyes and Nathan looks down, closing his test results. His head stays down, his heart beats loudly, breathing is heavy and fast. After a few beats we begin to hear students giggle, eventually there is an uproar of laughter, Nathan looks up and we see that almost all of the students are laughing. The teacher is pretending like nothing is happening, she is also enhanced and acts like she is distracted by grading information she is visibly processing.

Only a few students who also failed the test look disheartened by what they are seeing above Nathan's head. Nathan is confused, looking all around and above himself, unsure of what is so funny.

The perspective changes, and we can now see that his grade is hovering around him via holographic projection as a 3D red 49% with an arrow pointing to his head. When he turns towards it, the position of the number changes to stay out of his sight. It is a humiliating experience. Nathan finally gives up and looks straight at Dallen with frustration in his eyes. Some students begin hurling spoken insults (Brain dead!).

TEACHER

Quiet down class, that's enough-

Sarah looks towards Nathan, full of empathy. Nathan glances over at her through a tearful vision.

The classroom noise suddenly dissipates. We hear Sarah begin to speak before switching locations.

**EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL - DAY**

SARAH

Nathan wait up! Nathan, hey, don't feel bad. Dallen is being a complete glitch. I failed that test too. How the heck are we supposed to memorize all of the new equations overni-

Nathan suddenly stops and looks over at Sarah.

NATHAN

I'm stupid- we are stupid don't you see that the tests prove it?

She slows down to a halt and stands beside him in on the bridge leading to the lift we saw before.

NATHAN

It's just more proof of how dumb we really are!

Nathan starts running full speed away from Sarah.

SARAH



But Nathan it's not fair!

Sarah begins to chase after Nathan again, she starts to slow her speech as she breathes more heavily.

SARAH

Nathan wait, it doesn't make any sense!  
The tests are impossible! I failed it  
too! Nathan wait up, Nathan-

Nathan trips and goes skidding across the ground, scraping his arm.

He looks up through the foggy vision up towards the sky where hover shuttles fly in and out of passages in towering skyscrapers carrying upper class passengers. The city is essentially organized so that you can live your whole life on the upper levels if you are wealthy enough, traveling by shuttle from one tower to another. The ground level is where Nathan and Sarah both live because their families were put out of work by the robotic service units, they just live off of what the government doles out to them. Many of the upper class citizens refer to these lower class people as "bottom feeders." Suddenly Sarah appears above Nathan.

SARAH

Are you OK?

Nathan's vision becomes fuzzier and blinks in and out. He shuts his eyes, trying to focus after the dizzying blow to his head. Sarah becomes sharper and clearer, after he blinks for a beat she is the only thing in focus.

SARAH

I mean I know you're not OK...but you  
gotta stop running from me I wanted to  
cheer you up, y'know?

Nathan groans.

NATHAN

I want the enhancements

SARAH

You need a bandage. Here get up-

Sarah helps Nathan up.

Nathan and Sarah begin walking towards the crowded lift to which Nathan was fleeing.

NATHAN

Thanks Sarah...

The lift begins to beep and they then hurry to step inside. It begins to drop, taking them to their lower-class, ground level neighborhood.

NATHAN

What are we supposed to do Sarah? It's like we are stuck with no upgrades- with old news- I mean we're just a bunch of monkeys compared to Dallen.

SARAH

Hey! Didn't you see what a jerk he was? You don't want to be like him.

NATHAN

Yea... but I can't stop thinking about it Sarah... I want the enhancements- I want them so bad.

SARAH

My mom said that it's only a matter of time before everyone can afford it.

NATHAN

That's what my parents have been saying...

Sarah puts her hand on Nathan's shoulder. His frustration fades away for a moment and then the lift comes to a halt.

The two step off of the lift and begin walking down the street under a transparent roof that is covered in trash. Wrappers and pieces of paper float down to the bottom floor from the above levels. When

they emerge from the protective walkway onto the street, they walk onto the trash covered pavement. We see that two worker drones that are clearly outdated models slowly collect the garbage.

SARAH

You gotta stop letting it drive you so crazy. Just stop.

Nathan halts.

Sarah comes to a stop and turns to him when she realizes he isn't following her.

SARAH

Don't stop walking stop trying to pass the impossible tests.

NATHAN

Then I'll be left behind-

SARAH

You can't pass!

NATHAN

That's why I need the enhancements!

SARAH

You can't afford it in a million years!

NATHAN

So we just stop trying? That's your solution we just stop?

SARAH

Why should we do all the work if it's impossible for us to pass? They expect us to fail.

NATHAN

What do you think Mrs. Reignfold will do if...all the humans give up?

SARAH

Pretend like she didn't even notice, just like she did when Dallen was being a glitch.

NATHAN

I guess you're right...I'm glad you walked with me today.

SARAH

It's always a good idea to partner up down here, y'know? I feel safer when I'm up there.

NATHAN

Don't worry, if anyone tries to steal our stuff I'll just bleed all over them.

Sarah starts looking through her backpack as they walk together.

SARAH

I left my med kit at home but here's a napkin, hold it tight to stop the bleeding...we are almost there.

NATHAN (SMILING NOW)

I think I'll be fine my house isn't far.

SARAH

You're coming home with me.

NATHAN

Oh...

Sarah grabs Nathan's hand and starts to pull him along before he can refuse. His smile grows wider and he is silent as they hurry to the house. We see that the streets and sidewalks are untidy and some walls are marked with graffiti. They run past a couple arguing in the street. A car drives by leaking fluid and puttering past them. The ground level is a technologically advanced slum. Holographic advertisements contrast with trashy sidewalks and homeless beggars. The cars look futuristic but none of them hover, they are worn out and some are marked by rust. They still have wheels as opposed to the hovering shuttles above.

SARAH

That's my place right there! See the garden dome in the front? I started that last year. Come on I'll show you after we get your arm fixed.

When they get to the door, Sarah leans up to the door like she's trying to peep in a reverse peep hole and suddenly a white light begins rippling over her iris. Nathan looks at her, still smiling.

The sound of Nathan and Sarah drifts off and we hear Sarah's mom in the distant background.

SARAH

Mom I'm home

SARAH'S MOM

I see you brought a friend

SARAH

This is Nathan- he hurt his arm saving me! You were right about the muggers.

SARAH'S MOM

Oh dear, what happened? I told you it was dangerous down here by yourself. Thank you for walking with Sarah, here...we'll get you fixed up.

SARAH

There was this crazy guy that wanted to steal my bag and he almost did but Nathan ran after him. If it weren't for Nathan, he would have taken everything-

FADE OUT

**EXT. SARAH'S YARD - DUSK**

SARAH

I planted these in March, this is the best batch we've ever had.

Sarah plucks a ripe tomato from the plant and shows it to Nathan.

NATHAN

Wow.

SARAH

The dome was my idea. I was so sick of the rations.

Sarah's Mom (from the house)

Sarah! Let's invite the Durand's to join us for dinner!

SARAH (YELLING)

OK!

Sarah turns to Nathan, with his cracked glasses and bandaged face.

SARAH

She wants to repay you for saving me today.

NATHAN

My parents aren't going to believe us. They always know when I'm lying.

Sarah smiles and looks at Nathan with her kind eyes.

SARAH

Don't worry, I'll take care of it.

Pause on Nathan for a moment as he looks down to hide his embarrassment, a smile grows on his face.

We begin to hear the dinnertime chatter. CUT TO-

**INT. DAWN - DINING ROOM - DAWN**

MANDISA DURAND

This is a lovely meal you've prepared  
Okuosa. It's quite a garden you've  
cultivated.

OKUOSA (SARAH'S MOTHER)

Sarah's my little gardener.

She smiles at her daughter.

This food is the least we could do to  
return what your little hero did today.

She gestures towards Nathan, who can hardly keep a straight face to maintain the dishonest story.

Mandisa looks at Nathan, and then at her husband Josia in confusion.

OKUOSA

Oh he didn't tell you? So humble this  
one. Nathan fended off a thief who  
tried to snatch Sarah's bag on the way  
home from school.

MANDISA DURAND

He just said he hurt himself on the way  
home, Nathan, why didn't you tell me!  
Honey are you OK?

NATHAN

Yes...I'm fine. I didn't want to worry you-

Sarah jumps in to rescue the story-

SARAH

He was SO brave! We didn't see the mugger coming. I just felt him pull down on my bag and before I knew it Nathan was yelling at him, 'get away you creep!' He punched the guy right in the face! I was so scared because he wouldn't let go until Nathan tackled him to the ground! He scratched you up pretty good, but you should have seen the other guy's face! I don't know what I would have done if you weren't there.

Sarah looks at Nathan with ecstatic gratitude.

Nathan's parents are shocked.

NATHAN

I...I just...didn't want him to hurt you.

OKUOSA

Such a brave young man you two have raised. Josia looks at Nathan with astonishment.

JOSIA

Yes...I'm quite impressed.

Nathan shrugs, looking back at Sarah immediately, hoping that the subject will change before he blows the lie.

SARAH

So mom! What do you think about the tomatoes?



CUT TO-

**INT. DAWN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Nathan and Sarah are playing a game on a 3D holographic display. Nathan navigates a character who scales a dangerous tower while Sarah gives him pointers.

SARAH

You have to shuffle to the left on this part, if you go straight up the bumpers will knock you back like three floors.

Nathan follows her direction and reaches a cliff. The display rotates and scrolls with his character's movement.

SARAH

Drop down here.

NATHAN

But I thought we were trying to get to the top.

SARAH

Trust me, there's a trick where you can shimmy between those two pillars, but you can't get to them unless you drop off that ledge.

Nathan does what Sarah said. Eventually reaching the pillars, bouncing from one to the other. His attention shifts from the game to the conversation in the dining room, his character visibly loses momentum as this happens.

OKUOSA

My husband lost his job at New Hope when they started replacing doctors with engineers.

He's so busy down here, but the pay isn't what it used to be.

We want what's best for Sarah, but I just don't think we'll be able to commit her until next year.

JOSIA

He's at the hospital now?

OKUOSA

Yes, he would have loved to join us, but there was a horrible accident in the mines today. He'll be there all night. Thirty-seven workers are in emergency care...did you see the news.

MANDISA

Yes...how awful.

Nathan's video game character slips.

SARAH

Nathan, you have to jump faster.

NATHAN

Sorry, I'm tired...here, you show me.

Nathan gives control of the game over to Sarah.

SARAH

OK...

Nathan listens in on the discussion, turning his head slowly to get a look at the parents in the dining room.

OKUOSA

It just reminds you how delicate our bodies really are. If it weren't for the riots they would've replaced those miners with droids years ago.

JOSIA

I'd say the droids are part of the problem.

MANDISA

Josia...don't.

JOSIA

They've taken all of the jobs, how are we supposed to live without jobs...

OKUOSA

The free enhancements are coming...but they'll never see the day, risking like that.

JOSIA

Those rumors have been floating around for years...it's just a pipe dream if you ask me.

OKUOSA

Just give it time.

JOSIA

And what if we don't want our brains rewired? There is no freedom in sacrificing the unwilling.

MANDISA

Honey stop. This is no way to talk to our host.

OKUOSA

I'm sorry, I don't understand how you could think that you're better off without the enhancements.

JOSIA

Oh please, don't tell me you haven't  
seen the way it changes people.

Josia looks at his wife, he seems to be shaken. We get the sense  
that many of his family and friends have disowned him since they got  
they got the enhancements.

OKUOSA

Yes, well...it's getting late, past  
Sarah's bedtime. We'll have to finish  
this discussion some other time.

MANDISA

Thank you for your hospitality Okuosa.

Mandisa looks over at Nathan.

Son, it's time to go. Say goodbye to  
your friend.

Nathan looks at Sarah, her face lit by the flickering light of the  
hologram.

CUT TO-

**EXT. - PRETORIA - MORNING**

Nathan is walking to the lift for school, he stops in front of  
Sarah's house and looks towards the door. We hear Okuosa speak  
before transition to their discussion in the doorway of her house.

OKUOSA

Oh, she's already left...you'll have to  
see if you can catch her at the lift.

CUT TO-

Nathan walks towards the lift stop. He looks through the group of  
people who wait for the descending lift, but doesn't see Sarah.  
When the lift stops he boards with the group. The look on his face  
is one of insecurity, like something isn't right. Half way up the  
lift, there is the loud bang of a heavy object slamming into the  
level above them. Shrieks of terror sound from above. The group on

the lift begins to panic. As they reach to upper level we see that a shuttle has crashed into the bridge leading to the school. While most people stay put, Nathan senses that something is wrong, rushing to the scene of the accident. When he is halfway there he sees Sarah lying in a pool of rubble and blood, her chest is pinned under a heavy part of the shuttle.

NATHAN

No! Sarah!

He runs even closer to see her gasping for air through a gurgle of blood. When he attempts to lift the large metal piece that holds her down he fails and screams for someone to help.

DROID

Danger, step away from the accident.

NATHAN

Sarah, Sarah!?

Nathan backs away as the shuttle is surrounded by emergency droids. The robots begin prying people out of the wreckage, including Sarah, and shuttling the bodies off in metal pods. When Sarah is carried past Nathan, his eyes lock on her blank stare for a second. The camera follows the pods as he looks on. We see him standing in shock near the pile of wreckage and busy droids staring in the direction which the droids had taken her.

CUT TO-

Nathan slams on Okuosa's front door bell repeatedly and shouts for her to hurry. When the door slides open he takes a breath before saying-

NATHAN

They took her!

OKUOSA

What? Who?

NATHAN

A shuttle crashed into the walkway. The emergency droids got Sarah before I could see if...if she's alive.

Tears stream down Nathan's face as he tries to get the words out, Okuosa gasps and steps back.

NATHAN

We have to go to the hospital!

Okuosa nods with her hand over her mouth, reaching out to Nathan. They clasp hands and rush for the lift together.

CUT TO-

We hear a sudden release of air from the vacuum chamber that Sarah was sealed inside of by the emergency droids and the clicking of medical droids working to save Sarah's life. For a moment we see Sarah's limp body until she is swarmed by the three medical droids meant to operate on her. It is almost violent how a breathing mask is snapped to her face and her back is arched to lift her vital organs up for surgery. The view pans away and out of the viewing window, where we see that Okuosa is banging on the window with her fist. The sounds are muffled and warbled, as though we are hearing them from Sarah's perspective though the camera is now behind Okuosa. Nathan looks up at Okuosa in awe filled terror.

MANDISA (DISTORTED)

What's wrong with my baby girl!?  
What's wrong with her!?

Suddenly the glass between Sarah and the hospital room lights up with digitally projected letters and numbers. A light blue hue washes over Sarah as the glass turns to a display Sarah's condition. The display says her condition is critical and that her nervous system is unresponsive.

Sarah explodes into a frantic panic and begins pacing back and forth, to and from the screen as though it will change when she turns around.

Sarah leans against the glass display with her hand, and a spiraling blue object appears where her hand is. It identifies her, and a label replaces the blue object reading "Okuosa Lam."

The camera turns to a tight shot on Nathan's face. He is frozen in shock, and his eyes are colored by glowing blue reflections. We hear footsteps echoing through the hall as an post-human attendant approaches Okuosa.

POST-HUMAN ATTENDANT

Mrs. Lam.

Okuosa looks towards the attendant.

POST-HUMAN ATTENDANT

Please, follow me to the waiting room.  
The emergency droids are doing all they  
can. You can't stay here.

Cut to the waiting room.

OKUOSA

We can't afford the cerebral implants.  
What about the liabilities? Those  
responsible for the shuttle have to  
cover the bill.

POST-HUMAN ATTENDANT

I'm afraid I cannot ensure that they  
will. We won't know for at least a  
week if they will be liable for the  
injuries your daughter sustained. We  
don't have that kind of time. If your  
daughter does pull through, she will  
sustain severe and permanent brain  
damage. She will likely be permanently  
paralyzed if we don't act now.

STRANGE WOMAN

Perhaps we can be of assistance.

The strange woman is a highly enhanced post human, evidenced by her robotic eyes and hands. She is wearing an all-white garment similar to an open robe bound by a light brown sash at the waist, beneath the robe we can see that she wears a tan vest with ornate designs and tight black leggings. A silent man shrouded in a hooded blue robe accompanies the strange woman.

STRANGE WOMAN

As a daughter of Ascension, it is my responsibility to bring your dying child to salvation and save her from the mortal end.

The hospital attendant seems skeptical, even slightly unnerved by the proposal.

POST-HUMAN ATTENDANT

I'll be right back Okuosa, your husband should be here shortly.

OKUOSA

Thank you...

Okuosa turns to the strange woman from Ascension.

OKUOSA

Who are you?

POST-HUMAN ATTENDANT

My name is Sativa. Your daughter must be brought into the fold, or she will surely perish.

OKUOSA

You will pay for her enhancements?

SATIVA

In exchange for devotion.

OKUOSA

You would have me give up my daughter? I don't believe it... You're telling me to choose...to have her die or give up custody? Don't you care about my family?

SATIVA



What we offer is evolution of body, and spirit. The choice is up to you. Would you have her perish for your own selfish desires?

OKUOSA

Unbelievable...

NATHAN

Mr. Lam!

Akuosa's husband, Mr. Lam hurries into the waiting room, he stops when he sees Sativa and rolls his eyes, letting out a sigh, snaps quickly back to Okuosa.

MR. LAM

Dear, are you OK? I saw the reports. I'll find a way...I'll sue the bastards that ran that shuttle into the bridge.

OKUOSA

She needs the cerebral enhancements now...

MR. LAM

Where's the attendant?

Mr. Lam turns again to look at Sativa.

MR. LAM

If you really want to help, get the attendant.

Sativa closes her eyes for a moment. When she opens them they glow a bright blue, projecting a holographic display of the Sarah on the operating table. Sarah's critical medical conditions flash beside the image.

MR. LAM

Damn it...oh god...

Mr. Lam stammers and with visibly weakened knees, turns and sits by his wife. They begin to whisper, debating whether they should sign their daughter's life away to save her.

Nathan looks up towards Sativa in a confused gaze. The post-human woman, with her eyes still aglow, seems to be content in this moment. A slight smile appears on her face.

MR. LAM

We'll do it...

SATIVA

Very well.

The display changes to a confirmation to initiate the surgery for full cerebral enhancements. Sativa blinks the display away before she and her companion turn to leave the room.

OKUOSA

Wait!

The couple from Ascension stops, still looking away from the group.

OKUOSA

Will we see her again?

SATIVA

In due time...

Sativa continues out of the hospital. Nathan observes as Sarah and her husband hold each other close in a moment of complete apprehension. Sarah looks to Nathan over her husband's shoulder.

SARAH

Nathan, your family must be worried.  
You should go home.

## FADING FRIEND

### INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

We hear the nervous tapping of a foot against the ground as the shot fades in. Our perspective is below Nathan's desk, it rises to his disgruntled face. He is wracking his brain over the assignment. We cut from a large equation on his computer screen and his frantically searching eyes. He blinks hard and holds his eyes shut for a beat as though he wants to wish it away.

When he opens his eyes we cut in close on a timer counting down reaching 23 seconds. Nathan desperately tries to solve the problem, typing in multiple numbers, each followed by a negative chirp as the entire equation flashes red. He sighs and his finger reaches for a red X above the text. He hesitates for a moment and then shuts off the test. The teacher looks up at him with her robotic eyes, examining Nathan. She pauses for a moment and then begins walking down the aisle towards Nathan.

TEACHER

Nathan, it is not like you to give up...

NATHAN

I can quit if I want to.

The teacher's facial expression switches from attention on him to a glazed look. She is processing the test results for a moment. She snaps out of the blank look and nods, turning to the front of the class.

TEACHER

OK class, let's review the answers-

Suddenly the door glides open and the teacher's attention shifts to the open, empty entrance.

TEACHER

Please join us...

The entrance remains empty, but the camera pans with Nathan's eyes to reveal a small shadow at the doorway.

NATHAN

Sarah?

Sarah hesitates for a moment and then slowly steps into the entrance. Her head droops to hide her face from the classroom.

TEACHER

Dear girl, we are so very glad that you  
have recovered from that tragic  
accident.

Sarah approaches her desk (a few rows in front of Nathan) and takes a seat.

TEACHER

It appears that this tragedy has  
resulted in quite the blessing.

Some class members notice her eyes, they gasp and congratulate her. Nathan has yet to see what they see, though he suspects that Sarah's transformation is complete. Sarah turns to look at Nathan as everyone else in the room seems to be in awe of her. Two glowing eyes peer back at him and then down at the ground.

TEACHER

Let's get back to work, I'm sure Sarah  
is ready to flex her new  
processor...it's quite the upgrade.

SARAH

I bet you're thrilled...

TEACHER

I'm sorry? What was that?

SARAH

I bet you're thrilled to have another  
glitch in the classroom.

Dallen and the other enhanced students seem perturbed.

DALLEN

You should be grateful...

TEACHER

Hush, quiet class...she'll come  
around...let's get back to work.

We see that Nathan seems worried that Sarah is changing.

**EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY**

Nathan chases after Sarah, who is hurriedly leaving the building.

NATHAN

Sarah! Wait for me! Wait!

Sarah picks up speed trying to avoid Nathan.

NATHAN

Sarah wait!

Nathan grabs Sarah's shoulder and she snaps. She whips around and grabs his arm, holding it uncomfortably in a tight grip. When she sees Nathan's look of pain she lets go, and her pearly blue eyes seem to dim.

NATHAN

Geez Sarah...what the-

SARAH

I'm sorry Nathan, I'm not OK...I...

Dallen laughs from nearby in the hall.

DALLEN

Oops, don't hurt your little human!

NATHAN

Shut up Dallen-

DALLEN

Did you just piss yourself Nathan?

Nathan looks down to see Dallen is pointing at a projection. There is a fake "puddle" of holographic light around Nathan's crotch.

DALLEN

Hey guys, Nathan peed his pants!

Several other students turn to see Nathan and begin to laugh. Nathan looks furious and rears back, ready to punch Dallen.

Dallen's laughter suddenly ceases as he turns to see Sarah.

DALLEN

What the-

Nathan waits to strike, turning to see why Dallen is caught off guard-

NATHAN

Sarah?

Nathan holds up his hands to block the incoming danger and time seems to slow in the hallway. A look of terror fills Dallen's face as a sudden explosion of bright white light flashes from Sarah's eyes. The students in the hall scream as they are momentarily blinded by Sarah's attack. Sarah is nearly out of the door by the time the light has dimmed to normal. Nathan is huddled on the ground, turning to see his friend run away. He gets up and runs after her, leaving Dallen and those around him in a furious confusion.

**EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - DAY**

OKUOSA

I think Sarah needs to rest...

NATHAN

Please...

Okuosa pauses, and then relents, stepping out of the doorway.  
Nathan rushes in.

NATHAN

Thank you!

Nathan runs through the hall to Sarah's bedroom door. Holding down on an intercom button, he clears his throat and speaks into the microphone near the door.

NATHAN

Sarah...please talk to me.

Nathan waits a few beats for a reply, and the door finally slides open. Sarah isn't behind it.

Nathan steps through and looks into the room. He spots Sarah huddled in a corner of the room on the ground. She is hiding her face. He slowly approaches, taking a seat at the edge of her bed.

NATHAN

That was a cool trick you did back  
there...and the door, you can just tell  
it when to open...that must be nice.

There is another long beat of hesitation and silence.

NATHAN

Please talk to me...

SARAH

I can't cry Nathan.

NATHAN

What do you mean?

SARAH

I want to...but I can't.

NATHAN

I would want to cry too if I almost died.

SARAH

I didn't ask for this...

NATHAN

I know...do you remember what happened?

SARAH

I remember walking to school...and then waking up in the hospital.

NATHAN

Your parents didn't have a choice.

SARAH

Yes they did.

NATHAN

They couldn't...

SARAH

Let me die?

NATHAN

Yea...

SARAH

But I am dying...

NATHAN



What? No you-

Sarah whips her head around and stares at Nathan with her pearly new eyes.

SARAH

I can't feel it anymore!

NATHAN

Huh...

SARAH

I'm all gray...slipping...it's like...I'm fighting to wake up from a bad dream, like I'm about to ...but it keeps sucking me back. I was supposed to die.

Sarah pauses and looks down.

SARAH

I loved you...you know.

NATHAN

What do you mean "loved"?

SARAH

I'm trying...

Sarah pauses again.

SARAH

I don't want to forget...that lump in my chest when you looked into my eyes...my real ones. It's slipping.

NATHAN

I won't let you forget.

Nathan pauses a beat and slouches off of the bedside to sit by his friend. His hand reaches and rests on her shoulder.

NATHAN

I love you too.

Sarah reaches for his hand. For a moment it is as though she wants to push it away, but she hesitates and takes a hold of it. Holding it in both hands she looks up a little more, still not into Nathan's eyes.

SARAH

It's part of the deal...

NATHAN

What do you mean?

SARAH

In a couple of days I have to be initiated. You've seen how they are...

NATHAN

You are better than that...

SARAH

They're in my head...

NATHAN

We run away, leave Pretoria...

SARAH

They're in my head!

Nathan seems startled by the sudden exclamation and leans away, letting go of Sarah's hand. Sarah turns slowly back to her huddled corner. She is holding her head and gasping in between utterances.

SARAH

In my head. In my brain. Controlling.  
I'm losing. They're in my head!

Nathan is scared. His slow retreat becomes a hurried escape, running out of the room and down the hall he passes Okuosa without hesitation and flees the house.

OKUOSA

What happened?!

We follow Nathan down the street as he hurries to his house, biting his lip, trying to hold back the tears. We hear a loud horn as a car pulls into the street and nearly hits him. He freezes in place only a few feet from the edge of the vehicle. He is panting heavily, and realizes that he almost got pummeled. He looks back at the car as it drives past and seems to realize something dreadful. When he looks down at the skid marks a strange thought hits him.

**INT. DURAND DINNING ROOM - NIGHT**

MANDISA

It's just going to take some getting  
used to...it just takes time. She'll be  
back to her old self soon enough.

JOSIA

I know this is hard son...but just  
know, we are so glad you are OK. If  
you'd been...up there...I just don't  
know what we would have done.

NATHAN

You'd have taken Ascension's offer?

Josia seemed disturbed by the question...

JOSIA

I don't want to think about that.

MANDISA

We would have done whatever it takes to  
keep you here with us. They made the  
right choice.

Mandisa looks at Josia. She knows he couldn't make that call. She knows he wouldn't sell his son's life away, even to save it. But Josia remains silent, pondering the choice.

JOSIA

Let's just be thankful for what we have  
Nathan. We are all very blessed that  
you were not on that bridge...

Nathan seems unsatisfied in his father's response. We see that he is pushing the sloppy rations on his plate. Contemplating their destitute situation. The lack of control they seem to have living lives of poverty on the ground.

NATHAN

If it was up to me...I'd want to live.

The scene slowly fades to the next shot.

**EXT. GROUND FLOOR - MORNING**

The camera focuses on Nathan walking with determination towards the lift. He doesn't stop at Sarah's house, only looking at the house for only a moment. The camera stops but he continues. We turn to see him walking to the lift until a car rounds a bend onto the street in the distance. His small figure stops in the road.

We cut in close to see his back and the car nearing. His feet and body hesitantly turn towards the lane with the oncoming car. We see the look of determination on his face. He seems prepared to inflict self mutilation. He looks down at the street and up at the car. His jaw clenches as he grits his teeth, trying to force the action it will take to jump in front of the vehicle.

There are only seconds left to make the decision. Rather than jump, something in the back of Nathan's mind forces him to look back at Sarah's home. We tighten in on the house and then on Nathan's eyes, and finally his clenched fist.

He sighs...and turns to watch the car pass him by. He looks ashamed, upset that he couldn't sacrifice himself to be with her, to share her pain. Letting out another sigh he continues his walk to the lift.

We return to familiar shots that are interwoven. Nathan looks at the metal side of the lift, this time without Sarah's reflection.

He looks at Sarah's spot in the classroom. As everyone else pledges allegiance his mouth is shut.

Nathan looks at the sliding door later that day, waiting for it to slide open and for Sarah to walk through it.

**EXT. GROUND FLOOR - DAY**

Nathan stands in front of the Sarah's house, searching it for activity.

We hear and then cut to-

**INT. SCHOOL HALL**

DALLEN

Hey Nathan...wait...

NATHAN

Bug off...

DALLEN

I'm not messing with you. Wait.

NATHAN

What?

DALLEN

You need to be careful of her. Sarah's not like us.

NATHAN

Good.

DALLEN

No, I mean...I've heard some bad stuff about Ascension. I used to have a friend that became a part of that...cult. They're loony and crazy and...they're just not the same.

NATHAN

And you're so normal?

DALLEN

You shouldn't trust her...

NATHAN

I don't believe you.

DALLEN

Yea, look...I'm sorry for what I did.

NATHAN

Bug off!

Nathan turns and leaves Dallen behind. Dallen for the first time seems to truly have Nathan's interests in mind.

SEQUENCE FLASHING FORWARD

We see a sequence of quick shots: Nathan goes to and from school without Sarah in his life. Looking for her in the windows of her home, in the reflections on the metal lift, in the classroom doorway. We see the flashing red school screen as he fails test after test. His frustration turns to complacency. We see him smash the computer desk and storm out of the classroom. We see him join his father on a walk to the mines.

We see a dim corridor of the mines full of laborers and droids. We see him wielding a futuristic mechanism, the mining claw used for dissolving large boulders. He is walks home with his father covered in the smut of the mines.

**HATCHING A PLAN**

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

Nathan is visibly older. Now in his early twenties, he sits at a bar with fellow miners. They seem wrapped up in the glee of drunkenness as he sits watching a political news story on Ascension, which is gaining clout with leaders of the United Earth. Nathan eventually snaps out of the trance and joins his fellow miners in a shot of some harsh alcoholic drink. Sounds from the bar scene begin to fade in as they take the shot. We hear the clinking of glass and the young men clearing their throats from the harsh drink.

SOLOMSI (YOUNG MINER)

Nathan, what's on your mind?

NATHAN

It's nothing...

BAYANDA (YOUNG MINER)

You're already drunk-

NATHAN (LAUGHING IT OFF)

No, just thinking about someone.

SOLOMSI

Ooh, Nathan's got someone on his mind...

NATHAN

Shut up Solomsi...it's just...this girl, Sarah, we were in school together. She's with Ascension.

BAYANDA

You're in love with a glitch.

NATHAN

She's not a glitch.

SOLOMSI

She's enhanced...

NATHAN

It's not her fault. There was an accident. She almost died.

BAYANDA

Sorry man.

Nathan sighs and looks back at the screen to see the news.

The news report shows several Ascension representatives meeting with the president of South Africa and his staff. Someone in the crowd on screen catches Nathan's attention.

NATHAN

There's the lady that did it! Sativa. She was the one who convinced Sarah's parents to go through with it...to give her up to that cult.

SOLOMSI

That's messed up. Taking advantage of the sick. They think they're better than us. But they're evil.

BAYANDA

They're no better than us...

SOLOMSI

Soulless bastards.

NATHAN

Sarah's not like that. She never wanted the enhancements.

BAYANDA

It changes you.



NATHAN

Yea...

Nathan hangs his head, looking into his glass.

NATHAN

Do you think they can change back?

SOLOMSI

I don't know...

BAYANDA

I don't think anyone has ever tried.  
Once it starts, it's like they just  
keep going deeper and deeper until  
there's nothing left...they're no  
different from a drone.

NATHAN

There's got to be a way.

SOLOMSI

And if there was, then what?

NATHAN

I don't know, I've got to try to break  
her out.

BAYANDA

Good luck with that, the initiates live  
up on the seventh level.

NATHAN

How do you know that?

Bayanda looks at Solomsi who seems hesitant for a moment and then decides to let Nathan in on their secret.

SOLOMSI

Can you keep a secret?

NATHAN

Sure.

SOLOMSI

You can't go blabbing to the  
authorities...this is serious shit.

NATHAN

I'm talking about breaking someone out  
of Ascension...that's not serious?

Solomsi looks at Bayanda again. Bayanda pays for the drinks by swiping his ID over a register device at the bar.

SOLOMSI

We can't talk about it here...

**INT. SOLOMSI'S HOME - NIGHT**

The door slides open and Solomsi walks in, followed by Nathan and Bayanda. The lights come on, revealing a humble, seemingly normal home, much like the Durand household. They follow Solomsi through the main room towards the back of the house where Solomsi kneels down by a large rug on the floor of the living room. He looks up at Nathan.

SOLOMSI

You can't tell anyone.

Nathan looks curiously at Solomsi, then Bayanda, and back to Solomsi.

NATHAN

OK...

Solomsi pulls up the rug to reveal a hidden door to a basement level.

**INT. BASEMENT**

Bayanda and Nathan follow Solomsi down a rickety staircase into the dark basement. Solomsi flips a switch and the rudimentary lights flicker on. Nathan's eyes widen as he looks past the camera into the room. The shot changes to reveal what he has seen. The room is full of weapons. There are large maps of the city floors with key points circled and labeled in red.

NATHAN

Wow...what is this?

SOLOMSI

Our base of operations...

NATHAN

What?

BAYANDA

We're rebels Nathan.

NATHAN

I...I shouldn't have come here.

Solomsi grabs Nathan's shoulder.

SOLOMSI

We can help you.

BAYANDA

Don't you want to save Sarah?

NATHAN

Yes...but.

SOLOMSI

Then you have to fight. The post humans treat us like dirt, they stole this country from our fathers, they stole Sarah from you...

NATHAN

I'm not a terrorist.

SOLOMSI

They call us that because we fight for freedom. Whose side are you on?

BAYANDA

This is war Nathan...if we don't fight back...they win.

Nathan nods, contemplating his situation.

NATHAN

You've been to the upper levels?

BAYANDA (SMILING)

We have our ways.

SOLOMSI

I can hack the elevation platforms to take us to the seventh level. We'll have to go at night when no one is expecting us.

Solomsi walks to the table and shuffles his large maps until he finds the one he's looking for. He places his finger on one of the red circles.

SOLOMSI

Here's where they're keeping your girl.  
Platform T34 will take us to the living  
quarters. You break in...get the  
girl...and get out. I'll see if I can  
find the room where they keep her.  
Then you two will have to get the hell  
out of South Africa.

NATHAN

I've got a hover scooter, we could head  
for the border, hide out in Mozambique.

BAYANDA

That could work, our brothers could  
meet you at the border. We have a  
stronghold on the coast, they will take  
you there. We are at war Nathan. Our  
people don't know, but there are  
rebels, like us, fighting for  
independence all over the world.

SOLOMSI

It will be dangerous, the border is  
hostile, and they won't let you take  
Sarah without a fight. You'll need a  
weapon.

NATHAN

I've never fired a rifle-

BAYANDA

Huh...right...

SOLOMSI

How about the mining claw?

They call it a claw because of its appearance. It is a tool that is  
worn like a glove. We saw Nathan use it earlier to dissolve a  
boulder.

NATHAN

That thing has a security beacon.

SOLOMSI (SMILING)

I can fix that...

BAYANDA

You're pretty good with that thing eh  
Nathan?

NATHAN

Yea...I can't imagine what it would do  
to a person.

BAYANDA

It would tear them to pieces...

SOLOMSI

You can use it to break into the tower.  
I'll hack the security box on your claw  
tomorrow, meet you in the bend on the  
eastern tunnel. After they signal us  
to finish for the day, I'll turn off  
the signal, and you can sneak it out in  
your backpack.

NATHAN

They'll know something is up when it  
goes missing.

BAYANDA

They'll find out eventually...when  
you're gone.

NATHAN

There's no coming back.

SOLOMSI

Right...

The group contemplates this for a moment.

NATHAN

Right.

The following scenes are void of dialog, with only music and faint rumblings from the mining tunnels heightening the tense anticipation:

**INT. MINING TUNNEL - DAY**

Nathan uses his mining claw to cut away at the rock wall. A nearly invisible beam eats away at the wall, eroding and dissolving the minerals and revealing metal bits beneath the surface. The metal pieces hang in suspended animation while the dirt and rock falls the ground. Bayanda operates another machine, which is like a large suction device with magnetic force. He uses it to draw the metal pieces inside of the machine's canister.

Green lights begin to flash, indicating that it's time for their shift to end. Nathan looks at Bayanda who nods. Other workers begin filing past them. Solomsi appears from the crowd, joining Nathan and Bayanda. They quietly acknowledge Solomsi and look around as the last workers trudge past them. The tunnel clears. Nathan un-arms the mining claw and Solomsi goes to work on the claw with a multitool, removing a panel and eventually unplugging the security device from inside. Nathan and Bayanda look around to make sure that no one is in the area.

**INT. TUNNEL EXIT - DAY**

We follow the three young men out of the mining tunnels. They join a line of workers exiting the cave. Nathan looks hesitant as he looks back at Solomsi. Solomsi fastens Nathan's backpack shut to ensure that the claw doesn't fall out. As they near the exit we can see that there is a mechanical archway that seems to be scanning the workers as they exit the tunnel. We can see that Nathan is nervous as he steps through. He seems relieved when no alarm is sounded. The men subtly congratulate each other for their success as they walk away from the mine entrance.

Normal sound returns in the following scene.

FADE TO-

**EXT. ELEVATION PLATFORM GROUND FLOOR - NIGHT**

Solomsi is tinkering with the control panel where people board the elevation platform. A red light emanates from within the control panel. We see that Nathan, Solomsi, and Bayanda are each wearing hooded clothing to conceal their physical appearance. They stand waiting for Solomsi to finish his work.

BAYANDA

Come on man.

NATHAN

Does it usually take this long?

As we zoom out we see that the ground level is mostly empty at this time of night.

SOLOMSI

This is the first time I've tried this.

NATHAN

You've got to be kidding me.

BAYANDA

Take it easy. He'll get it. Right Solomsi?

We wait for a beat. Solomsi grunts.

BAYANDA

Right?

Suddenly we hear the elevation platform begin its descent to the ground floor from above.

SOLOMSI

Booya!

The elevation platform reaches the ground level.

NATHAN



Here we go...

They step onto the platform and it begins to rise. We zoom in to see the nervous group as they near the second level. They crouch down so as not to be seen by those crossing the bridges above. Nathan looks down in contemplation, examining his hand that wields the mining claw. The group is quiet, but we can hear the anticipation in their heavy breathing as they ascend higher into the towering cityscape.

The higher they ascend, the more active the city appears. Post-humans shuffle to and fro across suspended bridges and shuttles soar from tower to tower. The city is also brighter as they ascend with many colorful advertisement displays. Nathan notices one display promoting Ascension and another promoting the government's efforts to stop the terrorist acts of the rebels.

SOLOMSI

This is it.

The platform slows to a halt. The group rises and Nathan looks over the edge. We can see that we are much higher than seven stories, the levels of the city are separated by many stories. The ground level appears only as a black void in contrast with the bright lights from the levels in between. There are no post-humans in sight on the seventh level. It is void of advertising. Solomsi points at a nearby tower.

SOLOMSI

That's where the initiates live.

Nathan seems flustered.

NATHAN

I've never been past the second level.

BAYANDA

Do you still want to do this?

Nathan pauses for a beat.

NATHAN

Yea.

SOLOMSI

We'll be right here, waiting for you.

Nathan nods, turns to slowly approach the edge of the platform, and begins walking towards the tower.

**INT. ASCENSION TOWER - NIGHT**

We face inside of a wall that suddenly begins to dissolve, revealing Nathan wielding the mining claw on the other side. The wall crumbles into a pile of dust on the ground. When the hole is large enough Nathan drops his claw wielding hand and steps through, examining the interior.

We switch to Nathan's perspective as he walks into the chamber. He observes various intricate designs on the interior of the building as he walks through it. Nathan passes illuminated light "murals" depicting the ascension to immortality. Nathan reaches an interior chamber where we see roughly twenty translucent pods with the post-human initiates resting within like ancient Egyptians within futuristic sarcophagi. Nathan passes by, scrutinizing the people within, looking for Sarah. We can see that there are many silver attachments around their heads that resemble some sort of crown.

Nathan turns to scan the others and his eyes suddenly stop on one.

NATHAN

Sarah.

Nathan runs to a pod in the chamber across from him. As he approaches, Sarah looks angelic as she sleeps in the pod. Nathan puts his hand on the translucent surface and peers in at his friend. His weathered face contrasts with her pure skin. He looks down at the claw and lifts it to the sealed panel of Sarah's pod. The surface of the pod begins to deteriorate. Once the seal is broken Nathan slides the lid open with his other hand. We hear the sound of the vacuum pressure releasing as the pod door opens. Sarah's eyes light up behind her lids and seem to move beneath the skin. Before she opens her eyes, she speaks.

SARAH (CONFUSED)

Nathan?

NATHAN

Yes...I'm here Sarah. I'm getting you out of here.

Sarah's eyes open wide, revealing their pearly, blue light.

SARAH

How? How did you-

NATHAN

Never mind that, we have to go, now.

Nathan turns and beckons for Sarah to come with him.

SARAH

They'll come after us Nathan...there's no way.

NATHAN

I have a plan, come with me.

Sarah steps forward out of the pod...the metal attachments retreat back into the pod as she does so. Suddenly a high pitch hum fills the chamber alerting the authorities of Sarah's escape. Nathan grabs Sarah's hand and pulls her along towards the opening in the wall.

NATHAN

Let's go!

We follow the couple as they hurry through the tower to the gap in the wall. A security drone approaches as they reach the hole.

SECURITY DRONE

Halt intruder! Lethal force will be initiate-

Nathan reaches out with his mining claw, using the gravitational force with which he wielded the rock fragments to grab the drone. He throws the drone into a nearby wall, disabling it. Sarah is shocked, but Nathan isn't fazed, he pulls her through the opening onto the bridge as she looks back at the destroyed drone. Bayanda and Solomsi beckoned for the two to join them on the lift before more security drones reach them, approaching from across the bridge.

Sarah joins them on the lift while Nathan stands at the edge of the bridge.

BAYANDA

Nathan! There's no time!

Nathan reaches out with the mining claw and suddenly a large chunk of the bridge begins to dissolve in front of approaching security drones. The bridge begins to wain, trembling as it loses stability. The sound of the bending bridge is loud and the drones slide and fall into the opening. The ground where Nathan stands begins to tremble.

SARAH

Nathan!

SOLOMSI

We have to go, now!

Nathan turns and dives on to the platform which has begun its descent. We see the bridge above them crumble as it gives way above them. Dust floats through the air.

BAYANDA

Shit. That was a close one.

The men timidly laugh as they descend in the lift, breathing heavily. Bayanda and Solomsi slouch and sit on the platform floor. Nathan looks towards Sarah who is still in shock at what just happened.

NATHAN

We're going to be OK.

Nathan smiles assuredly. He then spots a flying drone scanning the area for the culprits.

NATHAN

Get down!

Nathan pulls Sarah down to the platform surface to keep her from being spotted by the drone. Its lights scan over the platform and away.

NATHAN

We leave Pretoria...head for  
Mozambique, they wont find us there.

SARAH

Oh Nathan...I wish you were right.

Nathan looks unsatisfied by Sarah's reply he grips her hand tightly.

NATHAN

Trust me.

Nathan looks longingly into Sarah's robotic eyes, his open hand reaches out to hold the side of her face. When his hand reaches her face...we suddenly cut to-

#### **INT. PRISON CELL**

Nathan screams and slams his fists into the clear cell door, eventually relenting, taking a break from his futile outburst to catch his breath.

The following sequence cuts between Nathan in prison and Nathan and Sarah's attempt to flee South Africa on a hover bike. Their dialog plays throughout both interwoven sequences.

SARAH

They'll track me Nathan. I can't hide  
from Ascension.

NATHAN

We have to try. If we make it to  
Mozambique, the rebels will hide us.

Sarah doesn't respond.

NATHAN

I thought about you every day since  
they took you. I missed you...

SARAH

I missed you too.

NATHAN

What's it like up there? What's the initiation?

SARAH

It's hard to explain...

NATHAN

You don't think I can understand?

SARAH

No, it's just...we have to meditate, for hours...opening our minds to...the ascended consciousness. It's like a network. It's like the thoughts and feelings of thousands of people, all at once, pouring into your brain.

NATHAN

That must be terrible. How do you handle it?

SARAH

It's draining. That's why we have to rest. We spend all day trying to make sense of the world, searching for the answers...the meaning...and it keeps asking.

NATHAN

What is it?

SARAH

The Singularity, I'm not sure what...or who it is. But it speaks to us.

NATHAN

Can you hear it now?

SARAH

I'm trying not to. I'm trying to fight it...block it.

NATHAN

What does it ask you?

SARAH

I don't know.

NATHAN

What do you mean?

SARAH

It's hard to describe, it's like a longing, a desire...like..."Where?" like the question "Where?" just..."Where?" Like it's searching for something but-

NATHAN

What?

SARAH

I don't know.

Sarah begins to sob.

NATHAN

Are you alright?

SARAH

I don't know! I don't want to know!

NATHAN

It's OK. You're going to be OK. I'm here for you.

SARAH

The other post humans, they don't know about the plan. All they care about is not dying.

NATHAN

What plan?

SARAH

Integration is just the beginning...It wants complete control Nathan. I can feel it, pulling us in. I can feel myself fading away, becoming a part of it.

NATHAN

I won't let that happen.

SARAH

Nathan...the world leaders know. Emmanuel Shaefer is one of us.

NATHAN

Part of Ascension?

SARAH



Yes, he is a very powerful member. He is part of it's plan. The alliance, the integration, the war, it was all a part of the plan.

NATHAN

What about the rebels? My friends, the ones who helped us escape, they said a lot of the humans...rebels all over, are fighting for independence. It's gotten so much worse at the bottom Sarah...they treat us like dirt.

SARAH

Sativa talks about a parasite. The Ascended Ones believe that the collective must be cured of it before they can rise.

NATHAN

We have to warn others. The rebels need you, you can tell them about the plans.

SARAH

What if it's too late?

NATHAN

We can't think like that. Sarah, do you remember that day that I failed the test...when Dallan mocked me? You called him a glitch. I wanted the enhancements and you helped me see that wasn't the answer. It was hard for me to accept, but you were right. Do you remember?

SARAH

Yes, it feels like another life...I remember.

NATHAN

I'm sorry that I didn't stop your parents from going through with this. I just stood by and let it happen...but we're going to fix this. There has to be a way to turn you back.

SARAH

I hope that you're right.

Sarah pauses for a few beats.

SARAH

That day when you came to my room, when I first had the enhancements...I felt myself, my soul, slipping, but I'm holding on, I'll hold on as long as I can. I love you Nathan.

We see Nathan in the holding cell, the cafeteria, etc. He seems distant and distracted by his memory of their escape attempt. The prison "guards" are all security drones. Nathan is at a table in the cafeteria He watches as a security drone passes his table, seemingly scanning the inmates to ensure that everyone is behaving. Once the drone passes, Nathan's attention shifts to his fellow inmates who begin to whisper after the drone goes by.

BAYANDA

What was it like in Mozambique?

NATHAN

The rebels didn't trust us. They were afraid of Sarah.

SOLOMSI

What did you tell them?

NATHAN

I told them about the accident, how Sarah was enhanced...that it wasn't her choice. She told them about the initiation process and about Ascension's plans to wipe us out.

**EXT. REBEL OUTPOST - NIGHT**

REBEL SOLDIER

They will come for you. They are tracking her as we speak. We can't risk sheltering a post human.

NATHAN

There must be another way. Have you got a surgeon? Someone who can remove the-

REBEL SOLDIER

It's too risky.

NATHAN

Couldn't we disable the connection, or disrupt it in some way?

REBEL SOLDIER

We're fighters, not miracle workers...I'm sorry. You can stay, but she must leave.

Nathan shakes his head and turns to Sarah, who is contemplating the situation.

NATHAN

He won't listen...let's go, we'll head to the coast.

SARAH

Nathan, they're coming, you should stay here, I'm afraid of what they'll do to you if-

NATHAN

No, we can't give up. We'll head for the coast, we just have to keep moving.

SARAH

But the probability...I just don't-

NATHAN

You can calculate, and reason, and...

Nathan gets on the hover bike and beckons for Sarah.

NATHAN

I know...I must seem so illogical, so stupid...but it's not over, there's still a chance.

SARAH

Hope.

Sarah joins Nathan on the bike.

SARAH

If anything happens...I want you to know...I want you to remember that since the day they took me, to this very moment, you are my hope.

We see Nathan standing near the clear prison cell door looking out. We see that he is staring at one of the soulless drones that monitors the cells. While we focus in on the droid we close in on its robotic lens.

SARAH

I can feel it Nathan...the Singularity is afraid.

NATHAN

Afraid of what?

SARAH

The small chances, the hopeful... the  
stubborn...resistance.

FADE TO-

**EXT. PRISON TOWER - MORNING**

Nathan's parents, along with Okuosa, seem excited and nervous as they wait in front of the prison entrance. The front door slides open and Nathan is escorted out of the building by two security drones. Nathan is visibly older (a few years have passed). They greet him with hugs as the drones release him.

**INT. DURAND FAMILY ROOM - MORNING**

The news headline reads "Government to Cover Basic Enhancements in June" the camera zooms out to reveal the Durand family room.

Nathan stops in the middle of strapping on his work boots.

NATHAN

Dad, can you turn that up?

His father sighs and turns up the news feed.

NEWS ANCHOR

Political analysts are predicting that  
this legislation will pass by week's  
end.

JOSIA

Hmm...we haven't heard that before.

NATHAN

They're lying...

JOSIA

Getting people's hopes up.

MANDISA

I hope they read the fine print before-

An alert suddenly appears on screen followed by a loud high pitch tone from the speakers. The family halts and listens.

Nathan watches the news of a record solar storm with his parents. His face grows worried. His parents seem to be perplexed.

NEWS REPORTER (EMOTIONLESS)

A sudden increase in solar flare activity has caused power outages in most of the western hemisphere. Many people have been disconnected. According to the emergency agency, South African power grids will be hit in approximately three hours. The emergency agency has confirmed that protecting people with robotic enhancements will be a priority and a plan is in effect to ensure the safety of all integrated individuals. This a code 592960231138, repeat initiate code 592960231138.

Now Nathan is clearly worried. The reporter's voice repeats the code and a mechanical buzz begins to pulse in the background of the broadcast. Nathan's phone also buzzes.

It's a message from Sarah that reads: I HAVE TO LEAVE

Nathan texts back: WHERE?

Nathan quickly stands up.

MANDISA

Nathan...honey?

NATHAN

I have to go.

Nathan grabs his stuff and runs for the door.

JOSIA

Son! Where are you-

NATHAN

Sarah-

He holds up his phone.

NATHAN

They're taking her.

MANDISA

Nathan!

NATHAN

I have to go.

MANDISA

Please be careful!

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Nathan bursts out of his family's house, and runs into the street, narrowly avoiding a car. The street is busy with cars and people. We switch perspectives to the driver of the car who is screaming at Nathan. We can hear his radio along with the sounds of the frantic people outside of the car.

RADIO HOST

Well this is just wild, our usual host Craig Spritz is not here today, due to the solar flares he had to leave. Can you believe it, all the integrated people are evacuating South Africa. With no time to say goodbye, hundreds are being shipped off to God knows where. The emergency agency has not disclosed where or how they will protect these individuals. An emergency evacuation is in effect, all flights scheduled for today have been canceled and reassigned for the

emergency evacuation. Airport  
officials are advising non-integrated  
citizens to follow local emergency  
protocol. Please stay indoors-

We switch back to following Nathan, who is running to Okuosa's home. Traffic is beginning to jam, with people in the streets. It is chaotic because now most of Pretoria knows that the entire power grid will go down in a few hours.

Nathan runs to the door and when he rings the bell it opens almost instantly.

OKUOSA

Oh Nathan!

Okuosa throws her arms around him. Nathan shakes her loose.

NATHAN

Where are they going?!

OKUOSA

I - I don't know. Nathan.

Nathan spins around swiftly on a mission to stop his friend. He searches the crowd, looking desperately for an answer. He looks up to see several shuttles flying away from the city. We hold the shot on him. As people rush in every direction Nathan stands motionless staring at the sky. We hear security drones in the distance.

DRONE

Do not panic. Do not panic. All non-  
integrated citizens must take shelter.  
You are not permitted to evacuate the  
premises.

Nathan looks to see that the drones are attempting to block several cars, and the drivers are trying to get around them. Suddenly, flurries of plasma shots fly into the drones, disabling them. Nathan Turns to see Bayanda holding a rifle by the edge of the street.

NATHAN

Bayanda!



BAYANDA

Nathan, this is our city now! I'm going to break Solomsi out. Come with me-

NATHAN

I've got to get Sarah before they take her, do you know where they are going?

BAYANDA

Not sure, but if we get to Solomsi in time, maybe he can get you to the seventh level in time.

Nathan nods.

BAYANDA

I've got your claw!

Bayanda reaches back into his bag and grabs Nathan's mining claw. He tosses it to Nathan. Nathan nods and catches the claw. The two men rush across the street together, towards the prison.

**INT. PRISON ENTRANCE - DAY**

We see the plasma blasts and mining claw eat away at the edges of the doorway until it finally collapses, revealing Bayanda and Nathan on the other side. The two young men rush in, Bayanda and Nathan take down several security drones as they charge into the facility.

**INT. HOLDING CELL HALLWAY**

Nathan rips the cell door from Solomsi's holding cell with his mining claw while Bayanda guns down an incoming security drone.

SOLOMSI

What's going?

NATHAN

The post humans are evacuating. Something about a solar storm. It's going to wipe out the power.

BAYANDA

We'll be free, we need to message the brothers in Mozambique before the grid goes down.

Solomsi nods.

SOLOMSI

How much time do we have?

BAYANDA

A couple hours.

SOLOMOSI

OK, that should be enough time to get to my radio.

NATHAN

Wait, can you help me get to the seventh level again. I need to stop them from taking Sarah.

BAYANDA

We need to focus on alerting the rebels.

NATHAN

Please.

SOLOMSI

OK, let's get to the lift, did you bring my jamming kit?

BAYANDA

Yea, here, it's in my bag.

SOLOMSI

Good, let's go. We can't go up with you.

NATHAN

Thank you, we have to hurry.

The group rushes out of the prison.

**INT. ELEVATED LIFT - DAY**

Solomsi works on hacking the control panel on the lift while Nathan and Bayanda fend off security drones. The ground floor is still chaotic. Nathan messages Sarah, who hasn't responded to his previous message. He sends her another one word message: "Stall!" The lift suddenly initiates with Nathan on board.

SOLOMSI

Good luck.

NATHAN

You too.

BAYANDA

Let's go.

Solomsi and Bayanda hurry to send an outgoing message to the rebels in Mozambique before the power grid goes down. We see them shrink in size from Nathan's perspective as the lift rises. Nathan's perspective shifts to the shuttles overhead, taking the post humans away from the city. As he passes the levels going up to the seventh level we see a few groups of straggler post-humans hurrying to the shuttle port. The upper levels are almost completely empty now. Nathan stares at his phone, Sarah still hasn't replied. He sighs in frustration, he worries that she is already gone.

NATHAN (TO HIMSELF)

Please don't leave. Please, please be here.

The lift finally arrives at the seventh level, revealing the Ascension initiates boarding a shuttle that hovers by the bridge. Sativa is struggling with Sarah, who is resisting her commands to board the shuttle.

NATHAN

Sarah!

Sarah turns to see Nathan while Sativa grabs her arm.

SATIVA

Take her!

Sativa pushes Sarah towards two Ascension followers who grab Sarah and force her towards the shuttle's open hatch.

SARAH

No, please, wait!

NATHAN

Let her go!

SATIVA

You! I know you! You stubborn boy!  
Wretched infidel! Parasite! You would  
have Sarah die! You ignorant fool.  
She cannot stay.

Sativa approaches Nathan, staring him down with glowing eyes. Nathan's face fills with anger at the onslaught of insults, he raises his mining claw, pointing it at Sativa. Her skin begins to dissolve partially revealing her fully robotic interior.

SARAH

Nathan don't!

Sarah breaks away from the two Ascension followers and tries to stop him.

SATIVA

Fool!

Sativa points at the claw and it disengages, visibly shutting down. Nathan looks at the claw confused and then back at Sativa. He is now afraid, because Sativa gestures towards the lift's control panel.

SARAH

No!

SATIVA

Be gone!

Nathan sees that the panel lights flicker and then realizes the lift is about to drop. He tries to get on the bridge but Sativa swings at him with her robotic arm, throwing him back against the far edge of the lift. She stands towering on the edge of the bridge as Nathan begins to fall with the lift, slowly at first. His body, weakened by the blow, lies against the far edge of the lift.

He looks up to see Sativa towering at the edge of the bridge and Sarah screaming and reaching in a futile attempt towards Nathan as the lift falls. The lift speeds up as it goes into free fall the vision becomes a blur from Nathan's perspective. We see his hand reach up. We hear the sound of the lift flying to the ground. The shot surrounding Nathan's hand is now intensely blurry. Suddenly the lift crashes into the ground. Nathan screams. We see that he is fading in and out of consciousness as his head turns to see the chaos on the ground floor through a blurred vision that pulses in and out.

FADE TO BLACK

#### **THE FINAL MOMENTS IN MOZAMBIQUE**

##### **EXT. MOZAMBIQUE COAST - MORNING**

We hear the sounds of the birds and see the beauty of lush green brush in the foreground. There are sand dunes and the Indian ocean in the distance. Nathan and Sarah fly into the shot, away towards the beach on Nathan's hover bike.

We switch perspectives to follow beside the couple, Sarah holds Nathan tight, she leans in to whisper something into his ear.

We switch perspectives again to the beach where the Nathan slows down; the hover bike kicks up clouds of sand as they approach the untouched coast. They slow to a stop and begin to get off of the bike. We hear the sounds of nature alone.

We switch between close ups of the couple on the beach and wide shots of their small bodies surrounded by the untouched nature.

Sarah lies back with her eyes shut, for a moment she looks entirely human. Nathan sits by her, looking down at her face as though he wants to remember this moment forever.

We see Nathan look back towards the sky. His eyes squint to make out the flying crafts that approach them. Just over the horizon we begin to make out the little black dots.

We see several sudden flashes of Nathan fighting off post humans who approach them. Nathan reaches up with his mining claw as they aim their rifles at him, but Sarah pleads with him to stand down. There is a flash of them being restrained by the soldiers, a flash of them being forced onto the shuttle, a flash of a bag going over Nathan's head from his perspective. The shot goes black.

#### **AFTER THE FLARES**

#### **EXT. WRECKED CITY - DAY**

FADE IN on Nathan's sun scorched fingers poking out of frayed fingerless gloves as they slowly release a metal cord. Looking down from the upper stories we see that Nathan is using a makeshift pulley system to lower the metal platform on which he stands. The platform is loaded with looted supplies.

The city is in bad shape. This is a few years after the initial solar storm.

When the pulley platform hits the bottom level we shift perspectives with a loud thud.

We see dust rise from the platform as it lands on the bottom level. The street is full of wreckage, and the only visible people are near death and struggling to survive the heat. Most people are wrapped head to toe in ragged cloth.

Nathan picks up his load of looted gear and steps off of the platform to head home. One man seems to be drawn to him. The old man enters the shot walking beside Douglass.

OLD MAN

Young man...wait, please!

NATHAN

Here, I don't have much

Nathan hands the man a half full bottle of clear water.

OLD MAN

That's very kind but I'd rather die  
than take water from you, I'm looking  
for an old friend, Davis is his name,  
Herman Davis.

NATHAN

You must be one of his rebel buddies...

OLD MAN

So you know him?

NATHAN

That old rebel never shuts up about the  
"damned alliance." Claims the  
resistance is alive and well, but he's  
coughing up blood- this is for him.

Douglass points to a bottle of pills strapped to his backpack.

OLD MAN

He's right, the resistance lives-

The old man begins to cough.

NATHAN

Whatever...follow me, the shelter is  
this way...but please, spare me the  
lecture. I get enough from Herman as  
it is.

OLD MAN

As you like it...I can't believe that  
son of a bitch survived-

The old man continues coughing, holding a rag to his mouth for the  
rest of the walk. Nathan turns to look at a house off camera.

Nathan sees Sarah's old house, the garden dome is cracked and the ground it surrounds is barren.

He looks ahead reluctantly, it is clear that she is not far from his thoughts.

**INT. - DOUGLASS FAMILY HOME**

The inside of the Douglass family home has been converted to a makeshift nursing home, roughly eight people lay in cots awaiting the much needed supplies. The shot lands on the front door.

The front door slides open, and Douglass is welcomed by the bedridden. Many people have deteriorated quickly because of the diminishing conditions of the city and atmosphere. Included among the bedridden are Douglass' parents, Okuosa, and Herman Davis. Some ask about the visitor.

HERMAN DAVIS

My God! Jacob! Is that you?

THE OLD MAN

Herman!

The old man, who we now know as Jacob, walks to Herman's bedside.

Nathan goes from one bedridden person to another, pulling bottles of water, pills, and ointments from his bag. Each person thanks him for his help, some in grunts and some in clearer words as he gives them each the much needed supplies. In a soft voice Nathan's mom beckons him.

MANDISA

Son...did you find something for your father's heart, it's beating so slow today.

NATHAN

Yes mother, these are supposed to clear the arteries, found them up on level 4-

MANDISA

Oh dear so high up-



NATHAN

I don't know why anyone up there would need them.

JOSIA (RASPY)

Don't suppose you found me a robot-heart while you were up there?

He wheezes though a spurt of coughs.

NATHAN (LIGHTHEARTEDLY)

Nope, they decided to take that with them...

During the following actions we begin to hear more of Jacob's conversation with Herman nearby. Nathan hands his mother some pills for his father. She weakly tries and fails to open it, handing it to Nathan with a look of hopelessness. Nathan snaps it open and hands her the bottle. His mother appears grateful and then turns to set a pill gently in her husband's mouth. She pours some water from a bottle for her husband to wash the pill down. Nathan's father struggles but eventually swallows the mouthful.

HERMAN

I thought you'd all died in France...or worse. When communications dropped-

JACOB

Some escaped, but they captured a lot of good men: Samuel, William, Even Damon.

HERMAN

Damon would kill himself before he'd join their side.

JACOB

Damon knows nothing of the rebellion anymore. They put him under and drilled his brain.

Suddenly Nathan is very interested in what Jacob has to say.

NATHAN

What about the others?

JACOB

The UE Alliance built a haven in Egypt.

NATHAN

What? We didn't have three hours notice  
before the flares knocked our power  
out, how could they-

Jacob turns to face Nathan.

JACOB

They were ready before the storm...

NATHAN

How could they have known? They didn't  
warn anyone.

JACOB

They don't think like we do son, they  
only see...calculations. They knew it  
was coming.

NATHAN

So the shuttles were heading-

JACOB

To Egypt, some made it there.

Jacob is starting to get choked up.

JACOB

A lot a good people died trying to get to the haven.

NATHAN

What about the enhanced? My friend Sarah was integrated before the storm.

JACOB

She may have made it, it's a long shot.

Nathan looks like he is contemplating the idea that Sarah could be dead.

HERMAN

So what are the others doing? I feel it's hopeless to even ask... but is there a plan?

JACOB

The resistance was crushed in France. Some escaped to Morocco. I got out with Zaid and his men. We met up with the other survivors and started a plan to regroup. In hindsight it wasn't so bad, there was a period where all of the drones cleared out and a lot of people joined us. I tell you it was chaos when the alliance just up and left, but we were glad to see them go.

The others nod in agreement.

JACOB

There were a lot of people killing and looting. But we had to make a safe place, a base for rebels and the like. We met a man in Morocco who laid out the plans to build a barrier from the elements. We aren't just waiting this whole thing out though, Zaid still wants to get back at those elitist Alliance bastards.

HERMAN

A protective barrier? So this safe place is like a rebel city? I can't imagine. Our little outpost in Mozambique was falling apart. The South African exodus was a blessing in disguise.

JACOB

I was there, it's incredible.

The entire room full of weak and dying people is focusing on Jacob (realizing he speaks of a new hope). Nathan looks intrigued by the good news.

HERMAN

You were safe. Why leave? Why come here?

JACOB

Zaid sent me-

Jacob lets out an agonizing cough.

JACOB

Sent me here to spread the word. To recruit some soldiers. But-

Again Jacob coughs.

-it's not really a city  
Herman...there's not many buildings,  
nothing fancy like Pretoria. When we  
retreated back to Niger, this man...a  
scientist, he worked his magic and  
blocked out the radiation. The best  
part is...there's clean air, water,  
plants, and animals.

HERMAN

What? How the hell?

JACOB

This scientist, Winhelm designed the protective barrier when he was working for the Alliance. He fled from Germany. He was one of the few human scientists left in the UE Alliance. Their mistake was letting Winhelm find out too much about what they were planning. When he realized that they knew the catastrophe was coming and were doing nothing to stop it...he fled and with his blueprints for a machine, one that can generate an artificial atmosphere. It deflects the radiation, keeps the good air from leaking out...we call it "The Garden."

HERMAN

Clean air? Are there clouds, everything like we had before?

JACOB

Better than we had before...oh there's clouds. There's rain. It's beautiful. It can keep the drones out too, at least that's what he says.

Everyone is now attentive to what Jacob is saying.

FADE OUT

Nathan tucks his father into bed. He takes off his dirty sandals and lays his head softly on the pillow. He looks to the corner of the room where Jacob continues to ramble on with Herman under the glow of a single warm light by the bed. They are like middle school students exchanging ghost stories. They talk under their breath, and the loudest statement is a wheezy clearing of the throat by Jacob. It seems to rattle a few others awake. Jacob's visit is welcome, but Nathan's mind is still full of questions.

NATHAN

How'd that old geezer make it here alive?

We slowly close in on Jacob. The scene fades.

**INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING**

Nathan helps his feeble mother feed the group. Placing bowls of soup in front of the elderly people. He returns again with a bowl for Okuosa and himself and afterwards sits between Okuosa and Jacob. Okuosa smiles at Nathan. She is quietly thankful, gently rubbing his shoulder as he takes a seat. He returns the smile and begins to eat his breakfast. Jacob is sitting between Nathan and Herman lapping up his soup while conversing with Herman.

HERMAN

Antique microwaves?

JACOB

Believe it or not. They're designed to keep radiation in, but Winhelm said they're just as good at keeping it out. That's why they still work.

Jacob brandishes what appear to be high tech goggles.

JACOB

You log the way points in and...

HERMAN

Remember how we used to tease you for not knowing North from South.

JACOB (LAUGHING)

Yes, these helped me travel at night, saved me a lot of trouble... kept me and Tera from running into a ditch.

Nathan eyes the device. Jacob catches his glances.

JACOB

Here, take a closer look.

He casually hands them to Nathan who studies them intensely.

HERMAN

Go on boy, tell us what you see.

Nathan cautiously straps the goggles to his head.

NATHAN

I don't see anything...

Here, we hear a click and suddenly Nathan's vision is full of a light scanning the surfaces around him. Coordinates and other data sets fill the heads up display.

NATHAN

Whoa...

Nathan takes the goggles off and sets them on the table.

NATHAN

You're scientist friend made that?

Jacob nods.

NATHAN

...he's not enhanced?

JACOB

No, just smart...just really damn smart.

NATHAN

Do you think he could turn a post human back...remove the enhancements?

JACOB

I'm not sure...but if anyone can, it's Winhelm.

HERMAN

This Tera...where's she staying?

JACOB

I've got her tied up by the overpass.

HERMAN

What the hell? You've got to be  
joking-

JACOB

Tera's my horse.

NATHAN

You brought a horse?!

JACOB

How else would I have come all this  
way.

HERMAN

That's just about the strangest thing-

JACOB

Quite a resilient creature...

HERMAN

I haven't seen more than a beetle in  
years...you're telling me a horse  
survived?

JACOB

Winhelm helped us save quite a  
few...I'm telling you, it's a heck of  
place, the rebel camp...hard to leave  
behind. A genuine garden of  
Eden...wish I could make it back.



NATHAN

You're staying?

JACOB

I don't got a choice...look at me.

Nathan studied the aging man.

JACOB

I'm a rusty, old wreck. You'd be surprised how quick youth fades out in the wilderness...in the radiation.

Jacob lets out a wretched cough.

HERMAN

You were sent her to rally the troops eh? So much for that...

JACOB

You mean you're not ready to charge the front lines?

Jacob and Herman let out a hardy laugh.

HERMAN

I wish.

NATHAN

You're looking for a recruit?

The laughing dies down. Mandisa looks at her son. Nathan locks eyes and looks down ashamed that he could think leave his family behind.

JACOB

You think you're up for it?

HERMAN

Nathan is important to us.

NATHAN

We should all go.

JACOB (LAUGHING)

It isn't exactly a walk in the park  
getting there.

A quiet comes over the group until Josia, rising from his sick bed  
struggles to the table.

JOSIA

He's up for it.

Nathan looks to his father in surprise, and then to his mother.

MANDISA

You...deserve more than...this.

Mandisa gestures around the destitute home.

JACOB

I'm must say, I'm impressed Nathan.

HERMAN

If it weren't for the young man...we  
couldn't have coped.

There is a consensus in the room, everyone seems excited about  
Nathan's opportunity. It's his chance to escape the hell they live  
in, their chance to live on vicariously through him.

JACOB

What do you say? The resistance needs  
men like you. Humans fighting for  
humanity. People who aren't willing to  
submit, who don't give up and die while  
the world turns the shit.

Nathan thinks deeply, staring into the table, then to the goggles.

NATHAN

I might needs these.

Nathan picks up the goggles and looks at Jacob. The mood shifts to lightheartedness. There is laughter, Josiah pats him on the back and Mandisa runs over to give Nathan a hug.

JACOB

Yes...and that's not the only thing you'll need to make it there. I've got some other gadgets to show you when you're finished eating, and we'll need to scavenge for supplies. You can show me where you've been finding food and water for the group, I'll take care of that job when your gone. My med kit is running low too and we'll need to find some concentrated nutrients. There's a lot to do so hurry up with that soup.

Nathan nods and lifts the bowl to his mouth. This gets a chuckle out of several at the table.

JACOB

And I'm assuming you've never ridden a horse before...

NATHAN (DOUBTFUL)

Is it anything like a hover bike?

JACOB

No...we've got some work to do.

#### **PREPARING TO LEAVE**

#### **EXT. PRETORIA FIFTH LEVEL - MORNING**

Nathan heaves the rope on the pulley system system a few times and flips a lever that anchors their makeshift lift to a fifth floor platform.

NATHAN

This level is mostly untouched. The first few floors have been empty for months now. We've been working our way up, gathering everything we can find.

JACOB

Does anyone live up here?

NATHAN

It was full of post-humans before the flare storm. When they fled they left everything behind. We weren't allowed up this high before the storm.

JACOB

Those aristocratic bastards enjoy keeping us down...

Nathan nods, then walks through the entrance of one of the skyscrapers. They begin passing several sliding doors that have been pried open.

JACOB

Should we check in-

Nathan looks at the open room.

NATHAN

If it's open its empty.

Nathan reaches for a prying tool in his belt and begins working on a sliding door that's sealed shut.

JACOB

Here, let me give it a try.

NATHAN

That's OK.

JACOB

I insist.

Jacob takes the handles and gives it a few good heaves until the door is wide enough for them to slip through. As they walk in we can see that the room looks virtually untouched. It is full of pristine technology unlike the antique mechanisms at the ground floor.

JACOB

Damn, someone was living pretty...

We see that Nathan is quickly searching the room while Jacob slowly scans a shelf.

JACOB

What the-

Jacob lifts a jar from the shelf and holds it up to examine its contents.

JACOB

Heartless sentimental bastard.

We see that a human heart is floating in the fluid filled jar. Jacob places it back on the shelf after a quick shudder.

NATHAN

Supplements, cell cream, antibiotics...

JACOB

Good find.

Jacob opens his bag as Nathan tosses the loot inside.

NATHAN

Let's try the neighbors.

The two move on and Jacob take the lead on prying open the door.

NATHAN

So...this scientist.

JACOB

Winhelm-

NATHAN

Yea, does he have any idea when things  
will get back to normal?

JACOB

I'm afraid there's no going back.

NATHAN

Why?

JACOB

This ain't a temporary thing. He says  
the atmosphere is deteriorating too  
fast. Our planet is dying.

NATHAN

I thought we could wait it out. What  
if it's just a cycle, like the ice age  
or something?

JACOB

I hope your right, but Winhelm says  
it's exponential.

NATHAN

Why didn't he warn us.

JACOB

It's not like that.

Jacob pulls out the prying tool and re-sheathes it. The two walk through the open door.

NATHAN

What do you mean?

JACOB

It's not natural. They planned this. The alliance knew that...at the pace they were going, the minerals they needed to sustain themselves would be totally spent.

Nathan looks up from a cabinet that he's checking for supplies.

JACOB

So they hit the eject button.

Jacob places a container of nutrients in the bag.

JACOB

They triggered the atmospheric erosion at the precise moment that they knew earth would be most vulnerable. Shot stuff up into space, not sure what. Winhelm explained it, but most of what he told me went over my head. Some kind of disruptive agent.

NATHAN (DOUBTFUL)

Why would they do that? What's the point.

JACOB

Consolidation of power. Eradication of humankind. They saw us as leaches. Their machine brains are rotten to the core, pure evil. They're not finished, but if we can, we will try to stop it.

NATHAN (DISGUSTED)

Stop what?

JACOB

Their escape.

NATHAN

Where are they going?

JACOB

Not sure, some other planet. They wanted to gather together all of the little pawns before fleeing the scene. As soon as they're finished raping this rock, they're out of here.

NATHAN

So what's the point of going after them?

JACOB

Payback. We can't turn back the clock on this ticking time bomb. But we can sure as hell go down fighting.

Nathan seems confused. His drive is slightly sapped. He loads the backpack up with more loot and his eyes struggle to meet Jacob's.

JACOB

Do you still want to go?

NATHAN

Yes.

JACOB

Why? Is revenge worth it to you?



NATHAN

No, I just...I have to try...

JACOB

The Garden is quite a sight.

Nathan seems to be internally focused on something else. Memories of Sarah are truly driving him to leave.

Jacob seems excited about a few objects in the new room, he analyzes the bag and nods his head.

JACOB

That should be everything. Let's get back to the ground.

**INT. DURAND LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Nathan lays out the supplies on their table while his mother goes about the house doing chores and checking on her husband who lays in bed. She eventually makes her way to Nathan and kisses his cheek.

MANDISA

Did you find everything OK?

Nathan nods and smiles at his mother before returning to the supplies. Jacob's dusty old supply satchel makes a thud as it lands on the table.

JACOB

Alright...let's see here.

Jacob sits down and flips open one pouch after another, pulling out various tools.

JACOB

This here is a suction device.

Jacob pulls on a handle, meant for applying a sucking pressure for the clear plastic cylinder it is attached to.

JACOB

It can be used for extracting shrapnel, blood, anything. Just apply it like this to the wound and then pull. The release button here will empty its contents.

Next Jacob pulls out a cylindrical machine.

This device will help grind up food, bones, dirt, basically anything you gathered into a fine, edible powder. You can pack that into the vials. It's best to mix the powder with water and just drink all of your meals.

Jacob pulls another cylindrical device, this one is has a clear capsule.

This is a heavy duty purifier. You can use it on any liquids to separate the water and nutrients from that other crap. Liquid is a rare find. This baby will keep you alive. And a breather-

Jacob pulls a mask out from his bag.

You can wear this to keep your air clean when you're traveling through smoke and sand...it may be best to just keep it on all of the time, it'll keep your lungs full of air and it'll keep out whatever it is that's leaking through the atmosphere.

Jacob clears his lungs. Nathan nods taking the mask and studying it. Jacob reaches for a bottle of water and stands up.

Well, those are my gadgets. Take good care of them. Tera's probably low on water. Start packing up these things...and try to keep it light. I'll be back.

Jacob heads out to get Tera. Nathan puts the mask back in the pack and takes a whiff of one of Jacob's used vials. It smells awful and he empties it into a trash bin. He takes the grinding container,

empties a canister of tablets into it, and searches for the right button to activate the grinding mechanism.

Josia approaches the table with his feeble walk.

JOSIA

I wish I could come with you.

He smiles, his hand rests on the back of Nathan's neck.

JOSIA

You're going to do great things. This is a calling.

NATHAN

Why do you say that?

JOSIA

Do you remember, when you were just a little boy, how your mother and I would pray?

NATHAN

Before the Alliance?

JOSIA

Yes, I knew a pastor back then, a very religious man. His name was...

Josia racks his brain.

JOSIA

Damn...I've forgotten. Well this man said he saw a light in you. I didn't put much thought to it then, but we did pray. In the quiet of the night, your mother and I would pray that you'd be strong. We kept on, even after that man left, after they tore down the church building. Now I know he was right. I can see it in you son. You were born for great things. Don't let this world take that from you.

MANDISA

You are strong.

Mandisa reaches in placing her hand on Nathan's cheek.

MANDISA

You will always be in my heart.

NATHAN

Yes mother.

Nathan tilts his head to receive her kiss upon his forehead.

The door to their home opens and Jacob appears at the other side, holding the reigns to his horse Tera. Everyone in the house rushes to see the horse, all but Nathan and his parents who see the man and realize that the time has come for him to go. Nathan embraces his parents and they exchange quiet goodbyes. He lifts Jacob's old satchel from the table and his father insists on bringing the other bag bag.

**EXT. DURAND HOME - DAY**

We see the others gathered around Tera, petting her fur. They're in awe of the creature. Nathan and his father exit the house with Mandisa close behind them. Nathan exchanges a quiet glance with Jacob who takes the satchel and goes to Tera's far side, strapping the satchel onto the horse. He returns with a large breather.

JACOB

This is for Tera. She's the best resource you have, so keep her healthy. If need be, this valve opens, and you can fill it with drinking water. She doesn't like the mask too much. It's uncomfortable but necessary.

Jacob returns the horse breather to its spot in the satchel.

JACOB

Are you ready?

NATHAN

Yea.

JACOB

First make sure the saddle is tight.

Jacob pulls on the saddle belt.

OK, put your left foot in here.

Jacob taps on the stirrup.

Lift yourself up on the saddle and set  
your right foot in the stirrup on the  
other side.

Nathan does as Jacob says, pulling himself onto Tera.

Tera seems a little perturbed and Jacob whispers to her, stroking  
her mane.

Make sure your legs are nice and snug  
on her sides. OK, now let's turn  
around. Lean a little to right and  
press with your right leg. That's it.

Tera turns to the right, but begins rotating too far.

OK stop, she's very responsive. OK,  
now straighten her out. Left a bit.  
OK. Now squeeze both your legs to  
tell her to go. Yea. That's it. Now  
pull the reigns to stop. Easy!

Tera moves forward in a trot, but when she stops she throws her head  
back in discomfort and neighs.

OK, not too hard! Now let's see if  
you can get her down the road and  
back.

Nathan looks unsure, he looks down checking his legs.

NATHAN

Come on. Horse let's go. Go.

He squeezes again.

Come on!

Tera sprints and Nathan nearly goes flying

Shit, slow down!

Mandisa looks frightened for a moment, but her fear subsides quickly when she sees that Jacob isn't concerned, only slightly amused. Tera slows down and begins to respond in line with Nathan's attempts to guide her. They ride down the road, turn, and ride back past the group. Jacob nods as he watches Nathan getting more comfortable. Nathan and Tera return to the group and come to a steady, comfortable trot. They stop in front of the people.

JACOB

There you go, this isn't the first time  
she's had to deal with a new rider.

Jacob looks into Tera's eyes and runs his hand up over her head.

JACOB

Isn't that right girl...

Jacob seems to lose himself in the moment, and Tera seems to feel genuine affection for him as they brush face against face.

Yea...you be good to this man wont  
you? Nathan will take care of  
you. Keep him out of trouble.

Jacob looks down, he's broken over parting from Tera. He looks up at Nathan.

JACOB

Be good to her.

Nathan nods.

MANDISA

Please be safe love.

Nathan smiles and receives his mother's open hand. He holds it for a few beats.

NATHAN

I will.

JOSIA

Bless you boy.

Josia seems healthier than ever, he is confident and full of joy for his son.

JACOB

Ready?

NATHAN

Yes.

The group exchanges "I love you"s and other blessings until Nathan finally turns to leave. Tera and Jacob say "goodbye," it's a mixture of soft whimpers from Tera and Jacob's quiet words. Slowly Tera turns and trots, Nathan waves and turns to face the road. We see a shot of Tera and Nathan with the crowd behind them and then cut in close on Nathan's look, a hopeful gaze.

#### **EXT. WASTELAND**

We quickly cut through multiple shots exhibiting the passage of time. We see Nathan and Tera riding through terrain riddle with destruction, passing empty cities, rusted cars abandoned along the road where the dead carcasses of birds lay among the carnage. We see Nathan shielding his eyes from the bright sunlight, his face covered in sweat. Nathan and Tera lay by a fire, he looks up at a night sky full of stars.

We see Nathan's perspective through the goggles, a way point counts down the distance to the rebel outpost, it is thousands of kilometers away. We see a shot of Nathan in goggles and breather. The sun is setting. Tera is also wearing a breather. They are surrounded by billowing smoke from several pockets in the ground (we will later gather that this was the result of meteorite impacts).

Nathan feeds Tera from a canister, tilting it slightly to help her lap up the chalky water. We see Nathan running his hand through Tera's mane before loading her back with the satchel and bag. They ride away from one of their campsites.

We see them riding through the shade of a rock wall. As they reach the edge of the shadow Tera slows. She shrieks in the light and refuses to move any further turning back into the shade. Nathan looks up, shading his eyes and then dismounts. He leads Tera to a divot in the rock wall where he releases her of the burdensome gear. He looks up again with a questioning look on his face.

The sun sets and we see Nathan preparing to ride. He holds the goggles and fiddles with a switch. The lenses glow a light green hue and when he straps them on we see his night vision perspective. We see them riding in the nearly pitch black night. Steam rises from cracks in the ravaged desert.

As the sun rises Nathan directs Tera towards a building in the distance. We see them recouping inside of the feeble structure as bright light streams through the cracks and windows. Nathan examines his nearly empty vials with skepticism. He finds a bottle full of slushy, nasty water in an old cabinet. He pulls the filtration device out of his bag.

We see them riding again at night. Something grabs Nathan's attention in the sky. We see an opaque green and blue light, its translucent hues swirl in the night sky. Nathan studies the sky as they ride on. We pan up and see the full sky as it gently glows.

#### **SUNRISE**

#### **EXT. DESERT - SUNRISE**

Nathan rides his horse parallel to the horizon across the shot. The aurora lights make the scene dimly glow. Tera and Nathan are wearing breathers over their faces. Nathan slowly turns his head to the right.

NATHAN

Over there. Come on girl.

Nathan's voice and Tera's panting are both heard distorted by the breathers. The horse responds to his prompt, and they ride towards a distant hillside. The horizon begins to glow a dim orange.

NATHAN

Come on Tera. Faster girl.

The sunlight grows behind Tera and Nathan. Nathan focuses on the cave as they close in. He turns his head to see the extremely bright horizon behind him. The sky begins to fill with a bright orange light. The sunlight passes over the desert floor while small critters scurry into cracks in the dust. Both Tera and Nathan are covered in sweat as they race to the cave.

NATHAN (BREATHING HEAVILY)

Come on girl. We're almost there.



A large beetle near one of Tera's tracks scurries into a hole in the dirt. We stay focused on the desert floor until the wave of oncoming light passes over and fills the shot.

Nathan's face beams with sweat and he is breathing heavily through the filtration device. Tera begins snorting loudly. The outer light has caught up with them and is beginning to burn the hair on Tera's hind end. Nathan looks back to see that the heat wave is close behind them. He swings his head back around to focus on the opening in the mountain wall.

NATHAN

Here we go girl, almost there.

The light closes in, we see Nathan and Tera racing against it towards the opening of a cave.

**INT. CAVE - MORNING**

Inside the cave we see Nathan and Tera burst through the opening with beams of light surrounding them, shining through a cloud of dust. We hear the sounds of their tumbling bodies in the rocks and dust. There is a loud thud and Nathan groans while Tera is neighing through the breather. They slowly recover from their tumble.

Tera and Nathan rise from the cave floor. Nathan begins taking the sandy bags and saddle off of Tera's back. He opens a valve attached to Tera's breather and pours in liquid from his canteen. He pulls back his breather and drinks the same fluid.

NATHAN

We've got all day to rest up.

Nathan strokes the sand out of Tera's fur and steps back to see the patch of burned hair and skin on her hind end.

NATHAN

That was a close one...

Nathan kneels down and removes his gloves. He opens a pouch on his bag and pulls out a bottle. He tilts it over and a single pill rolls out into his palm. Nathan sighs. He crushes the pill into a powder with his multitool on a simple metal tray and pours a few drops of water on the powder, mixing it to make a milky cream. He stands to apply the medicine to Tera's burns, wetting a thin cloth in the fluid to dab on the horse's burned skin. Tera whimpers in response.

NATHAN

Easy girl, this will only take a second.

Nathan wipes the burned spot softly a few times.

NATHAN

It'll be OK.

Nathan steps away from Tera and kneels down again to put up the tray and cloth. He then stands near Tera and strokes the horse's mane.

NATHAN

I'd be dead if it weren't for you.

#### **EXT. DESERT - DAY**

We see the broiling heat of the desert wasteland, widening until the cave entrance is a tiny black spot contrasting with the bright landscape.

#### **INSIDE THE TUNNELS**

FADE IN

We see the rock wall of the cave. Beams of light stream from the entrance to the rear of the cavern. Nathan walks along the wall deeper into the cave. As the light grows dim Nathan reaches towards his visor and presses a switch. From Nathan's night vision perspective we see the rock walls illuminated in a green hue.

Nathan ventures forward, scanning the floor and walls. The cave comes to a narrow passage where he ducks to crawl through. The passage begins to slant downward and Nathan slows down as pebbles slide down and into the opening. Nathan begins to breathe heavily and turns slowly to move forward, feet first, down the slope. The hole narrows even more near the steepest point at Nathan's feet.

NATHAN

Shit.

Nathan holds still pressing his body into the rock wall to keep from sliding. He grunts as he tries to work his way back, but some rocks give way and he begins to slide down.

NATHAN

No!

Dust and pebbles fly past as Nathan's arms and legs scrape against the passage to slow his fall. Nathan hits the ground and his visor flickers to black.

**INT - SECOND CAVE SECTION**

The click of his visor is audible and the visor flickers back on to a dim shot of Nathan looking up. He is lying prostrate on the cave floor. Nathan groans as he stands and examines the corridor that opens up to a deep chasm with a small reservoir of water.

NATHAN

Oh Tera, I wish you could see this...

Nathan limps towards the small glistening pool where a mangy dog covered in burns looks up at him from the edge of the water.

NATHAN

Easy...

Nathan kneels down by the pool looking at the dog as it backs away from the water. The tired dog's glowing eyes peer back at him as it breathes heavily.

NATHAN

Sun got you good.

Nathan reaches into his bag and pulls out a purification canister. He dips it in the pool and turns back to look at the dog.

NATHAN

It will be over soon.

The dog breathes harder and growls, scurrying up and away into a different passage. Nathan focuses on the opening and then turns back to the water. He lifts the canister, seals it, and stashes it in the pack. He looks again to the opening where the dog went and then begins to scan the walls. He sees some markings and walks closer. The faint etchings become clear as he nears the wall. They are old markings of figures chasing after small animals with spears on the right. As he looks to the left he sees a bigger four legged animal, the figures huddle with threatening spears, fending it off.

NATHAN

Survivors...all we ever were.

Nathan looks into a corner of the rock where a few scattered human remains lay in the dust. He then turns to the dog's tracks into nearby tunnel and walks to them and then into the opening. The light inside his visor grows brighter as he nears the outside of the tunnel until white beams streak across the cave wall.

Nathan switches off night vision and walks further down the tunnel. The dog starts barking, the sounds echoes throughout. The hiss of a cobra can be heard as Nathan turns the corner and sees the two facing off. He reaches for his multitool and pulls out a sharp blade crouching low as he sneaks up on the cobra. He stomps but misses the head. The snake recoils biting his ankle as he stomps its body. The dog continues to yelp.

Nathan lets out a shriek as he lifts up the snake still attached to his leg and slices through, severing the head from the body and tossing his blade aside. He yanks out the snake head and pulls up his pant leg to expose the bite mark. The dog whimpers, breathing heavily. Nathan sits down. Opening his backpack he pulls out a suction device and fixes it to the wound. The venomous blood drains into a clear vial attached to the device. The dog continues to whimper.

NATHAN

Shhhhh...

Nathan looks over at the whimpering dog and then at the dead snake. He reaches for the snake and then for his blade on the ground and begins tearing the skin off, tossing chunks of meat at the dog to eat.

NATHAN

I don't know how the hell a mutt like  
you managed to last this long.

Nathan pauses and pulls the suction device from his bite. He lifts the vial to look closer at his blood.

NATHAN (THOUGHT)

If I was a machine I'd never have snake  
bites...

Nathan puts the vial in his bag and begins to prepare a spot to sleep. He looks out towards the sun and clicks his visor.

We see the light in the opening of the tunnel dim slowly to black as Nathan thinks aloud.

NATHAN (V.O.)

Wait for me Tera...

#### **NIGHTFALL**

In his dream, Nathan flies through a massive cloud of smoke into the open air. A huge pile of flesh bubbles and burns in the sunlight.

Tall, dark, metal bodies glisten, and jagged limbs pierce the sand. The robots carry human limbs and bones to a huge pile with their metal hands

NATHAN (THOUGHT)

Is this how the world ends?

#### **INT. CAVE - DAWN**

Nathan jerks his head and breathes heavily as he is startled awake. His breathing slows as he turns to see that the sun is setting. He looks down where the remains of the snake had been sitting. He picks up the leftover skeleton stares at it for a moment and then tosses it to his side, sighing and standing to his feet. He picks up his sack and looks out the opening of the cave at the light of the setting sun. Burning red light reflects off of Nathan's visor, dimming to darker blood red and finally black. Nathan flips a switch and the visor begins to glow.

#### **EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - NIGHT**

Nathan struggles over the rough terrain, around the mountain side until he is nearly off screen.

NATHAN (YELLING)

Tera! Here I am!

Tera pokes her head from the tunnel edge, looking into the darkness, and begins snorting.

NATHAN (EXASPERATED)

Yea I know you're upset...I  
accidentally-

Nathan stumbles on the loose rocks as he reaches the halfway point.

NATHAN

Ouch! I'm sorry girl...I know. Maybe a little water will cheer you up.

Nathan reaches into his bag as he nears Tera. He pulls out the canister and shakes it in front of Tera's face. Tera neighs and Nathan responds with laughter distorted by the breather.

NATHAN

I thought you might forgive me.

He opens the liquid cap on Tera's breather and slowly pours in the clear water. Sounds of muffled slurping reverberate from Tera's breather. Nathan runs his hand along Tera's side until he gets to the patch on her back. Little hairs are visible on the new skin.

NATHAN

We cut it too close Tera...

Nathan sighs as he turns to enter the cave. Returning moments later with the bags and saddle, he lifts the saddle onto the horse.

**EXT. DESERT - NIGHT**

The dimly glowing desert landscape fills the shot as they ride away from the mountainside.

NATHAN (THOUGHT)

I'm starting to forget what clouds even look like...

Distorted flickers of clouds cut in and out.

There is a pile of matted fur on the desert floor beside them. As Tera slowly steps forward the dead body of the cave dog is revealed. Nathan stops Tera and examines the dead dog. He pats Tera on her side and they slowly move out of shot. A vast array of twisted, rusted metal is dimly visible in the far distance.

**EXT. ABANDONED CITY - NIGHT**

Nathan examines the rusted out beams and the rubble of city ruins, he steers Tera towards the street. Tera trots slowly, Nathan looks around, up at the sky, and back down again.

NATHAN

Come on girl, I don't like it here.

Nathan and Tera speed off down the paved road out of sight. The city ruins fly past on both sides of the road. Tera dodges abandoned cars and motorcycles, racing over bones and smaller debris scattered across the street. The road becomes more cluttered as they reach a point filled with rusted out car frames lying bumper to bumper, the rubber from their tires has melted away. Tera slows down as they navigate the narrow openings along the street. Something flashes bright blue and orange in the thin atmosphere above them little burning specks slowly drift down towards the city.

NATHAN (TERRIFIED)

Not now - Tera Go!

The sounds of the falling meteor chunks begin as low hums and increase to a loud whistle as they near the ground. Nathan looks down to focus on the road as they pick up speed. Tera lets out a moan as she brushes a rusted car. The rhythm of her sprint goes wild for a moment.

NATHAN

Dig in!

Nathan looks up as meteor chunks fly over their heads. The sound and power of the impact behind them is massive. Tera's pace becomes frantic, unruly. Nathan is knocked over and dangling off of Tera's side, struggling to get up. Nathan's head slowly lifts as he grunts. The sound of many flying chunks of meteor increases and Nathan looks up to see the burning shower of rocks. He turns his head forward to see a broken car door jutting out in front of him.

NATHAN

Shit!

Nathan shifts his weight quickly to avoid the door, pulling himself up onto the saddle. He looks one way and then the other, and his eyes land on a clearing at the edge of the city.

NATHAN

There, Tera!

The city ruins smolder as Nathan and Tera burst forth from behind the line of cars to the dirt beyond the city edge, fleeing the meteors that land in the ruins, throwing dirt, rock, and metal into the air with each explosive impact.

**EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS- NIGHT**

Nathan and Tera slow down to catch their breath, the city remains look like hot coals in the distance.

NATHAN

You gotta lot of nerve trying to toss  
me off ya like that.

Tera has stopped now, Nathan strokes her mane as she pants heavily. He reaches into a sack and pours water into her breather intake valve. We hear rapid slurps distorted through the breather. He looks back at the smoldering city ruins and then turns to look ahead of them.

NATHAN

We have to be getting close.

We see overlaid Images of pure white clouds flickering in and out.

Tera begins to speed up and the camera seems to pass into Nathan's mind.

FADE OUT

**EXT. DESERT - NIGHT**

We see that Tera is going full speed, but suddenly comes to a halt. Nathan notices that the earth has been gashed, the street was torn up by a crash landing. We see that the gash leads to a large hovercraft to the far left of the road. Nathan knows it is time to find shelter, but he also fears what he might find. We hear him take a deep, distorted breath. Nathan and Tera turn to ride towards the crashed shuttle.

**INT. CRASHED SHUTTLE - JUST BEFORE SUNRISE**

Nathan leads Tera by the reigns towards a massive gaping hole in the side of the shuttle. He breathes heavily as he walks into the side of the massive metal vessel. Tera snorts as they pass rows and rows of almost complete skeletons all with circuits and chips, robotic enhancements that were attached to the nervous system.



Some beady eyed rodents scurry around as Nathan surveys the shuttle. He looks up at the multiple levels above them. We get the sense that at least a thousand perished.

Tera's eyes follow a rat for a moment and then lock onto Nathan who stands by the open cockpit door. He slowly enters.

NATHAN

They didn't make it out in time...

Nathan looks out the ship's cracked and dirty window to see the sky begin to light up. The sunrise heatwave approaches. Nathan walks out and shuts the cockpit door.

He is visibly shaken, stooping to the ground he looks down for a moment, contemplating the idea that Sarah's remains may be in this very shuttle. He then looks up. Our perspective changes. We see 10 levels with rows and rows of deceased passengers.

NATHAN (DISCOURAGED)

The sun is rising...this is home for the day.

Through the opening of the ship we see light begin to envelop the landscape.

#### **AWAKENED BY TERA**

Tera grunts and we hear the sound of her nudging Nathan's body in an attempt to wake him, he rustles around for a moment and yawns.

NATHAN

Bad dream?

Nathan's night vision lights up and we see Tera's snout close to Nathan's chest. They have shut themselves in the storage hangar to sleep. Tera snorts again and the visor fogs up. Nathan sighs and wipes the moisture away with his hand.

NATHAN

I'm hungry too. There's got to be something in this luggage...a candy bar maybe.

Tera neighs. Nathan riffles through the bags one by one finding fried backup disks, clothes, wireless accessories, but nothing consumable-

NATHAN

Come on, didn't anyone bring a souvenir...

Finally under a bunch of belongings Nathan pulls out a bottle.

NATHAN

Post humans and their alcohol...

Nathan smiles and raises a bottle of whiskey, and turns to walk towards Tera to get the filtration capsule out of his bag. He finds it, fills it with whiskey, and seals it shut. He dials in a code and sets the capsule in his bag. Tera snorts.

NATHAN

You have to wait. I can't have you drunk.

Nathan goes back to rummaging through the belongings of the dead, he has done this before, it is part of surviving now.

NATHAN

Looks like the we aren't the first critters to search this stash.

Nathan lifts empty wrappers one by one from an open bag, but he spots something at the bottom of the bag that triggers his memory. He pauses a moment and notices that beneath the trash is a clear case containing a robotic eye with its retina cracked. He examines the eye carefully and then lifts the bag to look for the passenger information. The bag reads Property of Dallen Patel.

NATHAN

Dallen Patel...rest in pieces

Nathan drops the bag and then the eye case.

NATHAN

Let's go Tera, there's nothing good here.

Nathan opens the storage hatch slightly, the sun is setting and casting a faint red glow on everything in the shuttle (skeletons and seats mostly). Through the torn wall of the shuttle we see the light fade. Nathan's voice comes in from the next shot as he rides Tera away from the shuttle before the shot changes.

**EXT. DESERT - TWILIGHT**

NATHAN

It's not far now Tera, I know we are getting close-

The shuttle is in the background now, small in comparison to Nathan and Tera. We see that Nathan's visor displays information, there is a way point with coordinates just over a hundred kilometers away. Scrolling down the list we see the selection stop at "The Garden" and a dim beam of blue light begins to form in in the horizon.

NATHAN (THOUGHT)

I hope that old rebel was right...

CUT TO-

We hear Nathan's heavy breath as his body tires. We see his perspective through the night vision. The distance on his visor display counts down to 5 miles. The blue beam is brighter and closer now, but Nathan's eyes slowly shut as he nods off, opening only for moments at a time. We see the rider slumping on Tera's back as she trots onward. We fade to black.

The sound of Tera's thudding hoofs ramp up to a steady, sprinting pace. We hear Nathan mumble as he is awoken by the quickening pace until he suddenly snaps awake.

NATHAN

Tera? Tera! Easy girl!

Nathan pulls on the reins but Tera throws her head forward.

NATHAN

Aagh-

Nathan gasps, reaching out to grab a hold of Tera to keep from falling off. We see him struggle to get a good hold from a side perspective. The shot cuts in on Nathan, grunting and too distracted to focus on anything but not flying off of the horse. We see the desert earth as they past swiftly over it. We slowly turn upward with Nathan's gaze. His head is too heavy to look ahead. There's a sudden bright flash followed by a vision full of artifacts and static until the goggles totally shut down. We see flickers of foliage. Nathan shouts and loses grip. The goggles fly off as he hits the ground. He lies on the ground, looking deep into a jungle. Tera runs on without him, dodging trees and leaping over obstacles until she is out of sight.

FADE TO BLACK

## **MEET THE REBELS**

### **EXT. JUNGLE - DAY**

Our perspective faces Nathan's opening eyes between the leaves. Nathan rises slowly from the jungle floor, looking all around him in awe. He looks back and the camera rises to reveal the wasteland behind him, separated from the jungle by a fine invisible division.

We see Nathan from his side, limping over to the edge of the jungle until the exterior wasteland environment is revealed. Nathan's hand reaches out past the division. His flesh sizzles in the heat of the open wasteland air and he quickly pulls it back.

NATHAN

Ah!

Our perspective turns back towards the jungle. Nathan grabs his hand and looks and examines it for a moment, walking back into the seemingly safe environment. Nathan cautiously journeys deeper into the jungle, examining the variety of plant life that he has never seen. He sees a lizard crawl up the side of a tree, a cloud of mist atop the towering trees, and moss covered rocks. Suddenly a deep growl interrupts his observations. He looks up in curiosity and fear. Another growl. He turns his head, looking all around for the source. Suddenly his vision locks on the large, furry side of a creature emerging from heavy foliage. The lioness emerges baring her teeth. We cut in on her open growling mouth and menacing gaze.

NATHAN

Shit!

Nathan bursts into a full on sprint, he is hindered by the crowded terrain, tripping over rocks and roots as he tries to escape the beast. From his perspective we see Nathan turn to look back. The

lioness is just behind him beginning to leap. Nathan tries to turn away but comes crashing down. We look up at the beast, it's front legs at either side and its mouth open wide to bite Nathan's face. Nathan tries to push her off but the animals force overpowers him.

NATHAN

Aagh!

STRANGER

Stop!

The lion's attention shifts in the direction of the stranger's command.

STRANGER

Your breather! Take it off!

Nathan is totally shocked and confused. He looks over to see the strange, shirtless man who approaches.

STRANGER

She thinks you're the enemy.

Nathan is confused but he pulls his arm slowly back and pulls the clip from behind his head, letting the breather drop to the floor.

STRANGER

Breathe easy brother.

Nathan hesitantly takes breath and then, feeling the awesome clean air pouring into his lungs begins breathing rhythmically. He looks up towards the lioness towering over him. She leans in to lick his face.

Our perspective changes to reveal the lion licking Nathan's face while the stranger approaches while laughing at the sight.

STRANGER

See, she likes humans.

The stranger reaches out and pets the lioness' back.

STRANGER

OK girl, get off of the poor boy.

The lioness consents and steps over Nathan, turning around and sitting by them as though she awaits further instruction. The stranger reaches down to help Nathan to his feet.

STRANGER

Jacob sent you.

NATHAN

Yea...

Nathan takes a deep breath.

STRANGER

Where are you from?

NATHAN

Pretoria.

STRANGER

South Africa!? Damn! You've come a long way! Let's get you to the camp. Do you need help?

The stranger eyes his trembling body

NATHAN

Please.

The stranger lays a hand on Nathan and helps him steady his footing.

STRANGER

Here...give me your arm.

The stranger lifts Nathan's arm over his own shoulder.

STRANGER

I'm Anton.

NATHAN

Nathan Durand.

ANTON

Well Mr. Durand...welcome to The Garden.

**EXT. REBEL CAMP - DAY**

We see two men in the foreground discuss their varying views on dissent against the United Earth. Farris from Morocco and Karim from Mali argue mental revolution vs military revolution respectively. Karim is tweaking a futuristic rifle while Farris wields one of his anti-UE pamphlets.

Anton and Nathan emerge from the surrounding jungle, walking towards the two men. Farris notices them and quits the debate to acknowledge the approaching men.

FARRIS

Anton! Who is this you've brought to our humble abode?

Karim abandons his condescending remarks on Farris' futile efforts and looks to Nathan as the two come closer.

ANTON

Look what I found.

NATHAN

Hi there.

KARIM

He doesn't look so good, what's your name boy?

NATHAN

I was nearly cat food...

The group lets out a hardy laugh.

NATHAN

My name is Nathan Durand.

FARRIS

Where are you from?

NATHAN

Pretoria.

KARIM

South Africa?! Shit...Farris, get the boy some water. You must be dying.

NATHAN

Please.

ANTON

He's one of Jacob's recruits.

KARIM

It's about time Jacob's excursion paid off. We were beginning to think there wasn't anybody left. Please, take a seat.

Nathan gladly approaches the chair where Farris had been seated.

KARIM

How is it in South Africa?

NATHAN

It's bad.



Farris returns with a bottle of water and hands it to Nathan. Two more follow behind him, eager to see the newcomer.

FARRIS

South Africa...my god Nathan. Here,  
there's more where that came from. It's  
Nathan right?

Nathan nods while gulping down the water.

FARRIS

My name is Farris, did this trigger  
happy rebel rouser already ask you to  
suit up for battle?

Karim sighs and extends his hand to Nathan, who is now taking a break on the water.

KARIM

Karim's the name, it's good to have  
another able bodied man in our midst.

The two shake and Farris continues the introductions.

FARRIS

This is my wife Isabel, Anton's sister,  
and my brother Illias.

ISABEL

Welcome.

ILLIAS

Good to meet you Nathan. Where are  
you..

ANTON

South Africa

ILLIAS

Shit.

ANTON

Yea, how are you feeling?

NATHAN

Better. Could I have something to eat?

ISABEL

Of course, you must be starving.

Isabel leaves to fix something for Nathan to eat.

NATHAN

Do you think Tera is OK? She ran off  
before I could...

FARRIS

She's probably at the watering hole.  
Don't worry about her. She is home  
now. How'd she treat you?

NATHAN

I couldn't have made it this far  
without her.

ILLIAS

She's a resilient one.

KARIM

Sure is, Gabe will be happy to see her.  
First time I've ever seen a horse get  
depressed.

This gets another laugh out of the others.

FARRIS

Jacob must have really talked up a storm for you to come all this way. What did he tell you?

NATHAN

He told me about Egypt. About the post human Haven...and the scientist.

ILLIAS

Winhelm.

NATHAN

Yea.

KARIM

You'll have to meet him. He's at his workstation, tinkering away as usual. I'll take you there after we get some food in you...I need to get my rifle checked out anyhow.

FARRIS

Isabel?

ISABEL

It'll be ready in a minute!

ANTON

Here, let's have a look at what 'Bel is cooking up.

Anton reaches for Nathan's arm and helps him up.

**INT. DINING HALL - DAY**

NATHAN

Wow, this is amazing.

ISABEL

I'm glad you like it.

FARRIS

Better than the rations the Alliance  
was serving up.

KARIM

Careful not to shock your stomach...I'm  
guessing Jacob had you on the chalk  
water regiment?

NATHAN

It's like drinking sand.

Isabel rolls her eyes as the others chuckle.

ILLIAS

Do you know if Jacob is sending others?

NATHAN

I think I'm the first one.

ILLIAS

Are there others in South Africa  
willing to join the rebellion?

NATHAN

Most people wouldn't be able...there  
are a lot of sick and dying. Jacob's  
taking care of my parents and the  
others that I left behind.

KARIM

Doesn't he plan on coming back?

NATHAN

No...

Karim looks saddened by this, as does Illias, they look at each other contemplating the loss of their friend.

NATHAN

Pretoria is a ghost town. Most of Africa is. I saw a few crashed shuttles along the way too.

Another man (NOLAN) enters the dining hall and takes a seat by Anton after glancing at Nathan. He whispers with Anton, who catches him up on the new arrival.

NATHAN

We only had a few hours' notice before the storm...if there'd been more time.

ISABEL

I can't imagine many made it from the South. The post-humans in Spain fled with time to spare. We had time to get back to Morocco before the storm hit.

ILLIAS

That's when we met up with Zaid's men, Jacob, Karim, Nolan...

Illias gestures towards the man who just joined the table. The man, Nolan, bows his head towards Nathan.

ILLIAS

Nolan, where is Zaid?

A young woman (OLIVIA) enters the room.

OLIVIA

Dad's with Winhelm.

Nathan eyes the young woman.

OLIVIA

Oh, hello, who is this?

ISABEL

Nathan came all the way from South Africa, Jacob sent him. Isabel smiles at Olivia suggestively.

OLIVIA

Wow...

FERRIS

You two must be nearly the same age eh? Olivia just turned...twenty three was it?

OLIVIA

Twenty four.

ISABEL

And how old are you Nathan?

NATHAN

Twenty seven.

FERRIS

Hmm...

Ferris smiles, sensing the inevitable attraction Nathan must have to Olivia after such a lonely journey.

KARIM

Careful Ferris...Zaid's gonna have your head.

FERRIS

What?! I didn't say anything...

Olivia tries to cut through the awkward tension.

OLIVIA

Dad will be happy to have another "brother in arms."

KARIM

We all are.

Karim pats Nathan on the back.

KARIM

It is about time Nathan meets the fearless leader.

NATHAN

I've had about all I can eat without...er, its good I just-

Nathan looks at Isabel, and then to his half eaten meal.

ISABEL

Don't worry, I wouldn't want you to get sick.

Karim grunts as he rises from the table.

KARIM

Come on then, let's see what they're up to in that mad laboratory.

**THE SCIENTIST**

**INT. WORKSTATION - DAY**

The room is filled with computer monitors, circuitry and parts for various projects. Winhelm and Zaid study a map of the region while discussing the state of the magnetic shield. Their conversation continues as a large, vault like metal door opens to Nathan and Karim. Nathan examines the room as he walks in, Zaid seals the door behind them.

ZAID

We cleared out the Tahoua and Maradi regions with no sign of the conductors. We can try Zinder, but by the time we get back...if we don't find anything, you're saying the shield will be in critical condition.

WINHELM

Yes, with the few working conductors we have left... it's just too much tension on the system. I'd estimate that we have weeks, not months, before they inevitably fail. The parts you salvage in Zinder could be enough, but if they aren't...

The frustrating situation distracts Zaid and Winhelm for a moment, preventing them from acknowledging Karim and Nathan.

KARIM

Commander...Winhelm...I'd like you to meet Nathan. Jacob sent him.

ZAID

Welcome, I'm sorry we're a little busy for a proper greeting...

WINHELM

Hello Nathan. Zaid is right, we are quite busy trying to keep this shield up.

KARIM

Perhaps Nathan can be of assistance, he's come a long way...

NATHAN

I'm not sure how I could-



Nathan looks at the mechanisms throughout the workstation, intimidated by their complexity.

ZAID

I don't suppose you're an engineer?

NATHAN

Afraid not...I wasn't very good in school. I worked the mines in Pretoria.

ZAID

Yes, well there's not much a miner can offer here-

WINHELM

Hmm...perhaps you'll recognize this...have you used a Particle Glove?

NATHAN

A what?

Winhelm digs through a pile of parts on one of his shelves.

WINHELM

Let me see, yes here.

NATHAN

Oh, a mining claw.

WINHELM

Is that what you call it?

Nathan nods and takes the glove from Winhelm.

ZAID

What good is a glove going to-

WINHELM

An electromagnetic instrument, I hear  
the miners used it to collect rare  
earth minerals-

NATHAN

Yea, it can also tear drones apart or  
break through a solid steal wall in  
seconds...

KARIM

Let's see it then...

Karim grabs a rusty, useless metal scrap from another shelf and drops it on the table in front of them. Nathan looks at the others who are equally eager to see what he can do. He fastens the mining claw to his hand and lifts the metal scrap. It floats in front of them. Nathan activates the glove and the metal fragment begins to dissolve into dust until it is just a cloud of floating gray particles. Nathan moves his fingers and drops his hand, causing the cloud to collapse into a small pile of sand on the table.

ZAID

Incredible...

KARIM

Damn, so your fought drones with that  
thing?

Nathan nods.

NATHAN

I broke a friend out of an Alliance  
tower years ago with one of these.

ZAID

So you fought with our brothers in  
Mozambique?

NATHAN

They wouldn't help me.

KARIM

Why?

NATHAN

The person I was helping is a post-human.

ZAID

What on earth were you doing risking your life for a post-

NATHAN

I love her...

There's a heavy silence throughout the room for a few beats.

NATHAN

We fled for the Eastern coast. They forced the enhancements on her, she never wanted to join Ascension.

ZAID

I'm sorry...

NATHAN

I came here to...I hope there's a way to save her, to turn her back.

KARIM

Is that even possible?

WINHELM

That depends...on how deeply she has been integrated.

NATHAN

So there's a chance?

WINHELM

The probability is slim.

NATHAN

I'll do whatever it takes.

ZAID

I hope you'll fight with us.

Nathan nods.

WINHELM

I'll see what I can do to help you Nathan, but right now we need to focus on maintaining the shield. Did you come across any promising finds along the way? We're looking for a rotary conductor to maintain the shield in the coming months.

KARIM

What about those UE shuttle, you said you came across a crash.

NATHAN

Yea there were a few shuttles, it was mostly a lot of rusted out cars and destroyed buildings...

WINHELM

Their hover shuttle would have adequate parts for a makeshift rotary conductor.

NATHAN

There was a shuttle we slept in...southwest from here.

ZAID

Where exactly?

NATHAN

I couldn't tell you...but it wasn't very far. I was there yesterday, the coordinates were logged in the visor Jacob gave me...but I think it shorted out when I came through the shield.

WINHELM

May I have a look?

Nathan reaches into his bag and hands Winhelm the goggles. Winhelm removes a panel and has a look inside at the circuitry.

WINHELM

Mhmm, the coordinates should be intact. The shield will disrupt the conductivity of any active electronics traveling through it. That's why the visor shut off when you came here. It's a nice side effect that allows the field to serve two purposes- it keeps the radiation out and disables any drones the EA tries to send our way.

Winhelm attaches a cord to the inner workings of the goggles, transferring the information they contain to a workstation computer.

NATHAN

Have drones made it through in the past? One of the lions attacked me on the outskirts when I was wearing my breather...Anton said it had mistaken me as the enemy.

Winhelm, Zaid, and Karim seem amused.

ZAID

We haven't had any UE visitors, and we'd like to keep it that way. We programmed, er trained, the beasts to attack anything walking on two feet that doesn't look like us...two normal eyes, a normal nose, a normal mouth...human.

NATHAN

Programmed?

Winhelm looks at Zaid in slight frustration.

ZAID

Trained...we trained them to attack the bots.

WINHELM

How do you like it here Nathan?

NATHAN

It's incredible...Jacob told me it was, but it is amazing what you've built here. He said you used to work for the Alliance?

WINHELM

Yes, that was a long time ago...

KARIM

He saw the light!

ZAID

You sound like Nolan.

WINHELM

Well, I learned the hard way that Emmanuel Shaefer isn't what he seems, that the UE system is more machine than human. I abandoned when I saw their plans for a power grab. Those bastards had been planning for the storm...

NATHAN

Why?

WINHELM

Consolidation of resources, people, power, so that eventually...sooner than later, they can leave.

Winhelm looks to the screen, which is almost finished transferring the information.

ZAID

I say good riddance.

Karim nods in agreement.

WINHELM

Let's see here, yesterday's position...yes you were there for about eleven hours.

NATHAN

That must be it, we were there until sundown.

ZAID

Brilliant, we'll leave tonight, do you think you're ready to head back out Nathan?

Nathan looks speechless for a moment.

KARIM

It's alright...you need your rest.

NATHAN

A bed would be nice.

KARIM

You can stay with me. Zaid. Winhelm. We'll leave you two to it.

WINHELM

I'd like to show Nathan something first.

**INT. BENEATH THE WORKSTATION**

Nathan and Winhelm walk along a metal floor suspended over metallic tubes and surrounded by large humming coils. They each wear protective helmets.

NATHAN

It's safe to be down here, isn't it?

WINHELM

Not entirely, that's why we wear these...

Winhelm knocks on his helmet.

WINHELM

Do you know where we are?

NATHAN



Is this where the shield is generated?

WINHELM

Right...these magnetic coils produce the shield that holds our little atmosphere in place. These are the rotary conductors we spoke of earlier.

The two arrive at a cluster of large spiral shaped, spinning machines.

NATHAN

Wow...

WINHELM

You see Nathan...many of the rebels have an affinity for flesh. Some despise technology because many have seen it used for ill. Technology is heartless when we allow ourselves to be ruled by it. The results are often...amoral. I was trained to ignore this fact...and it took a long time for me to see the error of my ways. I helped them hurt many people.

NATHAN

If you worked for the UE, why weren't you enhanced?

WINHELM

Out of pride I refused the enhancements because I could. I knew they needed me.

NATHAN

But, you must have known what they were planning.

WINHELM

Yes...I sensed there was something more.

Winhelm looks down at the floor and then to Nathan.

WINHELM

Have you ever seen a solar eclipse?

NATHAN

Is that when the moon blocks the sun?  
I remember learning about it in school.

WINHELM

The ancient Egyptians never taught their children about the solar eclipse. The pharaoh and his astronomers of course knew it would occur, down to the very day it would happen. Do you know why they never taught the people this fact?

NATHAN

No...

WINHELM

Control. You see...when the a solar eclipse was predicted to occur, the pharaoh his priests would announce the their frustration with the people of Egypt. The Pharaoh played the role a god king, furious with the lack of faith pervading the public consciousness. In his anger, he claimed he would blot out the sun to prove to the Egyptians that he was worthy of their undying loyalty. So when the sun was blocked by the moon and the people were terrified...they submitted to their leaders. They lacked the knowledge to see through the trick.

NATHAN

So the United Earth leaders knew the solar flares were coming and they-

WINHELM

They wanted the chaos to occur, so that they could offer the order that they desired.

NATHAN

So how do we convince the people that they've been lied to.

WINHELM

I don't think we have that choice Nathan. The enhanced are blinded by their perceived evolution. They've been programmed to hate and despise us lesser beings. They believe they are the next step in evolution, that their survival is dependent on our destruction.

NATHAN

Survival of the fittest.

WINHELM

Exactly.

Nathan and Winhelm pause for a beat. Nathan feels the hope of saving Sarah waver. Winhelm gestures for Nathan to follow him back to the upper level workstation.

WINHELM

We'll prove them wrong. I'm glad you've come here Nathan. That shuttle you came across is promising. If Zaid's excursion is successful, we should be able to keep The Garden protected. We can continue recruiting, and eventually we can expand...

NATHAN

A bigger shield?

WINHELM

Future generations will carry on the efforts. All is not lost. We will rebuild.

**INT. WORKSTATION - DAY**

Zaid and Karim discuss the need for more weapons.

ZAID

Our primary objective is the shield.

KARIM

I agree, but we can't defend ourselves against the UE forces with a few guns.

ZAID

Yes, but we're never going to have the firepower we had before the storm.

KARIM

Winhelm, what about the electromagnetic charges? We could plant them along the outer perimeter, in the desert.

WINHELM

It's too risky, we would probably knock out the shield in the process.

KARIM

So we go on the offense. If we could find a way into the the Haven, we could wipe them out.

ZAID

Winhelm and I have already discussed this...

WINHELM

I don't know of a way in that wouldn't alert them of our presence.

KARIM

If EMP's are off the table then we need more firepower. I was hoping you could take a look at my rifle.

WINHELM

I'm working on a new prototype that should be more effective against the sentinel drones, a laser canon of sorts. The shuttle should be loaded with parts we can re purpose. I'll make a list of things for you all to look for.

KARIM

Great...let's get back to camp Nathan.

ZAID

Get some rest.

Nathan nods.

WINHELM

Goodnight Nathan.

NATHAN

Goodnight, it was good meeting you both.

Nathan and Karim leave and Zaid returns to discussing plans with Winhelm.

**A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

**EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY**

There is a faint sound of horses in the distance.

KARIM

Did you hear that?

Nathan pauses to listen to the neighing.

NATHAN

Is that Tera?

KARIM

Sounds like she's reunited with Gabe.

NATHAN

Your horse?

KARIM

Yea, let's check it out.

Zaid and Nathan take a dirt path into the jungle. They pass a variety of trees until they reach the opening. They stop at the opening and see a light horse (Tera) and a dark stallion (Gabe) playing together. Excitedly Tera rears up and brushes against Gabe, the horses seem to have an intimate connection. The two men stand quietly observing the horses at play, and then we see Tera spot Nathan.

KARIM

Looks like she's glad to see you.

Tera gallops over to Nathan, Gabe follows close behind.

NATHAN

Hey girl...I missed you.

Nathan runs his hands through her mane and then holds her head.

Nathan

You scared me back there...

Nathan brushes his face against Tera, hugging his trusted friend. He looks up to see that Karim has mounted Gabe.

KARIM

Come on, let's see what you got.

Nathan laughs and leaps onto Tera's back.

KARIM

YAH!

Nathan smiles and prompts Tera to follow, though she barely needs it. She responds immediately, and the two men on horseback race through the jungle. They leap over rocks and weave with the path, now side by side.

KARIM

Are you ready?

NATHAN

What?

Karim and Gabe take a sharp turn into the deeper brush.

NATHAN

Whoa!

Tera turns sharply after them. Nathan leans down on Tera's back to avoid the overhanging branches, his look is that of playful intensity. The two horses burst from the jungle into the opening around the camp. Karim keeps riding towards camp while Nathan and Tera stop at the edge of the jungle, slowing to a trot. Nathan smiles, watching Karim and Gabe run a circle around the cluster of single story buildings that make up the rebel camp.

Nathan dismounts and turns to Tera. We see Olivia emerge from one of the buildings and spot Nathan with Tera, letting her drink from his own water bottle.

We cut in close to Nathan and Tera as he cares for her.

NATHAN

That a girl...

OLIVIA

She's taken a liking to you.

Olivia catches Nathan off guard when she walks up beside him. Olivia's focus is on the horse and she runs her hand over the Tera's head.

NATHAN

We've been through a lot together.

Olivia makes a horse-like whinny as though she is speaking to Tera in her animal language. The horse responds with a similar sound. Nathan tries not to laugh in amusement.

NATHAN

How did you do that?

OLIVIA

It takes a lot of practice.

NATHAN

Can you teach me.

OLIVIA

I don't know. It's kind of hard to explain, but I can try.

Olivia takes a second to think about breaking down her technique.

OLIVIA



It's kind of like screaming, like a  
naaa sound but a scream. And you have  
to suppress it, like you're screaming  
but you don't want to.

Nathan's first attempt makes a really weird embarrassing sound.  
Olivia holds back her laughter.

OLIVIA

It helps if you put your tongue at the  
roof of your mouth when you do it.

Nathan tries again and the two just break out on laughter.

OLIVIA

So it's like...

Olivia makes the first, suppressed tone.

OLIVIA

And then you have to break it up into  
little stutters like this...

Olivia makes the sound and lets it putter out. Tera responds with a  
motorboat sound. The two laugh again. Nathan imitates the  
motorboat sound.

NATHAN

That one is easier.

OLIVIA

Yea, you can put it all together  
like...

Tera makes a whinny with the motorboat sound. Tera seems excited.

NATHAN

She's used to me just talking to her  
with words.

OLIVIA

Do you think she can understand you?

NATHAN

I don't know...sometimes it feels like  
she knows what I'm trying to say.

Nathan pats Tera again.

NATHAN

You understand me don't you girl?

We catch Olivia looking at Nathan with a hint of affection before  
Farris chimes in from a distance.

FARRIS

Come on you youngsters!

Nathan turns to Olivia.

NATHAN

Where is everyone going?

We see several people heading to one of the camp hall. Olivia and  
Nathan begin to head towards the same building after "saying  
goodbye" to Tera.

OLIVIA

Nolan is going to preach tonight. He  
joined dad's side when he got kicked  
out of the French army for not taking  
the enhancements. He says it was  
against his beliefs...ever since then  
he's been fighting against the UE with  
a Bible in one hand and a rifle in the  
other.

NATHAN

I've never heard someone preach before.

OLIVIA

Really?

NATHAN

There were some churches in South Africa when I was little, but they didn't last too long after our country joined the Alliance.

OLIVIA

Oh.

NATHAN

Before I left, my parents told me that they prayed for strength...for me when I was growing up.

OLIVIA

You miss them...

NATHAN

Yea...

OLIVIA

I can't imagine what it must have been like...leaving.

Nathan looks saddened by the memory as the two approach the entrance to the building where Nolan is holding his service.

**INT. MEETING HALL - DUSK**

NOLAN (EMPHATICALLY)

"You won't die!" the serpent hissed...."You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."

The meeting hall is full of people. We get the sense that a few are

intrigued by the newcomer. Olivia and Nathan take a seat by Farris who smiles suggestively before returning his attention to the sermon.

Eternal life...but at what cost?

Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians pleading with them. Today he pleads with us... Don't you know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man ruins the temple of God, God will abandon him; he will abandon an unholy temple.

He further instructed that we must nourish and cherish our flesh, even as our Lord cherishes his people.

In Genesis we read that God created us in his own image and he saw that it was good.

God assures us that before he formed you in your mother's womb he knew you... he sanctified you.

Consider the work of God's hands. How dare man believe that he can improve God's holy work?

Nolan pauses for dramatic delivery.

Emmanuel Shaefer is the false messiah, the abomination of desolation that God warned us of...he conspires against the Lord, against his anointed one. God laughs as Shaefer plots to break away from his sovereign power. As it was foretold... Shaefer exalts himself and defies our God, tearing down every object of adoration and worship. Claiming the lies of the serpent himself, claiming that we can evolve to godhood!

Shaefer's followers cry out, as the builders of Babel's tower before: Let's build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies, a monument to our greatness! This will keep us safe from destruction they foolishly thought.

So God sent a great deception upon them, allowing them to believe all of Shaefer's lies.

The deception grew, extending across the whole world.

Shaefer has brought ruin and misery while touting the false promises of peace and immortality.

In those glowing, robotic eyes there is no fear of God!

This climactic statement received a flurry of "amen" and agreeing nods. Nathan looks to see that Farris. Though he doesn't seem to be the most devout believer, Farris finds truth in this statement.

The enhancements were foretold in this book. This good book tells us that anyone who received the enhancements is damned.

God's wrath is poured in its full strength on the marked, they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lord. The smoke of their torment will go up forever.

Nathan seems extremely disturbed by this, as he imagines Sarah burning alive. Olivia notices his stress, and sees his trembling hand, and she lays her hand on his.

OLIVIA (WHISPERING)

You want to step out for a minute?

NATHAN

Please...

Nathan and Olivia quietly leave the building while Nolan continues.

**OUTSIDE THE MEETING HALL - NIGHT**

Nathan's breathing is uneasy, he doesn't look at Olivia, rather walking away from her and rubbing his eyes.

OLIVIA (SOFTLY)

What's wrong?

NATHAN

You don't think...

Nathan pauses, turning to reveal the sadness in his eyes as he looks at Olivia.

NATHAN

That thing Nolan said about the post humans being damned for choosing the mark...what if they didn't choose?

OLIVIA

What do you mean?

NATHAN

She didn't have a choice...

Nathan's voice is more frantic as he utters things Olivia couldn't possibly understand, turning his back to her to hide his face.

NATHAN

She didn't want the enhancements and I didn't do anything...I was there...and I didn't say anything! God wouldn't punish us for something we couldn't control would he?

OLIVIA

I don't think so...who is she?

NATHAN

A girl I knew when I was young, Sarah.  
There was a horrible accident. Sarah  
would have died if they didn't...

Nathan is visibly shaking, Olivia walks to him and puts a comforting hand on his shoulder. They stand there in silence for a moment, Olivia's eyes reveal that she is trying to find words that will comfort Nathan.

NATHAN

She might have made it to the safe  
Haven...

OLIVIA

Nathan, we can't change the past.

NATHAN

I know...but I have to make sure she's  
OK.

OLIVIA

You need to rest...

Nathan nods and turns to look at Olivia.

FADE TO BLACK

#### **A FRIENDSHIP BLOOMS**

#### **INT. FARRIS AND ISABEL'S GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING**

Nathan takes a deep breath as he stirs awake in the fluffy tan sheets of the guest bed. Light pours through slits in the shades. The room is void of technology, full of wooden carvings and various pieces of folk art from what Nathan can see. His eyes stop on a little figuring made of tin. There is the sound of a dog barking. We hear Isabel trying to hush their dog. The door cracks open and Farris peers in with one eye through the crack.

NATHAN (GROGGY)

Good morning.

FARRIS

Breakfast is almost ready.

Nathan takes a big whiff of the succulent smell that pours in through the doorway.

FARRIS

Boar sausages.

Nathan looks excited.

You must have passed out before we got back from the service. There's a shower in the back.

NATHAN

Thanks.

FARRIS

Of course, join us in the kitchen after you clean off that lovely traveler's scent.

Farris smiles teasingly before shutting the door.

Nathan rises from the bed, noticing a vase of colorful, fresh flowers covered in dew beads on the nightstand.

**INT. SHOWER - EARLY MORNING**

We see clear water turn to brown as it streams through Nathan's dark hair and down his face. His eyes are closed and he seems to be enjoying the overdue wash. After a few beats he starts practicing his horse whinny. He stops and smiles with his eyes still closed. We begin to hear the dinner table conversation and the sounds from the meal being had before cutting to-

**INT. DINING ROOM - BEFORE DAWN**

ISABEL



I hope our little rascal didn't wake  
you.

Isabel gestures towards the dog panting beside the table, eying the  
sausages.

NATHAN

Don't apologize, that was the best  
sleep I've ever had.

ISABEL

Good...you look well.

Nathan smiles and looks to Farris.

NATHAN

You didn't leave with Zaid?

FARRIS

No. My brother, Illias headed the call.  
Karim, Anton, Tarik...Zaid's got plenty  
of hero's for his quest.

ISABEL

All but my hero.

FARRIS

Indeed my love.

There is a pause as they continue to eat.

NATHAN

Did you meet before the storm?

ISABEL

We have quite a history.

FARRIS

We found love in the war. This beautiful renegade (gesturing towards Isabel with his fork) was helping people escape from Spain. Before we met, I only knew Isabel by the moniker...El Fantisma.

Farris makes a spooky gesture with his free hand.

FARRIS

The ghost.

Nathan looks at each of them, expecting an explanation for the nickname.

ISABEL

And I knew him as Liberador de la Mente.

Farris laughs.

ISABEL

Liberator of the Mind. Here...

Isabel reaches for some nearby papers and hands Nathan a pamphlet. He examines the liberation symbolism of broken chains falling from a figure's head.

ISABEL

Farris woke up a lot of our people...exposing the Alliance propaganda. He liberated minds. I helped them escape. We met each other in a Moroccan refugee camp.

Isabel and Farris look lovingly toward each other.

FARRIS

El Fantisma stole my heart. Her cooking sealed the deal.

Farris looks towards Nathan brandishing a skewered sausage with a look of silly profundity on his face. The three of them laugh at the gesture. Before Nathan can return to the meal Isabel asks him...

ISABEL

Did you notice the flowers in your room?

NATHAN

Yes, they're beautiful, thank you.

ISABEL

It wasn't me.

Nathan looks at Farris. Farris shakes his head.

FARRIS

It seems Olivia has taken a liking to you.

Nathan sighs and smirks, unable to look up from his plate. Farris pushes his plate away and rises dramatically.

FARRIS

See how love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs! She's beautiful, and therefore to be wooed; She is woman, and therefore to be won!

ISABEL

Oh Farris, your words are witchcraft!

Isabel smiles and shake her head, rolling her eyes at Farris. Farris smiles and dramatically clenches at his heart.

FARRIS (EXCLAIMING)

Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid  
fell! This bud of love by summer's  
ripening breath, May prove a beauteous  
flower...Oh! how this spring of love  
resembleth, The uncertain glory of an  
April day-

Isabel rises to meet her husband to stop his Shakespearean quotations by covering his mouth gently with her hand. Isabel looks at Nathan.

ISABEL

Ignore my poet warrior.

She then looks at Farris with a smile.

ISABEL

His passion will undo you.

Nathan watches the couple kiss in the corner of his vision.

FARRIS

You might want to-

Farris' words are interrupted and muffled by another kiss.

FARRIS

-check on that horse of yours...

Nathan laughs, taking the hint. He exits to his room, grabbing his bag and leaving through a side door. He only pauses for a moment to see the couple embracing each other through the doorway and then gazes again at the vase of flowers by his bed before shutting the door behind him.

**EXT. REBEL VILLAGE - DAWN**

Nathan walks through the busy paths of the Rebel village, passing children playing, women gossiping, and various animals (dogs, monkeys, etc.) scurrying through the dirt paths. Nathan looks up at pollution free sky above, there is a slightly strange hue from the artificial atmosphere, but otherwise it is beautiful and several puffy clouds gently drift through the air.

OLIVIA

Nathan!

Nathan turns to see Olivia hurrying to him.

OLIVIA

Hey, how are you?

NATHAN

I feel...

Nathan takes a deep breath.

NATHAN

Much better. This place is incredible.  
I had no idea there were so many  
people...

OLIVIA

Beautiful isn't it?

Nathan pauses and looks at Olivia's face before snapping out of his temporary trance to observe the surroundings, and then back to Olivia.

NATHAN

Yes.

OLIVIA

Come on, let me give you a tour.

We go quickly from shot to shot of Olivia and Nathan touring the camp. The sound is primarily music over the somewhat muted sounds of the various quick scenes. They tour the fruit stands, meet villagers, examine folk art on display and the artisans who create tin sculptures of animals and people.

The sound of the scene resumes as they play with a monkey while feeding it grapes. Olivia laughs at Nathan's discomfort when the curious monkey climbs on his back.

We cut to the two reaching the end of a path near an opening to the jungle. Nathan looks back for a second.

NATHAN

Your father should be back with the others soon...

OLIVIA

Come on, I want to show you something.  
We won't be long.

Olivia's hand grabs Nathan's and he looks down to see if it was on purpose.

NATHAN

OK...

OLIVIA

Come on.

Olivia leads Nathan into the jungle. The ensuing scene resembles the scene where Sarah led young Nathan through the streets of Pretoria to her home. The recollection of the Nathan's memory seems to register on his face. Olivia leads him past a flurry of lush green vegetation, deeper into the jungle.

OLIVIA

This way.

Olivia and Nathan cut into a less warn path. Olivia slows down and releases Nathan's hand. She ducks under a few low hanging branches and looks back at Nathan.

OLIVIA

Don't worry, I know where I'm going.

Nathan has some trouble making his way through the brush. We hear the shrill chirps of parrots as they near the spot.

NATHAN

And where is that?

OLIVIA

My favorite spot...when we first came here the land was mostly barren. Winhelm worked his magic, making thousands of seeds. I helped plant this patch of fronds.

The two emerge to a clearing with a cluster of oil palm fronds full of gray parrots.

OLIVIA

It was like they sprung up overnight...

NATHAN

Wow...when did you plant them?

OLIVIA

They'll be three years old this May.

NATHAN

How is that possible?

OLIVIA

Winhelm described it like...like back before people even existed. There was more...pressure something like that...anyways, the air was thicker...different. He said The Garden is like that, and things just...well they grow fast.

Nathan is still astounded.

NATHAN

Huh...

OLIVIA

Yea, it's hard for me to explain, but  
it's pretty great right?

NATHAN

Yea...

OLIVIA

Check this out.

Olivia whistles a few notes and after a beat a few birds up in the trees whistle back. She whistles the tune again and a chorus of parrots respond in key with a birdsong of their own.

OLIVIA

Go head, you try!

NATHAN

Remember how that went last time...I  
don't make a very convincing horse.  
I'm no better at bird calls.

Olivia smiles and walks closer to the cluster of trees, whistling a song in key with the birds. She walks behind one of the trees and emerges with a parrot on her hand. She looks at Nathan with look that draws him in. He comes closer. Olivia rubs the birds head with her fingers, brushing the feathers back gently and examining the pattern.

OLIVIA

Nathan, meet Taddle.

The bird mimics Olivia.

TADDLE

Taddle...taddle. Nathan.

Nathan starts to laugh.

NATHAN



Can you teach Tera that trick?

TADDLE

Tera Tat Trick. Tera Tat Trick.

The two laugh at the bird copying Nathan's words. Taddle continues to quack back words throughout their conversation.

OLIVIA

Horses can't do it, only these parrots.  
Taddle's the best with words.

NATHAN

You said it was nearly empty here a few years ago. Where did all of these animals come from?

OLIVIA

A lot of them were just attracted to The Garden. Like Noah's arc...

NATHAN

What?

OLIVIA

It's a Bible story. He built an arch to save his family from a big flood and God sent the animals to save them too.

NATHAN

Oh...

OLIVIA

And some of them are test tube babies.  
Like Taddle.

Olivia gives the bird a kiss on the head and he flies off to a branch above.

NATHAN

Winhelm made them?

OLIVIA

Yea, worked his magic.

NATHAN

When Karim told your father about the lion that jumped on me, he said they were trained...

OLIVIA

Winhelm programmed them.

NATHAN

Like...a robot?

OLIVIA

Kind of, yea, he chipped the meat eaters so they wouldn't try to eat us. The lion must have not been able to tell that you were a human.

NATHAN

Yea, I was wearing a breather. Anton told me to take it off...

OLIVIA

It's like night and day right?

NATHAN

Yea, when I took it off she gave me a big sloppy kiss.

Olivia giggles, holding her hand over her mouth, trying not to embarrass Nathan.

OLIVIA

Sorry!

NATHAN

It's OK...

Olivia looks up at Nathan, her eyes full of joy. They pause for a moment, Olivia can't hold back the impulse. She leans in and Nathan tilts his head down to avoid the kiss.

NATHAN

I can't.

Olivia looks embarrassed for a moment. Nathan eases back.

OLIVIA

I'm sorry.

NATHAN

Don't be...it's just. It's Sarah. I  
can feel her holding on. I have to hold  
on too.

We cut back to see the Olivia embracing Nathan under the chirping birds in the branches above. Olivia embraces him as more of a friend than a lover.

We pan back and the couple shrinks as the perspective pulls out through the leaves and branches to the path that they took from the village. We hear the group of rebel soldiers hurriedly approach. We hear Illias, Zaid, and Tarik yelling about their limited time, about making a stand. They get closer and eventually fly past the shot.

They yell at their horses to hurry, and one of them complains about "that damn bug." We cut back to Nathan and Olivia abruptly ending the embrace. They look towards the path where the sounds came from.

NATHAN

What was that? It can't be...

OLIVIA

They're just now getting back?

NATHAN

They sounded...like they were in trouble. They must have been scorched pretty bad.

Olivia looks worried at the fact that her father is probably injured.

NATHAN

We should go back.

Olivia nods and they hurry to out of the shot to the path.

#### **CERTAIN PROBLEMS**

#### **EXT. VILLAGE - DAY**

Several villagers surround the soldiers who have dismounted their horses and are now yelling for help. As Olivia and Nathan near they can see that horses are badly burned, covered in splotches of singed skin.

OLIVIA

Dad!

Zaid ignores his daughter and screams for Winhelm.

ZAID

Where is he? Winhelm! Does anyone know?

OLIVIA

Father what happened?!

ZAID

I'll explain, we have to get the others to the hall now!

Zaid turns briefly to his daughter and then quickly runs into the village screaming for Winhelm. Karim and Illias hurriedly take the saddles and gear off of their horses. Tera gallops over and responds to the sight of the other Gabe with a whimper.

ILLIAS

Shit, we need to treat these burns now!

NATHAN

I'll get my supplies!

Nathan runs to the house, leaving Olivia with the soldiers and the crowd of worried villagers.

OLIVIA

Karim what happened?

KARIM

We were running behind schedule...

ILLIAS

They know we're here.

OLIVIA

What!?

ILLIAS

Zaid was bit by some little bug.

OLIVIA

I thought the sun burned them all up... and what does that have to do with-

KARIM

A drone, like a little mosquito or something, I don't know. We crushed it but, if a signal got out...

Karim looks like he's processing it for the first time all over again. Olivia is distressed. Nathan returns with the skin repair cream (that he used on Tera before). He begins applying it to Gabe's burned spots. Karim looks to Nathan and then to some of the villagers.

KARIM

Aminata, Samba take this.

Karim snatches the container from Nathan's hand abruptly and hands it to the villagers that were called on. Nathan freezes in confusion.

KARIM

Come on Nathan.

Karim tosses Nathan one of the bags from his horse.

KARIM

We've got to meet the others at the hall.

Nathan looks to Olivia while Karim and Illias rush away with their bags slung over their backs. Nathan and Olivia turn from their worried glance and run after the soldiers.

**INT. MEETING HALL - DAY**

Zaid approaches a table at the front and slides his hand swiftly across the surface, flinging the bible, sermon notes and a cloud of dust out of his way to clear some space. Winhelm pulls a magnifying lens from his pocket. Zaid places the small metallic bug down on the cleared surface.

ZAID

This is what bit me.

Winhelm leans down with the lens at his eye to examine the culprit.

WINHELM

Hmm, yes it looks to have drawn some blood.

ZAID

No shit...

WINHELM

Sneaky little thing...It must have been on your arm for a few seconds...probably long enough to send the signal.

ZAID

How long do we have?

WINHELM

Maybe...two...three hours.

Zaid lets out a muffled grunt and several expletives, pacing for a moment and then slamming his fist into the table.

ZAID

Bastards!

People have been pouring into the room, they were murmuring about the cause of worry, but now they are silent. They wait for news from Zaid.

The commander composes himself for a moment and then turns to the crowd. He paces slowly forward until he lifts his head.

ZAID

Alright, listen up. We've got a few hours before the drone army hits our shield.

The reaction of the crowd is pure panic.

ZAID

Silence!

Several people accuse Zaid of failing them. Olivia lets out a shrill whistle to get everyone's attention.

ZAID

We knew this day would come! Today we make our stand! Our soldiers will arm themselves...civilians, gather supplies and get the children...and the elderly to the bunker and stay put! If they breach the shield we'll have no choice. We'll have to blast the shield...

Fear pervades the crowd.

ZAID

Get to it!

The crowd scatters as Zaid turns to Winhelm.

ZAID

When I give the order, you trigger the pulse.

WINHELM

Yes.

Zaid clasps Winhelm's hand and whispers something into the scientists ear before releasing him. Winhelm nods and hurries off.

Zaid turns to Nathan and Olivia.

ZAID

Follow me.

#### **INT. BARRACKS**

Zaid bursts through the door with Nathan and Olivia trailing behind. The room is full of various colors of florescent light from the weapons, charging stations, and bulbs. Tarik, Zaid, Karim, Illias, and Nolan hurriedly prepare for battle, checking weapons, divvying out ammo, and gearing up with armor. Nolan prays his battle cry aloud throughout.

NOLAN



Unleash your wrath in full upon our  
enemies oh God! Oh that you would slay  
the wicked! Rise up, O Lord! Scatter  
our enemies, let those who hate you  
flee before your righteous power. They  
fight against us without cause,  
returning our good with evil. Oh Lord  
my God, if we have brought this upon  
ourselves, if we have rewarded evil,  
let the enemy pursue, let him trample  
us to the ground. Search us, O God,  
and know our hearts. Let us fight  
without fear of death! They curse you  
oh God! Crush them beneath your feet,  
rescue us from the wicked...send your  
holy archangel Gabriel. Send your  
legions. Lead us into battle against  
the evil one!

Tarik tosses a rifle to Zaid. We hear the chirps and hums of their  
futuristic weapons. Zaid takes a glowing ammo canister and twists  
it into place on the side of his rifle. He turns to Nathan who is  
fastening the mining claw to his hand.

ZAID

Do you want a rifle?

Nathan shakes his head and holds up the claw bearing hand.

NATHAN

I'll tear them apart.

Zaid nods.

Nathan looks at Olivia who seems to be in battle mode, strapping on  
armor as quickly as possible. She hesitates for a moment when she  
sees his look.

OLIVIA

Grab a vest from the wall.

Farris bursts through the doorway.

FARRIS

I came as soon as I could, still saving  
that rifle for me?

ILLIAS

You know it.

Zaid puts a helmet over his head, mostly clear with slits for air and a curled metal spine going up the back. He then straps on some sort of gauntlet with a screen and turns to Tarik.

ZAID

Tarik, check to make sure the others are ready? I'll meet you at North West edge of camp. I've got to check with Winhelm on the shield. Let's make it quick people!

TARIK

Yes sir!

THE OTHERS (EXCEPT NATHAN)

Yes sir!

Olivia puts a helmet over Nathan's head (her's is already on).

OLIVIA

Hey...

Olivia clicks her helmet visor against his and holds him with her hands on his shoulders.

OLIVIA

We're going to get through this...stick with me OK? I've been shooting since I was ten.

NATHAN

Don't worry about me.

Illias slings his rifle over his shoulder and picks up a compact, expandable turret.

TARIK

Alright, let's go.

Tarik holds the door for Illias, Nolan, Farris, and Karim who each secure the last of their gear before leaving. Nathan looks to Olivia and follows her lead out of the room.

#### **THE STAND**

#### **EXT. BARRACKS - DAY**

The group hurries past a crowd of villagers carrying their belongings to the bunker. Nathan looks to where they are headed and spots Isabel by an open hatch to the underground bunker. She is busy giving instructions and helping people as they step down into the hatch. The fighters hurriedly continue on to the place where their horses were. Nathan reaches Tera. Karim gestures towards the helpful villagers who took care of the injured horses.

KARIM

Thank you, that's enough, get to the bunker with the others.

The helpful villagers do as he instructs. Olivia hands Nathan a saddle for Tera, which he places on her back as she strokes Tera's face. Once Nathan is mounted Olivia reaches for his hand and he pulls Olivia up to ride with him. Zaid comes riding in on his horse to meet the group.

ZAID

They just crossed the border into Agadez, coming from the north east. We'll post up at the edge of the shield.

Zaid rides around the group to the front as he says this, and then turns to ride into the forest. The group rides behind him, charging through the wall of jungle vegetation.

#### **EXT. AT THE SHIELD WALL - DAY**

The group halts as they reach the edge of the jungle, dismounting their horses. Illias throws down the expandable turret and calibrates it to face out towards the wilderness beyond the shield. Tarik sends the horses back into the jungle, shouting for them to run off. Nathan dismounts and removes the gear from Tera's saddle. He pauses for a moment and lifts helmet from his head. He strokes the horse's mane. He knows this may be the last time he sees Tera.

NATHAN

Be good.

He looks to Olivia for a moment and then back to Tera.

NATHAN

Go on.

Tera seems to want to stay but Nathan urges her to go with the other horses into the jungle. He watches as she gallops off before securing his helmet back in place.

Zaid looks to Karim, who taps in a command on his own gauntlet screen. Suddenly the jungle floor begins to rumble as two large cannons emerge from the dirt around the perimeter. Nathan is startled at the sight. A loud high pitched hum starts to loudly pulse. Nathan turns to see Zaid raising his gauntlet, aiming his fist towards the sky. Olivia points at the jungle behind them.

OLIVIA

Look.

At first Nathan sees nothing, but then one after another the lions emerge from the brush, walking to Zaid and sitting patiently for further orders. Throughout the jungle the vicious animals emerge from the brush as they continue the preparation. Some of the soldiers are checking the calibrations on the turrets that have emerged. Zaid and Tarik briefly discuss strategy.

Olivia fires into the desert. Green glowing blasts of light fly from the end of her rifle leaving plumes of green light and dust in their wake. Olivia begins adjusting the controls on her rifle. Nathan looks at the smoldering earth where Olivia fired and gets an idea.

OLIVIA

What is it?

NATHAN

Watch this.

Nathan reaches out and lifts a chunk of burning earth from smoldering impact spot. It changes form until it is a smoldering

ball of glassy sand. He slowly reals it in until it hovers in front of them. Olivia smiles in amazement at the make-shift weapon.

Zaid looks out into the distance for a moment and snaps back to the group.

ZAID

Incoming! Take your positions!

Nathan looks out and sees the line of black figures in the distance quickly approaching. We cut in close to make out some of the machines, their sharp black appendages glistening in the sunlight as they lumber forward, digging their "forearms" in the sand to propel them forward and landing on their "legs." Nathan steps back, bracing himself to fling the burning hunk of earth.

Olivia takes cover at the edge of the jungle behind a fallen tree and crouches down.

ZAID (COMING THROUGH A SPEAKER IN THE  
HELMET)

Wait for my mark!

Olivia aims her gun at the black figures in the distance. Nathan reels back. We get a closer look at the approaching machines in his sights, they kick up a cloud of dust as they barrel forward.

The automatic turrets lock on to the advancing army. Illias stands at the expanded turret and turns to his brother Farris. He raises his hand in salute and Farris responds, saluting his brother and then raising his rifle to his shoulder. Nolan is nearby, holding his rifle like a sacrament to God in both hands before him, mumbling a quick prayer.

ZAID (ON THE HELMET SPEAKER)

Ready yourselves!

Nolan returns the rifle to his shoulder and prepares to fire. Nathan stares out of the shield at the group of machines approaching, they kick up sand as they approach. Their black appendages glistening in the sun as they charge forward.

ZAID (ON THE HELMET SPEAKER)

Now!

Nathan flings the burning boulder, sending it crashing into the front lines of the enemy army. The impact knocks several of the Alliance soldiers back. A flurry of green light comes flying from the soldiers' rifles. Nathan ducks as large beams of constant light blast from the turrets and a slow rhythm of explosive grenades launch from Illias' mounted weapon. We see the effect of the blasters on the enemy armor, it eats at the metal, corroding it down to the hydrological parts and wires beneath.

We see an overhead view of the shielded jungle on the right and the army of hundreds of machines on the left.

As the machines are destroyed, they collapse and post humans come tumbling out from the inside. Some are trapped inside, trying to escape as their vehicles come crashing down on top of them, and some come crawling out of the black metal husks to be torn apart by the oncoming fire in a cloud of blood. The machines behind them trample their bodies as they trudge forward. We see Nathan's eyes widening behind the visor(which reflects the glowing green hue from the firing weapons).

ZAID (ON THE HELMET SPEAKER)

Hold your positions!

Nathan looks back and he gets an idea. He lifts a large rock from the jungle edge and hurls it at the enemy. It knocks back several machines and yet more emerge, trampling over the front line and nearing the shield. Nathan continues to hurl objects at the machines, rocks, tree trunks, and chunks of earth. While most of the machines are destroyed by the onslaught, a couple make it to the shield (broken by the blasts but mostly intact). They seem to be disrupted by the magnetic field as they pass through it, they twitch left and right as their controls go haywire. One is blasted open by the fire and the post human inside is near enough for us to hear his screams. Nathan tears the front panel from another machine. The post human operating the machine begins to crawl out.

POST HUMAN CRAWLER

For the alliance!

He raises his hand and looks up with his glowing blue eyes. Nathan reaches towards him but before he can act the post-human is pounced on by two of the lions. One of them gets a firm bite on his neck, rearing up and pulling out bloody muscle and wires from the body.

One of the machines that breaches the shield reaches for a lion through the barrier with its clamp-like hand. As it takes a hold of the lion, the animal flails in its firm grasp as it raises the lion up and out of the shield. The lion's hairs are burned from its body. Nathan reaches towards the robot's legs, pulling piece from

piece and causing the machine to collapse. The lion runs back to the safety of the shield.

Elias screams as he shoots several explosive canisters into the nearby group of machines, their parts come flying back into the jungle from the blasts.

OLIVIA

Watch out!

One of the machines takes a swipe at a turret, sending its parts flying. Nathan grabs a chunk of metal that flies at his head. It floats in midair only inches from his face. He flings it at the robot, piercing its armor. Nathan looks back at Olivia who acknowledges the close call.

As the explosions clear we see post humans dragging themselves from the rubble with body parts missing and wires trailing from their missing limbs before they crushed by a new line of machines emerging from the cloud. We hear an empty click from Elias' turret before he dismounts and grabs the rifle from his shoulder, retreating to protective cover.

The war wages on with the rebels and auto turrets taking down a massive amount of machines. The piles of corroded parts lay smoldering in a heap at the edge of the jungle while still more machines drive forward and begin penetrating the barrier. Nathan goes wild flinging their broken parts at the charging machines. When some machines make it through, they are easily taken down as they go haywire at the edge of the shield. One post human emerges, intent on getting to the soldiers. A lion attempts to take him down and his eyes flash a bright white light blinding the beast and a few of the soldiers before he gets torn to pieces by several blasts from the rebel rifles. This temporary distraction is enough to allow for more machines to near the barrier.

One of the machines hurdles through, aimed at one of the auto turrets. It's hulking mass lands and smashes into the turret, disabling it. More machines pile through with the decreased fire power until the second turret is destroyed in a similar manner by a flailing machine.

ZAID

Fall back!

Nathan stands strong flinging machine parts and post humans into the wasteland at the oncoming army. When they turn back we see (through the trees) a lion being strangled by one of the machines and smashed into the ground. Suddenly Olivia turns and blasts an approaching machine, before she can disable it completely it smashes into a

nearby tree trunk and she narrowly avoids the tree as it falls into the spot where they were standing. Nathan helps Olivia up and they run deeper into the jungle, turning occasionally to attack. They look around noting that the group is scattered but still fighting. Farris is on top of a tackled post human smashing his head with the butt of his rifle.

NOLAN

To hell with you!

We see Nolan standing strong, blasting at an incoming machine nearby. Zaid is deeper in the jungle, as Nathan and Olivia reach him, we hear his commands as he yells into the microphone on his gauntlet.

ZAID

Blow the shield! Now! They're in!  
Blow it!

Zaid rips the gauntlet from his wrist and throws it to the ground. Time seems to slow for a moment. Nathan sees a swarm of machines crashing into trees as they flail their way through the jungle. He turns to one that approaches Zaid reaches out to knock it back, but his glove begins to malfunction. He examines it and tries to fix the problem. We see a light behind them (at the shield's edge) grow to a bright white. There is a ethereal humming noise and Nathan notices the lights on his mining claw flicker off. The noise climaxes with the distant the light of the shield and then comes a blast that sends the glove flying off of Nathan's hand. The magnetic burst throws the metal objects, their guns and the machines out of the jungle into the wasteland. We see the blast from an over head view, waves of machines fling back. When the light dissipates we see more waves outside of the blast radius continue on towards the unprotected jungle (which is brighter now to represent the unrestrained light of the sun pouring in due to the loss of the shield).

Nathan and Olivia look up at the tree tops above them. Leaves burning in the sun and suddenly catching on fire.

OLIVIA

The shield is down, we have to get to  
the bunker!

Olivia grabs a hold of Nathan. As they run, pieces of burning tree limbs and leaves drift to floor. Olivia turns to see her dad.

OLIVIA



Father!

Zaid pulls his helmet off with one hand before turning to them.

ZAID

Just go!

Zaid flings the helmet at an oncoming robot (no longer phased by the shield). It doesn't interrupt the machine's forward momentum whatsoever.

ZAID

Come get me!

OLIVIA

No!

Zaid picks up a rock and flings it at the machine. Nathan runs over to Zaid and tackles him out of the robot's way. Zaid looks up into Nathan's eyes and pleads with him before brushing Nathan aside.

ZAID

Stop! I need to do this...

Zaid rises, grabbing a burning branch, he lunges at the machine and it fragments into embers when he brakes it across the robots shell.

ZAID

Gaaah!

The robot reaches out and picks up Zaid by the waist.

NATHAN

Let go!

Nathan grabs Zaid's leg and the machine knocks him to the ground. It slams Zaid's body against itself, pinning him between to its shell before stepping forward. Nathan rolls out of machines path and it reaches down, snatching Nathan up with his free hand and pinning him against its body before turning towards the edge of the

jungle to take him prisoner. Olivia tries to run after them, but Nolan and Farris stop her. She sees Nathan's face over the machines shoulder as it carries him and her father off. Nathan sees her pleading with Farris before they drag her back to the village.

We see Nathan trying to fight his way free from the robot, trying to turn and see where it is taking him. The robot carries them to two other machines and halts. The two machines kneel down and their "cockpits" open to reveal two post humans who proceed to step out of the machines, turning to change the controls, cuff like fixtures pop out from where the legs, arms, and neck of the pilot are positioned...these machines are now set to autopilot so that they can carry the prisoners back to the Alliance haven. The robot throws Nathan and then Zaid to the ground towards the post humans. Nathan struggles with his post human captor.

#### POST HUMAN CAPTOR

You will surrender human!

His eyes grow in brightness at the command, as though he is prepared to blind Nathan. Nathan turns to Zaid who willingly follows the post human's orders to get inside the machine. They lock eyes for a moment and Zaid has a look in his face like this is part of his plan. Nathan is confused but eventually allows the post human to thrust him into the machine. The cuffs lock in place around his appendages and neck. He looks terrified as the machine seals shut around him. Inside of the machine there is very little light from the few small glowing pieces. Nathan begins to panic as a sleeping gas fills the chamber. He hold his breath, but eventually gives in (quickly due to his panicked state) and inhales the sleep gas, passing out.

#### THE HAVEN

Nathan wakes up and gasps, rearing forward inside of the machine. Temporarily forgetting where he is, a fear sets in before an unsettled calm. There are muffled noises of electronics and robotic commands coming from the outside of the machine's shell. Suddenly the machine cracks open revealing that Nathan is inside of an ornate electronic environment, the alliance haven. A group of post humans take a hold of him before the braces around his arms, legs, and neck release. They drag his body out of the machine and through the intricate, futuristic corridor. Nathan silently looks around, examining the interior of the Haven's hallway as he is dragged through it. Post humans glance at him, machines and drones also move to and fro throughout. The post humans stop in front of a computer that appears to be a giant robotic eye, it scans Nathan and displays his identity, along with the instructions to take him to a certain "interrogation chamber."

Nathan's body is still weak from the sleep gas. They drag him limply

into the room and set him down in the interrogation seat, which locks him in place just like the machine cockpit. There is another large robotic eye on the wall facing him in the small room. The post humans exit the room and the eye begins twisting and clicking as it focuses and zooms on Nathan's various features. Suddenly a familiar voice fills the room.

SARAH'S VOICE

Hello Nathan...

Her voice is different now with a robotic, ethereal, inhuman filter. Nathan is startled by the sudden realization that his old friend is speaking to him.

NATHAN

Sarah!?

SARAH'S VOICE

Yes...that was my name wasn't it...

NATHAN

Why are you doing this?

SARAH'S VOICE

It's the only way Nathan. Why do you fight with these infidels?

NATHAN

These people are my friends. They're good people who just want to be left alone. The Alliance destroyed their homes...

SARAH'S VOICE

Look at you Nathan...you've aged so much...you look tired...your dying.

The eye turns downward, glowing brighter and aiming its light at the floor. The light begins as a patch of light on the floor and then

grows, manifesting as a human figure beginning with the feet and up to the head. A glowing, ghostly imitation of Sarah's young form stands before him, her holographic mouth moves with her words and she slowly steps towards him.

SARAH'S HOLOGRAM

I haven't aged a  
day...permanence...immortality...eterna  
l life. People have sought it since  
the beginning of time...and it's here.  
This is what your searching for.

NATHAN

You aren't Sarah.

SARAH'S HOLOGRAM

Don't you love me Nathan? Don't you  
want to be with me?

NATHAN

You can't be Sarah

There is an angry defiance in the holographic entities voice.

SARAH'S HOLOGRAM

You have no idea...your feeble mind  
cannot comprehend The Call for  
Ascension.

The hologram seems to tremble and flicker and suddenly the real  
manifestation emerges as the vision of Sarah transforms into Sativa.

SATIVA

Your flesh means nothing! A temporary  
flicker, a moment in time...humanity is  
the past. I am the future!

NATHAN

You won't win Sativa!

SATIVA

She would have died, you will too...if  
don't join us. You will be... a united  
consciousness.

NATHAN

No, I won't let you!

Sativa's figure smirks and turns away from him (as though the figure is looking at the wall pondering something). The figure fades until only the patch of light sits where the vision stood. The lens morphs and another figure appears, this woman appears as Sarah would have if the accident hadn't occurred. She is older and very beautiful. She turns to face Nathan and walks closer to him than before.

SARAH'S HOLOGRAM (SEDUCTIVELY)

This is what you want Nathan...I am  
Sarah. Here I am at the age you are  
now. Stunning, no? I can be anything  
you want...

NATHAN

I don't know you...

Nathan turns his head (as much as he is able) as Sarah's holographic hand reaches out, the light warming the side of his face and causing it to glow.

SARAH'S HOLOGRAM

You will join me!

We see single frame flashes of Nathan's memories of Sarah. He begins to scream. We see that the holographic hand seems to be reaching into his brain.

NATHAN

Stop! Make it stop!

We see several flashes of Nathan's memories of Olivia (from his perspective).

NATHAN

Let me go!

The hand pulls back and Nathan seems highly disturbed, unwilling at first to open his eyes. We see his face seems to be convulsing and then he finally pulls it together. He slowly opens his eyes to see a holographic Olivia standing before him.

HOLOGRAPHIC OLIVIA

See...dear Nathan. We can be whatever  
you want...

The figure reaches to take off her shirt.

HOLOGRAPHIC OLIVIA (SEDUCTIVELY)

You can have me...

Nathan is startled. He closes his eyes again.

NATHAN

No, make this stop! Sarah! If you can  
hear me...

Nathan slowly opens his eyes. The room is now void of holograms and completely quiet, until suddenly it fills with a horrifying voice, like a conglomeration of a thousand voices.

SARAH

We are God! Death will swallow you  
whole!

The light of the eye dims to black.

There is no response. Nathan breathes sporadically in the darkness, sweat drips down his face.

We see Nathan's eyes open in the dark interrogation room.

We are fixed on him, allowing the fear to mount until suddenly the door slides open and florescent light from the hallway fills the room. Two post humans walk in and take Nathan from the chair.

NATHAN

Where are you taking me?

There is no response as they drag Nathan through the hallway once again.

NATHAN

Where are you taking me?!

They arrive at a doorway to an operating room, we can see an operating table with braces to hold the patient down and a large hanging (head sized) mechanism suspended above the neck brace, Nathan sees it too.

NATHAN

Shit, no! NO! Please!

Nathan is weakly fighting with the post humans as they pull him through the doorway and force his body onto the operating table. He reaches out weakly towards one of their face.

NATHAN

Please! Please don't-

The post human slams his arm into the brace. He lifts his head to try to move away from the restraint. One post human types controls into a panel by the table and the neck restraint snaps around Nathan's throat. He gasps as it pulls him down against the table.

HORRIFYING VOICE

The unwilling must be sacrificed!

NATHAN (GASPING)

No. Stop. Please.

The mechanism above Nathan's head turns on. A small whirling blade starts to turn. Nathan's eyes widen in panic. One of the post humans pulls a breathing mask with a dangling tube from bellow the table and reaches to place it over Nathan's mouth and nose. He struggles, turning his face slightly and twitching his mouth which is clenched shut.

NATHAN (SCREAMING WITH HIS MOUTH SHUT)

No! No!

The mask is forced onto his face but Nathan keeps his mouth shut. The mechanism lowers, its small whirling blade approaching Nathan's forehead. He doesn't breath the gas in, but we can see that the mask is nearly full of the white clouds of sleeping gas. Nathan is slightly shaking his head as though he is trying to shake the mask from his face, his eyes clenched shut and his face full of sweat when suddenly there is a loud exploding tone like that of the bursting shield. We see the mechanism stop, the post humans collapse to the floor, and the lights dim to a tiny flickering glow. Nathan's eyes open and he looks around. He shakes his arm and the brace easily opens. He grabs the mask from his face with the freed arm and throws it off, the gas trails from his face until it has dissipated from the area around his mouth. He takes a giant breath and looks shocked. His breathing normalizes and he reaches for the brace by his throat which also opens with ease.

#### **ESCAPE**

#### **EXT. OPERATION ROOM**

Nathan cautiously steps out of the operating room and enters the hallway. We move out to see the many bodies of post humans, machines, and drones collapsed on the ground in the flickering corridor.

SARAH (DISTORTED)

A--thaaan.

Nathan looks around and sees no holographic manifestations. He cautiously moves on down the hallway to where he came from.

He observes one fallen, unmoving post human looking up with dead robotic eyes from the ground. He nudges the body with his foot to ensure that it isn't alive and moves on.

SARAH (DISTORTED)

Naaaa-~~than~~.

NATHAN

Sarah!

Suddenly one of the large "eyes" nearby flickers dimly for a moment and we can see the ghostly figure of young Sarah. Nathan is spooked.



NATHAN

Sarah! Where are you!

SARAH (DISTORTED)

Hurry!

He is startled, and stares where the hologram appeared, but it vanishes. He hears heavy footsteps running towards him from deeper in the haven.

NATHAN

Who's there?!

ZAID

Nathan?!

NATHAN

Zaid! What happened?

Zaid rounds a bend and meets Nathan, breathing heavily. He pauses, bending over for a moment to catch his breath, and then rises, opening up his vest to reveal burned up, smoking packs that look like detonated explosive charges.

NATHAN

The electromagnetic charges?

ZAID

Yup, I had Winhelm prepare them before the battle, just in case anything went wrong.

NATHAN

Why didn't you tell us?

ZAID

Men don't fight as hard when there's a Plan B.

NATHAN

So that's why you let them take you?

ZAID

Right...come on let's get out of here.

NATHAN

Wait, I have to save Sarah.

There is a flash of Sarah for a moment reaching out in front of them.

SARAH (DISTORTED)

Pleeeeeee-zzzz-donnnn-t-g-

The hologram flickers off.

ZAID

What the-

NATHAN

Sarah! Where are you?!

ZAID

Who is that?

NATHAN

She's a girl I knew...the one I tried to break out of Pretoria. Ascension forced her parents to enhance her. How long do we have before this place boots back up?

ZAID

I don't know if it will, but I'd rather not stay to find out...The others should be here soon.

NATHAN

The others?

ZAID

My men.

NATHAN

Am I the only one who didn't know about your plan?!

ZAID

No, but I gave Winhelm the instructions. They're here to break us out-

SARAH (DISTORTED)

Nathnnn! Donnnnn-T leave ee!

NATHAN

Sarah! Where are you!?

Nathan pauses, looking desperately down the corridor. Suddenly Sarah flickers on and off again, gesturing for Nathan to follow.

SARAH (DISTORTED)

Hurry!

Nathan bursts into a sprint towards the figure and then stops, realizing that Zaid needs to go. He turns quickly towards Zaid who looks at Nathan, questioning his decision to stay.

NATHAN

Go! I'll meet up with you! Get out of here!

ZAID

There's no time!

NATHAN

I have to try!

Nathan turns and sprints down the hallway. Our perspective switches to match Nathan's pace as he sprints down the corridor. He runs for a while, dodging fallen post-humans, until he comes to a split in the corridor. He looks around questioning which way to go. Suddenly Sarah appears again for a moment.

SARAH (DISTORTED)

Don't let it take me!

NATHAN

Hold on!

Nathan darts down the corridor in the direction of Sarah's hologram. We hear the sound of the power coming back online followed by a high tone signaling something. Lights fill the hallways pulsing in succession along the hallway from the entrance down the corridor. Nathan's urgency increases as he hurries down the hallway and suddenly he stops, turning to see the interior of an open room that he almost passed.

He turns back to look through the open doorway. He slowly walks into the chamber. It resembles the Ascension chamber from before, when Nathan broke Sarah out of the tower in Pretoria. Nathan looks around and realizes that all of the post human pods have their hatches open revealing that they are empty. Another doorway is open on the far side of the room and Nathan hurries through it. The ascending walkway is full of the pulsing light, as the emergency alarm sounds Nathan makes his way up.

He reaches the top and is shocked to see that the walkway emerges to a large circular bridge that wraps around a massive hollow chamber. There is a huge space ship that seems to be preparing for takeoff. Its low hum grows in volume throughout the following sequence. There are hundreds of post humans filing into the ship from multiple hanging bridges that funnel them into the several gateways around the side of the ship.

NATHAN

Oh my God...

Nathan approaches the nearest connected bridge with caution. As he nears the line of post humans that slowly files into the ship, he notices that they are all marching robotically (as though they are of one hive mind). With all of their eyes aglow they look like zombies. Nathan reaches out in front of one of the slowly moving post humans and it continues with no reaction. Realizing that it is safe to proceed, he runs down the walkway observing the crowded line, looking for Sarah. He notices one figure in the crowd as Sarah from behind and hurries to her.

NATHAN

Sarah! Sarah let's go!

Nathan reaches her and walks by her side trying to get her attention. His attempts fail. Sarah marches on emotionless and distant. Nathan stands in front of her. She bumps into him, pushing him back.

NATHAN

Hey! Snap out of it!

Nathan grabs her shoulders and pushes her back, the line begins to bump into her, brushing past them and towards the ship's opening. Nathan fights with Sarah, shaking her, trying to snap her out of the trance.

NATHAN

Come on! You have to stop!

Sarah keeps pushing back, mindlessly walking forward.

NATHAN

Sarah! I'm not letting you go!

Nathan slams into Sarah, knocking them both back onto the ground of the walkway. Sarah's head slams into the ground and her eyes close. When they open she is conscious, but weakened by the blow.

SARAH

Nathan? What...oh...my head.

NATHAN

I'm sorry, you wouldn't stop.

Sarah leans up slightly to see the other post humans filing into the ship and then back at Nathan.

SARAH

You came...

The tone still hums loudly in the chamber. Sarah looks like she is filled with a sudden painful urge. She covers her ears with her hands and groans.

NATHAN

Let's go!

Nathan helps Sarah up and they both rise to their feet.

SINGULARITY

Nathan Durand! Release her!

Nathan holds Sarah by the arm as they run away from the ship's opening, dodging the last mindless post humans who approach the ship. When they make it to the middle of the walkway, the alarm tone of the changes. Nathan looks back. Suddenly three post humans at the ship's entrance turn to face Sarah and Nathan.

Nathan, full of defiance, stands by Sarah, intent on fighting off the post humans who begin to approach them from ship. Sarah faces the post humans. Her eyes begin to charge. She blasts them with a blinding light. Nathan ducks down to shield his eyes and reaches for the multitool at his waist. The temporary shock of Sarah's attack stuns the post humans, giving Nathan time to extend a small blade from his multitool.

Nathan lunges at the first post human, slicing its hand as it reaches towards him. He then plunges the small blade into the post human's chest before knocking it off of walkway. Sarah blasts the other two post humans with a focused beam of bright light. Nathan looks back to see that Sarah seems drained by the attack. She is temporarily stooping down due to the lack of energy. Nathan turns back and lunges at another post human, knocking it from the bridge.

Before he can hit the third post human, it breaks out of the daze and grabs Nathan's weapon wielding hand.

The post human's eyes charge to blast Nathan with light. He ducks and sweeps the post human's legs, knocking it to the ground and plunging the blade into its throat. He twists the blade and we hear hard footsteps as Sativa emerges from the ship. Nathan looks up to see Sativa. She is now fully robotic with no human flesh, all of her features are metallic.

SARAH

Nathan watch out!

SATIVA

Ungrateful girl! I should never have saved your life!

Sativa reaches out towards Sarah. Sarah grabs her head and screams, her eyes flicker chaotically.

NATHAN

No!

Nathan charges Sativa but she swipes him back with her robotic arm, throwing him. Nathan slides to the edge of the walkway, nearly falling off before grabbing the edge. Sarah screams as Sativa walks forward with her arm outstretched. Nathan pulls himself over the edge of the bridge and sees Sarah collapse. Sativa drops her hand and turns to Nathan.

SATIVA

Wretch!

Sativa reaches down and grabs Nathan by his shirt, lifting him up off of his feet as he struggles to break the grip.

SATIVA

This ends now!

Sativa's menacing eyes glow brightly, she begins to choke him with her other robotic hand. Nathan gasps for breath. Sativa seems to study his face as he struggles for air.

SATIVA (SMILING)

What a feeble creature you are-

Nathan reacts with a sudden furious rush of adrenaline, plunging the multitool into Sativa's eye. Sativa screams and reels back, dropping Nathan and reaching for her sparking eye. The multitool blade is still lodged in her eye. Nathan darts to Sarah. He lifts Sarah into his arms and runs towards the exit. As he passes through we hear the Sativa scream at Nathan.

SATIVA

You'll pay for this!

We see Sativa board the ship, turning back to scream at Nathan as the gateway to the ship entrance begins to slide up.

SATIVA

You will surely die!

The ship's gateway seals shut and the entire chamber begins to rumble as the ship seems to prepare for launch.

SARAH (WEAK)

Don't let it me go...

Nathan looks down at Sarah. Her eyes are shut. Nathan hurries out of the space ship chamber with Sarah in his arms.

**INT. HAVEN EXIT**

We switch perspectives to see Zaid wedging a metal plate between the sliding doors of the outer gate. He looks back as Nathan approaches.

ZAID

You made it!

NATHAN

They've got a ship! they're leaving.

ZAID

Good. Let's get out of here.



Zaid pries the door open. Nathan crouches under the metal plate, carrying Sarah through the opening. Zaid follows behind them.

**EXT. ALLIANCE HAVEN - NIGHT**

The sky glows with the florescent hues of aurora lights. The humans appear as tiny silhouettes running from the base of the haven. It is a massive, cone shaped tower with a plateau top.

ZAID

They should be here...

We cut in close to Nathan (with Sarah) and Zaid reaching the end of the Haven exterior, now running clumsily through the sand away from the tower.

ZAID

They should have left at nightfall.  
Three nights is plenty of time to-

Zaid pauses and peers out to the horizon.

ZAID

There!

They continue making their way through the sand and Zaid points to the distant horizon.

ZAID

Can you see them?

We see Nathan squint as he runs. From his perspective, which comes into focus, we see four riders in the distance, silhouetted by the aurora lights.

ZAID

Over here!

Zaid continue to run and call out for the men as Nathan struggles to keep up. We see the riders from Nathan's squinted perspective. They stop, spotting Zaid, and begin galloping towards them.

NATHAN

The see us!

ZAID

Thank God!

Zaid slows down to catch his breath, holding his hand up so they don't lose track of his location. Nathan is also panting, he looks down at Sarah in his arms (now seemingly unconscious) and then looks towards the cone shaped tower.

NATHAN

Zaid, look!

When Zaid turns to look, we see that the tower is transforming. It's upper plateau is widening out and steam is emerging from the top like some kind of volcano. The outer shell of the tower seems to slowly compress downward revealing the pointed tip of something massive inside.

NATHAN

What is happening?

ZAID

I'm...not sure...

We hear the galloping of the horses until the soldiers are close by.

KARIM

I see you liked my idea.

Karim dismounts his horse and helps Winhelm dismount before he goes to greet commander. Zaid laughs and gestures towards his vest.

ZAID

Worked like a charm.

ILLIAS

What was it like in there? Who is that?

NATHAN

It was horrible. I almost got a drill  
to the forehead. This is my friend  
Sarah, the one I tried to rescue in  
Pretoria.

WINHELM

What luck.

NATHAN

She held on til the end...

ILLIAS

Here...take my horse.

Illias dismounts and Nathan and helps him get Sarah securely onto  
the horse.

WINHELM

Look!

Winhelm gestures to the tower which is opening to reveal more of the  
large pointed object that Nathan spotted earlier.

TARIK

Is that a ship?

WINHELM

I believe our little plan scared them.

NOLAN

They will spread their evil unto all of  
creation...

NATHAN

Where are they going?

WINHELM

I don't know...

ILLIAS

They could come back stronger; we need to bring that thing down while we have the chance.

NOLAN

Yes. They'll fill the universe with their sin...we need to bring it down.

Illias and Nolan arm and charge their weapons, aiming them towards the tip of the tower.

ZAID

It's worth a try.

Zaid grabs a rifle off one of the horses.

WINHELM

Wait...look...see how the light is bending.

Nathan mounts Illias' horse, making sure Sarah is secure, and then looks up in the direction of the tower.

The soldiers lower their rifles and the group looks and the aurora lights and stars around the haven seem to be bent by an unseen force. The spacecraft emerges slowly from the tower, and as it does the haven begins to disintegrate.

ZAID

That can't be good

WINHELM

It must be...a black hole? My god...DO NOT FIRE...if we bring that ship down, it could go haywire. It would eat us alive.

The haven has almost entirely been swallowed up into the engine of the space ship, and the ground around the haven is now being pulled into it.

WINHELM

We need to go, now!

The group hurries to mount their horses. As they gallop away we see the earth around the haven disintegrate into a cloud of particles that fly towards the ship, which hovers in place swallowing up more and more mass. We see a wide, bird's eye shot, and it seems that at the rate it is going that it will swallow the soldiers with it.

ZAID

Ya! Come on! Faster! Faster!

Nathan holds on to Sarah, he looks back with widening, awestruck eyes to see the ever nearing vortex of particles being ripped from their bonds and sucked into the ship's engine.

NATHAN

It's catching up to us!

Now times slows down, sound morphs, Nathan sees the tail hairs of the horse break into dust, we see his eyes full of awe and then just light. There is only light. The dark colors of the night scene seem to suddenly invert. For a few beats everything is bathed in an intensely bright light. And then we jarringly switch back to normal. Several of the horses collapse, throwing the soldiers from them. Nathan's horse is rearing up, he reaches to hold on to Sarah, but they both come falling down. We see him cough and wipe sand from his face. He finally turns to see that the ship it is gone. He and Sarah are lying at the edge of a massive, gaping crater where tons of land once was. We pan out to see the huge scale of the missing earth compared to the small company of rebels at its edge. We keep panning out to until the crater becomes like a speck.

ZAID

Come on, the sun is rising.

We see that Zaid is beckoning the men who stand at the edge of the cliff observing the sheer destruction. Nathan is beside him on a horse with Sarah. There is a dim light and the landscape is bright enough to make out clearly the huge scope of the crater. The others

each slowly turn from observing the crater to their join Zaid on horseback.

NOLAN

Abomination...of desolation.

Nolan rises from a kneeling position at the edge of the crater. He scoops up sand as he does so, and watches it run through his fingers drifting out with the wind. He looks again at the hole, up to the sky, and then turns to join the others.

The camera pans up the sky which begins a time lapse from morning to day tonight to morning to day a few times. It is slower at first and then very fast until we reach the fourth morning, just before sunrise.

We hear the sound of horse hooves clambering against the hard desert floor outside of The Garden and cross fade to the next scene.

**RETURN**

**EXT. EDGE OF THE GARDEN - EARLY MORNING**

We see the backs of the rebels riding at a slow trot towards what remains of The Garden. As the shot rises we see the smoldering remains of the jungle: blackened trees burned nearly to the ground. It looks nothing like before, we can see that the same destruction stretches for a great distance. We see a birds eyes view of The Garden, which is now a large black circle on the desert floor. We cut back to the soldiers as they pass the mound of fallen machines and post human corpses (burned by the sun). As they near the edge of the jungle, they pass over corpses of the lions that fought with them. We pan through the destruction of the jungle, there are a few scattered, fallen machines, but mostly dead plants and animals. We are pulling away from the soldiers, towards the village. We pan over the burned remains of the village and eventually stop at the hatch where the people hid during the battle.

We cut to Winhelm opening the door to his workstation for Zaid and the others to lead their horses in (assuring the audience that the much loved beasts aren't abandoned). Nathan lays Sarah on the table, he runs his hand over her head. Winhelm feels for a pulse.

NATHAN

Is she OK?

WINHELM

I don't know.

Nathan looks unsatisfied.

WINHELM

I'll do what I can...she's holding on.

We cut to the inside of the hatch, which is very large. Many villagers are inside of the crude bunker, candles are flickering throughout, their wax is in puddles, spilling over edges of the basic furnishings. We see the light from the opened hatch spill into the room from above, the squinting villagers look up with hands at their brows to see who has come for them. One by one the soldiers come down into the hatch. First Zaid, who is greeted with great cheer and applause. Olivia runs to her father and embraces him. The others come down one by one all greeted with joy. We notice Olivia's temporary worry which is calmed when the last man, Nathan, comes down the rungs of the bunker ladder. Olivia greets Nathan, but he seems to be barely happy for the moment, he won't be happy until Sarah's OK.

#### **RECOVERY**

The following is a compilation of the recovery, with little to no scene sounds and possibly music:

We see Winhelm tending to Sarah. He checks her vitals and analyzes her internal state on a screen that displays the enhancements. Nathan stands by, holding Sarah's hand and watching Winhelm work.

We see Zaid struggling to replace a mechanism on the underground magnetic shield generator.

We see Isabel rationing out water and food to the villagers in the bunker with Farris' help.

Olivia gives water to the horses outside of the workstation. She sees Nathan discussing Sarah's condition with Winhelm. He seems frustrated. Olivia is concerned for her friend.

Several villagers search houses and rubble for anything that can be of use by the light of the aurora lights. One man picks up several porcelain plates and dusts them off. A woman finds the spot where Nathan roomed with Isabel and Farris. She examines several things including the vase which is burned out and blackened, and after lifting several planks of burned wood and charcoal she sees a shiny piece of metal buried in the gray soot. She reaches in and pulls out the little tin figurine that Nathan saw before.

Zaid reaches into a panel in the generator room and something clicks, the rotary engines come alive and as he looks up we see Karim is standing behind him, a smile grows across their faces.

We see Farris and Isabel laying bricks for a new building (it is now safe to be out at daytime). Farris takes a moment to wipe the sweat from his brow and we notice small shrubs have sprouted up around the building site.

We see Winhelm extract blood from Sarah. Then, through his microscope, we see a small cell replicating into two.

We see the night sky, full of aurora lights. We see the glow of the light on the faces of a crowd as Nolan preaches an outdoor sermon. Nathan is distant and distracted.

It is daytime in the grassy outskirts of the village. We see Olivia's hand move a clump of dirt over a planted seed.

The camera is fixed on this little mound after she removes her hand.

We see Nathan kneeling by the entrance to the workstation, waiting for news from Winhelm. The door opens and Winhelm gestures for Nathan to enter. We hear the sounds of the medical devices, the chirp of Sarah's heart monitor, and air being supplied to her lungs via a mask. She lies motionless on the table.

Winhelm goes to a control panel and looks to Nathan, Nathan nods and Winhelm flips a switch. Sarah's body lunges from the shock and falls back to the table. Her eyes are still closed. Nathan looks hopeful. Winhelm waits for a moment and then flips the switch again. Again Sarah's body bounces up and down again. Winhelm looks discouraged as he examines the readout of Sarah's condition. Nathan grabs her hand and puts a hand on her face. We focus on Nathan's face his eyes begin to tear up, he fights the tears back and begins to silently plead, shaking, and clenching his hand tight. We stay on Nathan for a few beats and then he opens his eyes.

His eyes seem to be studying Sarah and an expression of hope begins to fill his face. Winhelm turns to look at what Nathan sees. We see Sarah's face begin to awake, her eyes move beneath their lids and slowly, her eyes open (now fully human) to see Nathan. We focus on Nathan's face, full of pure joy and then back to Sarah whose eyes seem to shine with a natural light.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END



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