

HARNESSERS

Written by

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OVER BLACK

BARTOK and GREI are talking.

GREI (V.O.)  
Name?

BARTOK (V.O.)  
Bartok Organon.

GREI (V.O.)  
Age?

BARTOK (V.O.)  
Fifteen.

GREI (V.O.)  
Rank?

BARTOK (V.O.)  
Six of Clubs.

GREI (V.O.)  
How many times have you been here?

BARTOK (V.O.)  
You're going to make me say it. One-  
hundred and eighty-six.

GREI (V.O.)  
Why are you here?

BARTOK (V.O.)  
To become a Harnesser. Defend home.

GREI (V.O.)  
You look like shit. What happened?

BARTOK (V.O.)  
You wouldn't believe me.

GREI (V.O.)  
Try me. We've got time. This is an  
appointment after all.

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING

Bartok (black, bald, slight build) is being chased by four teenage bullies on foot: VOLK, JIRA, ZIP, and JAVE. Bartok races past bright lights on crowded slum streets with massive high-rise buildings.

He bursts through a holographic street billboard right as the woman on the billboard is saying, "Be advised you are out during Irgo's peak crime hours. Please return to your home as soon as possible..."

The billboard shimmers when he crashes through before returning to its normal image. A couple seconds pass before the teenagers pass through it as well.

Bartok hits a corner and turns down an alley...

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok goes to take a quick leap over a fence thinking he has it, but is yanked down by his leg. He scurries backwards against the fence facing his attackers.

BARTOK

Guys, I already told you, I'm all out of Stick-From-Ass Remover. Trust me, if I had more, it would be all yours, no charge. Oh look, I got one of you to laugh!

VOLK

All you've got is jokes, huh, number? Let's see how hard you feel when you're on the ground.

BARTOK

That line felt more sentimental when it came from your mom. Another chuckle! I'm on fire today.

VOLK

(To Jira)

Seriously, bro?

JIRA

Sorry.

The four start in on Bartok...

BARTOK

Guys, come on! Why are you doing this? What are you trying to prove?

VOLK

What are you trying to prove,  
number? You think you're better  
than us? You actually think a six  
has what it takes to become a  
Harnesser? Shouldn't have any  
problems with the four of us then.

Except he does. After they wail on him for a bit, Volk grabs Bartok by the back of his shirt and yanks him to his knees.

VOLK (CONT'D)

Let's finish this.

Jira takes a couple steps aiming to kick Bartok underneath his chin. Bartok moves out of the way sending the kick straight into the nuts of Volk.

Volk's sudden vomiting provides enough of a distraction for Bartok to break free and take off running again.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok crosses the street and runs into a white building that resembles a large conservatory...

INT. WHITE BUILDING RESEMBLING A CONSERVATORY - MOMENTS LATER

It's all white on the inside, spacious. Bartok flies by other beings of varied species, racing to the center of the first floor into a small courtyard.

He hops onto a transparent elevator. As the elevator ascends, he focuses on catching his breath.

The elevator lets him off at a long bridge with lights staggered across it that decorate the night sky...

EXT. LIGHT BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok runs across the bridge, stopping short when he gets to the back of the line. He can see the transparent dome looming in front of him where the bridge ends, but there are about seven people ahead of him in line.

An antsy Bartok keeps glancing nervously behind him and finally spots the four bullies headed across the bridge.

BARTOK

Shit.

Bartok gets to the front of the line where a GUARD is scanning people through. He/She takes one look at Bartok then at the Six of Clubs rank tattooed on Bartok's inner wrist. The guard scans the rest of the line...

GUARD

Are there any Face Ranks that would  
like to move through?

A few people push through cutting ahead of Bartok. A MAN towards the back of the line starts to make a move towards the front, but his WIFE cuts him down with a smoldering glare.

The Guard finally looks back at Bartok with a smug smirk.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Good to go.

INT. INNER PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Inner Park is encased in a massive glass dome, an expansive, lush park where all walks of life spend time. The park boasts some of the most exotic animals in captivity, both large and small. The animals are scattered throughout the park blocked off from the rest of the population by laser cages.

Bartok finds a bench near multiple SECURITY GUARDS and parks himself down. The bullies hang back giving him distance. Bartok closes his eyes and leans back on the bench, taking in the classical music playing across the loudspeakers.

The music stops. Bartok opens his eyes to darkness save for a few emergency lights. A voice over the loudspeaker repeatedly says, "Security systems are down. Please exit the park as quickly as possible. We apologize for the inconvenience."

BARTOK

This day...

SECURITY GUARD #1

(To Bartok)

You! Move it!

BARTOK

Going, going.

Bartok starts to speed for the exit.

VOLK

Hey, number! We're not finished.

BARTOK

Look, if I don't leave now, I'm  
going to be late and you know how  
your mom is when I'm late!

VOLK

You little sh--

Out of nowhere, a pair of invisible jaws raises Zip high into the air. The INVISIMONSTER appears in its full glory, a massive dinosaur-like creature that can disappear/reappear at will, now free of its cage.

The invisimonster shakes Zip before launching him across the park while being shot at by the guards from multiple angles.

BARTOK

He is very dead.

The invisimonster continues to terrorize the park, ultimately setting his sights on Bartok. He chases Bartok up to a light bridge overlooking the park. The bridge's light grid is flickering on and off.

Bartok runs across the bridge and has to jump the rest of the way as the bridge ultimately diminishes and goes out completely. The invisimonster, who had been in hot pursuit, tumbles to his death.

EXT. ISOLATED STREET - LATER

Bartok is walking with a bit of a limp holding his side. He reaches a shed-style building. He walks inside.

INT. SMALL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is dimly lit and has two chairs in its center facing each other. Bartok hobbles into one of the chairs. A figure shimmers into existence filling the other chair, Grei (fifties, nonhuman, attractive, bluish green skin, red eyes).

Behind Grei is a door with a trim of yellow light stretching across the top.

GREI

Name?

INT. SAME ROOM - PRESENT

Having recounted his story, Bartok waits for Grei to speak.

GREI  
Sounds like you had quite the day.

BARTOK  
Oh, you know. Shit happens, right?

GREI  
Indeed. Your test, are you ready?

BARTOK  
Yes.

A table shimmers to life in between them. Ten items of varying shapes and sizes rest on the table.

GREI  
Please choose one of the items you see before you.

BARTOK  
The violin with the broken strings.

GREI  
Why the violin?

BARTOK  
Because that's exactly how I feel right now. Broken.

GREI  
Bartok, why are you here?

BARTOK  
You already asked me that.

GREI  
Right. I just figured this time you would tell me the truth instead of some superficial bullshit answer.

BARTOK  
My mom was murdered five years ago. If a position like this had been around...I mean, I know there are no guarantees. Maybe she still dies. But even if it means I could save the pain of someone like me or my brother or my dad, or just one person, it would be worth it to me.

GREI

Bartok, you have been here one hundred and eighty-six times and every single time, you have been rejected. What makes you think that this time is going to be different?

BARTOK

Nothing, but I'm here anyway.

GREI

Thank you, Bartok. That concludes our time today.

Grei's hologram shimmers before fully fading leaving Bartok with just the door with the yellow light in front of him.

BARTOK

Yeah, see ya.

Bartok stands up to leave. He is almost at the exit door when he hears a click. He turns around and sees that the yellow light above the door is now green.

INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS - SAME TIME

Gre is sitting in a dark room with a dozen or so holoscreens in front of her. RESPUNAM Pardogi, Head Conductor of the Harnesser Testing, shows up beside her. Respunam is a fifteen-year-old nonhuman female, chubby with small spikes emerging from a bald head.

RESPUNAM

Why did you decide to let him through this time?

GREI

Because of how he told that story just now. There were two important things he left out.

EXT. CITY STREET - EARLIER

Flashback to BARTOK running away from the BULLIES. This time things are different as GREI narrates...

GREI (CONT'D, V.O.)

The first was the little girl he saved in the street.

Bartok dives and scoops up a young girl in the street just as headlights race past.



GREI (CONT'D, V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Today would have been her last day  
 alive had Bartok not been there.  
 Stopping to save her was the only  
 reason those bastard kids caught up  
 to him. And speaking of them...

EXT. INNER PARK - EARLIER

Flashback to Bartok and the Invisimonster Incident.

GREI (CONT'D, V.O.)  
 ...The most important part Bartok  
 left out was that he actually  
 protected the life of the main kid  
 that was trying to see him hurt.

Bartok is racing for the bridge with Volk.

BARTOK  
 Come on, this way!

The invisimonster attacks as they are heading up the incline  
 towards the bridge. Bartok grabs a nearby fallen branch and  
 swings as hard as he can, connecting with the side of the  
 beast's face as Volk races for the bridge.

Volk stops short when he sees the bridge flickering. They  
 both turn to see the invisimonster stalking towards them.

VOLK  
 We're not gonna make it.

BARTOK  
 We have to try. You go first. I'll  
 try to hold this thing off. Go!

Volk makes it across. The invisimonster stalks forward  
 towards Bartok who is holding the broken branch. He throws it  
 at the invisimonster and races across the bridge.

He jumps the last bit of distance as the bridge fades and the  
 invisimonster falls to his death. Bartok is hanging on to the  
 rim of the bridge and Volk helps him up. They both stare down  
 below where the invisimonster lays lifeless.

VOLK  
 Thanks.

BARTOK  
 Same.

We finally see the minute vidcam that has been following Bartok this whole time.

INT. SMALL ROOM - PRESENT

The door with the green light opens on its own. Bartok starts walking towards it.

GREI (V.O.)  
Mentioning either one of those things would have painted him in a heroic light and he left them out.

RESPUNAM (V.O.)  
Why do you think that is?

GREI (V.O.)  
I think he just might be a hero.

RESPUNAM (V.O.)  
You actually believe a fifteen-year-old Six of Clubs is ready for something of this magnitude?

GREI (V.O.)  
Guess we'll find out.

Bartok walks through the door into darkness. The door closes behind him. Cut to title "Harnessers" over black.

OVER BLACK

As Bartok speaks, his words appear across the screen.

BARTOK (V.O.)  
Irigo is my city and home to almost one-hundred thousand beings of all races and species from Lyre. Irigo is one of the poorest cities on Lyre and sits just outside of Volstredin which just happens to be the richest city on Lyre. Volstredin is thriving while Irigo suffers from crime, famine, and poverty. It's pretty shitty, actually. Nope, can't say that. Delete last sentence.

"It's pretty shitty, actually" disappears from the screen.

BARTOK (V.O.)  
They call Lyre the Planet of Broken Weather.

(MORE)

BARTOK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I call it the Planet of the Broken System. Like the other eight planets in the Lytragainian System, Lyre relies on a Ranking System to judge a being's potential at birth. You're either a Face Rank like most of the people in Volstredin or a Number Rank like me and most of Irgo. You have no control of what Rank you receive unless, of course your parents are rich and can afford to buy you a higher rank. Delete everything after "receive".

Words disappear.

BARTOK (V.O.)

The result of this System means cities like mine see spikes in crime because most don't see an alternative. Most of my cousins are dealers and gang members and I don't blame them. I'm not a criminal but living where I live, I get it. Delete everything after "alternative".

The last two sentences erase.

BARTOK (V.O.)

Now that crime has trickled into Volstredin, the Volstredin City Council has finally decided to do something by creating the position of Harnesser. Harnessers will protect the city using a weapon called a namoom which the public still knows little about. If I become a Harnesser, I hope that I can protect not just Volstredin but my home. Irgo. Eighth Sector.

INT. BUS - SAME TIME

Bartok is on a bus holding a thin tablet device, its screen providing the only light as the bus slows to a stop. A cord with a small circular piece extends from the device to the side of Bartok's head, transcribing his thoughts.

He stares at the Six of Clubs tattoo on his inner wrist, rubbing it with two fingers. He is the last person on the bus besides the BUS DRIVER.

BUS DRIVER

Your stop.

Bartok's screen flashes with two options: "Hold" and "Submit". Bartok chooses neither and, instead, throws the tablet in his bag and gets to his feet. He takes a long look out the window at his apartment building.

BARTOK

No window service tonight?

BUS DRIVER

Boss is on my ass about freebies.

BARTOK

If I could pay for it, I wouldn't be riding the bus.

BUS DRIVER

Sorry, kid. Best I can do is offer you cover until you walk in.

BARTOK

Better than nothing. Thanks.

BUS DRIVER

Eight strong.

BARTOK

Six strong.

EXT. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A tall building rises against the night sky, smoke from its chimney billowing up into the clouds. As Bartok hops off the bus which is hovering slightly above the street, three police cars speed past through the air, sirens blaring.

A number of cannon-like guns varying in size emerge slowly from the side of the bus locked and loaded. Bartok dashes to the front entrance of his apartment covering about twenty-five yards before making it safely inside.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

There is a sign on the lobby elevator that reads, "Broken. Use the stairs" signed with a smiley face.

BARTOK

Again? Just don't have an elevator.

Bartok looks up the winding stairwell above him. He can hear raucous noises rising from one floor to the next. He's on the 91st floor. The dejection is written all over his face.

As he makes for the stairs, he passes by a telescreen in the lobby playing an ad. The ad features a middle-aged woman conversing with an older man, presumably her father, at a dining room table.

The voiceover states: "Missing your lost family member or loved one and wishing you could talk to them one last time? At Advent Apparitions we give you the genuine, real feeling that makes for a true final experience to put your mind at peace. Say goodbye to those you lost the right way. Advent: We'll make you feel like they never left."

INT. WINDING STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok makes the long trek up the stairs hearing and seeing various disturbing things along the way. He makes a few stops doing things like double-checking his homework and throwing a ball back to a kid before the ball rolls down the staircase.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

By the time Bartok reaches his door, ZALEA (teen, slim, long black hair, Latina) is coming out. Her eyes light up when she sees him and she immediately throws her arms around his neck.

ZALEA

I'm so glad you're ok. I tried to wait, but I have to get home.

BARTOK

I can walk you.

ZALEA

No, don't worry about it. You've done enough tonight. I should've been gone awhile ago, but I promised Klarvid I would play a game with him.

BARTOK

Did you tell them?

ZALEA

No, you told me not to. They're gonna freak. So excited for you!

BARTOK  
For us! Still feels like a dream  
right now. Got you something.

Bartok fumbles around in his backpack, pulls out a thin strip of violet material, and hands it to a confused Zalea.

BARTOK (CONT'D)  
Remember when I used to walk you  
home and we would pass that  
construction site. You told me if I  
went up and grabbed you that flag,  
I could take you on a date?

ZALEA  
Is this...Bartok, you didn't.

BARTOK  
I didn't wanna take the whole flag,  
but I didn't think they would miss  
a tiny piece.

ZALEA  
That was at least fifty stories up.

BARTOK  
Forty-one. Why do you think it took  
me so long to get home?

ZALEA  
You're the best boyfriend ever.

BARTOK  
I know things have been kind of  
tough for you losing your cousin...

Zalea cuts him off with a long kiss.

ZALEA  
You don't need to be Harnesser.  
You're already a hero.

BARTOK  
You know I would do just about  
anything for you.

ZALEA  
I know.

Bartok raises his fist to his forehead so that his rank tattoo is facing Zalea. Zalea follows suit.

BARTOK  
Six strong.

ZALEA

Two strong.

Bartok watches as Zalea exits down the hallway, tying the flag piece in her hair as she walks. He places his palm in the center of his door and a light forms around his hand before the door opens. Bartok walks inside.

INT. ORGANON HOME, FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok's father BEBBA (late thirties, black, short hair) is asleep on the couch in the front room, the telescreen providing the only light.

A news reporter can be heard on the telescreen saying, "The search continues across Volstredin and outlying areas for a Harnesser. Candidates all over the city are showing up in droves at the tiny testing stations to see if they qualify to be a part of the First Screening..."

BARTOK

Not here.

DINING ROOM/KITCHEN

Bartok walks past his father into the kitchen a few paces away. Images of his family with his dad, mom (now deceased), and little brother litter the walls.

Bebba's girlfriend LINJA (late thirties, thin, short hair) is in the kitchen at the sink her back turned.

LINJA

Zalea didn't leave, did she?

BARTOK

Just passed her. You could probably catch her if you hurry.

LINJA

Girl is so stubborn. I told her I'd take her home. How are you feeling?

BARTOK

Not bad. Could be worse.

LINJA

Damn, could have sued. I'm headed out. There's food in the fridge. Do me a favor, try to get your brother to eat.

(MORE)

LINJA (CONT'D)

He was so worried about you after we told him what happened, he wouldn't eat his food because Bartok might want seconds.

BARTOK

Will do.

LINJA

And congrats! Excited for you two.

BARTOK

How did you...

LINJA

Call it teacher's intuition. Later.

BARTOK

Later, Miss Goldwind. Linja. Sorry I'm really not good at this.

LINJA

Bartok, it's ok. Besides, it'll be a lot easier in three years when you've graduated and won't have to see my face everyday all day. That is, if your father and I are still--

BARTOK

If he hasn't left you after a year--

LINJA

Smartass! I'll see you tomorrow.

#### KLARVID'S ROOM

KLARVID (Black, 8, skinny, same haircut as his brother) is in his room punching and kicking furiously at nothing but air.

KLARVID

Take that and that! You can't stop me. I'm a Harnesser!

Bartok walks directly past Klarvid's room, but puts it in reverse when he sees what his brother is doing. He watches him for a bit before deciding to interrupt.

BARTOK

Spell Harnesser.

KLARVID

H-A-R-N-E-S-S-E-R.



BARTOK

Nice. Hey, guess what?

KLARVID

Me first? So Jash was picking on me earlier today and Mrs. Kershel got mad at me because she thought it was my fault. I couldn't beat him up even though he hurt my feelings. So instead I invited him to be in my story for story time.

BARTOK

That was nice of you.

KLARVID

Ok, now you go.

BARTOK

I guess my news is almost as cool. I'm going to be a Harnesser.

KLARVID

Really? That's so perfect!

BARTOK

Why is it perfect?

KLARVID

Because when I grow up and become a Harnesser, you'll be my partner.

BARTOK

Sounds good to me.

KLARVID

Glad you didn't get eaten today.

BARTOK

Me too. You eat yet?

KLARVID

No, I'm not really hungry.

BARTOK

Me neither. I actually ate a lot before I came home, but I don't want Dad to get mad at me for not eating what he cooked. If I warmed it up for you, do you think you could try to eat mine? Help me out?

KLARVID

I think I can do that.

BARTOK  
Come on, fat head.

DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - Later

Klarvid and Bartok are sitting at the dining room table. Klarvid is talking in between bites, in a low tone so as not to wake Bebbba who is still asleep in the front room.

KLARVID  
Zalea seemed sad tonight.

BARTOK  
She is. A bad man did a bad thing.  
Bombed a warehouse plant and killed  
a bunch of people. Her cousin was  
one of them.

KLARVID  
I'd be sad too. Did they catch him?

BARTOK  
Caught him. Took him to court. They  
found him guilty.

KLARVID  
At least he's going to prison for  
what he did.

BARTOK  
He's not going to prison. He was  
acquitted. That means no prison.

KLARVID  
But he did something bad.

Bebba enters and takes a seat at the table.

BEBBA  
He's a Face Rank. Their law is not  
our law. Everyone has laws, even  
me. My law says it's bedtime.

KLARVID  
Bartok's going to be a Harnesser!

BARTOK  
Klarvid!

BEBBA  
Bartok, you're a minor. I was  
informed as soon as it happened.  
Proud of you, boy. You did a lot of  
good today.

(MORE)

BEBBA (CONT'D)

Your brother on the other hand...he tell you what he did today?

BARTOK

He said he let Jash have a part in his story after the jerk had been picking on him.

BEBBA

(To Klarvid)

That's the story you gave him, huh?

KLARVID

Finished my food, goodnight!

Bartok watches as Klarvid scurries off.

BARTOK

Is that not what happened?

BEBBA

Jash was picking on him, that part is true. Klarvid's story was about a Harnesser protecting the city from a monster. Klarvid was the Harnesser. Jash was the monster.

BARTOK

Klarvid beat up Jash, didn't he?

BEBBA

I was mad, but I couldn't get too mad. It was actually a smart play.

KLARVID

(From his room)

Thanks, Dad!

BEBBA

Go to bed, Bug! You wanted to wait for Bartok to get here so you could say goodnight. You've done that.

KLARVID

But I didn't say goodnight, though.

BEBBA

Fine, say goodnight.

KLARVID

Goodnight, Bartie!

BARTOK

Goodnight, Bug.

BEBBA

Lights out, now please.

KLARVID

Fine. But can I at least leave the door open? It gets really dark when I close it.

BEBBA

What happened to your night light? Nevermind, that's fine. Go to sleep.

BARTOK

You gotta admit Jash had it coming, the little terror.

BEBBA

This is something your mom would have laughed at for weeks. She would be so proud of the men you are becoming. I guess they administered a test at Klarvid's school yesterday to see if kids might have potential to be Harnessers in the future. Why they're testing kids at that age is beyond me, I don't know. Klarvid's score was off the charts. They want to bring him in to test further potential. I told them no.

BARTOK

What if this could be a big opportunity for him?

BEBBA

Bartok, Klarvid is eight. He's still a kid and I don't want him growing up too fast. Not a fan of you going either, but your situation is a little different. This is your time, man. Make the most of it.

BARTOK

I will.

They share a fist bump.

BEBBA

Seven strong.

BARTOK  
Six strong.

EXT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS - DAWN (MOMENTS LATER)

SUPER: "Three Days Later". Bartok and Zalea are two of a thousand waiting outside the sprawling building that is Harnesser Headquarters. Rain is coming down in sheets as lightning scrapes the sky. People are giving up and leaving.

A GUARD is manning the front double doors. The person in front of Bartok and Zalea gets their watch scanned and passes through. Bartok is halted by the guard once his watch is scanned. The guard isn't even looking at Bartok, but a tablet he is holding.

HARNESSER DOOR GUARD  
Name and rank please?

BARTOK  
Bartok Organon, Six of Clubs.  
Scared of spiders. Love sunsets.

HARNESSER DOOR GUARD  
When did you receive your invite?

BARTOK  
Three days ago. Is there a problem?

ZALEA  
Bartok, don't...

With a flick, the guard's tablet wraps around his wrist. The guard thoroughly pats down Bartok. Bartok stands there helpless with his arms out. The guard finally finishes up.

BARTOK  
We done?

HARNESSER DOOR GUARD  
Good to go.

BARTOK  
Thank you! Glad to hear that. Funny how the Jack in front of me was good to just pass right through.

ZALEA  
Bartok, please, just let it go.  
We're so close. Just leave it be.

HARNESSER DOOR GUARD  
Your girlfriend is smart. I would  
listen to her.

After a brief hesitation, Bartok extends his hand.

BARTOK  
My mistake. We're good.

Bartok jerks his hand back suddenly as the Harnesser Door Guard shocks him with a small weapon on his belt.

HARNESSER DOOR GUARD  
Keep moving or get gone, Number.

Bartok stares the guard down. Zalea forces Bartok on.

INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS, FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

BARTOK and ZALEA enter the building behind a wave of others. As expected, the inside is massive with the foyer leading off into a number of different directions. They can hear a voice above saying, "Welcome to the Harnesser Testing Facilities. Please follow the green arrows to the Mind Test."

ZALEA  
You've got to be better about  
flying off at the handle like that.  
One of these days, it's going to  
get you killed.

BARTOK  
I'm just so tired of that shit.  
People doing what they want to you  
because you have this rank or they  
have that badge. It's not right.

They reach a standstill as they see droves of people waiting to get onto elevators. He hears a clear, audible VOICE.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE  
The stairs.

BARTOK  
Great idea, Zalea!

ZALEA  
What? Where are you going?

## STAIRWELL

Bartok and Zalea enter the base of the stairwell staring up at the obstacle before them. After a brief ascent, Bartok stops at the fourth floor exit.

## FOURTH FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok and Zalea open the stairwell door and step into an expansive hallway with plush carpet. They fall in with a group of people headed in one direction.

BARTOK

You ever think about what this is really all about?

ZALEA

What do you mean?

BARTOK

You think the Harnesser position is just about protecting Volstredin or something more?

ZALEA

I don't know. I guess I never really thought about it.

## MIND TEST ROOM - LATER

The room is flat, expansive. There are a countless number of rows of chairs lined from one end of the room to the other. A voice above is repeatedly saying, "Welcome to the Mind Test. Please quickly find a seat so the test can begin..."

Bartok and Zalea find the closest seats in the back row. Bartok can sense Zalea's anxiety as she takes a number of deep breaths. He is about to say something when the voice says, "The Mind Test will begin in a few moments. Good luck."

A sound-proof metal cube suddenly forms around him.

## SOUND-PROOF METAL CUBE

Bartok presses a button on the communication contraption on his wrist and Zalea's face appears in front of him.

BARTOK

Hey, I know you're nervous but you don't need to be.

(MORE)

BARTOK (CONT'D)

No matter what happens, this isn't  
the end of the line for you.

ZALEA

It feels that way.

BARTOK

You're so smart and talented. You  
could do whatever you want to do.

ZALEA

You know that's not true. Not for  
us. People from Irigo don't get a  
second chance. I'm not crazy. I  
know it's now or never.

Zalea cuts the call before Bartok can respond. A voice fills  
the cube: "Welcome to the Mind Test. In this test, your  
avatar will enter a sequence of rooms. Your goal in each room  
is to improve the room's quality. Try to get through as many  
rooms as possible before your time ends. Good luck."

A timer counts backwards from 5 to Begin...

INT. VIRTUAL HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok's avatar is inside a study filled to the brim with  
books. A man is sitting on a couch in front of a fireplace  
reading. Bartok gazes around at various objects littered  
throughout the room.

He sees a cute furry animal on a leash in the corner panting.

BARTOK

Come here, boy.

He pets the creature then leads it to the rug in front of the  
fireplace. The creature lays down and goes to sleep. A green  
light beams above the only door in the room. He continues on  
into the next room and then the next with success.

We see a number of different settings from an underwater room  
to a room with a blizzard's worth of snowfall. Gradually, a  
rumbling builds shaking the entire foundation. He eventually  
finds himself running from room to room trying to find the  
right fix before time expires.

INT. SOUND-PROOF METAL CUBE - SAME TIME

We see Bartok sweating with the mental exertion of the test.



BARTOK  
Gotta go faster. Faster faster.  
Man, I was not ready for this!

INT. MIND TEST OVERLOOK - SAME TIME

Seated in a room of "important" Face Ranks, Bebba, Linja, and Klarvid are looking through a window wall that overlooks the Mind Test room. Respunam is sitting behind them, unbeknownst to the three of them.

BEBBA  
What do you think is happening?

KLARVID  
Bart is winning, that's what!

RESPUNAM  
(To Klarvid)  
Your brother must be really cool.

KLARVID  
The coolest. I remember you. You were in my class a few days ago. Your name is Respunam and you handle the Harnesser tests.

RESPUNAM  
Very good. I remember you too. You asked me why we even needed Harnessers in the first place and I said it was because crime has gotten really bad in Volstredin and they need saving. Do you remember what you said?

KLARVID  
Crime has always been bad in Irigo. When will they be saved?

RESPUNAM  
(To Bebba)  
I believe you and I spoke on the phone the same day.

BEBBA  
We did. Nice to meet you in person.

RESPUNAM  
A word?

Bebba and Respunam step away from the onlookers for privacy.

BEBBA

I know what you're thinking.

RESPUNAM

He is already here. What could it hurt if he took a couple tests? I know we might not be in agreement here, but can we at least agree on one thing? Your son is exceptional.

BEBBA

Klarvid.

Klarvid runs over.

BEBBA (CONT'D)

How would you like to do what Bartok is doing right now?

KLARVID

Serious?

RESPUNAM

Serious. Want to hang out with me for a bit? My office has snacks.

KLARVID

I love snacks so much.

RESPUNAM

Who doesn't love snacks? What's your favorite?

(To Bebbba)

It'll be painless, I promise.

As Bebbba watches his youngest son leave with Respunam, Klarvid is still rattling off his favorite snacks. Linja comes to stand beside Bebbba.

BEBBA

Looks like I have two genius kids.

RESPUNAM'S OFFICE - LATER

Klarvid is fidgeting in his chair while Respunam examines a chart of dots on her holoscreen.

KLARVID

How did I do?

RESPUNAM

Exceptional, actually. No question you belong here in the Testing. Now how do we convince your dad?

KLARVID

Dad thinks I'm going to get hurt.

RESPUNAM

It's very possible.

KLARVID

Maybe if you could promise him that I won't, he might say yes.

RESPUNAM

Klarvid, you're a genius.

KLARVID

I know.

RESPUNAM

Shall we go deliver the good news?

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Klarvid and Respunam step into the hall. Down a ways Bartok and Zalea are in an intense argument. Zalea storms off.

KLARVID

What's wrong with Zalea?

BARTOK

I made it to the next round.

KLARVID

And she got upset with you like she did with me when I beat her in Fire Flush a few nights ago.

BARTOK

You never told me about that.

KLARVID

She really doesn't like to lose. Well, I'm happy for you.

BARTOK

Thanks, bug.

KLARVID

Let's go tell Dad we both made it to the next round!

Klarvid races off.

BARTOK

Sounds good. Wait, what?

INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS, WOMENS' BATHROOM - SAME TIME

We hear puking coming from one of the stalls. Zalea comes out looking extremely disheveled. She walks over to the long sink breathing heavily. She doesn't notice the NONHUMAN WOMAN standing next to her who is fixing herself up in the mirror.

The woman is taken aback by Zalea's appearance.

WOMAN IN BATHROOM

Is everything alright? Is there something I can help with?

Zalea turns on the woman looking as if she is going to pounce on her. Right at the moment we think she might, she gets a message across her wrist: "Congratulations! You have been invited to move on to the final test of the Harnesser First Screening. Please report to the ninth floor immediately."

ZALEA

(To Woman In Bathroom)

I'm fine.

Zalea exits. Woman In Bathroom carries on.

WOMAN IN BATHROOM

I think you need a second opinion.

INT. GATHERING ROOM - FOUR DAYS LATER

ESREBA Blackstar is on a stage finishing up a speech to a room full of people while cameras hover filming her from different angles.

Esreba is a young nonhuman, thin with red skin. She is tall and bald with a ring of bone jutting out the top of her head (the same jutting bone runs up her arms). Slits in her cheeks open and close as she breathes.

The Harnesser Testing finalists are listening to her speech from backstage. The people in the audience are sitting around various tables scattered about the room.

ESREBA

And that is why the great city of Volstredin and the world needs Harnessers. So the terrible things like what happened to my sister will happen no more. While I am dropping from the Testing to continue serving on the Volstredin City Council, my unyielding support for this position will live on.

Esreba leaves the stage to raucous applause. RESPUNAM takes her spot on the stage.

RESPUNAM

Thank you, Esreba. Before we continue with tonight's proceedings, I want to share...

INT. BACKSTAGE - SAME TIME

Bartok is standing beside Klarvid and Zalea in the backstage waiting area as Esreba is passing by.

BARTOK

(To Esreba)

That was a great speech. It's really an honor to meet someone so committed to their city.

ESREBA

You haven't met me yet.

BARTOK

Right. I'm Bartok. This is my brother, Klarvid. This is Zalea.

ESREBA

Esreba Blackstar. And I already know you. The youngest finalists in the Harnesser Testing. Cute.

ZALEA

It's an amazing sacrifice you giving up your spot as a finalist to continue working on the VCC.

ESREBA

It's bullshit is what it is. Political bullshit. Too much power, they said. I can only do one or the other. Don't look so surprised. You really think I would choose a City Council over becoming a Harnesser?

BARTOK

Guess not.

ESREBA

Upper Council, maybe. City Council? No. But, hey, I guess my departure leaves room for spectacles like yourselves to have more of a chance in this next Screening.

Esreba walks away.

KLARVID  
I don't think she likes us.

INT. GATHERING ROOM, ON STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Clapping ensues before Respunam resumes speaking.

RESPUNAM  
With Esreba Blackstar dropping and  
the untimely death of Wale Uncer,  
that leaves us with twenty-eight  
finalists who will be split into  
seven teams of four. These teams  
will be randomly drawn...now!

Cheering ensues as the lights dim and upbeat music starts to play. A holoscreen behind Respunam shows each finalist as they are called and puts them in their respective team. Respunam is reading off the names from a pad in front of her.

RESPUNAM (CONT'D)  
Team One: Bartok Organon. Rickin...

Bartok hits the stage to clapping. He gives a little wave as he awaits the rest of the names.

RESPUNAM (CONT'D)  
Zalea Tetron. Tear Jacent.

Bartok is all smiles. More teams materialize on stage.

RESPUNAM (CONT'D)  
Team Four: Dinook Heart. Klarvid...

Clapping staggers when Klarvid walks onto the stage. We hear a few gasps and whispers. He looks even more out of place when he stands next to Dinook who is well over six feet tall. The final teams materialize.

RESPUNAM (CONT'D)  
And there you have it. We wish all  
these teams the best tomorrow in  
the Second Screening.

More applause and cheering, including from Bebbba who is seated in the back row.

INT. LAVENDER BISCUIT HOTEL, LOBBY - LATER

It's late, but the hotel where the Harnesser finalists are staying is bustling with activity. Purple neon lights decorate the interior where three stages are setup.

Bartok, Klarvid, and Zalea are walking past to head to their rooms. One stage houses a concert, another stage a fighting match, and the third stage strippers, both human and inhuman. Klarvid is eyeing the third stage as they pass by.

KLARVID

What are they doing?

BARTOK

Working.

KLARVID

Their jobs look like fun.

ZALEA

Your brother seems to think so too.

26TH FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok and Klarvid exit an elevator. Zalea stays on.

KLARVID

(To Zalea)

See ya tomorrow.

ZALEA

You know it.

Bartok and Klarvid proceed down the hallway to their room, Klarvid chattering on. Bartok stops short when they get to their room door. It's slightly ajar with the words, "Number Ranks Go Home" painted across it.

BARTOK

(To Klarvid)

Come on.

EXT. LAVENDER BISCUIT HOTEL, PARKING LOT - LATER

Bartok takes a remote-sized object from his pocket and tosses it on the ground. Within seconds, the object unfolds itself and becomes a four-door car.

INT. RENTAL CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok and Klarvid hole up in their rental car, with Bartok in the driver seat and Klarvid stretched out in the back.

KLARVID

Why are people so mean?

BARTOK

I don't know, bug. Some people are just taught to be that way.

KLARVID

Do you think that's why Jash picks on me so much?

BARTOK

Probably. But he's still wrong. He shouldn't do that to you or anyone. Hey, do me a favor. Don't tell Dad about what happened tonight.

KLARVID

Why?

BARTOK

He'll make us go home. Do you want to go home?

KLARVID

No. I don't know. Esreba was scary.

BARTOK

Don't worry about her or anything that she said. You know I won't let anything happen to you, right?

KLARVID

I know, but I'm not worried about me. I'm scared something bad is going to happen to you.

BARTOK

Don't worry. Just sleep.

KLARVID

Bartok?

BARTOK

Yes, bug.



KLARVID

If I take a shower and, right after  
I get out, I pee, do I still have  
to wash my hands?

Before Bartok can reply, a KNOCK at the window. It's Zalea.

RENTAL CAR - LATER

Klarvid has fallen asleep in the backseat. Bartok and Zalea have their seats laid back as they talk.

BARTOK

How are your parents doing?

ZALEA

Mom has her days. Dad still won't  
speak to me. According to Mom, he  
feels betrayed. Whatever. I don't  
regret what I did.

BARTOK

You shouldn't. If my Dad would have  
told me no, I probably would have  
done the same thing.

ZALEA

Yeah, well, your dad is pretty cool  
while mine is so blinded by the  
system, he wouldn't know  
opportunity if it punched him in  
the face. Whatever. Look, I want to  
apologize for how--

BARTOK

You don't even have to say it. I  
know how important this is to you.  
I know what it means. We're good.

ZALEA

Tomorrow's gonna be fine, right?

BARTOK

A breeze. We're gonna be fine.

INT. DROP CRAFT - LATE MORNING

The twenty-eight finalists are sitting in individual pods facing each other. The pods are egg-shaped with a pane of glass in the front. Mechanical claws keep the pods attached to the craft.

Each team is wearing matching body suits. Bartok's team wears an ultramarine color while Klarvid's team wears white. Respunam is walking back and forth down the row in between the pods. The area is dark save for a ghoulish, blue light.

RESPUNAM

In a few moments, your pods will be dropped, scattered across the Second Screening area. Your team objective is simple: Get to the finish line first and win.

The floor beneath the pods open up, revealing open sky.

RESPUNAM (CONT'D)

Good luck.

BARTOK

(To Zalea)

Remember when I said we'd be fine?

ZALEA

Yeah?

BARTOK

I'm not so sure now.

RESPUNAM

Counting down from three...

ZALEA

(To Bartok)

Bartok, look at me. Just breathe, it's gonna be fine. Breathe.

RICKIN

(To Both)

Listen, as soon we touch ground--

The pods release from the craft into open sky with a BANG.

EXT. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING - FLASHBACK

Outside of the Organon's apartment building ZIRSHA Organon--a bald latino woman in her mid-thirties--drops to her knees in the snow in front of her two children, a TEN-YEAR-OLD BARTOK and THREE-YEAR-OLD KLARVID.

Laser bullets fly out of a moving air vehicle in array of colors and more bodies drop while others scatter. Bartok is too entranced by his mother dying in front of him to notice.

TEN-YEAR-OLD BARTOK

Mom?

Zirsha's mouth is moving, but words won't come out. She gives Bartok a ghost of a smile before collapsing.

TEN-YEAR-OLD BARTOK (CONT'D)

Mom!

Bartok rushes to her side cradling her head in his lap. Klarvid is frozen, entranced by the moment.

EXT./INT. OPEN SKY/POD - PRESENT

Bartok's breath is echoing throughout the closed pod as he feels his body dropping and he can see sky rushing past him. It's not too long before he hears a HUMMING sound.

His pod lurches as he is shot by an ATTACKER (clad in an orange metallic suit) riding an airbike. Laser bullets whizz past as his pod continues to descend to the ground.

The pod slows to a stop just before hitting the ground.

EXT. WILDERNESS - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok fumbles with his seatbelt and hops out of his pod, stumbling to the ground just as his pod explodes from a laser blast. He is in a forest and he can hear screams and turmoil all around him.

BARTOK

Zalea!

A HARNESSER CONTESTANT is running towards him frantically waving him back.

HARNESSER CONTESTANT

They're coming! Run!

A laser blast shoots through the Harnesser Contestant. The biker circles back on Bartok. Bartok takes off through the forest, dodging bullets along the way.

He mistimes a jump over a fallen branch and trips, rolling down an embankment. As he is crawling to get to his feet, he feels a hand on him. It's TEAR Jacent, one of his teammates.

Tear's a young, nonhuman female with blue skin and pink hair.

BARTOK

Tear.

TEAR

Rickin and your girlfriend ran off  
in that direction. Wait, it's not  
safe yet. This place is swarming.

BARTOK

Do you think it's gonna get any  
better because I don't!

TEAR

This isn't right. It's not supposed  
to be like this.

BARTOK

What is this?

INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS, VIEWING ROOM - SAME TIME

Bebba is looking on from a viewing screen with Linja as the  
Harnesser contestants run for their lives. The room seats  
about eight, but is less than half full. Bebbba is horrified  
as he sees at least two people die, one right beside his son.

He is on his feet, livid. He goes after the person in the  
room that feels like the highest up: GREI. Guards step in as  
he approaches her, but she holds them at bay.

BEBBA

What is this?

GREI

This is exactly what your sons  
signed up for.

BEBBA

No, not this! This is a kill fest.  
You can't be serious putting people  
through this. Shut it down. Shut  
this shit down, now!

GREI

Afraid that isn't a possibility.

BEBBA

Pull them out now. This is insane!

GREI

I can't do that. This is in motion  
now. There is no way to stop it.

BEBBA

Ok, so send me out there. Put me in one of those pods and shoot me down there. I'll pull them out myself.

GREI

The grid is locked. Once the Second Screening began, the contestants are walled in by forcefield. The only way that field comes down is one of the teams reaches the end.

BEBBA

This is bullshit!

GREI

Mr. Organon, you really should give your boys more credit. They are stronger than you know.

Grei walks away. Linja leads Bebbba away before he can say something he might regret.

BEBBA

(To Linja)

I can't watch this.

LINJA

Ok, so let's walk away for a bit.

BEBBA

No, I can't abandon them.

LINJA

Then we stay. Either way, I'll be with you the whole time.

Linja gets him to sit back down and settle in.

EXT. WILDERNESS - SAME TIME

Klarvid is running through the woods dodging in and out of trees. An orange clad airbiker comes into view firing off shots at Klarvid. As he is running, an explosion happens at his heels taking him off his feet.

Klarvid smashes hard into a tree and lays there for a second. When he gets up, he looks down at his arm and sees a deep cut where a piece of his skin is dangling. He pulls the skin off and a couple sparks fly out of his arm.

INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS, DARK ROOM - SAME TIME

The REAL KLARVID is in the center of an empty dark room looking through a virtual visor. As he moves his arm, the ANDROID Klarvid's arm (the one sparking) moves as well.

He puts the piece of skin back and taps it back into place.

KLARVID

Still gotta get the hang of this.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

This way, Klarvid. This is the way you need to go to reach the end.

Klarvid feels his body being pulled in a specific direction. It freaks him out at first, but there is something about the voice that keeps him calm.

KLARVID

Who said that? Is there someone in here with me?

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

I can explain later. Right now you have to listen to me. The direction you want to take is this way. Trust me. I can get you through this.

Klarvid sees his teammate Dinook waving him down from a distance. Dinook is an older human, tall with a small build.

DINOOK

Klarvid! This way, we found safety!

KLARVID

I need to go with my teammate.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

Klarvid, follow me. I will take you to the end.

DINOOK

Klarvid, let's go now! We don't have time to sit around.

EXT. WILDERNESS - SAME TIME

Klarvid hesitates for a moment then starts to follow Dinook. They are running headlong for a cave where their other two teammates are waiting at the mouth. A steady rainfall starts.

## KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

Wait. Danger.

A slim pole pops out of the ground about twenty yards away. As his two teammates near the cave continue to call to him, a swell of red light forms at the tip of the pole, small at first then larger. The growing light is accompanied by a high-pitched WHINE. Klarvid senses danger.

## KLARVID

Dinook! Wait!

A blast of laser leaves the pole in a flash, shooting straight into Dinook. Dinook explodes into red dust halfway between Klarvid and the cave.

## KLARVID (CONT'D)

Dinook.

Klarvid is paralyzed. Seeing that Klarvid isn't budging, teammate QUARA Zapperdy makes a decision.

## QUARA

(To Remaining Teammate)

Let's leave him before he gets us killed. He's an android. He'll survive no matter what. Not us.

Quara and the remaining teammate disappear inside the cave. Seconds later, Klarvid hears a terrifying growl followed by the screams of his teammates. He barely sees them exit the cave before a wave of flame engulfs them.

## KLARVID

No.

As the smokes clears, a dragon peers his titanic head out of the cave. He stares at Klarvid for a moment before disappearing back inside the cave. Klarvid runs off in the direction he was originally being "pulled".

## INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS, VIEWING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bebba, Linja, and Respunam are watching the madness ensue.

## RESPUNAM

As promised, your son is safe.

## BEBBA

Physically, sure, but he just watched three people get killed.

(MORE)

BEBBA (CONT'D)

You think that's not gonna scar him? And my other son? He's very real out there.

RESPUNAM

Mr. Organon...

LINJA

You should probably shut up now.

EXT. WILDERNESS, VALLEY - LATER

It is dusk and the rain has increased. Team One is crouched down in high grass at the top of a valley. They are staring down below at what awaits them.

TEAR

Are we really doing this?

ZALEA

It doesn't look like we have much of a choice. The map is saying the path runs through here.

BARTOK

So what you're saying is we might have a choice if the map is wrong.

TEAR

Bartok, we've been over this. Why would the map be wrong?

BARTOK

I don't know. Has any of this seemed right to you so far?

ZALEA

This is what we signed up for. What you signed up for. It might not seem right because you're scared.

BARTOK

No, that's not it. Ok, I'm a little scared, ok terrified, but there has to be a better way. Zalea, don't you feel it? The pull--

ZALEA

We're not doing this again, Bartok. Whatever you think you feel, it's not real. I know you want it to be, but this is the way we have to go. We follow the map.



BARTOK

Alright, what's the play? And  
please tell me it doesn't involve  
running through that.

It's finally shown what has them so captivated down in the valley. The valley floor is littered with starflower dragons: White, five-foot tall beasts that spit fire bullets and can run upright as fast as they fly.

As the team looks on, two of the dragons get into a scrap over food. One of the dragons gets the upper hand and throws the other one. As the fallen dragon gets up to charge, he is shot down by fire bullets.

ZALEA

Through the starflower dragons?  
Hell no! We'll skirt through the  
forest and go around.

BARTOK

That's not gonna be easy either.

Zalea looks up from the virtual map in the direction everyone else is looking. Three starflower dragons are staring them down from the edge of the forest.

One of them drops the dead creature they are holding and bellows out a roar.

ZALEA

We should probably run now.

Rickin takes off down into the valley.

TEAR

Not that way! Numbers, man. Come  
on! It's simple math. What now? Do  
we follow him?

The starflower dragons at the edge of the forest start towards them. They are a decent ways off but closing in fast.

ZALEA

He snagged a gun off one of the  
shooters earlier so he's the only  
one with a weapon. I don't think we  
have a choice.

BARTOK

We're gonna die, aren't we?

TEAR

If I make it out of this, I'm  
definitely skipping that board  
meeting next week.

Tear starts down into the valley at full speed, followed by Bartok and Zalea. Rickin has already cleared a path firing off shot after shot. The starflower dragons fire back with shots of their own.

Bartok kicks one that gets too close but gets pinned by another one that drops him from the sky. He struggles underneath the beast as it gnashes at him with ferocious teeth. It lets out a SCREAM, the beast suddenly pulled backwards. Tear breaks both its wings then breaks its neck. She helps Bartok to his feet.

Meanwhile Rickin is still firing, taking down dragons.

RICKIN

You want to take us? Come on! This  
way, we're almost through!

Rickin suddenly stumbles and falls as he is hit with multiple fire bullets. He drops the gun. A number of dragons begin to tear into him.

ZALEA

Rickin!

BARTOK

Zalea, grab that gun! We need it.

As Zalea dives for the guns she gets scooped into the air by one of the starflower dragons. Bartok dives for the gun and, while on his back, aims at one of the dragons running straight for him.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Blam kapow!

He fires. The gun doesn't go off. He tries to fire a couple more times then covers himself as the dragon closes in to pounce. The dragon suddenly bellows in pain and covers his eyes, backing away.

Tear helps Bartok to his feet, a headlight emitting a bright beam from the top of the hood of her bodysuit. She flashes a light at a few more dragons, pushing them back. She takes the gun from Bartok.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

I didn't realize we had those.

TEAR

Or that guns have safeties. And did you really say, 'Blam kapow'?

BARTOK

Moment got me. Oh no, Zalea!

TEAR

On it.

Zalea is in the sky tussling with the dragon that has her in its clutches. Tear fires off a few more shots at the dragons around them that eventually scatter and give up. She takes aim and starts firing into the sky. She misses seven times.

BARTOK

Come on, Tear.

TEAR

Shut it! This bullet lands wrong and it hits her.

Tear fires again. The bullet puts a hole in the dragon's wing and he goes down taking Zalea down with him. They disappear out of view over the crest of a hill. Bartok takes off running for her.

TEAR (CONT'D)

Blam kapow.

Bartok and Tear make it over the hill to Zalea who is getting to her feet. A WILDERNESS of trees awaits fifty yards ahead.

TEAR (CONT'D)

Zalea, thank goodness. You ok?

ZALEA

Thanks to you. Nice shot. Rickin?

TEAR

No. Just us now. We gotta keep moving or we're next.

They break for the woods.

EXT. WILDERNESS, WOODS - LATER

Night is in full swing. The remaining members of Team One roll into view huffing and puffing. EXPLOSIONS and FAINT SCREAMS can be heard in the background.

ZALEA

Our map is sending us this way.  
Toss me the gun, I'll scout ahead.

Zalea runs off right disappearing from view while Bartok and Tear wait in the darkness.

TEAR

You're twitching.

BARTOK

Oh yeah? You're just as scared as I am and you know it.

TEAR

I didn't say you were scared. I said you were twitching. You're nervous about something. You going to let me in on the secret? What if I took a guess? Was this competition rigged for you to win?

BARTOK

The hell are you talking about?

TEAR

You keep saying you're being pulled in another direction. You're hearing something, is that it?

BARTOK

Yes, but--

TEAR

So, how do I know someone back at the testing station isn't telling you where to go?

Bartok holds up his wrist to show his Six of Clubs Ranking.

BARTOK

This is why. You know good and damn well no one would risk their neck to help me. If anything, they want me to lose.

TEAR

So the voice? It's real then?

BARTOK

I can't explain it. It keeps calling to me, telling me where I need to go.

(MORE)

BARTOK (CONT'D)

I questioned it at first, but it  
hasn't gone away. It's very real.

INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS, VIEWING ROOM - SAME TIME

Bebba is watching Bartok talk with Tear on a viewing screen along with Linja, Grei, Respunam, and a handful of others. His nerves have kept him pacing, but he takes a seat beside Respunam who is sitting next to Grei in the front row. Linja is right behind them on the second row.

BEBBA

(To Respunam)

Are you doing this?

RESPUNAM

Of course not. I've been here just  
about this whole time with you.  
What's he's hearing, I can't--

GREI

They're doing it.

LINJA

Who's doing it?

GREI

The namooms.

LINJA

The weapons are talking to them.

GREI

There is a lot you don't know about  
the namooms. They are more than  
just weapons. Much more. And it  
appears they are choosing who they  
want to wield them.

BEBBA

My boys.

GREI

They appear to be the only ones  
hearing the voice.

EXT. WILDERNESS, WOODS - SAME TIME

Bartok and Tear are still waiting for Zalea to return.

TEAR

No, you're not crazy. I think.

BARTOK  
So what do we do?

Zalea shows up, her breathing labored.

TEAR  
You ok?

ZALEA  
I'm good. Things look safe ahead.  
We need to head out now, though,  
before things change.

Neither Bartok or Tear respond. Zalea senses something weird  
is going on.

ZALEA (CONT'D)  
What?

TEAR  
Or?

ZALEA  
Or what, Tear?

TEAR  
Or we give Bartok's way a shot.

ZALEA  
Tear, not you too!

TEAR  
Hear me out. What if Bartok is  
right and this feeling is real?

ZALEA  
You're kidding. Him?

TEAR  
Zalea, he's your boyfriend.

ZALEA  
He's an idiot!

BARTOK  
Wow!

ZALEA  
I mean...that's not what I mean.  
Guys, we've come so far. We just  
have to stay the course.

BARTOK

I'm sorry. I can't shake this. I'm  
being pulled. Can't you feel it?

KLARVID

I do.

Zalea fires the gun shooting a laser bullet into Android  
Klarvid's shoulder. Klarvid falls. Bartok races over to him  
and taps out the sparks forming on his shoulder leaving  
smoke. Zalea can't believe what she's just done.

ZALEA

Klarvid! It was an accident.

TEAR

You sound like law enforcement.

BARTOK

(To Klarvid)

You good, bug?

KLARVID

Zalea shot me.

BARTOK

I know. You said you feel it too?

KLARVID

A voice has been talking to me. He  
scared me at first, but he's really  
nice. He led me here. The feeling  
got stronger the closer I got to  
you. Bartok, I don't like being in  
this room by myself. It's dark and  
there's no food.

BARTOK

Hang in there, bug. We'll be done  
in no time and we can get all the  
food you want after.

ZALEA

Bartok, from everything I  
understand, I think we have to  
cross the finish line as a team. I  
don't think we can take him.

BARTOK

I'm not asking you to. This feeling, these voices we hear, they aren't going away and, as long as the map is pointing us in a different direction, we're going to keep having problems.

ZALEA

What are you saying?

BARTOK

I think this is where we split up. I hope I'm wrong about this and I hope you both cross the finish line as winners, but I'll be kicking myself if I was right. I have to see where this voice is taking me.

Bartok extends a hand to Tear.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Tear, it's been a pleasure.

TEAR

Get over here.

Tear wraps Bartok up in an embrace. They both look down to see Klarvid has his arms wrapped around both of them.

KLARVID

I like hugs too.

TEAR

(To Bartok)

You're a good person. If this doesn't pan out, look me up. I'll have a job waiting for you.

BARTOK

Don't forget about me, Miss CEO.

TEAR

Look me up and find out.

Zalea kisses and hugs Bartok one final time.

ZALEA

(To Bartok)

You really are an idiot.

BARTOK

I love you too.



Bartok and Zalea both raise a fist to their forehead as Zalea is backing away.

BARTOK (CONT'D)  
Six strong.

ZALEA  
Two strong.

Bartok looks on as the two ladies run off wondering if he is doing the right thing. For a split second, it looks like he is going to follow them, then Klarvid takes his hand. Bartok realizes at that moment that he is doing the right thing.

KLARVID  
Bart?

BARTOK  
Yes?

KLARVID  
You promised me food.

BARTOK  
Right. Let's get rolling.

EXT. CLIFF BASE - LATER

The night presses on. Bartok and Klarvid are at the base of an insurmountable cliff resembling and feeling like a sheet of ice. After almost an hour of walking, Bartok feels at a loss as he can't seem to find a way up.

KLARVID  
What now?

BARTOK  
Don't know. Looks like a dead end.

KLARVID  
My voice is saying to run through.  
What is yours saying?

BARTOK  
Same. But that doesn't make any sense. And I've felt up and down this wall. I don't know, maybe there's a way around. If we can--

As Bartok is talking, Klarvid moves a few paces backwards, then runs headlong at the wall. He runs right past Bartok through the wall. The wall shimmers before returning to a solid state. Bartok is blown away.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Umm...

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Your turn.

BARTOK

Uhhh, Klarvid?

Bartok backs up a few steps knowing what he has to do.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

I've been crazy this far...

He runs full speed at the wall expecting to run right into it. Every fiber of him wants to stop, but he pushes forward anyway. The wall ripples around him like water and we see him on the other side...

INT. CAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok almost trips as he bursts through the wall, but he regains his balance to stand beside Klarvid. They are standing on a large, octagonal, grated platform.

As lights hover around them casting a faint glow against the darkness, they see three paths in front of them all branching off into tunnels: Left, Middle, and Right.

All three paths have a car at their start with a green arrow hovering above each. The Right Path Car is a metallic purple with sleek gill-like patterns running along its side.

KLARVID

I can't hear the Voice.

BARTOK

Me neither. Looks like we're taking our chances from here on out. Which car should we take?

KLARVID

I like purple.

BARTOK

Purple it is.

They hop in the purple car and seatbelt up. Bartok starts to fumble around with the dash buttons bringing the car to life.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Almost there, bug.

KLARVID

Ok.

BARTOK

Then we eat.

KLARVID

Yes!

A VOICE is heard over the DASH.

DASH VOICE

Body scan complete. Welcome,  
Bartok. Please proceed through the  
tunnel to the last leg of the  
Second Screening. Your head start  
bonus will be twenty-seven ticks.

BARTOK

Did she say, "head start"? She  
said, "head start". Shit...

A countdown shows up on the steering wheel: 26, 25, 24...The  
car takes off into the Right tunnel as doors slide down  
sealing off the other two.

The sound of the engine is blaring against the tunnel walls.  
The two brothers have to almost yell at each other.

KLARVID

Can we listen to music?

BARTOK

Now? Probably not the best idea.

KLARVID

Ok.

Bartok notices his brother's rejection.

BARTOK

Find something. You'll have to do  
it manually since we don't have our  
phones. You know how?

KLARVID

I think so. Dad showed me.

Klarvid presses a few buttons on the holodash and various  
songs start to play.

BARTOK

Change it...change it...

KLARVID

But I like--

BARTOK

I don't care. Now this is perfect!

The countdown clock goes 3...2...1...The screen on the steering wheel flashes red.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Hope that's enough of a head start.

An EXPLOSION erupts behind them as five cars--four air vehicles and one ground vehicle--burst out of the tunnel walls, beginning an intense car chase. Laser bullets fly around them lighting up the tunnel.

The tunnel winds and breaks off into different directions. One by one, he manages to shake each car until its down to the ground car and one air car.

As they are driving, the car protects them by shifting all of its exterior metal to one spot during threat of impact (like a laser blast). The car can also run alongside the walls. Bartok starts to play around with it going back and forth. A laser bullet tags the back of the car.

KLARVID

We're gonna die!

BARTOK

We? I'm the only one with real skin in this car.

The tunnel breaks off into three different directions. Bartok, seeing his moment, accelerates the car and brings it up on the right wall.

Just as it looks like he is going to take the right path, he does a sharp parabolic loop, driving the car across the ceiling and down the left side wall.

KLARVID

Weeeeeeeee!

As the car speeds down the left tunnel, the ensuing cars can't bank in time. The air vehicle crashes into a wall and falls on top of the ground vehicle. They both explode.

BARTOK

I can't believe that worked!

INT. HARNESSER HEADQUARTERS, VIEWING ROOM - SAME TIME

Bebba, Linja, Grei, and Respunam just witnessed what happened. Bebbba and Linja are on their feet, excited.

BEBBA

Neither can we!

Bebba high-fives Linja as he gets a few slaps on the back from some of the others in the room. At this point, the only screen showing is the one following Bartok and Klarvid so everyone in the room has been following along. Meanwhile Grei and Respunam take a sidebar.

RESPUNAM

I think this might be it.

GREI

Go get him.

INT. CAVERN TUNNELS - MOMENTS LATER

As the purple car speeds down the tunnel. Extinguisher-style mist suddenly shoots out of the side of the tunnel walls blocking Bartok's view.

BARTOK

We're slowing down.

The car slows to a stop at what appears to be a dead end. As the tires roll over a red line, the line changes to green.

DASH VOICE

Congratulations. You have completed the Second Screening of the Harnesser Testing. Please proceed ahead on foot. Thank you.

BARTOK

I think we made it! Klarvid?

Klarvid's head is slumped down, his eyes closed. Bartok gets out of the car and walks over to Klarvid's side. He scoops him up in his arms, gently as if it were his real brother.

A drop of blood trickles down Bartok's face from a cut on his cheek. He wipes it off on his shoulder.

The dead end opens revealing passage beyond. Bartok steps through into a massive open space, darkness surrounding him. A long bridge about ten feet in front of him leads to a small platform illuminated in a bright light.

The bridge has no side railings, only dozens of tiny bright lights surrounding it showing the way. As Bartok prepares to start down the bridge, a doorway opens off to his far left.

The REAL KLARVID bursts through running for his brother. Respunam hangs in the doorway for a bit with a slight grin before disappearing.

Bartok doesn't see him until he's a few feet away. He tosses android Klarvid to the side.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Klarvid!

The two exchange a hug.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Was that Respunam? What'd she say?

KLARVID

She said we won! They're down there. Across the bridge!

BARTOK

What is? Klarvid, wait! Be careful.

Klarvid is already halfway across the bridge. Bartok follows behind him at a much slower pace. Once on the platform, they are standing in front of two poles about four feet high with a hook jutting out of the top.

When Bartok looks closer, he sees them: Two long ring bands, one on each hook. One is orange and the other is green. Bartok grabs the orange one and slides it on his left middle finger. It adjusts to his hand, fitting perfectly between his first and second knuckle.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

I wonder what it does.

In montage, the brothers try to turn the namooms on.

KLARVID

What if we tapped them together?

BARTOK

Ok, one...two...three.

They tap their fingers together. Nothing happens.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Feel anything?

KLARVID  
Maybe?

BARTOK  
Next.

They try a few more things. Bartok throws his fist up...

BARTOK (CONT'D)  
Power on!

Klarvid takes his off and starts poking his belly button with it. Cut to Bartok taking his off to look at it more closely.

BARTOK (CONT'D)  
Maybe it has some instructions?

KLARVID  
(To his namoom)  
Please turn on.

Cut to...

BARTOK  
Klarvid, no, it's not gonna work on  
your foot. Put your shoe back on!

In the next cut, Klarvid is talking into his phone.

KLARVID  
How does a namoom work?

PHONE RESPONDER  
Your guess is as good as mine, kid.

Meanwhile, Bartok is jabbing at the air hoping some kind of laser blast will emit from the namoom.

BARTOK  
Blam kapow! Blam kapow! Damnit!

GREI  
You got all this way and can't  
figure out how to turn them on?

Bartok and Klarvid both jump at hearing Grei directly behind them. She is watching them with a smirk.

GREI (CONT'D)  
Bang your fists together. Watch.

Grei brings the sides of her fists together with her two pointer fingers and thumbs touching.

When Bartok bring his fists together, we hear a DEEP BOOMING like the sound of a single bass drum beat and Bartok's hands light up orange.

He jumps back at the surprising sound. He stares down at his hands with wide eyes.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Thank you for finding me, Bartok.

BARTOK

You. The voice I've been hearing.

GREI

The same voice that guided you here  
will be your guide during training.  
It is an extension of the namooms.

KLARVID

My turn!

Klarvid bangs his fists together next, his namoom producing the same sound. A green glow emits around his hands. He has the same wide-eyed response that Bartok has.

KLARVID (CONT'D)

Woah!

Grei is back across the bridge. They don't notice until she speaks, her voice echoing across the open space.

GREI

Congratulations, Harnessers! I hope  
you can feel that power coursing  
through your veins because you're  
going to need it to get back.

BARTOK

I definitely feel...wait, did you  
say 'get back'?

GREI

Bridge down.

BARTOK

Wait!

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Run, now!

Bartok sprints as the bridge falls apart at his heels. His speed from wearing the namoom easily gets him across.



BARTOK  
That felt good!

The BOOMING sounds again. Bartok looks down at his left arm. A ring of orange light flickers around his wrist before becoming solid. He looks to Grei for an answer.

BARTOK (CONT'D)  
What happened?

GREI  
You improved. Every ring represents a new level advancement. The more rings you have, the more powerful you potentially are.

BARTOK  
Nice!

KLARVID  
Ummm, guys?

Klarvid is still back on the platform.

GREI  
Looks like you left someone behind.

Grei makes her exit leaving Bartok and Klarvid stumped.

KLARVID  
What now?

BARTOK  
What is the voice telling you?

KLARVID  
It wants me to jump, but I was hoping you had a better idea.

BARTOK  
I got nothing.

KLARVID  
Looks like I'm jumping.

BARTOK  
Wait no...Oh God, he's doing it.

With a running start Klarvid leaps into the air. Legs and arms flailing, he's covering good ground. A few feet from the ledge, he falls short plummeting into the darkness. Bartok runs for the ledge, screaming.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

KLARVID!

Peering down below into the darkness, Bartok sees a faint green light, then two lights. The lights are getting closer. A repeated crushing sound can be heard as Klarvid makes his way up the side of the cliff before propelling himself to land beside Bartok.

The brothers are flush with excitement as they give each other a big hug.

EXT. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING, ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The image of Bartok and Klarvid hugging hovers in the sky on a holoboard, above them the words, "Congratulations to Irigo's own Bartok and Klarvid Organon, the new Harnessers". Bartok and his cousin NIDI Bringham are marveling at it from the rooftop of their apartment. Nidi is black in her early twenties and rocks a bald head.

A light snow is falling.

NIDI

Shit, that's you, cuzzo! Big time!

BARTOK

I don't know about big time, but it's a start.

NIDI

You serious, this is the best thing that's happened to our family since...Hell, this is the best thing that's happened to our family! Your mom would be proud.

BARTOK

Can I tell you something I haven't told anyone else? The real reason I did all this is so I could have enough money to buy her apparition. She died so quick. I just want to see her again, talk to her one last time. I miss her.

NIDI

We all do. Hey, I need a favor.

BARTOK

They haven't paid me yet.

NIDI

Not money. I got more parties than I can deal with right now so I'm good there. I actually got into it recently with some real bad people and I was wondering--

They both jump back in surprise as Grei suddenly shoots in front of them lifting high into the sky before landing in front of them on the rooftop. Her hands are glowing blue. Nidi wastes no time starting towards her, a gun drawn.

NIDI (CONT'D)

Yo, we got a problem? 'Sup?

BARTOK

Nidi, chill, she's good people. This is Grei. She's going to be training me and Klarvid. Grei, this is my cousin Nidi.

Grei extends a glowing hand.

GREI

Nice to meet you, Nidi.

NIDI

That's not contagious, is it?

The glow disappears from Grei's hands.

GREI

Not at all.

NIDI

So that's the namoom? Yo, that's some cool shit! Get in here!

Nidi wraps Grei up in a big embrace.

NIDI (CONT'D)

Take care of my cousin. Cuz, I'll get at you later. Proud of you for making it out of Irgo.

BARTOK

Nidi, before you go, would you mind giving Grei back her namoom please?

Nidi reaches in her jacket pocket and produces the namoom. She flips it to Grei before raising her fist to her forehead.

NIDI

Later, cuz. Eight Strong.

BARTOK

Six strong.

Nidi exits.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry about that. Nidi's always had a talent for taking things that aren't hers.

GREI

I imagine that's not a bad talent to have growing up here.

BARTOK

Not too far from it myself before the Harnesser gig came along.

GREI

Somehow I don't believe that. You're a good kid, Bartok.

BARTOK

You live long enough in a place like this, even a good kid might have to do a bad thing or two to get by. This Harnesser thing, it's going to change everything for me and my family. I can't thank you enough for giving me a shot. What?

GREI

I just left a meeting with the Volstredin City Council. They weren't happy about the results. After deliberations, they decided the position would be better filled by two Face Ranks who can command respect from the population.

BARTOK

They're pulling us? I don't understand, we did everything that was asked of us.

GREI

I know.

BARTOK

I passed every test. Put my life on the line. And I did it better and faster than everyone else.

GREI

I know.

BARTOK

And now I have to go downstairs and tell my dad...this is bullshit! Who are they replacing us with? At least tell me that.

GREI

Two leftovers from the competition. A male named Dim Current--

BARTOK

That's a stupid ass name.

GREI

And your teammate Tear Jacent.

BARTOK

You've gotta be shitting me. And she agreed? I can't believe this. This has gone from being the best day of my life to the worst!

GREI

Teenagers. You're so, "Oh no, the world is ending because something just got hard for me."

BARTOK

What do you expect me to do?

GREI

What you've done from the beginning. Fight! I couldn't talk them into letting you keep the position, but I did convince them to at least let you hang out at the training facility to watch while the other two train. And when I'm not training them, I'm going to train you. I'm going to show them why the namooms called to you and not them. Klarvid's welcome. Your father. I even got Zalea a pass to come and visit.

BARTOK

If she ever talks to me again.

GREI

She'll get over it. Bartok, I know this isn't how you wanted things to play out, but look at it this way: You didn't get the job, but you did land an internship. Just means you're going to have to work a little harder. You in?

Bartok looks up in the sky. The holoboard is gone.

BARTOK

When do we start?

Grei tosses him her namoom.

GREI

Right now. Fire it up.

Bartok bangs his fists together. A blue glow emits from them.

INT. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - LATER

Bartok and Grei are standing outside the Organon door.

BARTOK

You beat my ass.

GREI

Get used to that. You should also try getting used to your Voice.

BARTOK

How?

GREI

Talk to it.

INT. ORGANON HOME, BARTOK'S BEDROOM - LATER

Bartok is laying on his bed, the only light coming from his hands aglow with the power of the namoom.

BARTOK

So can you like read my thoughts?

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

It's more like reading your movements. I can see the battle as it's unfolding. Give you direction.

BARTOK

Before the First Screening, I heard  
a voice and thought it was Zalea.  
It was you.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Yes.

BARTOK

Grei said you chose me and my  
brother. Why us? We're nobodies.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Not true. Not even close. The  
sooner you realize your worth, the  
more powerful you can be.

BARTOK

What is your goal?

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Peace.

BARTOK

And the fighting?

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

We can't know peace without war.

Bartok glances over at the picture on his nightstand of him  
with his arms around his mother.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE (CONT'D)

Yes.

BARTOK

Yes, what?

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Your mother would be proud of you.

BARTOK

I thought you said you couldn't  
read my thoughts.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Sometimes you don't have to be able  
read someone's mind to know what  
they are thinking.

KLARVID (O.S.)

Can I try?

Bartok looks up to find Klarvid standing in his doorway.

Moments Later

Klarvid is sitting on the bed his hands aglow.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE  
It sounds to me Jash had it coming.

KLARVID  
That's what I've been saying!

BARTOK  
Ok, bug, maybe let's give the Voice  
a rest for the night.

KLARVID  
Wait, one more question. If I take  
a shower, then pee right after...

INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, TRAINING ROOM #2 - DAYS  
LATER

Bartok is sparring with Grei in a white room, their hands  
glowing. Grei is better, making Bartok pay at every turn.

GREI (V.O.)  
The namooms are not about how  
powerful you are or the things they  
allow you to do. The namooms  
revolve solely around your ability  
to listen. It's probably why,  
historically, women have wielded  
these weapons better than men have.

Grei knocks Bartok down repeatedly.

GREI  
Get up. Again.

INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, TRAINING ROOM #2 - LATER

The room is darker now as Bartok deflects various laser  
blasts coming at him.

GREI (V.O.)  
Listen to it. Heed its voice. It  
wants to help you.

Just as Bartok is starting to get the hang of the exercise a  
sudden barrage of laser blasts knocks him offscreen.

GREI (O.S.)  
Get up. Again.



INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, HALLWAY - LATER

Klarvid sneaks down a bright hallway before arriving at a thick, black door at the hall's end. He presses his palm to the door and the door slides open revealing darkness beyond.

NAMOOM HOLDING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A glass case holding the three namooms rests in the center of the room on top of a pillar. Klarvid puts a hand on the base of the case and the glass slides away. He picks up a namoom.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A scowling BEBBA is waiting for Klarvid just outside the door. Klarvid drops his head knowing he has to put the namoom back. He re-enters the room.

TRAINING ROOM #2 - LATER

Klarvid looks on from a window wall while Bartok takes on a sleek robot in combat. More light rings have formed around Bartok's arm, signifying his improvement.

GREI (V.O.)

Eventually your ability to listen  
will become a reflex and you and  
the voice will move in sync.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Stay low, look for the body. It's a  
larger target. Good. Block,  
counter, avoid, left strike. Good!  
Watch for the...

Bartok just about has the upper hand when the robot catches him with a kick he wasn't expecting.

GREI (O.S.)

Up. Run it again.

INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, BARTOK'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

BARTOK'S alarm sounds. He sits up in his bed stretching his sore muscles. He's got bruises all over.

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Bartok is walking towards the door at the end of the hallway, he sees his father escorting a sullen Klarvid back to his room.

TRAINING ROOM #2 - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok gets slammed against the wall and slides to the floor.

GREI (O.S.)

Again.

INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, TRAINING ROOM #2 - LATER

Bartok spars with Grei. He is getting better but she still gains the upper hand, dropping him with a right hook.

GREI

Get up. Again.

INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, TRAINING ROOM #2 - LATER

Bartok loses to the robot, again getting closer before being knocked down. The robot jumps on his back and repeatedly slams his head into the floor.

BARTOK

Ow...ow...ow...

GREI (O.S.)

Again.

INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, HALLWAY - LATER

Bartok reaches the door at the end of the Hallway and the spot where he places his palm to open the door reads, "All Namooms Currently In Use". He's upset.

TRAINING ROOM #2 - LATER

Bartok and Klarvid watch from a window wall while DIM and Tear train with Grei. Dim is a nonhuman in his twenties with buggy red eyes and two pincers coming out of his cheeks. He rocks a mohawk and a number of tattoos.

The Harnessers aren't doing well and it makes Bartok happy. Tear catches him smirking. His face changes when he sees her get knocked down again.

## TRAINING ROOM #2 - LATER

Bartok squares off against the lasers, the robot, and Grei simultaneously. After a series of maneuvers, Bartok is able to time a perfect dodge from a laser that ultimately blows a hole through the robot.

As the robot sparks out and falls, Bartok trades blows with Grei before landing a spinning kick that takes her to the ground. Grei wipes blood from her mouth looking up at Bartok with an impressed smile. She accepts his hand to help her up.

GREI

Good. Let's go again.

## INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, BEBBA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Grei is leaning over Bebbba shaking him awake. Bebbba jumps.

GREI

Come with me.

## HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Bebba follows Grei down the hall. They come to a stop at the window wall looking into Training Room #2. Klarvid is in the room doing the laser blast exercise and he's kicking ass moving with fluid grace and precision.

He creatively flips off walls and uses his glowing fists to deflect the blasts. He has six light rings going up his arm.

GREI (CONT'D)

He's at a Level Six, the same level as Bartok. There's only one thing holding him back.

BEBBA

What's that?

GREI

You. You've got to step back from this and let me train the boy. I need you to trust me.

Bebba looks on silently from the window at his son. Grei materializes inside the room (indicating a time lapse) to spar with Klarvid. Bartok eventually appears as well. The three go at it fiercely.

## TRAINING ROOM #2 - MOMENTS LATER

Grei gives a tired Bartok and Klarvid fist bumps.

GREI (CONT'D)

Very good. Next person that knocks me down can leave early.

Bartok and Klarvid share a look before charging Grei.

EXT. INTERACTIVE GARDEN - NEXT DAY, EARLY MORNING

The rich and colorful Interactive Garden is a sprawling haven for flower lovers, allowing one to get closer to nature. Touching the flowers and plants in the garden are encouraged as these flowers respond to touch.

They may bloom into a larger flower, dissipate into hundreds of tiny pieces, or begin a soft song (among other things) depending on which flower you touch. Bartok and Grei are walking through the garden, interacting with the flowers.

BARTOK

One thing that's been bothering me is why the Volstredin City Council didn't just choose you. You have all the experience, the knowledge. Why not give you the job?

Grei rolls up her sleeve revealing the Eight of Hearts tattoo on her wrist.

GREI

For the same reason they took the position from you. I'm good enough to train. Nothing more.

BARTOK

That's bullshit.

GREI

That's life. And, as shitty as life can be at times, it does have a great sense of humor. Imagine their surprise when two Number Ranks ended up being chosen. I'm sure it would have made Malvus happy.

BARTOK

Tell me about Malvus.

GREI

First history lesson: A love story.

EXT. BORDWAY CITY STREET, LUST ROW - FLASHBACK

Lust Row is just as the name indicates, a place where sex runs rampant. Neon signs decorate buildings while men and women of all races and species walk the streets in skimpy clothes flagging down passing cars.

GREI (V.O.)

Ages ago, Malvus grew up in a city called Bordway, aka The Bust Belt. Bordway is a city powered by brothels. It's the city's primary source of revenue. People come from all over the Lytragainian to visit Bordway. Some get so entranced they end up working there.

INT. HOME OF MALVUS GRAY, BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

MALVUS Gray is reading on his bed. He is a bald, nonhuman in his forties with a slight build and greenish blue skin.

GREI (V.O.)

Though it was a common thing for everyone else in the city, Malvus never visited the brothels. Not because he thought he was better than anyone else, but because he was always afraid he would run into his mother and sister who were both prostitutes. Maybe if he had, he never would have met Di.

Malvus sits up when he sees a dim light from just outside his window. As he gets closer, the light gets brighter.

GREI (V.O.)

Di was a wander fairy, free-spirited beings that love adventure. They fell in love.

Malvus opens his window and DI floats inside, hovering inches from his face.

GREI (V.O.)

They did. They connected on every level. Wander fairies are extremely intelligent and strong, about as strong as ten men.

Di's light engulfs Malvus and he is lifted off the ground. Malvus laughs as they twirl about in an air dance.

GREI

Back then, people would try and capture wander fairies and use them for their own means. I think she loved him so much because he wanted nothing from her.

INT. HOME OF MALVUS GRAY, FRONT FOYER - FLASHBACK

Malvus answers his front door only to find his sister XIXA looking a wreck. Her clothes are tattered and half her face is destroyed.

She collapses in Malvus' arms. He scoops her up and carries her to his bedroom.

GREI (V.O.)

One day his sister shows up hurt. Apparently one of her customers thought it entertaining to beat the shit out of her.

EXT. LUST ROW - FLASHBACK

Malvus is walking down Lust Row. He walks into one of the brothels with murder in his eyes.

GREI (V.O.)

Naturally, Malvus wasn't having it. He confronts Xixa's attackers...

Malvus is tossed into the street. A gang of guys led by a mountain of a man walk out of the brothel and stand over Malvus before attacking him.

GREI (V.O.)

And Malvus loses badly. They almost kill him before Di intervenes.

A light emerges between the gang growing brighter and brighter until finally it explodes throwing the gang every which way. The light hovers over Malvus before lifting him off the street and carrying him off.

INT. HOME OF MALVUS GRAY, BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Malvus awakes in his bed with not just one light, but multiple dots of lights hovering over him.

GREI (V.O.)

When Malvus wakes up, Di tells him that the same man that nearly killed him is now terrorizing the city. She and twenty-two other wander fairies decide to sacrifice themselves, pouring themselves into a weapon that will take the man down. She tells Malvus exactly what he needs to do to create the weapon--the first namoom.

INT. HOME OF MALVUS GRAY, DINING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Malvus is sitting at his dining room table working on a contraption while the wander fairies hover over him.

GREI (V.O.)

Creating it is bittersweet as he has to say goodbye to his love Di who would be the first sacrifice for the weapon. They both know the other fairies wouldn't be willing to sacrifice themselves if Di wasn't. She tells him she will always be with him.

After hovering just inches away from his face, Di draws herself into the namoom Malvus has created as if she is being sucked into a vortex. The other fairies follow suit.

EXT. LUST ROW - FLASHBACK

Malvus is in the street just twenty yards from the man who had bested him, his hands glowing orange. The man charges him. Malvus beats him like a drum.

EXT. INTERACTIVE GARDEN - PRESENT

Bartok and Grei continue through the garden.

BARTOK

The voices are wander fairies?

GREI

Yes. Never forget that the namooms were created with love and sacrifice. Use it with love in your heart and the willingness to sacrifice for the greater good.

(MORE)

GREI (CONT'D)

Also remember that, before the Ranking System, was put into place, the most powerful weapon in the world was created by the son of a prostitute. You don't need a great beginning to be great now.

BARTOK

What happened next? How did the other namooms get created?

GREI

Another story for another day.  
You're going to be late for school.

INT. BARTOK'S SCHOOL, HALLWAY - LATER

Bartok is walking down the hall to his next class, clowning around with two of his friends, KAL Atalan (chubby white male, 14) and TICKIE Klicks (nonhuman male, slight build, 17, indigo skin). Bartok's eyes, typically brown, are now red.

TICKIE

They make your eyes change color?

BARTOK

Yes. Our trainer Grei says it's a side effect of wearing them.

KAL

But you're not going blind right?

TICKIE

Powers or not, hell if I would wear anything that would make me blind.  
This one time, my uncle...

Tickie's voice fades in Bartok's ear as he spots Zalea about fifty feet away. She sees him too, but pretends as if she doesn't and tries to keep walking.

BARTOK

I'm not going blind! Excuse me.

Bartok catches up to Zalea as she rounds a corner. She doesn't slow down and looks like she is in no mood for bullshit.

If it isn't awkward enough, people are shouting out Bartok from everywhere as they walk by.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

You get my messages?



ZALEA

Yeah. Been busy. You know, with school like regular people.

BARTOK

Z, what do you want me to do? You want me to apologize for winning? I'm not even a Harnesser now. Why am I the bad guy?

The hallway is now flooded with people clapping for Bartok and cheering their support of him getting cheated. Bartok looks around at his schoolmates sheepishly.

ZALEA

You're definitely not the bad guy. I gotta go. See ya around, icon.

BARTOK

Zalea!

Bartok looks on as Zalea turns a corner and disappears.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - LATER

Bulky drones with food trays fly around the school cafeteria delivering food to the kids. Robot droids walk around cleaning up floor spills. Once a party leaves a tables, the table sinks into the floor to be replaced by another, the dirty table being cleaned underground.

A circular bar decorates the center with various screens scattered about, some for telescreen programming, some for gaming, others for highlighting school events. Booths used for private study time line the far right wall.

Zalea makes a beeline for the first open one, numb to almost everyone. She does notice a group of girls looking at a holovid of Bartok, fawning over him.

Almost as soon as she sits down (with no food in hand), she starts sobbing uncontrollably, the weight of everything bearing down on her. A SOFT VOICE emits from the telescreen in front of her.

SOFT VOICE

Your vitals imply sadness, possibly depression. Would you like assistance feeling better?

ZALEA

Not unless you have a gun so I can blow my brains out.

SOFT VOICE

Your counselor has been made aware  
of your suicidal thoughts. She  
should be here momentarily.

ZALEA

No, I don't need--

SOFT VOICE

Thank you.

When she walks out of the booth, Volk is sitting at one of  
the tables. He regards her cynically holding back a snicker.

VOLK

Aww, boyfriend steal your thunder?

ZALEA

You don't want to do this today.

VOLK

Didn't you get picked first? Had  
the whole school up in arms when  
you got chosen. Now, look at you.  
Guess Numbers always lose.

A RINGING CACOPHONY is heard along with Zalea's breathing,  
drowning out Volk's remaining words. Zalea is fed up. As one  
of the drones is passing by, she steals a lunch tray. She  
walks back to Volk who has his back turned.

Just as he swivels back around to face her, WHAM! She hits  
him so hard, she breaks the tray in half. His friends back  
away like scared rats, not knowing what just happened.

Zalea stands over Volk triumphant as blood pours from his  
mouth and nose. He can't even talk.

It doesn't take the entire cafeteria long to realize what has  
happened. As more people crowd around him, Zalea feels a hand  
on her arm pulling her backwards.

LINJA

(To Zalea)

Let's get out of here.

Linja and a smirking Zalea disappear.

INT. COASTER CAR, SCORCH SPRINGS - LATER

The Scorch Springs are an underground volcanic formation that  
are best known for their man-made "spray shows" that occur  
around the clock.

Volcanic sulfur sprays in fountains like a shower of fireworks while coaster car passengers travel safely around the spray, admiring the scenery.

Linja and Zalea are riding in a two-person car, their plush seats facing each other. They converse as an automated voice in the background touches on the history of the Springs.

ZALEA

I should have killed his ass.

LINJA

If it makes you feel any better,  
kinda looks like you did.

ZALEA

No, it doesn't make me feel better.  
I mean, it shouldn't right?

LINJA

Egger suffers from false  
popularity. Everyone pretends like  
they like him, but they really hate  
his guts. You probably did a lot of  
people a favor today.

ZALEA

I lost it. Saw red.

LINJA

And how did it make you feel?

ZALEA

Like for that brief moment in time,  
I found myself.

LINJA

Zalea, what's next for you? Now  
that the Harnesser position is no  
more because the boyfriend you  
trusted had to outdo you. You can't  
go back to school now, not after  
that. You'll be lucky if you aren't  
arrested. And your parents? How are  
they going to take this?

ZALEA

I...I don't know. I don't want to  
go home. I don't want to face this.

LINJA

Why did you want to become a  
Harnesser? Everyone had their  
reasons. What was yours?

ZALEA  
To help people.

Linja gives her a look as if to say, "And?"

                  ZALEA (CONT'D)  
Because I'm tired of being poor.

                  LINJA  
What if I told you I could help you  
with the latter?

                  ZALEA  
I would tell you that I would do  
just about anything.

INT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, HALLWAY - SEVENTEEN DAYS  
LATER

SUPER: "Seventeen Day Later". Bartok is walking towards the  
Namoom Holding Room. Just as he gets there, the words "All  
Namooms Currently In Use" materializes across the door.

                  BARTOK  
Come on!

The door slides open and Tear exits.

                  BARTOK (CONT'D)  
Oh, I was just--

                  TEAR  
Bartok, it's ok. I know you and  
Klarvid have been training.

                  BARTOK  
Why would we do that? It's not like  
we're Harnessers or anything.

                  TEAR  
Dim's training and Grei's namoom is  
gone. I shouldn't be too long. I'll  
knock when I'm done.

                  BARTOK  
Don't stress it. Wait, what do you  
mean by Grei's namoom is gone?

                  TEAR  
It was taken. Recently.

                  BARTOK  
No way. Maybe she misplaced it.

TEAR

It's not car keys. You don't just lose something like this.

BARTOK

Good luck finding it then.

TEAR

Sorry.

BARTOK

For what? Taking a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity away from me? Making all my hard work mean shit?

TEAR

I can only imagine...

BARTOK

Don't you dare finish that sentence. You have no fucking clue what this feels like, to have something so meaningful just ripped from you. And you know why you don't? Because it's always the Face Ranks that take from the Number Ranks, never the other way around! Do you have any idea why I wanted to become a Harnesser? It was never about being a hero. I just wanted enough money to buy my mom's apparition, talk to her one last time. Because, from where I'm from, people like her get killed all the time and we can't afford to say goodbye. A Joker couldn't imagine that feeling if you tried.

TEAR

Would it make you feel any better if I told you it should be you?

BARTOK

No. Maybe.

TEAR

Would it make you feel better to know that the reason all of this is so hard is because I like you?

BARTOK

Like...like me or like like me?

TEAR

I had a camera put in the training rooms so I could watch you from my room without you seeing me. What do you think? I didn't want to take the position, but I thought if not me then who? Some Face Rank bastard that would abuse the position? I know you're better than me, Bartok. And Klarvid is better than me and Dim put together.

BARTOK

Nice way of saying my eight-year-old brother could kick my ass.

TEAR

All I'm saying is, neither of you are dumb enough to make the same mistake I did.

BARTOK

What mistake?

TEAR

Don't get mad. A couple weeks ago, Zalea called me really depressed talking about how hard of a time she was having with everything. I told her she was welcome to come here anytime and, we've kind of been hanging out here recently. I would have told you but she told me not to. She didn't want to talk to you and I wanted to respect that.

BARTOK

How many times are we talking?

TEAR

About everyday. Bartok, I think she took the namoom.

BARTOK

Zalea? No way She would do something like that.

TEAR

Something has seemed off about her recently. Last time we talked, she was asking me some weird questions about my political affiliations and if I knew anyone important. I didn't like the look in her eyes.

BARTOK

And you're not just saying this  
because of what you just told me?

TEAR

I'm telling you because I feel like  
she might hurt someone.

BARTOK

Even if she did have it, it's not  
like she knows how to use it.

TEAR

I may have shown her a few things.

BARTOK

Tear! You're a terrible Harnesser.

TEAR

I know. I have to find her before  
it's too late.

BARTOK

We don't know if it's her. A lot of  
people work at this facility. Could  
be anybody. She's already mad at  
me. I'll talk to her.

GREI (O.S.)

I'm afraid that won't be possible.

Bartok and Tear now face GREI who they didn't notice before.

GREI (CONT'D)

Zyn Lin of the Volstredin City  
Council was just murdered. The  
killer used a namoom. That makes  
you the prime suspect.

BARTOK

I...what? Me? I didn't...

GREI

I know.

BARTOK

I'm not a...

GREI

I know. But they've got no other  
leads. You have ties to the namoom  
and you're a scorned Number Rank.  
There are guardians waiting outside  
to arrest you.

(MORE)

GREI (CONT'D)

Just say the word and I'll go out there right now and make them wish they never came.

BARTOK

No. It'll only make things worse.

GREI

Smart man.

TEAR

What now?

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok is walking away from Grei and Tear as they look on.

GREI (V.O.)

Tear, find Zalea. If she is behind this, the sooner you can get to her the better. If you can't find her, pair up with Dim. He's watching over Borna Turgeson. Investigators seem to think she could be the next VCC member to go.

The front doors of the Harnesser Training Facility slide open. Bartok walks outside.

EXT. HARNESSER TRAINING FACILITY, PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The blackness of the early morning sky is lit up by a large mahogany moon. As snow falls, Bartok is escorted by eight guardians who are clearing the pathway of media members firing off questions left and right. Bartok is wearing boxed shackles that cover his entire hands.

GREI (V.O.)

Bartok, when you get outside, don't fight. Don't talk. Go out there with your head held high. We're with you. We'll get through this.

Bartok does exactly as Grei instructs, keeping his head held high until they throw him in the back of a Guardian transport. Once inside and away from the eyes of everyone, he sheds silent tears.

Over Black

SUPER: "Five Days Later".



INT. IRGO CITY PRISON, HOLDING CELLS - FIVE DAYS LATER

The holding cells in the prison are stacked on top of each other in a massive warehouse-type room like storage units. Instead of bars, the front of each cell is an impenetrable wall of glass.

An individual using a crane-like vehicle uses the vehicle to snatch a cell about eleven rows up. The crane lays the cell on the floor.

Bartok is inside the cell. The glass opens in the center and Bartok steps through the created doorway.

As a guardian is taking off his shackles, Bartok sees three figures in the distance walking towards him. Bartok takes off running, not stopping until he reaches them.

He hugs Bebbba first then Klarvid. When he extends his fist to Grei, she wraps him up in an embrace too.

A NEWSREPORTER has been talking as this moment unfolds:

REPORTER (V.O.)

Civil unrest is occurring in metro Volstredin as two Volstredin City Council members have been killed just five days apart. Zyn Lin was murdered in his home five days ago while, just recently, fifty-five-year-old Borna Turgeson was brutally slain outside of a restaurant after celebrating her son's birthday. Harnesser Dim Current was killed while Harnesser Tear Jacent was severely beaten, both in their futile attempt to protect the VCC member. What we know: The unidentified killer is using a namoom and is considered extremely dangerous. However, that killer is not former Harnesser-elect Bartok Organon as he was wrongfully imprisoned during the time of Borna's murder. Bartok is set to be released instantly.

BARTOK

(To Bebbba)

Tell Nidi I said 'thank you'. I don't think I would have survived in there without her connections.

Grei puts two namooms in his hand.

GREI  
(To Bartok)  
I got the approval to reinstate  
you. Both of you.

Bartok flips one of the namooms over to Klarvid.

BARTOK  
(To Klarvid)  
Looks like we're a team again, bug.

KLARVID  
What should I do?

BARTOK  
Keep an eye on Dad for me.

GREI  
(To Bartok)  
This is real shit now. One way or  
another, you need to understand  
that this is going to end in  
bloodshed. This is your show now.  
What's the call?

BARTOK  
(To Grei)  
Tear awake?

INT. VOLSTREDIN HOSPITAL, TEAR'S ROOM - LATER

Bartok is sitting at Tear's bedside. Tear looks worse for  
wear, her face bruised, her body hooked up to machines.

TEAR  
She was like a lightning bolt.

EXT. CITY STREET OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - FLASHBACK

Dim and Tear are taking on the KILLER together. The killer is  
wearing all black, including a face mask. As they fight, the  
attendees scatter.

BORNA forces her children and husband away to keep them out  
of harm's way. Borna is an attractive nonhuman in her mid-  
fifties with long red hair and navy blue skin. Her eyes are  
an exotic yellow.

As she hides, the fight continues on into the street.

TEAR (V.O)

She was like a whirlwind, too quick  
for both of us. When she knocked  
the wind out of me, it was all the  
time she needed to end Dim.

The killer knocks Dim upwards into the direct line of sight  
of a speeding air vehicle. He crashes into the middle of the  
street. She walks over casually, rips off one of his pincers,  
and kills him with it.

INT. VOLSTREDIN HOSPITAL, TEAR'S ROOM - PRESENT

BARTOK

I just can't see Zalea doing  
something so violent. And you still  
think it was her?

TEAR

I don't think. I know.

EXT. CITY STREET OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - FLASHBACK

Having taken care of Borna, who is laying at her feet, the  
Killer casually walks over to Tear who is sprawled out on the  
sidewalk. As the killer walks, the glow of her namoom oozes  
from her hands, making puddles on the street.

TEAR (V.O.)

I would only notice when I was also  
wearing a namoom, but anytime Zalea  
uses one, the glow would seep from  
her hands and make puddles on the  
floor. It was almost like the power  
itself was trying to somehow get  
away from her. It was doing it  
again outside the restaurant. When  
she reached me, she said...

KILLER

(In a distorted voice)

I'm only leaving you alive because  
you had my back when I was at my  
lowest. Come after me again and you  
won't be so lucky.

INT. VOLSTREDIN HOSPITAL, TEAR'S ROOM - PRESENT

TEAR

I'm sorry you went to prison for  
something you didn't do.

(MORE)

TEAR (CONT'D)

I'm hoping my gift makes up for it  
a little bit. In that drawer there.

Bartok slides open the drawer on the nightstand beside her bed. He can't believe his eyes as he pulls out a white box with an image on an egg-shaped object on the front. The box says Advent Apparitions.

BARTOK

An apparition. I can't take this.

TEAR

I was hoping to get it to you  
sooner, but I wanted to make sure  
it was just right for you. Figured  
with everything going on, it might  
be good to have.

BARTOK

Thank you.

TEAR

It's nothing. My father owns the  
company after all.

BARTOK

You're the CEO of Advent?

TEAR

I might have lied a smidge. I  
wanted to impress you guys, what? I  
know I'm a Joker, but you're not  
the only one that feels pressure to  
live a better life. I work there,  
but far from a CEO.

Bartok gives her a long hug. Tear rests her head on his shoulder as if it's the safest place in the world.

BARTOK

You're alright for a Face Rank.

TEAR

We're not all bad.

He pulls away after getting a phone notification. It's a text message from Zalea that says, "Ocean Blue. 1 hour." Bartok doesn't hide his concern. He holds up the apparition.

BARTOK

You mentioned you had another room  
connected to this one. Mind if I  
use this now?

EXT. OCEAN BLUE NIGHT CLUB - ONE HOUR LATER

Bartok's expression fades into a shot of Ocean Blue Night Club and its holosignage with the words Ocean Blue washing out repeatedly by an invisible tide.

INT. OCEAN BLUE NIGHT CLUB - SAME TIME

Bartok walks into the club his feet met almost immediately by water that is the brightest of blues. The entire club is submerged by this rich pool, waist-high on most of the patrons in attendance.

Music blares about the room as people dance, drink, and enjoy their night. Shirtless waiters (human and nonhuman) and waitresses in bikini tops walk about with serving trays.

As Bartok walks deeper into the pool, he counts a number of people but no Zalea. People are starting to recognize him and they don't look happy.

He sees her. She is wearing something sleek, all black with shades and gloves to match. She walks over to him, her face stone.

She puts a minute dot of an object in his hand. He sees her put hers in her ear and he follows suit. When she speaks, he hears as clearly as if they are in a quiet room. The rest of the club noise moves to the background.

ZALEA

So we don't have to yell.

BARTOK

It's good to see you.

ZALEA

Is it?

BARTOK

How have you been?

ZALEA

I brought you here to tell you that you should walk away from this. Go back home to your Dad and your brother. This isn't going to end well for you. Zyn. Borna. Dim. I'll do the same to you if I have to.

BARTOK

So it is you?

ZALEA

Your deductive reasoning is off the charts. You're a true Harnesser!

BARTOK

What are you doing? This isn't you!

Zalea takes off her shades and throws them in the water behind her. Her eyes are now a bright yellow.

ZALEA

Bartok, do you know those shades cost twice as much as what my parents pay for rent? That was only a sliver of what they gave me to kill Zyn. And Borna's price was double! He made me rich. She made me wealthy. You asked me how I've been. I'd say I'm doing just fine.

BARTOK

You did this for money?

ZALEA

No, I did this because fuck you, that's why I did this! And fuck them. You think they care about our city and the shit that happens to us? It's about money for them too and their precious rank. Fram killed all those people. She killed my cousin. And they let her go just like that. Because she was a Face Rank and they were Number Rank nobodies. If they won't let me save the city, then I'm gonna destroy it. I'm gonna tear this System down from the inside out.

BARTOK

Zalea, you're not wrong. The Ranking System is terrible, we all know it. But this isn't the way to change it. Not like this.

ZALEA

So we bow down to them? Protect them? Is that your change?

BARTOK

Zalea, please--

ZALEA

Bartok, walk away from this. I won't ask you again.

BARTOK

If you stop now, I can get you out of this. There's still time.

ZALEA

Tell you what. I'm going to walk out of here. Then I'm going to kill Cascade Zipkolona then Heirs Nathan, then Biana Yorker, then Esreba Blackstar. And there is nothing you can do to stop me.

BARTOK

I will stop you. Don't make me.

ZALEA

You're so cute. You really think this is still your story, don't you? This isn't about how you become the hero. It's about how I became the villain.

Zalea takes off her right glove and drops it into the water. As she starts to walk away, Bartok sees Grei's namoom on her middle finger. In sync, the patrons and servers, turn to him. He doesn't notice as he starts after Zalea.

He barely gets three steps before he's grabbed from behind, one arm around his neck while the other locks his arms just so that he can't bang his fists together. A woman gives him a shot to his ribs followed by another shot across the face.

Bartok uses both feet to kick her in the chest bringing his weight backwards on the man holding him. They both crash into the water. His hold slips free for just long enough for Bartok to bang his fists together and bring his namoom to life. Still underwater, Bartok hear his Voice.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

They want you dead. You're going to have to kill them first.

Bartok becomes a whirlwind of death as he bursts from the water, his Voice guiding him the whole way.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE (CONT'D)

Block...kick...punch...duck.

They come at him in droves and he takes them all down. He takes a few hits here and there but is mostly too quick to be touched. As he fights them off, he sees a repeated symbol: A cross with circles at all four points.

He tosses his phone up which stops to hover in mid-air.

BARTOK

Pic burst.

The phone goes wild snapping a burst of pictures as Bartok whoops ass. A man holding a glowing baton-like weapon jolts back a step when the weapon fires at Bartok. Bartok looks down in confusion at a beeping bolt attached to his shirt.

He suddenly flies across the room before he is stopped by a wall. He stumbles to his feet out of the water.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

The fuck was that?

He screams in surprise as he's suddenly thrown again...and again by some invisible force. As he is being thrown up into the ceiling, he sees the guy with the baton pointing it directly at him then directing him downwards.

Bartok crashes to the ground. He grabs the nearest person he can get his hands on and chucks them at the guy controlling the baton. They are both knocked unconscious.

Bartok seizes his opportunity and gets ahold of the baton, taking out a few guys along the way. He takes the bolt off his own shirt then fires more into his attackers. Bartok now controls the baton. Ten men and women are thrown about the room helplessly taking out the attackers close by as well.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Blam kapow.

After taking down the last attacker, Bartok looks around at his dirty work and drops the weapon. There are dozens of bodies floating in the pool. Another ring of light flickers into existence on Bartok's arm.

Bartok heads for the entrance. He is blocked by a mountain of a man with a hard face, the Last Man Standing.

BARTOK (CONT'D)

I can either go around you or  
through you. Up to you.

The Last Man Standing takes a look around at all of the fallen men and women.



## LAST MAN STANDING

You know what? To tell you the truth, I really didn't like these guys anyway. Terrible people to work with, the worst. So yeah, you seem like you've had a time. I'm gonna go ahead and let you pass.

## EXT. OCEAN BLUE NIGHT CLUB, PARKING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Bartok walks past the man out into the night. A sign beside the club name flickers back into existence: "Closed this evening for a special event." Bartok stands on a platform just outside the club that scans his eye.

Within a few seconds, the platform parts and his car pops up from underground. Bartok hops into the car.

## LAST MAN STANDING

I could give you names if you like.  
Where we're located, who we are.

## BARTOK

No time.

Bartok speeds off leaving the Last Man Standing by himself confused. A few seconds later, Bartok skirts back into view, pulling up right beside the Last Man Standing.

## LAST MAN STANDING

(To Bartok)

Ok, so we're called the Ultraists.  
Our hideout is in Irgo...

## EXT. DIAMOND BAY - LATER

Clear night. A red moon hangs in the sky, its reflection bouncing off the ocean waves below. People are walking down a long dock from shore extending out into the sea.

The dock ends at a glass elevator that is shooting patrons up into sky to board a circular train rotating in the sky. Multi-colored lights flash in the sky and around the train.

## INT. CIRCULAR TRAIN - SAME TIME

The inside of the train is an insane mess of people enjoying themselves--dancing, laughing, making out.

Amid the partying, Volstredin City Council Member CASCADE Zipkolona (attractive female, early twenties, human, short hair) is sitting in a red room on a red couch with four others sharing a drug they intake through their nostrils. Next to her are VCC members HEIRS Nathan and ESREBA Blackstar. Heirs is a heavyset, elderly nonhuman with blue skin and red eyes. He has long lavender hair that flips up halfway down his back.

Cascade's phone RINGS. She sees it's Bartok and ignores the call. He calls again and she ignores it again.

HEIRS  
(To Cascade)  
Who's the bugaroo?

CASCADE  
That annoying Organon kid. The  
nerve of that damn kid thinking he  
can call me.

HEIRS  
Maybe it's about the murders.

CASCADE  
I don't care, let our guardians  
handle it. They're more qualified.

HEIRS  
Great, he's calling me now.

Cascade rolls her eyes as Heirs steps away to answer.

HEIRS (CONT'D)  
All hail the mighty Harnesser. To  
what do I owe this pleasure?

INT. BARTOK'S CAR - SAME TIME

Bartok is aimlessly speeding down a highway hoping he's headed in the right direction.

BARTOK  
Thank God you answered. Listen, I  
need...Cascade...The killer...

HEIRS  
Darling, darling! Slow down. Take  
your time, get your words out.

BARTOK  
I'm trying to get in touch with  
Cascade. She's in serious trouble.

HEIRS

What kind of trouble?

BARTOK

She's next. Where is she?

HEIRS

With me. We had a little gathering  
at Diamond Bay.

BARTOK

You're together? Biana there too?

HEIRS

Biana's too young for these type of  
parties. I imagine she's at home  
doing her dance practice.

BARTOK

Council Member Nathan, I really  
need to know where you are right  
now. Something horrible is headed  
your way and I'm the only one that  
can stop it.

HEIRS

Just dropped coordinates. What  
should I tell Cascade?

BARTOK

To answer her damn phone every once  
in a while!

INT. CIRCULAR TRAIN - SAME TIME

Bartok hangs up on Heirs. Heirs smirks.

HEIRS

I like that boy. Cascade, darling!

INT. ORGANON HOME, FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bebba, Linja, and Klarvid are on the couch. Bebba and Linja  
are watching something on the telescreen while Klarvid  
sleeps. Bebba sees a text on his phone from Bartok: "Call me  
ASAP. Be alone." Bebba gets up.

BEBBA

Be back.

LINJA

Everything good?

BEBBA  
Yeah, I told my mom I would call  
her with updates. She's worried  
about the boys.

INT. ORGANON HOME, BEBBA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bebba leaves the door just slightly cracked and the light  
off. He presses a button on his phone to dial Bartok.

BARTOK  
You alone?

BEBBA  
Yes, where are you?

BARTOK  
Listen, I don't have a lot of time.  
Dad, it's Zalea. She killed Zyn and  
Borna and she's not done.

BEBBA  
Wow. That's a lot.

BARTOK  
I should've caught it sooner.

BEBBA  
Don't blame yourself, son. The  
important thing is you know the  
truth and you can help put a stop  
to it. Now, where--

BARTOK  
Dad, Zalea is a part of a group of  
assassins called the Ultraists.

As Bebbba focuses intently on what Bartok is saying, the  
bedroom door cracks open and Linja slips in.

BARTOK (CONT'D)  
Linja was the one that recruited  
her. She's in this too. She's been  
recruiting kids our age for years.

BEBBA  
Bartok, that makes no sense.

BARTOK  
Apparently the VCC wasn't the only  
council that was unhappy about two  
Number Ranks becoming Harnessers.  
This goes all the way to the top.  
(MORE)

BARTOK (CONT'D)

Someone from the Upper Council hired the Ultraists to kill off the VCC for letting this happen on their watch. Zalea was the logical choice to do it because she could get the closest to the namooms the quickest. I guess we can cry about our shitty girlfriends later. I'm headed to stop mine. I'll shoot you the coordinates just in case.

BEBBA

Be safe. Seven strong.

BARTOK

Six strong. I'll be fine.

The call ended, Bebba turns to leave the bedroom. Linja is standing in the doorway with a gun pointed at him.

BEBBA

Guess I don't have to ask you whether or not it's true.

LINJA

And I don't have to ask you whether or not you know how this ends.

BEBBA

You got Zalea wrapped up in this? That poor girl.

LINJA

Look, for the record--

Linja crumples and hits the ground unconscious. Klarvid is standing behind her, his hands glowing.

BEBBA

Is she dead?

KLARVID

No. We should go. More are coming. I can hear them.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

Be strong. These people want to kill you and your father. Don't be afraid to fight back to save your lives, even if it means taking theirs. I'm with you, Klarvid.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A handful of men are waiting outside of the Organon door with blasters. The door blasts outwards from the inside causing them all to shield themselves.

The distraction is all the time Klarvid needs to tear through them. He cringes at his own strength.

KLARVID

Sorry! I'm so sorry...sorry. I  
didn't mean to...sorry!

Once he's done, he motions for his father that it's safe for him to come out. Bebbba follows staring at the fallen bodies.

Klarvid's not done. They run into pockets of Ultraists and Klarvid continues to beat their asses while keeping his father out of harm's way at the same time.

In some instances, he has to do both at the same time moving his father one way, kicking ass, then shifting him back another way to help him dodge a laser blast.

He peeks over the railing seeing dozens of Ultraists left on the floors below. A crowd of tenants have gathered in the foyer on the ground floor to watch.

KLARVID (CONT'D)

Dad, stay here. I'll be right back,  
ok? I'm sorry for killing people.

BEBBA

It's ok son. They don't seem like  
very nice people.

KLARVID

Right?

Klarvid jumps backwards off the railing headed straight to the foyer dozens of floors down. As expected the Ultraists follow him.

Klarvid twists and turns gracefully in the air avoiding the multitude of laser blasts that try and claim his life. They can't touch him. The tenants in the foyer scatter.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Klarvid hits the ground and immediately starts waving his arms deflecting the laser bullets back at his attackers. Bodies fall from the sky. The remaining few that live land smoothly using gravity boots.

Klarvid makes short work of them, leaving no one standing.

INT. WINDING STAIRWELL, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Bebba looks down in disbelief at the carnage.

BEBBA

Wow.

Klarvid suddenly appears in the hallway beside him having come up over the railing. Bebbba jumps back with a scream.

KLARVID

Sorry.

BEBBA

It's ok. Nice job.

KLARVID

Grei would say I could do better.

BEBBA

You're probably right. Come on,  
let's go get your brother.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Bebba and Klarvid reach the lobby. Klarvid looks around at all the damage he has done. Another glowing ring flickers into existence on his arm.

KLARVID

Am I a bad person now?

The swell of tenants in the lobby start clapping for him and cheering his name.

BEBBA

They don't seem to think so.

Klarvid raises a fist to his forehead as he's seen his brother and father do a number of times before. The tenants respond in kind. The silence is deafening.

EXT. DIAMOND BAY - LATER

Bartok races down the dock to the elevator leading up to the circular train, his namoom power on and at the ready. Two large guards lay at the base of the elevator seemingly dead. When the elevator touches down, six people run out screaming.

He hops into the elevator and it shoots him up to the circular train. He is on a platform staring into the many windows of the train as the train circles him. He spots a flash of light through one of the windows.

INT. CIRCULAR TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER

Zalea (now wearing a black mask to match the rest of her outfit) is causing all kinds of fits on the train as she kills to make her way to Cascade who is running through throngs of people through different cars. Some keep partying lost in the flashing lights and blaring music, not realizing there is a killer in their midst.

Cascade makes a break down a bright, empty train car. Zalea takes aim, but Bartok crashes through the window kicking her in the face before she can get a shot off. They tussle.

Just when Bartok think he's gotten the better of her, she shakes him off with a quick move, giving her enough time to fire off a shot that catches Cascade square in the back of the head. Cascade falls dead.

BARTOK

No!

Bartok once again takes the offensive trying to take her down. When he knocks the gun out of her hand, the battle turns into who can get to the gun first.

Bartok forces her back, kicks the gun into his hand, and points it at her.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

She won't go quietly. There is only one way this ends. If you don't end her now, more people will die.

ZALEA

Bartok, you're not gonna sho--

Bartok fires the gun twice, hitting her in the chest and the stomach. Her hand instinctively clutches her wound. They stare at each other for a moment before she falls. She's breathing heavily but still alive.

BARTOK'S INNER VOICE

Finish it.

Bartok shakes his head, refusing to comply. He turns off his namoom power and limps over to Heirs and Esreba who are now huddled over the body of Cascade.



ESREBA

(To Bartok)

The guardians are on their way. You know, the real heroes that actually protect this city.

BARTOK

I don't think Zyn, Borna, or Cascade would agree.

ESREBA

Show some respect, Number.

BARTOK

I just got out of a fight. I'm not trying to fight you too. I'm just trying to save your life--

Zalea throws Bartok through the ceiling of the train car.

EXT. TOP OF THE TRAIN CAR - MOMENTS LATER

It's raining now. Bartok sits up with a painful grimace as Zalea pops up from the hole she threw him through. Her mask slides away from her face.

Puddles of namoom residue ooze from her hands. She is bleeding from her wounds, but seems unbothered. She rips off a metal bar that is welded to the top of the train.

ZALEA

I tried to tell you, Bartok. They're ungrateful. And they're ungrateful because they're entitled. They think they deserve what we don't have. They don't give a shit about you.

BARTOK

If I only helped the people I gave a shit about, I wouldn't be any better than them.

ZALEA

This is exactly what they want. They want us to fight. The longer we spend hating each other, the more we avoid the real issues.

BARTOK

Zalea, you're bleeding bad.

ZALEA

Oh, this! This is nothing.

Zalea places her glowing hand over the wound on her stomach. Bartok is astonished as he watches it heal before his very eyes. She puts her hand to the other wound next.

ZALEA (CONT'D)

Guess you haven't learned  
everything there is to know about  
these things yet. All better!

Bartok stands up like a wobbly duck while Zalea is at full strength. Despite landing a few blows, her repeated strikes with the metal bar break him down. She gets him to a knee and bends the bar around his neck with one foot on his back.

Bartok struggles then goes still, his namoom power flickering off. She regards him for a moment then lifts him by his collar and carelessly tosses him out into the night sky. Another glowing ring of purple flickers and comes to life around her arm.

Bartok plummets towards the ocean below. A namoom-powered Klarvid catches him before he can hit the water. His brother in his arms, Klarvid races back to shore running on water.

EXT. DIAMOND BAY, SHORE - MOMENTS LATER

Klarvid lays Bartok gently down on the beach with Bebba watching. Bartok is cognizant, but his eyes are fluttering.

BARTOK

I'm ok...I'm ok...OK. I can fight.

BEBBA

(To Bartok)

I think you're done son.

BARTOK

Had her--

BEBBA

I know you did. I'm proud of you.

(To Klarvid)

Gonna call for help.

Klarvid is near tears.

KLARVID

I'm sorry I didn't get here sooner.

BARTOK

It's ok. You're the only one that  
can stop her. Do you think you can?

KLARVID

Not if you didn't.

BARTOK

You're so much better than me. I'll  
be with you the whole time. Just  
listen to the Voice, ok?

KLARVID

Ok. I don't want you to die.

BARTOK

Don't worry about me. Go get her. I  
love you, bug.

KLARVID

I love you too.

BARTOK

Do me a favor. Don't kill her, ok?

KLARVID

Ok.

BARTOK

Promise?

KLARVID

Promise.

BEBBA

They're on the way.

KLARVID

I have to go.

BEBBA

Of course. Just remember if things  
get too tough--

KLARVID

Fight harder. Got it.

Klarvid races off for the dock with Bebbba looking on.

BEBBA

That's not what I was going  
to...Damn it, Grei.

(Talking into his watch)

How far to the nearest hospital?

WATCH

Four dricks.

BEBBA

How far to the nearest hospital  
that doesn't tax Number Ranks?

WATCH

Forty dricks.

BEBBA

He'll be dead by then.

BARTOK

Dad, really?

BEBBA

Oh, did I say that out loud?

INT. TRAIN CAR - LATER

His namoom power on, Klarvid walks into the same part of the train where Cascade was shot. Heirs' body is now not too far from hers, lifeless. Esredba is crouched against the wall, her hands between her knees. She looks up when she notices Klarvid has arrived. Her skin is pale.

KLARVID

Where is she?

ESREBA

She went after Biana. She said she  
was going to save me for last.

KLARVID

Take me to her.

EXT. RICH NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Esreba's air vehicle is gliding across a gated community with massive homes. As rain continues to fall, she finally pulls up in front of a home shaped like an upside-down isosceles trapezoid. Its shape makes it look as if it has no roof.

ESREBA

This is it.

KLARVID

Thank you.

ESREBA

Your brother failed at this. What makes you think things will be different for you?

KLARVID

He loved her. I don't.

Klarvid gets out and runs up the lawn. The door has already been kicked in so he just steps through.

INT. BIANA YORKER'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Klarvid bangs his fists together and his hands glow. The home is immaculate, but Klarvid only notices two things: The bodies all over the floor and the purple puddles.

He can hear music and he follows it down a set of stairs through a brightly-lit hallway. More bodies he has to step over. A door is ajar at the end of the hallway. This is where the music is coming from.

Klarvid bounds through the door into a dim room. BIANA Yorker (female, nonhuman, red skin and eyes, bald, preteen, petite) is practicing her moves on a dance floor with tiles that light up as she steps on them. She doesn't notice Zalea who is slinking towards her prepared to deliver a finishing blow.

KLARVID

NO!

Biana and Zalea look up simultaneously at Klarvid whose voice echoes over the music.

KLARVID (CONT'D)

Biana, go!

Biana races for the door.

ZALEA

Don't go too far!  
(To Klarvid)  
Let's make this quick.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

She's cocky and she thinks you're afraid. Use that to your advantage.  
Let her come to you.

Zalea charges, the rise and fall of the namoom power carrying over the music as her feet light up the tiles. Klarvid waits until she is almost upon him before he shifts his feet just slightly, getting into position.

Their power meets. Zalea is fast, but he is able to keep up. He drops her a few times but she gets up repeatedly healing.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE (CONT'D)

You have to stay on her. She's  
trying to tire you down.

Sure enough she gets the best of him the next couple rounds.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE (CONT'D)

Get up.

Zalea slams his face down on her knee before sending him off with a flying kick. He's bleeding.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE (CONT'D)

Get...up.

He gets up, drops her with a kick to her side. She hops up and, after a quick combo, slams him down head first into one of the tiles.

The tile flickers with electricity. Klarvid can't hear the voice anymore, only Zalea's laughter.

The pain is overwhelming. His hands are no longer glowing.

ZALEA

Looking for something?

Zalea is holding up Klarvid's namoom, marveling at it. Klarvid is on his knees, his forehead bleeding.

ZALEA (CONT'D)

If one of these can take down a  
city, I wonder what two can do.

She slides it on. With glowing rings going all the way up her left arm, another ring forms on her right.

ZALEA (CONT'D)

I can't tell you how great this  
feels! Aww, what's wrong Klarvid?  
Is this not how you thought it  
would end? Nothing to say?

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

Get up. I know you're tired, but if  
you can get up, we'll finish this.

Klarvid slowly gets to his feet. Zalea is chuckling.

ZALEA

Seriously? Just stop. There's no one here to call you a hero. Who are you doing this for?

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

Let her know.

KLARVID

My brother.

Klarvid bangs his fists together and his hands power to life WITHOUT wearing the namoom. The glowing rings shoot up his arm rolling over to the next arm, one level higher than Zalea. Zalea is in utter shock.

ZALEA

How...

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE

Let's finish this.

They charge each other. Klarvid doesn't let up, doesn't give her a chance to heal. Every time she reaches for a wound, he hurts her hand making her think twice. She is forced to focus on him, but he is too strong, too quick, too smart.

He gets her on the ground and starts to hit her repeatedly in the face. She is too weak to block.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE (CONT'D)

Klarvid, you've won. Stop.

Klarvid continues to hit her.

KLARVID'S INNER VOICE (CONT'D)

She might be able to save Bartok.

Klarvid stops, his knuckles a mere inch from her face. He stands up, looking down at her as the victor.

KLARVID

I hate you.

Klarvid takes his namoom off her and puts it back on his finger. He then scoops Zalea up in his arms and starts for the door. Biana and her parents are standing at the door. She's hugging her dad's side. She walks over to Klarvid.

BIANA

Thank you. Is there anything I can do to help you?

KLARVID

Do you know any pilots with a ship?  
I need to leave Lyre for a bit.

BIANA

I'll take you. Just got my license.

KLARVID

Thank you. We need to make a stop  
first if you don't mind.

INT. HARNESSER TESTING FACILITY, GREI'S OFFICE - ONE HOUR  
LATER

Grei and Respunam are in Grei's office reading a long message  
from Klarvid. Klarvid does voiceover as the scenes unfold.

EXT. SPACE - SAME TIME

Lyre is in the distance in the dark of space as a small  
spacecraft ventures further into the Lytragainian System.

INT. SPACECRAFT, PILOT'S HELM - SAME TIME

Biana is at the pilot's helm with an immaculate view of  
space. Klarvid gets up from beside her and starts walking  
into the next room.

INT. SPACECRAFT, BLUE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Klarvid walks into a room that is tinted blue. There are two  
resting chambers, one with Bartok in it and one with Zalea in  
it. They both look beaten to shit. Klarvid takes a seat in  
the corner of the room and waits.

KLARVID (V.O.)

Hi Grei and Respunam. I used the  
namoom to help me write this so I  
hope it makes sense. Thank you for  
being so great with me and Bartok.  
You trained us well and I hope we  
made you proud. I'm sorry we  
couldn't find the killer sooner. It  
was Zalea, by the way. I know she  
needs to go to prison, but I  
couldn't let you take her while  
there is still a chance she can  
save my brother. I will bring her  
back, I promise. I think Bartok and  
I are done being Harnessers.

(MORE)



KLARVID (V.O.) (CONT'D)

No matter what we do, people will always hate us. I also think the namooms are too dangerous for anyone to have so I'm throwing them out into space. I won't be gone long. I hope we can still be friends, but I understand if you are still mad at me. Bye.

INT. HARNESSER TESTING FACILITY, GREI'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Grei leans back in her chair after having read the letter. She pours herself and Respunam a drink before taking a sip.

RESPUNAM

Looks like the experiment failed.

GREI

Failed? You only fail when you quit and they never quit. They took down the killer before she could do any more damage. You know, I never meant this for Klarvid.

RESPUNAM

I know. Should we try and stop him?

GREI

Be my guest. I'm going to drink this and watch slosh until I pass out. I don't think I've watched a game since the season started.

RESPUNAM

But the namooms.

GREI

Found 'em before. Find 'em again.

RESPUNAM

That's it? We're starting fresh?

GREI

I think the players are right, but the timing is wrong. They're kids. I'm sure this is the last thing our World Ruler wants to hear but, they need some time to grow up.

RESPUNAM

So none of this worries you?

GREI

Things will work out the way they need to. And someday we'll drop the curtain and tell them who they were really meant to face.

RESPUNAM

And if they say no to the mission?

GREI

Then I'll go and kill her myself.

INT. SPACECRAFT, BLUE ROOM - SAME TIME

Zalea awakens with a huge GASP. As she catches her breath, she gazes around the room. Her eyes fall onto Bartok in the bed next to her. Her face is distraught as the memories of the pain she has caused come back to her mind. She CRIES.

Klarvid is in the corner watching them. She doesn't notice him until he speaks. His hands are glowing.

KLARVID

I saved you for one reason. If he dies, you die. Make it right.

She looks down at her finger. The namoom is there.

ZALEA

I'm not sure it works on others.

KLARVID

Try.

She bangs her fists together and places her palm over his body. Nothing happens. Klarvid walks closer.

KLARVID (CONT'D)

Come on, Bartok. I need you around.  
Don't leave me too.

Close-up of Bartok's face as we race into a flashback.

INT. VOLSTREDIN HOSPITAL, TEAR'S ADJOINING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Bartok is using his apparition, speaking with his mother Zirsha. She is sitting on the couch beside him as if it were a real person.

ZIRSHA

I think that has been the hardest thing about all of this.

(MORE)

ZIRSHA (CONT'D)

Not being there for you when you need me. Not tucking Klarvid in at night. Not helping you with your girl problems. I just hope you got enough of me in you.

BARTOK

You should see Klarvid now. Dad says all the time how much he reminds him of you. We miss you. More than you know.

ZIRSHA

I'm sorry.

BARTOK

They want me to catch a killer. I don't think I'm ready.

ZIRSHA

You never know what you're ready for until you're ready. I think you'll do great! Remember your band you created when you were little, The Fire Lights?

BARTOK

I almost forgot about that!

ZIRSHA

You were so worried about performing in front of your classmates for your first show. Then you did it and you were great!

BARTOK

Mom, we were terrible!

ZIRSHA

But I was so proud of you because you did the best you could. That's all anyone can ask for. Just do your best. Fight until it's over.

BARTOK

I will, Mom.

ZIRSHA

The world doesn't want to see you win. You're a Number Rank, but if I can leave you with one thing, it's to never see your Rank as a weakness. Be proud of who you are.

Bartok wraps his mom up in a hug. The percentage bar on the side of the apparition starts to drop quicker. 5% left.

BARTOK

I love you, Mom.

ZIRSHA

I love you too. Always. Take care of your brother and your dad.

BARTOK

I miss you so much. I need you here. This is all too much.

ZIRSHA

Do me a favor? Open your eyes.

BARTOK

What?

ZIRSHA

This world can be so overwhelming when you look at the deck stacked against you. But if you can take life just one small step at a time, you have a fighting chance. And it all starts with making that decision to open your eyes and waking up to fight everyday. Open your eyes. Do that for me?

INT. SPACECRAFT, BLUE ROOM - PRESENT

Close-up of Bartok's face.

BARTOK (V.O.)

I'll try.

Bartok opens his eyes.

INT. ORGANON HOME, FRONT ROOM - DAYS LATER

Klarvid is sitting on the floor of a now-empty front room. He is staring at the holoscreen in front of him that reads "Fire Flush - Two Players Only."

Bartok crouches down beside him. They both look a lot better than they did a week ago.

BARTOK

You miss her, don't you? It's ok, you can admit it.

KLARVID

She was mean sometimes. But she was also nice. Can people be both?

BARTOK

All of us are built like that. Luckily we get to choose how good or bad we want to be.

KLARVID

I don't think she got to choose. A lot of bad things happened to her.

BARTOK

Her cousin dying was really sad and not becoming a Harnesser made things worse, but that doesn't mean-

KLARVID

It was more bad things than that. Things she told me that she didn't tell anyone else. If those things happened to me, maybe I'd be bad too. I don't know.

BARTOK

What did she tell you?

Bebba enters.

BEBBA

Ready?

BARTOK

Good to go.

BEBBA

I still can't believe we're getting out of here. It was all your mom and I ever talked about. Fifteen years I've lived here.

KLARVID

That was really nice of Biana to buy us a new place.

BARTOK

You did save her life. You're a hero, bug. But I bet you still can't beat me downstairs!

KLARVID

Can too!

BARTOK

Tell you what, you beat me and I'll  
play Fire Flush with you the rest  
of the day.

The two brothers take off, Klarvid ahead. Bebbba calls Bartok.

BEBBA

Bartok. Don't ask questions you  
don't want the real answers to.

BARTOK

You're right, Dad.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The brothers race through the lobby and front doors...

EXT. HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING, FRONT ENTRANCE

And stop short when they are greeted by a crowd of thousands.  
They erupt into cheering when they see Bartok and Klarvid.  
Fans hold up numerous signs of support including one that  
says "Jash Deserved it".

The crowd repeatedly chants "Klarvid" over and over. Bartok  
looks down at his brother with pride.

Klarvid takes a step forward and puts the back of his wrist  
to his forehead. In unison, the crowd follows suit.

The silence is deafening.

FADE OUT.

THE END