

ICHOR

A THESIS IN

Creative Writing and Media Arts

Presented to the Faculty of the University
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

by

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Xiao Zhi Shi, Candidate for Master of Fine Arts Degree

University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2021

ABSTRACT

This project includes the pilot episode and series bible for a one-hour teleplay titled Ichor, a sci-fi epic.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined a thesis titled “Ichor,” presented by Xiao Zhi Shi, candidate for the Masters of Fine Arts Degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Supervisory Committee

Mitch Brian, M.A., Committee Chair
Department of Communication Studies

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INTRODUCTION

Writing Ichor

This pilot for Ichor is the third version of the story. The first version was about a used bookstore owner who gets pulled into a civil war between his estranged mother's band of mutants and his childhood friend's mutant task force, against the backdrop of a corrupt NYC election season. The second version was a weird in-between of the first idea and this current version, which is exactly why it was too convoluted to work. After each major revision and editing session, I noticed that I was incapable of abandoning ideas that were thematically similar and were linked to certain conflicts. I realized that those ideas were the heart of my story; in other words, these ideas were my muse. In each version, the protagonist was always a weak-willed boy who matures with the help of braver, more responsible people against the backdrop of a war, conceptually between family and freedom. I unabashedly admit that this storyline is a hyperbole of how I view my childhood, a circumstance I am sure many others could relate to as well. Home and shelter are concepts deeply rooted with childhood. If fiction serves as an escape from reality, then why not write a story in which the world offers a feeling of home, rather than shelter. But the reality of screenwriting, or really in all writing genres, is that good ideas are dead without proper execution.

Storytelling is a balance between the chaos of creativity and the logic of craftsmanship. For me, a major part of my editing process is telling my right brain to shut up. My first draft was overcomplicated and overcrowded with unnecessary characters and plot-lines that offered no immediate payoff in the pilot. I thought time was the only resource I needed to solve these problems. I believed all I had to do was merge characters and convert spoken exposition into visual spectacles, which is easier said than done. But no amount of time can transform a turd alone into gold. The stench will just spread to the new material

stuffed into it. After workshopping the first version of Ichor, I learned that my story was hard to follow and awkwardly paced. Using the feedback I got, I started to think about what the foundation of my story was. I needed to find a clear, solid storyline to rest all the elements of my story on. After trial and error, I realized that I was wrongly writing Ichor as if it was a boy-fights-dragon type of story. Ichor isn't that. Ichor is a pilgrimage.

“Ichor is about people in search of a home.” I reduced Ichor's story to this simple statement and started organizing Ichor's story structure around it. For example: In the pilot, the protagonist starts off in a false home, a *shelter*, and embarks on a journey with newly found allies, a new *home*, in the final act. As lame and soap drama as it sounds, Ichor's structure was inspired from the phrase *home is where the heart is*, but it is derived from one of the most solid narrative structures there is: the hero's journey.

When I finished and received feedback on the first draft, I encountered a new issue. My script did not have a solid understanding of perspective. I will not say that this final product solved all the perspective issues from the draft, but it is an improvement. In the draft, about a dozen characters were introduced within 15 minutes of screen time, and I was deluded at first in thinking that all of them mattered, or would even be remembered by the audience. That being said, I went ahead and tried my best to keep them. I believe that fodder characters should be interesting and smart, so when they are *disposed* they leave the audience with a visceral reaction. So during edits, I made sure that each minor character did something to elevate the scene while they were on screen. As I developed my characters, I saw new opportunities to make the story cooler and crazier—I went through with it. I rewrote three quarters of my pilot and inadvertently ignored the importance, the clarity, of single-character perspective once again in the final draft. Whoops.

There are very clear dos and don'ts in the industrial craft of screenwriting. There are also plenty of pitfalls, and I fell into a plethora of them while writing Ichor. Writing and workshopping this pilot was an extremely educational experience, one which helped me grow as a writer and a person. The fear of my story not being taken seriously haunted me while writing this script, given the genre it falls under, and I always worry about the possibility of writing a boring story. I think my anxiety is partially the reason for my overcomplicated scripts: it's to overcompensate for the dread of being read as simplistic or boring, which is pretty funny because the shows that have influenced me the most were ones that began with a simple premise and were bold enough to take short, quiet steps in its plot. The simplification process is the most difficult part of screenwriting for me, but workshops have helped me improve in this area. For example: during a workshop, Professor Mitch Brian explained that movies are written in broad stroke. This helped a lot, because it changed how I fundamentally approached the craft. After the lecture, I wrote less useless scenes and language that would slow down the script. I started building my script taller, instead of wider. I still have a long way to go before I could see myself as a competent screenwriter. But I know what my weaknesses and strengths are, and I know I am getting better after every scene I write.

Influences

Plot and symbolism are what excites me the most in story, and I almost always go overboard with them in my work. We are told that every line in a script has to be productive and meaningful. I learned the hard way that this does not necessarily mean every line must be optimal, otherwise machines could write more entertaining stories. The best route isn't always the more interesting or funnest route. Even though a script is a logistical item, like a

blueprint or manual, it's a document that will be read by a person with a pulse and sense of rhythm. So why not make the read entertaining. I took two poetry workshops during my MFA, and I am so thankful for it. Writing and reading poems in a workshop setting helped me improve my sense of structure and imagery. The most influential and universal advice I got from poetry workshop is that an artist must stay consistent to the system of meaning-making they establish in their work, until they choose not to. Poetry and screenwriting are similar in the respect that they both communicate ideas through sequences of images and sensations in written form for performance. Practicing poetry has undoubtedly improved how I edit language and images in screenwriting.

One regret I have is that I missed the opportunity to take a class in playwriting. However, I did take a class on Shakespeare's Histories, and that was a fantastic, educational experience. We read the stageplays and compared them with the film adaptations, *The Hollow Crown*. In the class, I paid close attention to what the screenwriters considered were the essential moments in the play. I was astonished at how the writers transformed a series of rich plays into a widely accessible piece of television. As screenwriter, I took this class to better understand story structure and to study a literary adaptation. But also because reading Shakespeare is just a good time.

The most impactful thing about the MFA program was that all the workshop classes I took were significantly hands-on. As much as I love listening to lectures, and I actually really do, working with other writers in a classroom setting encouraged me to do better. Moreover, this MFA program gave me an opportunity to explore various genres of creative writing and literature that I could not afford to do during my undergrad. Every single course I took during

my time at UMKC was useful, and they were also a blast. I learned and grew a lot as a writer in the program, and I'm proud to take the knowledge and wisdom I earned wherever I go.

ICHOR

Series Manual

by Henry Shi

Logline:

A young amnesiac assists an unlikely band of freedom fighters reform a banana republic, while threatened by an unearthly yet intimate foe, the fabled Atlantis.

OVERVIEW

***Ichor:** (n) the fluid that flows like blood in the veins of the gods; the watery discharge from a wound.*

The first season of Ichor is a ten-hour sci-fi epic.

It is set on a supernatural archipelago named **Thule**, a banana republic exploited for its non-renewable resources, namely the fictitious substance called **Cor**. Thule has a secret history with Ichor's version of **Atlantis**, a theocratic technopoly that had banished a fraction of its population for defying its code of laws. These folk that Atlantis exiled would become the ancestors of present day Thulians.

Emotional, suspenseful, and character driven, Ichor is a story about a tragic group of people looking for a place they can call home. Ichor is partly a coming of age story, one that is rooted in love and war. In season one, our heroes rally a formidable resistance to overthrow the reigning dictatorship on Thule, all the while reconnecting with the loves they lost or were denied.

MAJOR SETTING

Thule: (n) a place beyond the borders of the known world.

Ichor takes place in a speculative Earth where a fictional race of blue-blooded humans exist on an archipelago called **Thule**. Historical events such as the Vietnam War, the publication of *The Origins of Species*, the Bubonic Plague are in this world's history textbooks as well, with Thule included in the narrative. Thule was discovered by the Greeks in 400 BC.

Life on Thule

Thule is an archipelago with a large, central landmass in which Thule's capitol is located. Its biome is otherworldly. Most notably, a human-size species of insects inhabit the island of Thule. The existence of these insects are treated as myth, but Red knows the truth; one of them took her arm. Our main cast will discover these insects in Season 1, but their significance to the overarching story won't be realized until Season 3.

Thule is a banana republic. All major nations have engulfed Thule with personnel and trading posts to improve their commercial relationship with The Numen, Thule's head honchos. Foreigners are forbidden in Thule's capital, with the exception of a few VIPs and individuals with work visas. Almost all the excavation happens in the capital, which covers 80% of Thule's surface area. The other 20% is composed of private, commercial, and political zones erected during the Occupation of Thule, after WWII. These zones are home to influential, non-Thulian stakeholders and to Thulians who have escaped or were born outside the capitol.

Thule is the only place on Earth where **Cor** resides. This crude substance is the envy of all other fuel sources. When processed, 1 gram of Cor can fuel a Boeing 747 on any transcontinental flight. Its chemical makeup allows the material to be an effective component in the composition of any hardware, ranging from semiconductors to tank armor. Cor occurs in various forms.

STRUCTURE

Ichor is a monomyth at heart. Each season our main characters are charged to defeat an overwhelming opposition only to find that the real enemy is something far greater and more sinister. All episodes highlight the pivotal moments in the campaign against the seasonal threat. The characters move the plot in Ichor; each major character has clear goals that are tied to the main, seasonal conflict. Episodes are written for television using a 5-arc structure. Season 1 is structured similarly to *Star Wars: Episode II*, where a search for answers leads our heroes to disturbing discoveries that can only end with a climactic battle in which sacrifices are made and resolves are tested.

GENRE: Sci-Fi & Modern Fantasy

The supernatural elements of the show will be rooted in natural science; the mathematics and studies of real-world phenomena will ground the science fiction elements in reality. Concepts such as grafting, biomimicry, and transhumanism will be explored in the show. There will be no *deus ex machina*, no silver bullet, or panacea in this world; effects are earned through consequence, sacrifice, and a bit of chance. Although the protagonist has the ability to mend even the deadliest of wounds, it comes with a great sacrifice.

Thulian Physiology

Thulians look like ordinary humans at first glance; they do not possess any common racial features, aside from their blue blood, commonly referred to as Ichor. Their blood acts as an extraordinary catalyst with seemingly unrestricted potential. A regular Thule is as impressive as an ordinary human; however, when introduced to certain stimuli, a Thulian's physiology is temporarily enhanced or altered. Certain Thulians do not need stimuli to access latent abilities—Thulians who are members of the nobility fall into this special category.

Hierarchy on Thule:

It is similar to the caste system in India.

- (1) The Numen: A religious council composed of Thule's founding families. Senior members are privy to the existence of Atlantis and Thule's origin.

(2) The Lists: Thule's highest ranking military officers and secret police.

(3) The Clerks: Educated Thulians who manage and supervise Cor excavation sites. The clerks are also in charge of the educational institutions in the capitol.

(4) The Staff: Everyone else. An uneducated, illiterate labor force. If a clerk discovers a promising staff member, in regards to their blood—Cor concentration—or natural talent, the clerk may enroll them in an apprenticeship program in the capitol.

Few Thulian refugees have made their way off the island. However, for reasons unknown, all Thulians who leave the island for a prolonged period of time soon die of a strange heart disease. It's as if all Thulians are eternally bound to the island.

TONE & STYLE

The visual style will be cinematic and creative. The tone of the show is very much in the tradition of series like *The 100*. Ichor ventures through heartbreaking topics with an upbeat cast of passionate characters, each with bold, heroic personalities. Ichor is not above comedic reliefs; however, the show will never take its humor down a cynical route.

The pacing will be fast with few slow scenes for rumination. The key memorable moments would be ones that are lighthearted. Ultimately, the show is bittersweet. Every step forward is not without a deadly sacrifice; wins feel like losses, but the gang keeps moving forward.

The soundtrack should be original and thematic. Classic songs would only come from electronics and the occasional tap-room musician. I imagined the music as having elements of rock, trailer music and cinematic music, to blues on the harmonica.

CHARACTERS

These are descriptions and short backstories for each major character in the pilot episode.

Andrew Syn (15)

Andrew is the protagonist of *Ichor*. He starts off as a coward and a bit of a brat. But what else would you expect from a kid who has been marooned in a research lab his entire life. But he does change. As Andrew serves as a member of a small force of freedom fighters, he finds his courage and learns responsibility. However, his membership in the resistance served as a violent introduction into the world for Andrew. After helping the resistance remove The Numen from power, Andrew infiltrates Atlantis to rescue his father.

Andrew is one reincarnation of a supernatural being called Origin. All we need to know for season one is that this trait bestowed Andrew with the ability to repair and revive all things. The Numen sees Andrew's ability as a gift from the divine; the Atlanteans know it as a cosmic entity; and Andrew's father regards it as a curse. Andrew's half of Origin is called Trace.

Andrew is of royal Atlantean descent. His father, Rhys Synardus, erased his and his brother's memories when Atlantis learned of his family's existence. Andrew was then hidden by his parents and left under the care of Collin Roark, while Andrew's brother, Lazarus, was masqueraded as an only child. Rhys chose to erase Andrew from his family's memories instead of Lazarus because he believed Andrew possessed the more sinister half of Origin.

Andrew and Lazarus were products of a forced zygotic splitting of an embryo that would become the single, reincarnation of Origin. If this happened, Atlantis would have the means to advance their hidden agenda, an outcome that would consequently *restart* life on Earth.

Red (20)

Red was born on The Drain, a vessel operated by a nomadic band of engineers who traffic and experiment on Thulians. With the help of a fellow captive named Jade, Red escaped that horrible place on her 10th birthday. The waves carried Red to the outskirts of Thule, an ordinary shantytown home to ordinary Thulain catadores. There she met an elderly man who was not born on Thule; the old man taught Red how to read and write. With literacy, Red feigned as a member of the nobility in the capital and encountered a disloyal Thulian nobleman, and member of The Numen, Bennett. With his help, Red searches for The Drain with hopes of finding Jade.

Jodie Coffey (35)

A Thulian who escaped the capital and fell into Collin's arms. After Collin discovered that Jodie was among the few low-class, literate Thulians, he enrolled her in an Ailanthus sponsored military training camp. After bootcamp, Collin gave Jodie a guard job at the secret research facility where Andrew resided. Collin hoped that the female Thulian would serve as a companion, or mother figure, for Andrew; though, he was also curious if the presence of another Thulian would help Andrew recollect his lost memories. When she was 15, Jodie lost her parents during a cave-in when they were relocated to a new, precarious excavation site.

She survived the cave-in at a great cost, a truth that she continues to repress. Jodie has an unwavering sense of responsibility; even after she learned about the horrific truth about her employer, Collin, she continued to serve as Andrew's guardian throughout the civil rebellion on Thule.

Jaundice “Jaun” Phillips (55)

She fought for the US during WWII alongside a special Thulian unit to reclaim Thule for the Allies. During the war she fell in love with a Thulian named Eric Matsuo, a soldier from the 442nd Infantry Regiment. Their romance was cut short when Eric's entire unit was transformed into living bombs. Jaundice received the very injection that transformed her lover into a bomb; however, she was not Thulian. This afforded her enough time to stumble onto a mysterious spring. It not only diffused her body, but also reversed the effects of the drug and extended her lifespan. Present day, Jaundice is in search of the military scientists that betrayed Eric. She looks for individuals with the Ouroboros tattoo.

Bennett Papadontoshi

Bennett is a member of the Papa. royal family whose ancestors founded Thule. His mother, Tress, is an influential member of The Numen. Bennett has long despised the traditions on Thule and plots to dispatch The Numen, which includes his mother. When Bennett was twelve, Tress escorted him throughout the capitol and lectured him on the functions of Thulian society. During this trip, Bennett saw Karl, a boy his age and member of the staff, dribbling a flaming coconut with his feet. Bennet asked Tress if he could partake; she said no

and continued to pontificate the teachings of the state. Five years later, Bennett met Karl again during an apprenticeship at a Cor excavation zone. Instead of playing with a fiery fruit, Karl was smashing stone. When Karl failed to meet his Cor quota, Bennett was ordered to administer his punishment. When the crowds cleared from the public lashing, Bennett had a heart-to-heart conversation with Karl. They developed a friendship. Bennett taught Karl how to read and write; he also shared how to determine which stones had a higher chance of containing Cors, and taught him how Cors could be made into explosives. Karl had nothing substantial to offer Bennett in return for his aid, but Bennett didn't care. On one ordinary day, not unlike any other, Karl was absent from his shift. Soon later, the excavation site was bombed and attacked by a small group of Thule rebels; Karl was among them. Bennett was spared during the assault; a fact that surprised Tress. The rebels were soon quelled, and the survivors were sent to The Drain. Tress revealed the existence of The Drain to Bennett and took him onboard the forlorn vessel, amidst a surgical operation. Bennett watched as Karl's entire person became processed into a tiny, solid Cor. Tress handed Bennett the gem and told him that the soul of his false friend may still be alive in the stone. Upon this revelation, Bennett resolved to reform Thulian society in the shadows.

Lucas Coine

Lucas is 14 years old. He grew up as an orphan like most children who lived on the outskirts of Thule, outside the capitol. He lived as a catadore, scavenging and recycling trash created from Thule's occupational zone. When he heard rumors that a rebellion was brewing, he searched them out and met Bennett. During their encounter, Lucas felt an emotion he never experienced before; for the first time in his life, someone did not see him as trash. Lucas

views Bennett as more than a leader. He sees him as a brother, and a source of validation. However, while fighting in the rebellion, Lucas learns self-respect and develops a sense of individuality.

Fiora Locket

A talented, soft spoken scientist with a massive ego. She believes that the next technological step for humanity lies in Cor research. Fiora is the daughter of an infamous military scientist who sacrificed Thulians to produce an enhancement drug. Although Fiora resents her father, she is more like him than she would like to believe. Due to this fact, Collin appointed Fiora as the lead scientist for his secret R&D lab, where Andrew resides. After Fiora is held hostage by the freedom fighters, she encounters the horrible daily reality that many Thulians face. After Collin reintroduces the super enhancement drug to aid The Numen during the civil war, Fiora's resolve is tested as she develops a tool to compete against Collin's super soldiers.

Collin Roark

Collin is an evil genius in all respects. He is the CEO of Ailanthus Industries, or A.I. When he came up with the company name, he reveled in the potential confusion the acronym would cause reporters during his press conferences. Collin met Rhys when the Atlantean challenged his conclusions on the Cor purification process during a Q&A session. For the first time in his life, Collin saw another person as a peer. Rhys revealed his Atlantean identity and shared his knowledge of Cors with Collin. Years later, out of the blue, Rhys returned to Collin with

his twin boys and told him about Origin and his plans to thwart Atlantis's goals. Soon after, Rhys left Andrew under Collin's care and disappeared. After Collin grew tired of waiting for Rhys to return, he erased Andrew's memories and began to use his blood to conduct Cor experiments.

SYNOPSIS PILOT EPISODE

TEASER

The tale begins when THE PARENTS, MONA and RHYS, recover their son LAZARUS from a hiding place on Thule. Before they could escape the island, the family was intercepted by CARLA, an Atlantean warrior tasked to capture Rhys and Lazarus, and to dispose of Mona. After Carla impaled Mona, Lazarus attempted to save her with his supernatural healing ability. Instead of mending Mona, Lazarus inadvertently mutated his mother into a biochemical bomb. In the moments before her death, Mona reminded her husband to return for his other son, ANDREW. In the aftermath of the explosion, Carla realizes that Lazarus is the child of prophecy. She incapacitates Rhys and takes what's left of the family back to Atlantis.

ACT I | Set-up

Seven years later, Andrew is marooned in a research facility on one of Thule's outer islands. FIORA, the head scientist of the facility, draws Andrew's for an upcoming experiment. JODIE and JAMESON are two security guards employed at the research facility. Jodie attempts to befriend Andrew and is harshly rejected. Meanwhile, a Trojan horse under the guise of a delivery truck enters the facility. Inside the truck are RED and LUCAS.

ACT II | Conflicts

Red and Lucas snatch MANNY, a security guard, and interrogate him in the box truck. During the interrogation, Lucas discharges his weapon to intimidate Manny. The sound

draws Jameson and Jodie to the scene. There, Jameson orders Jodie to find Andrew and to take him to the safety bunker. After Jodie departs, Manny informs Jameson that the infiltrators are looking for the Drain. Having heard the news, Jameson betrays and dispatches Manny and attacks Red and Lucas.

Meanwhile in the laboratory, Fiora succeeds in producing a new energy source, GOLDEN ICHOR, using Andrew's unique blood. But celebrations are cut short when BENNETT enters the lab and discovers that Thulian experiments are taking place on this island.

ACT III | Collision

Jodie takes Andrew to the bunker and finds an emergency briefcase, which contains MYSTERIOUS DRUGS similar in appearance to Andrew's medication. Before departing to reinforce Jameson, Jodie reveals her Thulian blood to Andrew. As she leaves, Andrew's traumatic headaches return and knocks him out.

While pursuing Red and Lucas, Jameson is ambushed and lured away from the chase by JAUNDICE. Jaundice defeats Jameson in combat and interrogates him on the whereabouts of the Drain, and secretly checks him for THE MARK. Meanwhile, Bennett reunites with Red and Lucas, and drops off Fiora and the golden ichor before leaving to search for Andrew.

Jodie arrives in midst of interrogations and rescues Jameson. Jodie bleeds blue-blood after a quick bout with Jaundice: an event that surprises both her immediate ally and enemy. A badly beaten Jameson flees while Jodie covers his escape. Jaundice informs Jodie about

Jameson and Collin's connection with The Drain and tries to convince her to switch sides; Jodie refuses and Jaundice incapacitates her.

At the bunker, Jameson unlocks the bunker door and is immediately knocked down by Bennett. Inside the bunker, Jameson convinces Bennett to allow him to administer Andrew's medicine. Bennett reluctantly agrees and hands Jameson the syringe in the briefcase. Jameson injects the syringe into himself, instead of Andrew. Bennett defies the no-kill order and executes Jameson out of spite.

ACT IV | Turnaround

Bennett carries Andrew to the delivery truck and reunites with his team—Red, Lucas, and Jaundice—along the two abductees, Jodie and Fiora. When Bennett informs Jaundice about Jameson's actions at the bunker, she panics and issues an immediate retreat. As the team exits, Jameson returns with hot vengeance, literally. Jamie's hand explodes as he punches the getaway truck and blows a hole through the rear door. The truck escapes in the nick of time. As the truck departs from the facility, everyone in the back sees Jameson's hand regenerate.

The team is afforded some downtime as they make their way to the rendezvous point. During the ride, Jaundice and Fiora explain their connections with the enhancement drug that Jameson took. Jaundice tells Red that she experienced the drug's effects when she served in the military years ago; meanwhile in the back of the truck, Fiora shares with Lucas and Bennett that her father was the inventor of the drug.

Right as Jodie wakes up, Jamie catches up with the truck from running at a superhuman pace. His legs explode as he jumps onto the top of the truck. As the truck exits

the forest and enters the shore, Red drives the truck onto its side in an attempt to shake Jameson off.

ACT V | Resolution

On the shore, Bennett confronts Jamie and gets his ass kicked. Inside the side-ways truck, Jodie overhears Jamie admit his association with The Drain. Jodie asks Fiora if the enhancement drug has any weaknesses. Fiora hesitates, but agrees to help Jodie, and turns her back on her former ally, to stop her father's wicked product. Fiora tells Jodie to consume the golden ichor that had spilled over from the truck fall. Jodie drinks the liquid and confronts Jameson. During their bout, Jodie overwhelms Jameson with newfound strength. Meanwhile, Andrew awakens from unconsciousness and exits the truck. As a last resort, Jameson charges up and prepares to detonate his body. Everyone runs for cover, except Andrew. Jodie leaps onto Jameson's unstable body and sacrifices herself to save Andrew.

In the aftermath, Andrew has a flashback at Jodie's grave in the sand. He remembers his brother, Lazarus, and a moment in time when his brother revived a dead rabbit. Andrew puts his theory to test and rejuvenates Jodie. Having witnessed this miracle, Bennett realizes that Lazarus is an Original.

TAG | New Foes Awaken

Back at the research facility, Collin murders his personnel and disposes all evidence of what had transpired there. Afterwards, Collin is visited by a blood-stained Atlantean looking for Andrew: Lazarus.

ICHOR

"PILOT"

Written by Henry Shi

LOGLINE:

A young amnesiac assists a group of unlikely freedom fighters reform a banana republic, while threatened by an unearthly yet intimate foe, Atlantis.

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. THULE - NIGHT

Heavy rain pummels an ocean surface as lightning torches the sky and illuminates a large archipelago: Thule.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

As a small buoy struggles to stay afloat, a lightning flash reveals a silhouette, looming underwater beneath the beacon.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Alone in a fallout shelter like room, a boy watches an ant crawl between his fingers. As the insect reaches the boy's palm, he CLAPS and SQUEEZES his hand.

This is LAZARUS (8, hard eyes). He relaxes his grip.

Lightbulbs blink as rainwater drips from the ceiling. The ant crawls out of Lazarus's hands.

EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT

Two humanoids trudge out of the ocean. They are equipped in FUTURISTIC WETSUITS. They are MONA and RHYS, the parents.

EXT. SHANTYTOWN - NIGHT

A mucky, fenced-in town that neighbors a landfill. A group of catadores play craps inside a candle-lit shack.

Beyond this favela, across a stretch of water, is a seaside town overflowing with activity and marvelous lights, untroubled by the ongoing storm.

The Parents hustle through a warren of puny huts. Mona pauses and looks through a window. Inside, she sees:

A family of children, none older than 8 years old, nestled together on a single mattress, under a mess of blankets. Each one: raggedy and scarred.

Among the castoff flash furniture, at a desk littered with junk, an amputee girl counts coins and sorts through rummage with her only arm. This is RED (12, sallow). She wears a BRIGHT BLUE BANGLE around her wrist.

Rhys pats Mona and spurs her forward.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

The Parents enter an unoccupied hut flooded by rainwater. In the middle of the room: a rusty car engine, a relic.

Rhys approaches the engine, and effortlessly lifts and tosses the old-thing aside...

Mona points her palms at the floor, and in an Iron Man like fashion, light emits from her suit and reveals a hatch.

INT. CELLAR, HUT - NIGHT

As the hatch opens, rainwater splashes onto Lazarus, pressed against the corner and gripping a DECORATED KNIFE.

MONA (O.S)
Lazarus?

LAZARUS
Mother?

RHYS (O.S)
Hurry up!

MONA
Come on Laz, we're going home.

Mona lowers her hand; Lazarus takes it.

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

The family rushes towards the dock. The storm has calmed.

RHYS
The boat should be up ahead.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

As a commuter boat drives to the dock, an UNDERWATER SHADOW stalks it from behind, leaving a water trail... It's fast.

EXT. BOAT - NIGHT

The HELMSMAN waves at the family. A symbol is branded on the helmsman's uniform: a SUMAC LEAF.

Behind the helmsman...crawling on board are TWO ATLANTEANS, wearing FUTURISTIC WETSUITS akin to the Parents' outfits.

The helmsman turns around and YOWLS as he spots the deep-sea humanoids advance. The helmsman reaches for his gun.

BANG! BANG!

The male Atlantean, LUFT (30, mastodon) bulldozes through the bullets, tackles the helmsman off-board and takes him down...

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Lazarus watches his father, Rhys, tremble as he recognizes the female Atlantean, grinning maliciously on the bow of the boat.

This Atlantean is CARLA (22, aquiline). Her bone-white face is decorated with ritualistic scars.

RHYS

Damn it!

Carla dives into the ocean. Her entry, her form: terrifyingly olympian.

RHYS (CONT'D)

Mona, run!

MONA

No!

LAZARUS

What's going on?!

RHYS

Lazarus and I will be fine. Head back to the safe house now!

MONA

I'm staying with my family!

RHYS

Will you listen to me for once!

MONA

This island is not my home, Rhys.

RHYS
I can fix this. I will come back
for you.

MONA
I'm not spending another day alone
on this island.

Carla has arrived. She struts toward the family; Rhys begrudgingly meets her halfway. Face-to-face, Carla exhales and bows before Rhys.

CARLA
It's been a while, *Prince Synardus*.

RHYS
(interrupted)
Please Carla.

CARLA
You committed an inadmissible
crime. The council bids your
return.

Carla rises and chuckles.

CARLA (CONT'D)
Perhaps they'll chain you to a rock
and feed you to raptors.

Carla looks at Lazarus, beside Mona.

CARLA (CONT'D)
So that's your bastard?

RHYS
Carla, we will return to the state
posthaste and without bother.
Lazarus! Come!

LAZARUS
I am not leaving mother!

Carla rubs Rhys's shoulder and brushes him aside.

CARLA
You defied *The Instructions* for
her? You could have done better.

RHYS
Don't you dare--

Carla repels Rhys and knocks him to the ground. Luft approaches Rhys from the shoreline and pats his back.

LUFT

Condolences, my prince. It would be best if you did not watch.

Luft bearhugs Reece and aims his sights toward the shore.

Carla approaches Mona. Lazarus puts himself in front of his mother and guards her with his knife.

CARLA

Ooo, I like your boy, Rhys.

MONA

Why did you abandon us here on Thule?

CARLA

Thule? Ah yes, the name that you heretics gave this island.

MONA

Let me speak to the council.

CARLA

Corpses can't talk.

Lazarus lunges at Carla as she enters his range. Carla grabs Lazarus's wrist and squeezes the knife out of his hand.

CARLA (CONT'D)

This isn't a club, boy.

Carla looks down on Lazarus.

CARLA (CONT'D)

Do you even know what the decorations on the *Kash* means?

Lazarus struggles to break free from Carla's grip.

LAZARUS

Does it look like I care?

Lazarus swings his other arm at Carla's temple. As she blocks his haymaker, Lazarus hops and delivers a headbutt.

Carla stumbles backward, hand over her nose. She looks at her palm and sees BLUE BLOOD.

Carla looks at Lazarus's bloody forehead and chuckles.

CARLA

That hurt. Good. The bloodline hasn't been corrupted.

As Carla dashes at Lazarus, Mona aims her palm and emits a flash of light. Carla covers her eyes. Mona picks up the knife and lunges.

...Carla recovers, violently disarms Mona, and lodges the blade into her stomach. She twists, and pushes Mona off.

Mona drops. A pool of BLUE BLOOD stains the sands... Lazarus runs to his mother's side. She's bleeding out.

RHYS

Mona?!

Luft releases Rhys; he scampers to Mona. Carla steps aside.

LAZARUS

Father, do something!

Rhys puts pressure on Mona's wound. Carla tosses the knife next to Rhys. She looks proud.

CARLA

She's bleeding internally. You can end it quickly. If you do, I'll let the council know. Perhaps they'll soften your sentence.

Lazarus aches as he witnesses the horror and futility of his father's attempt to save Mona...

Lazarus furrows his brow; his dread is replaced by pure, unadulterated frustration. He pushes his father aside.

LAZARUS

Move! I'm doing it.

RHYS

No, Lazarus. Don't!

LAZARUS

Shut up father, you're pathetic.

Lazarus places his hands over the wound and performs a LAY ON HANDS. As Lazarus mends, Mona's wound slowly regenerates.

Carla is stunned.

MONA

Please stop, Lazarus. It burns.

CARLA

The ANCIENT ONES blood flows through him. If that's the case...

Carla stiffens. She dashes for Lazarus. He resists. Carla knocks him out, grabs him, and flees to the shore.

MONA

Please, Rhys. Make me a promise.
Don't forget about Andrew.

RHYS

He'll be fine with Collin.

MONA

Collin is a foul man.

RHYS

That boy is not my son, Mona.

MONA

Please for me, Rhys.

Mona's skin disintegrates and bubbles... She caresses Rhys's cheek, catching his tears.

MONA (CONT'D)

I'm so happy you found me. Please,
carry on our dream.

CARLA

RHYS! Luft, go get him!

MONA

Don't blame Lazarus for this.

Luft races to Rhys, grabs him, and lugs him toward the shore.

Mona stares above the ocean, beyond the horizon.

...She EXPLODES

Luft dives to the ground, covering Rhys with his body. Mona's blood splatters and MELTS Luft's back. Luft screams.

Mona's remains steam and solidify into blue, mercurial pools of metal. On Luft's back, the material has MERGED with him.

Carla approaches Rhys, shaking on the ground.

CARLA

You kept him a secret all this
time. Traitor.

Carla punts him.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - DAY**

PRESENT DAY

ANDREW (15) stares into space, completely jaded, as the physician BAILEY (40s, glamorous) draws BLUE BLOOD from Andrew's arm and deposits it into a vial.

On the desk is a framed picture of Andrew and COLLIN (40s, a built erudite) in a laboratory background.

Bailey is in her company's business polo: The SUMAC LEAF on its chest pocket.

Bailey offers Andrew a GREEN PEARL. Andrew glares at her.

BAILEY

What is it, Andrew?

ANDREW

It tastes like dirt. Couldn't you at least make this taste like strawberry?

BAILEY

Dip it in jam.

ANDREW

We don't have jam.

BAILEY

I'll put it on the list for the next shipment. Now swallow.

Lazarus takes it; Bailey inspects his mouth.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Good boy... How are your headaches.

ANDREW

The usual.

BAILEY

And your memories?

ANDREW

I still can't remember anything past that day, so can you please stop asking every time you visit.

Bailey packs up her equipment.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
You're heading back already?

BAILEY
I have a meeting with your father
at East Harbor.

ANDREW
Can I come?

BAILEY
He has an open block next week.
I'll convince him to visit.

ANDREW
Yea okay...Can I go to the forest
this week?

BAILEY
I'm already babysitting your dad.
Go ask Jodie.

ANDREW
Ughh.

Bailey leaves the room and enters...

INT. HALLWAY, LAB - DAY

The ornate door to Lazarus's room starkly contrasts the cold,
monotone walls of the facility.

BAILEY
If you even think about sneaking
out again, I'll take away your
Wi-Fi.

ANDREW
You're the best, Bailey.

Bailey shuts the door.

INT. BUFFER ROOM, LAB - DAY

Bailey approaches the lead scientist, FIORA (28, dainty
primadonna) and hands her the vial of Andrew's blood.

BAILEY
Another round of PRP.

FIORA

Here's the report of this month's activities...and the survey team's report of Thule's subduction zones.

BAILEY

What?

Bailey browses the survey.

FIORA

The tectonic activity around Thule?

BAILEY

I know what lithospheric subduction is; what I don't know is why you're handing me this.

FIORA

Mr. Roark asked for them. He didn't tell you?

BAILEY

No, he didn't... I want your team to test this insulator for today's trial. Here are your directions.

Bailey hands her a set of folders.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

And Fiora, Collin might have given you this job, but you're under me. Don't forget that.

FIORA

I'm sorry, mam. Won't happen again.

As Bailey leaves the facility with her chauffeur, Fiora flips through the instructions and gets anxious.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

A small, gated campus in a bucolic setting by a deep forest.

Bailey enters the back of a jeep and is driven off.

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - DAY

Andrew hops into bed and flips open his laptop.

INT. STAFF QUARTERS - DAY

FOUR GUARDS (3M , 1F) play cards in a comfortable lounge with a wall packed with SECURITY MONITORS. One monitor watches Andrew's room.

ON THE STAFF ROOM TV:

News report. Images of a freight bay crowded with yellow tape, reporters, and uniforms. A CHINESE DETECTIVE (jaded, indifferent) speaks to the press. The headline reads: THULE TERRORISTS STEAL AILANTHUS CARGO.

BEEP. A monitor turns on and streams a live recording of Andrew's laptop screen. He's watching a travel blogger.

JODIE (30s, zaftig) looks at the stream and SMILES.

One of the male guards, JAMESON (40s, wiry) finishes dealing.

Jodie looks at her hand and SLAMS it on the table. A hammer: 2-7, off-suit. Chip stacks crash and splash off the table.

Jameson sighs.

The other two guards, MANNY and DANNY (early 30s, tweedles, MLE accents) spring from their seats.

JODIE

Another hammer! You assholes are screwing me over!

JAMESON

Everything's a hammer when all you see are nails, Jodie.

JODIE

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

MANNY

I don't think that's how the saying goes, Jamie.

DANNY

I think he's got it flipped.

JAMESON

It means there's no such thing as a bad hand, just bad players.

JODIE

This is the third hammer in a row. You know the odds of that? About 1 out of 2 million!

JAMESON

What do you want me to say, Jodie? How bout you go into town and get one of those *Blue-ee* charms.

JODIE

And leave security to you diddly daddlers?

JAMESON

Hey now, you're the sapling with 3 months under your belt. I've been working for Collin for about 15 years. We're nothing more than glorified babysitters.

JODIE

You're not worried about those terrorists who've been pillaging the trade routes?

JAMESON

Those Thulians? They're illiterate pirates still learning how to tie their shoelaces.

MANNY

Luddites...

DANNY

Also, no one even knows the kid exists.

MANNY

Don't you mean guinea pig.

DANNY

This place won't be on anyone's radar.

JAMESON

Face it, Jodie. This is the easiest job in the world, so relax. The only downside is the location.

MANNY

Ain't so bad. Everything on Thule is so bloody cheap.

DANNY
Yea, the birds, burgers and all.

JODIE
I'm gonna go check on the kid.

JAMESON
Why? We got monitors right there.

JODIE
Like you said. We're not being paid
to be security guards.

Jodie exits.

JAMESON
Sanctimonious cow.

MANNY
Speaking of beef, doesn't the
freezer get restocked today?

DANNY
Yea, the delivery should've been
here already. I'll head over to the
gates.

INT. BUFFER ROOM, LAB - DAY

Jodie passes by a TEAM OF SCIENTISTS studying Bailey's
folders in the buffer room.

FIORA (O.S)
I understand it's unusual but these
instructions are directly from Dr.
Bays. We'll have to skip lunch
today.

The scientists sigh.

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - DAY

Andrew is digitally painting a finch on a tablet. It's good.

KNOCK KNOCK

Jodie enters the room.

JODIE
How you feeling kiddo.

ANDREW

I didn't say you could come in.

JODIE

What's with the attitude?

ANDREW

I'm doing something, can you leave?

JODIE

I was gonna ask if you wanted anything in town, but since you're being a jerk.

ANDREW

Wait...

JODIE

What?

ANDREW

Can I come with?

JODIE

No, but you can have lunch with me outside if you want.

ANDREW

Hard pass.

JODIE

Alright, I'll feed the jays myself then.

ANDREW

Wait, Jodie...

JODIE

Yes?

ANDREW

Stop trying to get me to like you. You and the other guards are uneducated idiots who can't do anything but look after a 15 year old. Don't try to babysit me.

JODIE

Well, I'm gonna go eat lunch with the birds. Hey, here's one right now.

Jodie flips Andrew off and leaves the room.

ANDREW
My dad signs your paycheck.

JODIE
He's not your dad.

Jodie closes the door as Andrew THROWS his tablet at her. The electronic shatters. Andrew slams his hands on the desk.

INT. STAFF QUARTERS - DAY

Jameson chuckles as watches their encounter on the monitor.

JAMESON
Manny, save that recording would you.

MANNY
You know he was talking about all of us.

JAMESON
Yea, whatever. I'm starving. I'm gonna get some grub at the mess hall.

MANNY
Who's gonna watch the kid?

JAMESON
You can stay here if you want. I'll bring you back a plate.

MANNY
Save me some of the good nosh before those bloody boffins take it all again.

JAMESON
I'll try.

Jameson exits. Danny contemplates... He scuttles behind.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**EXT. SEASTEAD - DAY**

A nature dome planted on the ocean, half a kilometer away from a commercial waterfront where country flags from each major nation perch the shoreline.

A speedboat is on its way towards the seastead. Bailey's arms are crossed as her chauffeur drives the boat. She's pissed.

INT. SEASTEAD, GREENHOUSE - DAY

A male hipster trims a bunch of blue otherworldly, tubular flowers. It's Collin.

Bailey stomps toward him with the reports.

COLLIN

I'm sorry I didn't tell you.

BAILEY

This is an international crime, Collin. What I'm holding can shut this whole operation down. If the TTF found out about this, they'd--

COLLIN

Strap me in a suit and chew me out in a public assembly, and that's all they will do, Bailey. Every country has a hand in my pockets. Ailanthus is the middleman that can't be taken out of the equation.

BAILEY

... In any case, this data supports your hypothesis that Thule wasn't formed from a continental collision.

COLLIN

Then do you believe me now?!

BAILEY

Volcanically formed islands are common occurrences.

COLLIN

It wasn't a volcano! Look at the size of these islands.

(MORE)

COLLIN (CONT'D)

Thule's rich ores, the unique biome, its natives... Don't you find it suspicious?

BAILEY

Yes Collin, nature is a miracle.

COLLIN

You're not an idiot, Bailey. If Thule was created by a volcanic eruption, then where are the historic records? Krakatoa 1883 was heard 3,000 miles away; certainly there would be records, or at least muddy testimonials for an eruption that could create this archipelago. Thule was not created by nature, it was created by--

BAILEY

I'm gonna stop you right there. Atlanteans, Atlantis? None of it exists. What does exist is Andrew, your *adopted* son.

COLLIN

Right. How is he?

BAILEY

He's stable.

COLLIN

Stable is good... And the new inhibitor I devised?

BAILEY

Will be used in today's trial run.

COLLIN

Great. This one's the one, I know it... Say, do you want to grab lunch at Shrimp Shack?

BAILEY

No, I need to run an errand before our 5 o'clock with Harris and the stakeholders.

Bailey presses the reports onto Collin's chest and exits.

Collin clips the reports between his pants and his backside. He goes back to gardening.

COLLIN
 Left me with the defect and
 disappeared. Real swell, Rhys.

INT. LAB - DAY

While Fiora gives Andrew an IV injection at an exam table, he watches the Team of Scientists distill his blue blood.

FIORA
 Dizzy?

ANDREW
 No, I'm okay.

FIORA
 Thank you again for your donation,
 Andrew. Your father and everyone
 here appreciates it.

ANDREW
 I really don't want to, but my
 ichor is special, right.

FIORA
 Yes, your blood has the highest Cor
 concentration on record. It would
 be difficult to find another viable
 Thulian donor for our experiments.

ANDREW
 I wish dad would give me some
 credit.

FIORA
 Your father cares dearly about you.
 You're essential, Andrew. It would
 be dangerous if the public knew
 about you.

ANDREW
 You *really* like my dad, don't you?

FIORA
 Of course I admire him. Who
 wouldn't?

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY, ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

The gate opens. A one-armed DRIVER brings in the delivery truck; her elbow rests on the open window. On the driver's wrist is a BRIGHT BLUE BANGLE.

She's all grown up. It's Red (20, hard eyes) in a delivery uniform, branded with the sumac leaf: the Ailanthus symbol.

Danny saunters to the truck window.

DANNY
Where's Jim?

RED
I'm covering for him today.

DANNY
Can I see some identification?

RED
Sure.

Red looks the front. Danny notices that she has one arm.

RED (CONT'D)
I might have dropped it in the back while loading the truck.

DANNY
That's fine. I gotta inspect the shipment first anyway.

RED
I think I forgot to lock the backdoor; I'll be right there.

DANNY
(mutters)
Another PR move I guess...

Danny opens the back of the truck.

SHOTGUN COCKS

The 12-gauge stares down Manny from inside the truck. The young soldier behind the gun is LUCAS (14), shorter and more pugnacious than Billy the Kid.

Red pokes Manny's back with a pistol.

RED
Get in.

Manny obeys. Red shuts the back door and returns to the driver seat.

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

DANNY
You one of those terrorists all
over the news?

LUCAS
Shut up.

Danny notices Lucas's shaky grip.

DANNY
I promise I won't do anything
funny. Put the gun down, kid.
You'll shoot your brains out.

BAM!

The discharge punches the back steel wall. Danny cowers;
Lucas ejects an empty shell.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

As Jameson and Manny leave the mess hall, they overhear the
gunshot.

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

Red enters the back and glares at Lucas.

LUCAS
He pissed me off.

Red ignores Lucas and begins interrogations.

RED
Where are the Thulians?

MANNY
What? Thulians? There are a bunch
on the island west of here.

RED
Hit him.

Lucas slaps Manny with the butt of the shotgun.

RED (CONT'D)
Don't screw with me. Where is the
Drain.

MANNY

Drain? What are you talking about?

RED

Where is Jameson Schultz?

MANNY

Jamie? You're looking for Jamie?

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

While chewing on a toothpick, Jodie sees Jameson and Danny, approaching the box truck with their handguns.

JODIE

What the hell is going on?

DANNY

Gunfire. Look at the back of the truck. Could be Thulian raiders.

JODIE

Thulians don't use guns.

JAMESON

The Children of Theuth do. Pray it's not them, for Manny's sake. Jodie, go take the kid to the bunker.

JODIE

We don't even know if they're here for Andrew.

JAMESON

Listen. That kid is more important to Collin than anything else here, including us. You want to prove that you're more than a babysitter, then do your damn job.

In the distance, hidden in the grass, a female MARKSMAN stationed with a crossbow pulls the trigger.

WHOOSH

A TRANQUILIZER darts toward Danny's neck. It hits.

THUMP

As Danny's body drops, Jameson and Jodie hop behind cover.

JODIE
Oh shit!

JAMESON
GO!

JODIE
Don't be a hero, Jamie.

Jodie exits. Jameson peeks out of cover to examine Danny.

JAMESON
Tranquilizers... Who are these
guys?

INT. BUFFER ROOM, LAB - DAY

Andrew sits across a MUSCLY MALE SCIENTIST with a clip-board.
Jodie busts into the room.

JODIE
Kid, we got to go now.

ANDREW
Why?

JODIE
(at the muscly scientist)
You, round up the other eggheads
and get to the bunker ASAP. We have
a Code Violet. Take this in case.

Jodie hands the scientist her pistol; he jets out the room.

ANDREW
Code Violet?

Jodie grabs Andrew's arm; he pulls away.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
No! Tell me what's going on.

JODIE
Danny's been shot.

INT. LAB, HALLWAY - DAY

As the muscly scientist sprints to the workshop, he bumps
into a young man, dressed in fur and wielding a scabbard.
This is BENNETT (26, a frenetic caveman in jeans).

Bennett HIGH KICKS the gun out of the scientist's hand.

The scientist tosses a huge left hook... Bennett slips it, weaves behind the scientist, and grabs the back of the buff man's lab coat...

The scientist barges forward, trying to break free from Bennett's grip... He can't... Bennett's gaunt physique betrays his inhuman strength.

The scientist stretches his arms backwards and ejects himself from his lab coat. He dives for the gun... they're reunited.

As the scientist rolls onto his back to take aim, he sees his lab coat descending, obstructing his view. It covers his face.

BANG BANG BANG

The scientist blind-fires. Leaning on the wall in the adjacent corridor is Bennett, waiting it out impatiently.

The scientist pulls the trigger; it clicks. Out of bullets. He removes the lab coat and sees Bennett, approaching and tickling the hilt of his blade.

BENNETT

I really hate guns.

INT. LAB, WORKSHOP - DAY

Fiora is by the window of a pitch-black testing chamber, where a sonoluminescent event is being fixed.

TESTING CHAMBER:

In a chamber as dark as deep space, a round flask full of clear liquid is held in suspension, and surrounded by acoustic transducers and sensors. At the center of the flask is a pulsating bubble of light: a captured star.

Fiora nods. A scientist presses "Enter" on a computer.

A tiny blue teardrop is dispensed into the flask. The small mass sinks toward the light... makes contact. A moment of darkness... the light comes back, flickering... now violently bubbling and expanding bigger and bigger--

FIORA

MUTE IT!

A green pearl is dispensed into the flask. It slowly dissolves as it approaches the center. The reaction becomes less violent, the light becomes gentler... until it finally calms.

The result... a fluid that looks like honey.

FIORA (CONT'D)

We did it.

Eureka! The entire room cheers.

Fiora collects the sealed, spherical flask. She swirls the orange, viscous liquid. It even moves like honey. This is GOLDEN ICHOR.

FIORA (CONT'D)

Get Mr. Roark on the line!

WHOOSH

Lab door swings open. Bennett tosses the muscly scientist into the room.

Everyone panics, except Fiora. Bennett stands triumphantly on the unconscious scientist.

BENNETT

Do you guys know where Jameson Shultz is?

The room panics and crowds together.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Don't worry, he's not dead... He might have brain damage.

Bennett hops over the motionless body and gaits whimsically to the group of scientists. On his way, he recognizes the lab equipment and notices the blue blood samples. His tone shifts.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Who are you keeping here?

He examines the lab and recognizes more equipment. He draws his cutlass and SWEEPS it across the tables.

In the midst of Bennett's rampage, Fiora furtively repositions herself to the back of the crowd. She pulls out her cellphone and calls Collin.

INT. MARTIAL MEETING ROOM - DAY

Collin sits among politicians and military officers at a long boat-shaped conference table. His phone rumbles as the U.S. Politician COURTNEY (30s, shrewd, corporate) speaks, fast.

Collin places the phone on his ear and listens to Bennett's rampage. The man at the head of the table, KRONIK (60s, austere), watches Collin.

Sitting beside Kronik is a THULE NOBLEMAN (30s, toady, reserved) in hermetic attire.

COURTNEY

Raiders bypassed Fort Kernel and plundered a shipment of Cors en route the Jersey Line last quarter. The TTF and The Numen have since taken no measure to prevent potential analogous events. Hence a convoy was appointed to our most recent transport.

GENERAL

Your mercs brought BAZOOKAS onto sacred ground! We're not talking about BB guns here. This is blasphemy.

Courtney chuckles; her hand fails to cover her mouth in time.

COURTNEY

No weapons were discharged and no munitions were expended during the job. More importantly, the armaments that the convoy employed are made with the same materials Ailanthus uses to manufacture Cor excavation tools. So please, General. Delineate. Explain the difference.

Collin leers at Courtney. In that instance, he overhears;

BENNETT (V.O.)

What's that in your hand?

INT. LAB - DAY

Bennett is breathing heavily; he looks at Fiora, holding the flask of yellow ichor.

FIORA

It's *honey*.

BENNETT

Honey?

INT. MARTIAL MEETING ROOM - DAY

Collin recognizes the codename. He shuts his phone and rises.

COLLIN

There's an issue with the ventilation units for our next cycle. I need to go.

COURTNEY

You're needed here.

COLLIN

Oh, do you know someone else who understands the rheology of in-flux vapor purification for raw Cor emissions?

COURTNEY

It can wait.

COLLIN

This affects the health and safety of thousands of miners. You can go on pretending that your group didn't break a dozen international laws without me.

KRONIK

Collin.

Collin uncharacteristically halts.

KRONIK (CONT'D)

I'll send you the meeting minutes. Read them.

Collin nods. The Thule Nobleman whispers into Kronik's ear.

KRONIK (CONT'D)

Also, The *Numen* would like to extend its gratitude for your efforts in the welfare and prosperity of its people.

COLLIN

Likewise.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

Red and Lucas hold Manny hostage as they exit the back of the box truck.

Jamie peeks out of cover and sees them.

JAMIE

Really, Manny. You let a couple of kids get the handle on yah.

Manny sees Danny's body on the ground and calls his brother's name in terror. Jamie breathes; readies his pistol.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Relax, Manny, he's just knocked out. You twerps don't seem to be in the killing business, so what do you want?

MANNY

They're here for Jamie...and for something called a *Drain*.

A chill runs down Jameson's back.

Red and Lucas stand behind Manny. They're weapons ready. Lucas's grip is limp and sweaty. Red notices; she lifts the rib of Lucas's shotgun upward, and gives him a nod. Lucas shows no sign of appreciation.

Jamie JUMPS out of cover and AIMS. Red drops behind the box truck; Lucas trips backward.

BANG!

Clean through the skull. Manny drops dead.

JAMESON

Collin, you promised me a boring gig.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. COLLIN'S CRIB - DAY**

A one-floor rectangular unit. Jodie punches in the code for the door's security lock.

ANDREW

My dad's weird man cave is the bunker?

INT. COLLIN'S CRIB - DAY

Hyper modern. No dividing walls. All the aspects you would expect in a home are integrated together in one room, including the toilet.

A miniature aquarium sits in the corner of the room. Inside it: an entire aquatic ecosystem. A tree ornament sits at the center of the tank, clashing with the aquarium's organic aesthetic.

Jodie hurries to a panel on the wall; she takes out a pocket book and begins inputting a series of combinations.

Andrew, not knowing what to do, goes to Jodie's side.

ANDREW

Do you know what they want?

JODIE

Probably to burn this whole place down with us inside.

ANDREW

What? Why?!

JODIE

Your dad has a lot of enemies. My guess is that we're dealing with those terrorists who've been pillaging his trade routes.

ANDREW

Are we going to be okay?

Jodie looks at Andrew, briefly. He's visibly worried.

JODIE

Yea, we'll be fine. These assholes don't know whose house they're in.

Jodie punches in the last digits of the code. A secret compartment erects from the floor, revealing a suitcase.

JODIE (CONT'D)
Your dad also left us instructions
for emergencies like this.

Jodie opens the suitcase. Inside: a BLUE PILL and a SYRINGE properly encased in black foam. On the syringe, a label reads "CC-197: FREEZER 2".

JODIE (CONT'D)
What the hell is this?

ANDREW
Looks like medicine.

JODIE
I was hoping for a ray gun.

Jodie shuts the case.

JODIE (CONT'D)
The white coats should be here by
now. Jamie too... Andrew, stay put.

ANDREW
Wait, you can't leave me here.

JODIE
Don't worry, I'll be back.

ANDREW
No. You can't go. Your job is to
protect me.

JODIE
Do you know why your dad selected
me for this job?

ANDREW
I honestly have no idea.

JODIE
...Unlike those other mooks, Jamie
included, I'm very good at what I
do, and because of this...

Jodie takes out a pocket knife and pokes her thumb with it. BLUE BLOOD seeps out.

JODIE (CONT'D)
I met your father soon after I
escaped the capitol.
(MORE)

JODIE (CONT'D)

Your dad thought having someone like me around would be good for you.

ANDREW

Why didn't you tell me?

JODIE

Because blood shouldn't make the difference... Andrew, I understand the frustration of being stuck in a world you can not leave. No one should have to live in that world alone.

Jodie goes to the front door.

JODIE (CONT'D)

You'll be safe here. Just stay put and I'll be back soon, I promise.

As Jodie exits, her departing words lingers with Andrew...

Andrew SHUDDERS. He's having a bad headache... FLASHBACK: Fragmented images of Mona and Rhys in a lab. They're leaving... Rhys looks back. Apathy.

MONA (V.O.)

You'll be safe here...I promise we'll be back for you...

ANDREW

Mom?

The headache gets worse... FLASHBACK: Fragmented images of Rhys and Collin in a lab.

RHYS (V.O.)

Don't let him touch the ocean. Otherwise, the plan fails.

Andrew stumbles and COLLAPSES.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

BANG BANG BANG

Red and Lucas flee from Craig. Right as they pass a building corner, Lucas turns around and takes a suppressive shot. BANG!

Bullets chip the baseboard and jet by Jameson as he arrives at the turning point. He puts his back against the wall.

CRAIG
Thought you kids had some questions
for me!

BANG! Another warning shot.

Jameson peeks around the corner... Red and Lucas have repositioned behind a barrier. Jameson scopes the facility, scans for vantages points, and weighs his options...

He gets bad feeling, and DUCKS...

As a tranquilizer flies by him, he retraces its path and catches a glimpse of the Marksman before she could re-conceal herself. Craig pursues the Marksman.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Coward!

Lucas takes aim.

LUCAS
He'll turn the corner.

RED
We need him alive.

LUCAS
I'll just blow off his legs.

RED
Lucas, no. Would you think for once.

LUCAS
I can't if my brains are splattered on the floor. Weren't they on the same team?

BENNETT (O.S.)
Lucas, drop it. Check you pagers. Schultz is on Jaundice's hook now.

Bennett reunites with the team. With him: Fiora and the yellow ichor.

Red checks her pager; a load has been lifted. They trust Jaundice this much... Lucas struggles to read the message.

RED
Good, then let's get out of here. Who's that with you.

BENNETT

These colonizers have been experimenting on a Thulian boy, and this woman is apparently their leader. We're going to rescue him.

RED

That's not the mission, Bennett.

BENNETT

Yes it is. Our goal is the liberation of *all* Thulians, Red.

FIORA

Liberation? Thule would still be in the dark ages without international aid.

BENNETT

I won't argue with a sadist. Hold onto this.

As Bennett lobs the honey-pot over to Red, Fiora nearly has a heart attack.

RED

What is it?

BENNETT

I don't know, but it's important to her. We'll have *The Cranes* inspect it and question the woman.

FIORA

I have a name.

BENNETT

You don't deserve a name.

Bennett spits at her.

FIORA

Neanderthal!

BENNETT

Her underlings told me where the kid is; don't hesitate to leave if I'm not back in time.

LUCAS

I'm coming with you.

BENNETT

No. You're lucky that I even let you tag along.

LUCAS

You said I needed to start pulling my own weight.

BENNETT

Then don't be a burden and listen to Red. Also--

Bennett grabs the neck of Lucas's shotgun.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

This isn't a security blanket, Lucas. Stand tall without it.

FIORA

Of course you would think that; you got it flipped!

BENNETT

Shut up!

Lucas resigns.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Fine, then hurry back so we can all go home together.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

We have a long way to go before we can call Thule our home.

Bennett checks Red. She matches his glare.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Withdraw once Jaundice finishes up.

Bennett exits.

Lucas points his shotgun at Fiora and ushers her forward. Fiora complies, reluctantly. As Fiora moves along, she stares at Red...

EXT. BOX TRUCK - DAY

Jodie returns to Manny's incapacitated body and finds Danny's corpse.

JODIE

Danny... I shouldn't have left.

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

Lucas sits with Fiora, who's lost in deep thought.

LUCAS

What did you mean before?

FIORA

... That weapon you are holding is one of the many instruments that keep brutal men in check. It's the gavel of democracy.

Lucas contemplates.

FIORA (CONT'D)

The Numen has taken extensive measures to condemn literacy for that very reason. Literacy is the fountainhead of liberty.

LUCAS

What? Are you saying that you can't be free if you don't know how to read.

Fiora realizes Lucas is Thulian, possibly illiterate. She scoffs to ease her embarrassment and discomfort...

FIORA

No, listen, what I mea--

LUCAS

Shut up. No one's in charge of me.

Fiora lowers herself...

FIORA

(mumbling)

Why can't you learn when to shut up, Fiora.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

The Marksman leads Jameson to an open area.

JAMESON

You had me back there.

JAUNDICE

I did.

The marksman, JAUNDICE (55, dour), faces him. Her cold, monumental expression suggests a soldier who's lived through hell, and who has a multitude of catechisms in store.

JAMESON

Jaundice Phillips? I had you and Audie Murphy's GI Joe action figures when I was in pre-school. You should be in your 90s by now. How the hell--

JAUNDICE

Botox. You called me a coward. Prove that you ain't one yourself.

Jaundice cracks her knuckles and walks toward Jameson; He rejects her challenge and keeps her at gunpoint.

As Jameson advances, Jaundice walks backward while attentive to his position.

JAMESON

I'm sorry grandma, but I'm really not that stupid.

JAUNDICE

Well that's too bad, because I wasn't asking.

A tiny REMOTE hidden in her hand. She pushes it.

CLKKK. WHOOSH

A CROSSBOW BOLT flies towards Jameson. He jolts, but not quick enough. As the bolt rips through his deltoid, Jamie screams in pain and drops his gun from the shock.

Jaundice comes in quick with a SUPERMAN PUNCH; Jamie lifts his damaged shoulder to his cheek and mediocrely blocks the blow.

As Jamie stumbles backward, Jaundice closes the gap and keeps up the pressure. Jaundice skillfully connects a few more punches and kicks Jameson to the ground.

Jaundice pulls out a pocket knife and cuts open Jamie's uniform.

JAMESON

What the hell are you doing?

She looks at his left chest... just fuzz.

JAUNDICE

You don't have it either...

She sighs and puts the knife away...

JAMESON

What?!

JAUNDICE

...Where's *The Drain*, Schultz.

JAMESON

Oh that again... Just kill me.

JAUNDICE

Interrogations haven't even began.

Jaundice steps on his shoulder wound.

JAMESON

The war hero has risen to torture
huh?

JAUNDICE

Where's *The Drain*, Shultz.

Jameson coughs in pain, and laughs.

JAMESON

Hey, you know if you ask me again,
I just might tell you.

As Jaundice picks him up... Jodies CHARGES IN from behind,
completely telegraphing her attack.

Jaundice parries and returns with a hook. Jodie slips it
perfectly and performs a single-leg TAKEDOWN.

Now on top, Jodie unleashes a flurry of blows. Jaundice
bunkers down and takes the beating until... POW! She finds an
opening and socks Jodie, and kicks her off.

Jaundice notices the BLUE BLOOD on her clothes and finds its
source: Jodie's busted lip. Jaundice is puzzled; Jameson,
shocked.

JAMESON (CONT'D)

Jodie? You took the shot?!

JODIE

What, those drugs in the briefcase?
No.

JAMESON

Then why--

JODIE

I'm from Thule, Jamie. Collin took me in.

JAMESON

But--

JODIE

Can we save the questions for later!

JAMESON

Fine. Is the briefcase with the kid?

JODIE

Yes.

Jaundice puts it together; she jolts.

JAUNDICE

Where is it?!

As Jameson rises and attempts to escape, Jaundice reaches for him, but Jodie intervenes.

Jameson FLEES; Jodie blocks Jaundice's path.

JAMESON

Jodie, keep her busy!

JAUNDICE

You're on the wrong side.

JODIE

You picked the wrong island, bitch.

EXT. COLLIN'S CRIB - DAY

The display on the number-lock is blinking red ERROR.

Bennett RAMS the front window with the pommel of his blade. Ineffective. Through the window, Bennett sees Andrew still unconscious on floor.

BENNETT

What the hell is this made of? Hold on kid, I'm coming.

Jameson arrives and watches Bennett try to bust in...

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

POW. Jaundice's fist connects with Jodie's cheek. As Jodie recovers, she sees Jaundice maintain a defensive stance...

JAUNDICE

Shultz put a bullet through one of your guy's skulls.

JODIE

That's a cheap lie, you got another one?

JAUNDICE

He's part of *The Drain*.

JODIE

... That's ridiculous; you think I'd believe that?

Jaundice lowers guard, and removes the REMOTE from her pocket with a sleight of hand; she operates the directional pad.

In the distance, the STATIONED CROSSBOW reloads and marks Jodie...

JAUNDICE

You know about *The Drain*. That means you've lived in the capitol.

Jodie is taken aback.

JAUNDICE (CONT'D)

Your employer, Collin Roark, is the architect of the Drain, Jodie.

JODIE

Another lie and I'll make you choke on your own teeth.

JAUNDICE

Why would Roark would trust a Thulian fugitive with guard duty at his R&D lab...

JODIE

He has Thule's best interest at heart, unlike you terrorist who continue to sabotage our reputation.

JAUNDICE

Thule's reputation? Who cares what the world thinks when you can't even live for yourself.

JODIE

You're *human*, why do you care about any of this.

JAUNDICE

Because the only person who ever saw me for who I am died for a stupid reason.

Jaundice sucks her teeth and spits glob of RED BLOOD.

JAUNDICE (CONT'D)

...Human? If we can speak freely with one another, who cares what the difference is?

JODIE

...

JAUNDICE

Jodie, you left the capitol just to work for the bodyguard of all lies.

Pissed, Jodie rushes towards Jaundice.

CLKKK. WHOOSH.

A tranquilizer hits Jodie. But she presses onward just to deck Jaundice across the face...

Jaundice wards Jodie off with the greatest of ease and knocks her out. She hurries pass Jodie's body... but stops and looks back.

EXT. COLLIN'S CRIB - DAY

Right as Bennett makes his way to the back of the building, Jameson furtively walks to the front entrance.

At the doorstep, Jameson peeks in and sees the Andrew and the BRIEFCASE. He quickly enters the code... GREEN

BEEP. Bennett is right behind him.

BENNETT

Thanks for the help.

Jameson instinctively goes for a TURNAROUND PUNCH. Bennett catches it and BREAKS his arm.

Jameson falls to the floor in pain and crawls towards the briefcase. Bennett steps down on his back.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

You must be the infamous Jameson Shultz. Now, how did you get away from Jaundice?

LAZARUS (O.S)

(mumbling)

Ocean...

Bennett races toward Andrew and inspects him; Blue Blood is running out of his nose.

BENNETT

Hold on, kid.

JAMESON

He has severe case of Occipital neuralgia.

BENNETT

What?

JAMESON

It means he needs his shot.

BENNETT

We have doctors.

JAMESON

Won't make it.

Bennett picks up and carries Andrew on his shoulder.

BENNETT

Shut up. We'll patch you up too. Now get up! I didn't break your legs.

As Bennett reaches for Jameson, Andrew convulses. He puts him down.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Shit.

JAMESON

Give me the briefcase; the medicine's in there.

BENNETT

Fine.

Bennett looks inside the briefcase... and hands Jameson the SYRINGE. Jamie stares at the needle.

JAMESON

I said briefcase.

BENNETT

The only other thing in there was a green pill.

Jameson takes a deep breath and decides not to push his luck; he kneels next to Andrew, shaking, and INJECTS HIMSELF with the syringe.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Why--

Jameson throws himself at Bennet and socks his cheek... Ineffective. Jameson pulls his fist back in pain.

JAMESON

Your skull is hard as metal...
You're a *Numen*. Why are you siding
with terrorists?

Bennett BACKHANDS Jameson; he falls backward.

BENNETT

I shouldn't have trusted you,
sapient.

Jamie scurries to the briefcase, to the GREEN PEARL, and quickly puts it in his mouth. As Jamie gulps, Bennett KICKS him.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Screw the no-kill order.

Bennett draws his cutlass.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY**

Bennett carries Andrew while passing by Manny and Danny's inert bodies.

ANDREW
(mumbling)
Ocean...

BENNETT
Ocean? We'll be there real soon,
kid... It's our birthright.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY, ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

The entrance gate is open. His entire team is waiting for him by the box truck. Bennett reunites with them. Lucas smiles.

Inside the truck, Fiora inspects Jodie, still unconscious and sees her blue blood.

FIORA
Jodie...why didn't you tell anyone?

The uneasy tension between Jaundice and Bennett is palpable.

BENNETT
How long were you all waiting for?

JAUNDICE
Not long. Where's Schultz?

BENNETT
Dead.

JAUNDICE
How?

BENNETT
He wouldn't have talked anyway.

JAUNDICE
Great.

BENNETT
Who's that woman?

JAUNDICE
A refugee from the capitol.

BENNETT

Here?

JAUNDICE

My thought's exactly. Roark assigned her here for some reason; I have a hunch it's related to that boy you're carrying.

RED

You think they might know the whereabouts of *The Drain*?

JAUNDICE

Chances are no, Red. But the information we've collected here should give us some more leads.

Bennett places Andrew in the back of the truck.

LUCAS

Who's the brat?

BENNETT

Our new brother.

FIORA

Andrew! What did you do to him?

BENNETT

What did I do? The boy was unconscious when I entered that strange building.

LUCAS

What was strange about it.

BENNETT

The house had no walls inside. There was a toilet in the living room.

FIORA

His headaches... He's burning up.

BENNETT

Then do something.

FIORA

I need to head back to the lab.

JAUNDICE

No. We're leaving. Red, start the engine.

Red complies.

FIORA

... He needs his medication.
Without it, he could enter a coma.

BENNETT

Where is it?

JAUNDICE

No, we're leaving. You can't keep
wandering off.

BENNETT

Don't you care about saving that
boy, Jaundice. Or are the only
Thulians you care about dead?

LUCAS

Ben! That's unfair.

BENNETT

Then why--

JAUNDICE

Will you keep you savior complex in
check and pay attention to the
people in front of you. We can't
risk staying here any longer.

BENNETT

(to Fiora)

... Woman, if that boy dies before
we make it back to base, I'm
feeding you to the raptors.

Bennett hops in the back of the truck.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

Damn it. If I didn't fall for
Shultz's trick, the kid would be
okay.

JAUNDICE

What are you talking about?

BENNETT

He pretended like he cared about
the boy. Instead he injected
himself with the sho--

JAUNDICE

RED! GO NOW!

As Jaundice shuts the back door of the truck;

JAMESON (O.S.)
PHILLIPS! Running away again!

Jameson, nearly nude and now unfathomably jacked, gaits heroically toward the truck. He is completely HEALED. His veins glow and pulsate as he rolls his shoulder. His entire vascular system is SUPERCHARGED.

Jaundice races toward the passenger seat. Jameson CHARGES FORWARD. His strides SEAR the ground as his foot GLOWS. He's FAST.

VROOOM.

Jameson PUNCHES the rear of the shock right as it embarks.

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

BENNETT
Did she just shut the door on--

BOOM!

Jameson's fist DETONATES and MELTS the metal sheet. The drugs he took made him EXPLOSIVELY CORROSIVE.

Fiora tumbles backward, landing next to the honey-pot, the yellow ichor.

As the truck scurries away, Bennett looks through the smoldering hole and sees Jameson in agony as his hand REGENERATES.

LUCAS
What the hell was that?

BENNETT
I killed him! How is he still alive.

FIORA
No, it can't be...

BENNETT
Do you know what that thing is?

FIORA
An Abomination.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

The truck sails through a bumpy forest trail.

INT. BOX TRUCK, FRONT - DAY

RED

Do you know what that thing was?

JAUNDICE

A product of the *Indigo Project*...

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

FIORA

It was meant to be an all-purpose EpiPen... A super adrenaline shot, but the military scientists went down a darker route... They tried to refine raw Cors into a transmissible drug, but the technology wasn't there yet. So, they used Thulians. After the Third Geneva convention, all remnants of the project were destroyed. All records were erased.

LUCAS

Apparently not.

FIORA

Yea... Apparently not.

BENNETT

How do you know this much.

FIORA

My father was the lead scientist of the project.

BENNETT

The apple never likes to fall far from the tree.

FIORA

What's your problem with me?!

BENNETT

You cut up and stick needles into my people.

FIORA

I would never put anyone's life at risk.

BENNETT

Really? Look in front of you!

Bennett points at Andrew and the honey-pot.

FIORA

Andrew had these headaches ever since Mr. Roark took him in.

BENNETT

Took him in? You're poachers! And what the hell is in that jar!

FIORA

A theoretical synthetic fuel. Well, I guess we can drop the theoretical now.

BENNETT

Get over yourself.

FIORA

This is the key to solving all our energy problems, permanently. It could lift Thule from its technological captivity. We nicknamed it *Ambrosia*.

BENNETT

It won't change anything.

FIORA

Right when I thought you couldn't be any more ignorant.

BENNETT

Cani Cani Cati.

FIORA

What?

LUCAS

It means "devoured by the growing light".

FIORA

One of the *Numen's* proverbs?

LUCAS

A version... In the slums, we would say it when somebody complained about not having enough to eat. It also means, *use a smaller spoon or cup your hands.*

FIORA

Romantic. Unfortunately, we've past the age of proverbs and magic.

Fiora caresses the honey-pot.

FIORA (CONT'D)

This marks the beginning of a new chapter for humanity...

Jodie wakes up, groggy. She looks around.

FIORA (CONT'D)

Jodie!

JODIE

Fiora? Who... where are we going?

LUCAS

How is she already awake.

BENNETT

The sleepers were rigged to knock a sapien out, not one of us.

Andrew is still out cold. Jodie shakes him.

JODIE

Andrew!

FIORA

Jodie, stop! All we can do is monitor him for now...

BENNETT

SHIT!

Here comes Jameson, running, ACCELERATING, towards the truck.

JODIE

Is that Jamie?!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Jameson's legs burn brightly while he runs. Brighter now. His calves BURST as he LONG JUMPS onto the truck. THUMP.

He pushes his fingers through the roof, melting the steel to create a grip.

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

The flesh from Jamie's fingers drool down like lava.

JAMIE (O.S.)
I LOVE THE SMELL OF BBQ!

BENNETT
We need to get out!

INT. BOX TRUCK, FRONT - DAY

Jaundice loads her MAGNUM.

As the truck reaches the forest exit, Red looks at her side-view mirror... Jameson is REVVING UP. The veins on his massive arm are thick like veins on leaves, and they're glowing.

Red SWERVES the truck out of the forest and onto...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**EXT. SHORE - DAY**

The truck FLIPS onto its side. Jameson flies off the truck and tumbles toward the ocean.

INT. OCEAN - DAY

On a boat, A female NAVIGATOR surveys the shore with a spyglass.

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Jameson laughs hysterically as gets back on his feet.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

High Caliber rounds blow through Jameson's body, but he quickly regenerates.

Jaundice tries the head. BANG! Jameson covers his face with his hands, and BLOCKS the bullet. Jameson picks up the bullet and CRUSHES it.

JAMESON

It's about time the drugs
stabilized.

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

The honey-pot, smashed. Fiora, in shambles.

Bennet kicks open the back door and exits.

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Jaundice is paralyzed by fear. Bennett approaches Jameson.

JAUNDICE

What are you doing?

BENNETT

Cutting up loose ends.

JAUNDICE

That's not the saying...

BENNETT

(to Jameson)

I don't know if I'm happy or mad
that I get to do this again.

JAMESON

I'm ecstatic. You can have the
first punch.

BENNETT

Fine.

Bennett connects a powerful LEFT HOOK to Jameson's skull.
Ineffective.

BENNETT (CONT'D)

What the hell.

Jameson JABS Bennett's solar plexus. Out of breath, he falls
to his knees.

JAMESON

Wanna see what else I can do?

Jameson's palm RADIATES heat. He slaps Bennett across the
face. Bennett SCREAMS.

Red and Lucas can only watch on the sidelines... Lucas takes
a step forward. Red stops him...

LUCAS

We need to do something!

Lucas finds his shotgun and runs to Bennett.

BENNETT

Lucas! No! GET BAC--

Jameson KICKS Ben... He recovers and draws his cutlass, and
SWINGS it... Jameson catches the blade. It melts between his
hands.

JAMESON

You know what? I really did miss
this part of the job. Maybe I'll
ask Collin to put me back on *The
Drain* when this is over...

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

Jodie is beside Andrew and Fiora... and she just HEARD THAT.

JODIE
She wasn't lieing...

Jodie looks at Andrew, with a new resolve.

JODIE (CONT'D)
Fiora, do you know a way we can
stop him?

FIORA
Why? This means we're saved.

JODIE
No, Fiora. It's the opposite.
Collin lied to us.

FIORA
What are you saying Jodie?

JODIE
Jameson shot Danny... He's also a
member of *The Drain*.

FIORA
The Drain?

JODIE
Many believe it's just an urban
legend, but it's not. It's a group
that traffics and conducts
experiments on Thulians. Collin is
in charge of it. I can't believe I
didn't see it before...

FIORA
Don't tell me you believe anything
that these bandits have said.

JODIE
Fiora. You're a scientist, right?
Then look what's right in front of
you.

Fiora takes it all in... she looks at the spilled golden
ichor.

FIORA
You're Thulian, right?

JODIE
I'm sorry I didn't tell you.

FIORA
What class are you?

JODIE
... the lowest.

FIORA
So you shouldn't have any more than
120 mg of Cors in your body... You
should be fine. Drink that.

Fiora points at the golden ichor.

JODIE
What?

FIORA
It'll function like the drug Jamie
took, except you don't need a hoax
pill like he did. I'm not 100% sure
it'll work. I don't even have the
slightest clue what the side-eff--

Jodie CUPS her hands and gathers the nectar... She drinks.

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Bennett lies flat on the ground, badly beaten... Jamie's
taking his time with him.

JODIE
Jamie!

JAMESON
Oh, how's it going Jodie? Not such
a boring gig after all, huh?

JODIE
You piece of shit.

JAMESON
What?

JODIE
You're a member of the *The Drain*,
aren't you?

JAMESON
... God damn it, Jodie! I have to
kill you too! Who told you?

JODIE
I'm from the capitol.

JAMESON
Oh... that's funny.

Jodie strides toward Jamie. Jaundice grabs her arm and tries to dissuade her...

JAUNDICE

Don't, you'll--

She withdraws her hand immediately... HOT!

INT. BOX TRUCK, STORAGE - DAY

Andrew wakes up. It's still blurry... He sees Fiora and the others as they spectate Jodie.

ANDREW

Jodie?

Andrew sniffs... and hears the sound of the ocean.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

What's that smell...

EXT. SHORE - DAY

JAMESON

But you know... It actually makes a whole lot of sense. You've always struck me as stupid cattle. How about I give you a little brand!?

Jamie fist RADIATES as he hurls it at Jodie. She catches, and grins...

JAMESON (CONT'D)

What the fuck.

JODIE

Huh, well would you look at that.

Jodie clenches her hand and SMACKS Jamie with a HAMMER FIST.

Jamie stumbles backwards and feels his face... It's smoldering...and he's not recovering.

JAMIE

What the fuck!

Jameson and Jodie duke it out. Jamie can't seem to hurt her, let alone hit her! Each blow Jodie connects gets Jamie madder and madder! She completely outclasses him in every way. Everyone cheers her on!

Jamie backs up, out of breathe. His entire body is covered in bruises... smoldering. He's frustrated, furious, getting redder by the second.

Andrew exits the truck and sees the ocean...

Andrew turns to Jodie, completely nonplussed but happy.

JAMESON

The kid...

Jodie briefly turns her attention to Andrew... Jamie seizes the opportunity and hurls SAND at Jodie's eyes.

Jamie races toward Andrew with killing intent. Jodie recovers and CATCHES Jamie's leg...

JODIE

What do you think you're doing.

JAMESON

My fucking job! If all is lost,
kill the kid.

Jamie DETONATES his leg. It's too much! Jodie's arms MELT.

Both of them SCREAM in pain.

Jamie HOPS toward Andrew, who's in complete shock. The man TRIPS and FLOPS onto the floor.

JAMIE

Why isn't it growing back!

Jamie crawls...

Bennett limps over and STAKES Jamie's hand with what's left of his blade.

BENNETT

Looks like you're all out of juice,
asshole.

JAMIE

FUCK!

Jameson's entire body scintillates. His skin BUBBLES... he starts to laugh.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

See you all in hell!

Everyone runs to find cover. Except Andrew.

BENNETT

Kid! Find some cover.

Andrew is petrified; he trips backwards and falls onto his back, now wet by the incoming waves.

Jodie RACES towards him, but there's not enough time! She HOPS onto and COVERS Jamie.

SPLAT! He explodes...

EXT. BARREN PLAINS, MEMORY - DAY

Andrew and Lazarus when they were 7 years old... They're kneeling beside a dead rabbit.

Lazarus prods the carcass with his knife, and immediately REPAIRS it by running his finger down on the damage flesh, as if it were a welding pen.

ANDREW

Can I try?

LAZARUS

No. Father said you're not allowed to.

ANDREW

How come you get to?

LAZARUS

Because I'm special.

Lazarus heals the rabbit once more and lets it run away...

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Everyone, except Andrew enters the boat. Mercurial puddles of metal are scattered across the shore...

NAVIGATOR

What happened?

BENNETT

I'll tell you later...

Andrew kneels beside a grave mound made of sand... Everyone on the boat witnesses the sad sight.

FIORA

We need to go Andrew... Your father will be here soon.

ANDREW
I just remembered something.

FIORA
That's great Andrew...

ANDREW
I think I can save her.

FIORA
Andrew...I know it's hard but--

Andrew sinks his hands into the mound and performs a LAY ON HANDS.

Jodie PUSHES out of the sand. Everyone is dumbfounded, especially Bennett.

JODIE
What? Did I just die?

Andrew HUGS Jodie.

NAVIGATOR
Is that boy--

BENNETT
He's an *Original*.

Bennett smiles, as if he just hit the mother-load.

BENNETT (CONT'D)
The revolution has begun, brother.

Red marvels at the wonder...she turns her head toward the forest, at the vegetation... a large patch of it has died.

END OF ACT V

TEASER**INT/EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY**

Collin whimsically explores the research facility with BODYGUARDS.

AT THE LOT, he extracts the tranquilizer from Manny's neck, inspects it and hands it to one of his men.

COLLIN

This one's still alive.

As Collin walks away, one of his bodyguards finishes the job. BANG!

IN THE LAB, he inspects his Team of Scientists. All of them knocked out with bruises on their heads -- Bennett's fine work. He looks inside the testing chamber, and finds nothing.

Collin sighs as he exits the lab. As the door closes behind him... BANG! BANG! BANG!

INT. COLLIN'S CRIB - DAY

Collin sits on the toilet while on his phone. He's not using it; it's just the seat he prefers.

BEEP. Footsteps through the door... Collin's eyes are still at his phone.

COLLIN

We lost a lot of good people today,
Bailey. But hey, some days you're
in the green...some days you're in
the red--

It's Bailey... with a Kash Knife at her throat...

The intruder, drenched in blood, is LAZARUS (15, glacial expression).

LAZARUS

Where's my brother.

END OF TEASER

VITA

Xiao Zhi Shi was born on April 15, 1996, in Fuzhou, China. He moved to Bayside, NY, when he was three years old and received his K-12 education in local public schools in Queens borough. He attended Purdue University for Industrial Engineering, and completed the degree in May 2018. Afterwards, Xiao Zhi began an MFA Creative Writing program at UMKC while working as a GTA for the university's English department. Upon completion of his MFA degree, Xiao Zhi plans to continue a path in screenwriting and media arts.