

BLACK VEIL

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ACT ONE

FADE IN

EXT. SPACE - EARTH

From the cold depths of space Earth shines in the darkness like a bright beacon of life. However, the familiar view that we all know and love quickly begins to change as it rotates around.

The dark half of Earth slowly creeps into the sunlight, and we realize that our beloved planet has undergone some horrific changes. The edge of a MASSIVE CRATER takes shape, the depths of which cannot yet be seen, but the size is as big as Mother Russia.

EFFIE (V.O.)

That's us. Earth after the bomb dropped. Ain't we just the best species ever.

The young female voice belongs to DOCTOR EFFIE HARPER, one of our heroes. She'll be our melancholy guide for now.

As the sunlight exposes more of the crater, large chunks of suspended rock obstruct a clear view of the giant hole. These broken pieces of Earth are AIR ISLES, and they are quite beautiful.

This floating debris field stretches all the way out of our atmosphere and into space. Obviously, the debris in space is dead rock, but in our atmosphere there are signs of life on the Air Isles.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

The Black Veil. That's what our ancestors called the bomb. It was supposed to be a weapon of peace. A non-lethal alternative to nukes. A weapon that would end the war.

The view of the Air Isles begins to thin out in one area and we now see the terrifying depths of the crater.

The bomb has cracked the planet so deep that a portion of the EARTH'S CORE IS EXPOSED.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Yeah, we nearly ended ourselves instead. Idiots.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 Can't say we didn't deserve it  
 though -- mass extinction and all.  
 But somehow we survived. Not that it  
 was much of a life worth livin' back  
 then.

(beat)  
 Ain't much better now either.

The Crater and Air Isles ROTATE out of the way to reveal more detail of what's left of the EARTH'S SURFACE. There is nothing recognizable about the landmasses.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 The bomb, Black Veil, darkened the  
 Earth with it's EMP, which to this  
 very day still suffocates us. The  
 explosion itself cracked the planet  
 to it's core. Entire landmasses  
 broke apart, continents smashed into  
 each other, or just plain  
 disappeared. Everything...  
everything changed. Except us.

The sunlit view of the Earth's surface begins to fall into a shadowy darkness once again. Literal darkness. There are no city lights anywhere on the surface.

EFFIE (V.O.)  
 Survivors rebuilt without the  
 technology of our ancestors. We do  
 okay without it, sure, but Shine Town  
 does better than all of us.

SHINE TOWN is the only place on Earth with electricity, and it shines like a technological beacon of hope, or envy to the rest of the world.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 Somehow, don't know how for sure, but  
 the technology we lost is still alive  
 in that city. The rest of us...  
 we're left to struggle in the dark.

MOVING CLOSER to Shine Town we see that it sits atop a mesa, and it is surrounded by huge walls and a desert boneyard full of collapsed war-era buildings and heaps of human remains.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 A lot of folk have tried to take  
 Shine Town and it's power, and a lot  
 of folk have died for their efforts.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Devil's Forge stands between them and us, and ain't nobody made it out of there alive. 'Cept one, but that's just a rumor.

Several miles out from the bright lights of Shine Town, and the death trap of Devil's Forge we see a huge contrast in lifestyle when the TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE comes into view. It is nothing like Shine Town. Independence is a WESTERN-STEAMPUNK town and the only lights here are made of fire and flame.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

But hey, we ain't got it so bad out here. At least we ain't trapped behind walls and a living graveyard. Although...

The STREETS of Independence are lined with storefronts. The buildings are either constructed of wood, or they are restored war-era buildings.

Just outside of the SURGICAL CLINIC there's a stand-off in progress.

It's DUSK and lanterns light the street. A FEW PEOPLE are watching in shock as a desperate GUNMAN holds a frightened FEMALE HOSTAGE at gunpoint with his double-barrel, steampunk inspired, pistol. Embedded in his face is a gasmask augment that covers his nose and mouth. It's a air-filter.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

... some of us are trapped in a different kind of prison. And instead of the fancy peace-making bomb of our ancestors, well, we've found other more creative ways of killin' each other.

Across from the hostage situation there stands the shadowy figure of a LONE FEMALE BADASS in the street, staring the Gunman down.

GUNMAN

Do it! Or I swear I'll blow her brains all over the street!

A MAN and WOMAN flee the scene, passing by the SURGICAL CLINIC.

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - EFFIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EFFIE (V.O.)

I am an augment surgeon. I make  
monsters out of people.

Effie is in her early twenties. Seated at her desk, she  
appears to be drawing something.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

And I do it well.

OVER HER SHOULDER we suddenly see a SCALPEL in her hand as  
she presses it to her wrist, right over the main artery.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Even with our old-world engineering,  
I've made people faster, stronger,  
and even weaponized a lot of them.

There's desperation in her eyes. She applies pressure to  
the scalpel. The blade still shakes in her hand, and a small  
cut begins to bleed.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

I've given folks new arms, legs,  
eyes, lungs -- hell, you name it,  
I've done it.

The scalpel cuts a little deeper.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

I make broken people whole again, but  
there's one thing I can't seem to  
fix.

Drops of blood trickle down her wrist and soak into the  
sketch paper below.

EFFIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Me.

A GUNSHOT from outside. SCREAMS are heard in the street.

The commotion startles Effie from her suicide attempt. Her  
eyes flash quickly to the sound of the gunfire right outside  
of her clinic doors.

Conflicted, Effie glances back down at her bleeding wrist.  
She seems to hesitate between finishing the job of taking  
her own life, or doing her job and saving somebody else's  
life.

(CONTINUED)

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After a moment more of internal struggle, Effie slams down the scalpel as if this interruption has ruined her day. Wrapping her wrist in a cloth to stop the bleeding she rushes out to help.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - SURGICAL CLINIC - DUSK -  
CONTINUOUS

Bursting through the doors of her clinic, Effie runs right into the arms of the desperate Gunman. He immediately takes her hostage, and jams the barrel of his gun under her chin. Oddly though, he leaves his head exposed.

GUNMAN

You're gonna hafta shoot me, or I'll  
just keep killin'em! One-by-one!

(beat)

You want more innocent blood on your  
hands?

As the Gunman shifts to pull Effie further out in the street, Effie's feet stumble a little over the dead body of his last Female Hostage. Half the woman's face is missing.

For Effie, suddenly the sweet escape of death doesn't seem as appealing to her anymore. She begins to resist, but the Gunman locks her down tighter.

EFFIE

Please. I don't want to die.

GUNMAN

Shut up!

Effie recognizes the voice and the air-filter augment on his face. He's a patient of hers.

EFFIE

Jackson? What are you -- You don't  
have to do this. Tell me what's  
wrong and we can talk it out. Nobody  
else has to die.

The Gunman scoffs. He's not interested.

GUNMAN

Yes, they do, Doc.  
(to the Lone Female)  
Come on! Get it over with!

His eyes are locked on the Lone Female Badass standing several feet away from him in the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The woman is in her early to mid 20's, and her name is ABILENE TEXAS LARKIN, (A.K.A "BLACK VEIL"), and she is the fastest gunslinger in the world, unmatched and unstoppable. She is a lethal beauty that exudes confidence in the most stressful of moments, like this one.

GUNMAN (cont'd)

Black Veil! That's what they call you, right? Widow Maker. Murderer. Cold-hearted bitch of death! You suck the light out of every one. Well, you go ahead and take mine too! You hear me? Shoot me, or she dies!

Effie is terrified and searching for help, but Abilene merely stands there with her long black duster tucked behind her back. The two holstered pistols on her hips are exposed, but she's not interested in doing anything more right now than watching.

Wide-eyed, Effie looks beyond Abilene when a small flame from a match lights up a cigar. The cigar belongs to SHERIFF CYRIL MAGNUS. His face is scarred up, and unshaven. He's in his 50's and has an eye augment, and full arm augment.

DEPUTY MUTT DOBBINS stands in the shadows with Magnus on the porch of the GENERAL STORE, but whereas the Sheriff is calm, Mutt is antsy.

Effie is relieved to see them both.

EFFIE

Magnus! Sheriff, please! Do something!

SILENCE.

The cold realization that nobody is going to help hits her hard.

EFFIE (cont'd)

You need me! I'm the only doctor in town -- for miles!

More silence. Everybody holds their ground.

MAGNUS

(to Abilene)

Is that right, darlin'? Are you the Black Veil? The one that murdered the bounty hunter -- your own father?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He steps further into the light of a lantern. Behind him on the storefront wall is a WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE POSTER of Abilene "Black Veil" Larkin. She's wanted for multiple counts of murder and torture.

Slowly, Abilene lays eyes on Magnus and sizes him up, it's clear that she's not the least bit impressed.

GUNMAN

No. NO! You look at me! You pay attention to me, or I'll blow her damn face clean off!

MAGNUS

(casually)

Man just lost his entire family to the plague. Ate them right up in three days flat. He doesn't have anything to live for. I reckon he's looking for a way out.

Magnus puffs nonchalantly on his cigar. He's got everyone right where he wants them.

Abilene, carefully turns her stoic face back to the Gunman and Effie.

Magnus smirks at her dismissal of him.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

He's askin' for a mercy killing. Suicide by gunslinger. Do you do that kind of murdering too, or is it just family you gun-down in cold blood?

(beat)

Of course, if you don't shoot you'll just be aiding and abetting the murder of another innocent girl tonight.

Abilene takes note of Effie's sudden change in expression. The young blonde's face registers a sinking feeling -- she's the bait.

EFFIE (V.O.)

Sheriff, please don't do this. I'm begging you.

SILENCE. Magnus takes another sweet puff of his cigar, and then nods once.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

Mutt shifts into position. His hand rests on his gun, but he's not looking at the Gunman. He has his eyes set on Abilene, from behind.

Without turning her head, Abilene knows Mutt is there.

The Gunman in front of her is soaked in sweat. He cocks the hammer on his double-barrel pistol. His hand trembles ever-so slightly.

Abilene shifts her left hip a little.

This is it. Death lingers in slow silence.

EFFIE

Please don't...

Tears flow freely down Effie's face. The Gunman's barrel slowly slides along her wet cheek, and then inch-by-inch starts to veer-off in Abilene's direction.

Suddenly, and nearly in unison, both Mutt and the Gunman snap to their target, Abilene, and a SINGLE GUNSHOT RINGS OUT!

Before anybody realizes what has happened, it's over. Abilene's speed is incredible, inhuman, and insanely accurate.

In Abilene's right hand she holds the smoking pistol that shot the Gunman right between the eyes. On her hip is the gun fired from her holster that shot Mutt in the thigh.

Effie sits up from her fall to the ground and takes in the scene. The dead Gunman lays by her side with a bullet lodged between his eyes, Mutt is squirming in the street clutching his thigh, and Abilene is just standing there as if nothing special has happened.

Effie's terrified and shocked expression slowly fades into thankful admiration for Abilene. And then she suddenly frowns at something behind Abilene.

Before Abilene can react, Magnus hits her on the head from behind with the butt of his gun. She collapses to the ground.

He stares down at Abilene for a moment while she writhes in pain. It's clear she's special. His expression seems to waver between fear, jealousy, and respect.

Magnus glances up at Effie as she staggers to her feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MAGNUS

You think I'd let you die that easy,  
Doc? You still owe me. Now, stop  
Mutt from bleeding-out. I got this  
one.

Abilene GROANS and starts to move with enough sense to go for her gun. Magnus with his augmented arm punches her in the face knocking her out cold this time.

BLACKNESS

Disembodied SCREAMS from a YOUNG MALE voice.

FADE IN

EXT. SHINE TOWN - NIGHT

Let there be light! And there is plenty of that in this town.

This city was once a military base. There are above ground bunkers, large aircraft hangars, and a deteriorated airstrip.

The structures of the town are a strange, beautiful mix of advanced technology that has been embedded into the old war-era buildings. There are fine strands of fiber-optic-like cables woven into everything, the streets, the buildings, and even in the skin of the people. It is clear that everything is connected and alive. However, the walls surrounding this city indicated that these people are very isolated.

More SCREAMS from the Young Male voice. The sound is coming from somewhere in the city. We follow the screams, which nobody else can hear.

Every building has a HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTOR displaying a countdown that reads, "CURFEW BEGINS IN 10 SECONDS."

The streets are empty, except for COMPLIANCE OFFICERS on patrol. (Note: All Cyberpunks have blue filaments embedded in their skin around their hairline. These cybernetic veins have a faint glow.)

TWO OFFICERS pass by a hangar building with the words, RECLAMATION CENTER, painted on the outside.

Harrowing SCREAMS from the Young Male voice are coming from inside.

INT. RECLAMATION CENTER - EXTRACTION ROOM B

The room looks like a cross between a sterile ER exam room, a computer server room, and a torture chamber.

The SCREAMS are pinpointed and coming from a 16 year old BOY, who is strapped face down on a cold metal morgue table. Extraction TECHNICIAN 1 drills into the Boy's back along the spine. There's hardly any blood spillage. In fact, the Boy looks anemic.

TECHNICIAN 2 checks on a FEMALE that is strapped into what looks like a dialysis machine. Red blood runs through the tubes connected to her arm.

TECHNICIAN 2

Twenty more minutes on the bloodwash.

Technician 1 nods and begins to work a set of pliers into the Boy's back. MORE SCREAMS from the Boy, and then in one sharp pull, a network of fine, translucent wires are ripped out of his back. Technician 1 holds up the wires, they are as long as the Boy's spine, and that's exactly where they came from.

INT. RECLAMATION CENTER - HALLWAY- CONTINUED

SCREAMS penetrate a closed door labeled, EXTRACTION ROOM B.

There's only one more non-compliant waiting for his turn. His name is, KAEL. He is in his twenties, good-looking, but not overly-so. He is normally very sure of himself, but not right now. He sits nervously listening to the SCREAMS coming from behind the closed door.

Then SILENCE.

Slowly Kael looks up from his hands, more worried now that the screams have stopped.

The Compliance OFFICER guarding him notices.

OFFICER

Welcome to the scrapyard, kid. Kiss the citizenry goodbye.

KAEL

Feck you.

His tough guy act fades a little when the SCREAMS start up again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAEL (cont'd)

(wary)

What are they doing to them?

OFFICER

Getting rid of dirty data. Don't you remember your first downloads as a kid? The 3-B's of extraction?

KAEL

Yeah, but--

OFFICER

Brain, blood, and body. In that order. It's less messy that way.

Another burst of SCREAMS pulls Kael's eyes back to the door.

OFFICER (cont'd)

Your fellow non-compliance are getting a bloodwash to remove impurities, and the nano-cells. They're the quiet ones.

Kael's eyes shift back to the Officer. He's worried.

OFFICER (cont'd)

The screams, those come from the tech-extractions. Sometimes the implants grow deep into the bone, and they have to drill them out.

Clearly the Officer is trying to scare the crap out of Kael, and it's working.

The door to Extraction Room B opens and Technician 1 assists the Boy out. The Boy looks around. He's dazed, and confused. As he walks he drags his feet along the ground as if he can't quite get them to work right. His back is bandaged and bloody.

Kael swallows his fear, but nearly gasps when the Boy turns to look at him. He's missing one eye.

As the Boy exits to another GUARD, Technician 1 turns to Kael and smiles.

TECHNICIAN 1

1911. Kael.

Kael doesn't move, as if he can hide by not answering, but he's the only one left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TECHNICIAN 1 (cont'd)  
(happily)  
Right this way, please.

He opens a door to Extraction Room A and waits for the Officer to remove Kael from his seat, which he has to do with force.

KAEL  
(struggling)  
Wait. This isn't right!

OFFICER  
Come on.

For a moment Kael breaks free, but the Officer pulls his SURGE PISTOL and fires a blast of black static electricity that hits him in the back.

Kael immediately collapses. His cybernetic system and biological systems both shut down. When this happens we see the thin filaments of blue along his hair-line go dark.

INT. EXTRACTION ROOM A

This room looks exactly the same as Room B, only it has no other patients.

TECHNICIAN 1  
(pleasant)  
Secure him in the chair, please.

The Officer dumps Kael into a chair and straps him in tight.

Kael's system starts to boot-up again. The filaments along his hairline faintly glow under his skin. Once he's aware of himself, he immediately starts to resist, but it's too late.

KAEL  
Let me out of here!

Technician 1 ignores him as he readies the port scrubber terminal.

KAEL (cont'd)  
Get me the Director. I demand to see the Director. Now!

Technician 1 turns toward Kael with a cable in his hand. The cable is connected to the port scrubber terminal. The holographic DISPLAY runs ominous looking code.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAEL (cont'd)

Wh- what is that? What are you doing?

TECHNICIAN 1

(reassuring smile)

It is your required port exchange scrub. The citizenry cannot have non-complaints exiled to the Dead Zone with knowledge of our city. That would be irresponsible.

Technician 1 approaches.

KAEL

Wait. Stop. That's not necessary. There's nothing outside but Feral Humans.

OFFICER

Relax. This is the part that doesn't hurt.

Technician 1 exposes the port node behind Kael's right ear, and just as he is about to plug in the cable -- the door swings open.

MIWA

Stop.

The Officer and Technician 1 are both surprised. Kael on the other hand looks utterly relieved.

MIWA is in her late forties, and her presence demands attention and respect.

TECHNICIAN 1

Director. Is there a problem?

MIWA

Yes.

(she looks at Kael)

Leave us.

She walks over and rips the cable out of the Technician's hand.

MIWA (cont'd)

I'll handle this one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TECHNICIAN 1

But I have not read the grievances  
against him, nor have I informed him  
of his mercy rights.

Miwa just glares at him and the Officer. Once the room  
clears...

KAEL

Mom. Thank God. Get me out of here.

Miwa takes a deep steady breath of preparation.

MIWA

No.

The relief on Kael's face spirals into confusion. Miwa  
simply turns and sets down the cable.

MIWA (cont'd)

I can't. Not this time.

KAEL

What?! What do you mean? Override  
the Board of Trustees. Let me go!

Miwa glances over her shoulder at him. She stays firm, but  
it's killing her.

MIWA

The order came from the Overseer. I  
can't help you this time.

Doom spells out on Kael's face. Nobody defies the Overseer,  
not even the Director.

MIWA (cont'd)

(frustrated)

I warned you. I begged you to stop  
spreading your propaganda, your  
flawed data. I told you that I  
couldn't protect you if you continued  
to corrupt the people.

KAEL

(now he's frustrated)

We can do more than just slowly die  
in here. We can live outside of  
these walls. How is that wrong?

MIWA

We can't leave, Kael. We'll die and  
the city will die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She shakes her head, and turns her attention to a syringe and vial on the counter.

MIWA (cont'd)

I'm done with this. It's over.

KAEL

Mom, listen to me. I found a way. I can counter-act the Black Veil's particle field. I built the Resistor. It works. We can bring life back to the Dead Zone. We don't have to scrounge for resources anymore. We don't have to exile anyone ever again! Don't you want that for us?

Miwa fills the syringe. Her face is stone.

MIWA

Without these walls the Ferals will kill us and destroy everything our ancestors entrusted to us. So, no. I don't want that, Kael. The city must be protected at all costs.

KAEL

No price too great to pay, right? Even if it means sentencing your son to death.

Miwa turns to face her son. Her expression is softer now.

MIWA

Exile.

KAEL

Same damn thing!

That hits Miwa hard because she knows it's true. Even Kael feels that one. Miwa rejects the emotions and picks up the fully loaded syringe from the counter.

MIWA

It is my duty to inform you of the grievances you have been formally charged with.

KAEL (OVERLAPPING)

Mom, please...

Miwa turns with the syringe in her hand.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (4)

MIWA  
Unauthorized allocation of precious  
resources.

Kael senses the end is near and starts to wrestle against  
the restraints.

MIWA (cont'd)  
Illegal use and operation of a high  
yield energy sources. Illegal use  
and operation of an unsanctioned  
device.

KAEL (OVERLAPPING)  
Don't do this...

She slowly begins to approach him, every step hurts her, but  
she fights it. The needle drips fluid from the tip.

MIWA  
And the spread of treasonous  
thinking, resulting in the corruption  
of the citizenry. Your actions of  
non-compliance have resulted in a  
unanimous decision of exile.

KAEL  
Fine! Exile me, but give me the  
Resistor. Tell me where the Black  
Veil site is located. Give me a  
chance! Give us a chance.

The needle comes toward his neck and he tenses as it is  
carefully injected in.

MIWA  
Non-compliant number 1911, your exile  
ceremony begins tomorrow at dawn.

KAEL (OVERLAPPING)  
We don't have to do this anymore. We  
can live-

MIWA  
Your mercy rights will include a  
vitamin boost, and a ration of water.

She pulls the needle out of Kael's neck. Her expression is  
cold, and hard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MIWA (cont'd)

Once you leave the city you will no longer receive aid from the citizenry.

KAEL

(groggy)

This is murder...

The last thing Kael sees and hears before the sedative takes hold is his mother coming toward him with the scrub cable in her hand.

MIWA

It has to be this way.

Once her son is plugged in, she turns her intense focus to the flood of codes on the holographic DISPLAY, and she starts manipulating the 3-D interface. But is she helping, or hurting her son?

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - COUNTY JAIL - SAME NIGHT

There's quiet activity in the streets. Lanterns are lit inside the COUNTY JAIL house. There's movement inside.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - JAIL CELL

Abilene's unconscious body occupies a small single bunk. This jail cell has nothing more than a bed, and a bucket to use as a toilet.

Effie cares for the nasty looking wound on Abilene's forehead. She carefully dabs an alcohol soaked cloth on the wound, and then softly places a hand on the side of Abeline's cheek to turn her head more towards her.

As consciousness slowly returns, Abilene, the badass gunslinger, leans into Effie's touch. A moment passes, and then suddenly Abilene jerks awake. She snaps Effie's wrist up in her hand. She's ready to throw a punch.

EFFIE

Whoa. Non-threat. Take it easy.  
I'm just cleaning your wound.

The scowl on Abilene's face fades, but only a little as she recognizes the blonde girl. She lets Effie's wrist go, and starts to sit up only to wince in pain. After touching her forehead she sees blood on her fingertips, and looks back at Effie.

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CONTINUED:

ABILENE

Doctor?

Reaching into her doctor's bag, Effie rustles around.

EFFIE

(grins)

The best. Effie Harper. Augment  
surgeon and general practitioner.

She pulls out a tube of salve and holds it up to Abilene.

EFFIE (cont'd)

This will seal it. May I?

A moment of uncertainty passes before Abilene simply nods. Effie smears some of the waxy salve on her fingers, and then reaches out to apply it to Abilene's forehead.

EFFIE (cont'd)

You must have a death wish or  
something. Riding into town with  
your wanted posters all over the  
place.

Abilene holds still but her eyes glance up at the other woman.

ABILENE

I'm not nearly as suicidal as you.

Effie follows Abilene's eyes back down to her own bandaged wrist. She freezes. She's caught. They lock eyes.

EFFIE

Really? The wanted posters say  
otherwise.

(beat)

Is it true you killed your father?

Cold silence, and then:

ABILENE

What do you think?

Effie check-mates Abilene's hard response with a glance, but the gunslinger doesn't look away. This is exactly the kind of person Effie needs. Soulless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EFFIE

(subject change)

Well, I think it's best to inform you that what happened out there in the street was a trap -- meant for you.

Abilene pulls away. Her expression requires more.

EFFIE (cont'd)

Trust me.

(beat)

I knew Jackson, the man you shot. His family ain't dead, but they would have been. He owed Sheriff Magnus.

(beat, darker)

Everybody does.

That's got Abilene's interest, though her tone doesn't reveal how curious she really is.

ABILENE

And what do you owe him?

Effie avoids eye-contact, and then avoids the answer.

EFFIE

He's been watching you since you rode in. He wants you and now he's got you.

Though Effie's words are threatening, Abilene isn't worried. In fact, she's cocky.

ABILENE

That so?

EFFIE

If you want to live you'll do what he asks.

Abilene straightens up on the bunk and catches Effie's eyes for a moment.

ABILENE

Like you? And just how long have you been in his debt?

Effie glances behind to see that they're still alone. She hesitates to answer, but risks revealing herself.

EFFIE

Long enough that I can't remember what it's like not to be like this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

That seems to hit home for Abilene, but she quickly brushes it off, putting up her defenses once again.

ABILENE  
Why are you telling me this?

Effie sits herself down on the bunk and lowers her voice.

EFFIE  
Because I got a favor to ask and I need you alive to do it.

Abilene slants an interested look in Effie's direction.

ABILENE  
Go on.

EFFIE  
I want you to kill the Sheriff.

ABILENE  
(dry chuckle)  
Oh, is that all.

EFFIE  
(nods)  
That's your thing, right? Killing folk.

Abilene glares, insulted.

ABILENE  
You think that will set you free, me taking a man's life for you?

Her eyes take note of the bandage on Effie's wrist again. They both have demons that can't be physically slain.

Effie swallows hard.

EFFIE  
(slightly desperate)  
All I know is, I gotta get out of here.  
(beat)  
Please... sooner or later he's gonna kill me.

Abilene considers the favor. She's unsure at first, but when she looks at Effie again she sees a kindred spirit and takes a chance. She's not nearly as soulless as she would like people to believe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ABILENE

Why should I help you? What do I get out of it?

Effie looks away. She can only offer one thing.

EFFIE

I guess... I'd owe you?

ABILENE

(cold chuckle)

I thought you wanted out of bondage?

She lets Effie squirm at that thought, and then...

ABILENE (cont'd)

Forget it. All I want is information. There's a family that used to homestead here, about five miles out, near Thunder Hill.

Once the shock wears off, Effie nods.

ABILENE (cont'd)

The name is Wester. The father and mother are dead, but their daughter may still be alive. Her name is Lila. You find me information on her whereabouts, and who killed that family, and I'll do your favor with nothing more owed.

EFFIE

Yeah. Yeah, I can do that. How long ago was this?

ABILENE

'Bout thirteen years.

EFFIE

(unsure)

That's... a while.

(thinks)

But Magnus would have been Sheriff back then, so...

(wry grin)

Yeah, I think I know where to look.

ABILENE

Good. One problem. I can't help you if they hang me.

FOOTSTEPS are overheard, and Effie hurries her last words.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

EFFIE

(whispers)

Don't worry about that. Magnus don't want you dead, he just wants you. Go along with what he asks and you'll walk out of here like the rest of us.

She quickly stands and collects her doctor's bag as Magnus enters all proud and arrogant. He caught the Black Veil after all.

EFFIE (cont'd)

She's all yours.

MAGNUS

She say anything useful?

EFFIE

Just that you're an ugly Feral humper.

The comment almost gets a smile out of Abilene.

Magnus ignores it and parks himself in the open cell door, playing with the keys in his hands. He eyes up Abilene. Abilene ignores him.

MAGNUS

I'm fast, and accurate thanks to these...

He indicates his augmented arm and the eye-goggle embedded in his face.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

But I ain't never seen anybody sling a gun like you. What kind of augments are you hiding?

EFFIE

None. I checked. She's raw. She ain't been cooked by no one.

ABILENE

Augments are for pussies.

Wary of Magnus's reaction, Effie watches as he rests a hand on his gun.

MAGNUS

I've got little patience for weak-minded insults.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Let's try to keep a civil tongue and get down to business.

ABILENE

All right. My poster outside says dead or alive. I don't think you're the kind of man that's bullet conscious, or an advocate of justice. So what do you want?

MAGNUS

(smiles)

You'd be right. Here's the deal. You got skills I could use for now. I can either have our fair Judge try you right now, and hang you tomorrow, or you can take a ride with me and my posse in the mornin' to Devil's Forge. Think of it as a work release program.

ABILENE

And just how long would I be working for my release.

MAGNUS

How long do you think your life is worth living?

And doesn't that say it all. Abilene slides a look past Magnus, at Effie, then back again.

ABILENE

What's at Devil's Forge? We'll never make it to Shine Town if that's what you're after.

MAGNUS

Not your concern at the moment. Are you going to ride with me, or is it the end of a rope?

Effie is worried.

ABILENE

I'll ride.

MAGNUS

Glad to hear it.

He slams the cell door shut.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (7)

MAGNUS (cont'd)

See you at sun-up.

He heads out, and takes Effie with him, but not before she glances back at her ticket to freedom, Abilene.

EXT. SHINE TOWN - DAWN

All of the citizenry has gathered in the streets to witness the exile ceremony. They look like mourners at a funeral, but everyone is dressed in white.

MIWA (O.S.)

Our city. Our great city of Tesla has been our home for many generations, and it shall forever give life to the generations hereafter. But only through compliance can we continue to exist.

At one end of the old torn-up AIRSTRIP the sea of people part, and the non-compliants -- the BOY with a gauze eye-patch, the FEMALE, and Kael, are escorted along by THREE OFFICERS.

MIWA (O.S.) (cont'd)

Only through brain, blood, and body can this great city continue to live. For we are as much a part of it, as it is of us. Ours is a symbiotic relationship.

Miwa stands at a podium in front of a statue of a man, the plaque behind her reads, "FROM DARKNESS COMES LIGHT - CREATOR OF THE BLACK VEIL, CALIX AMIAS."

MIWA

And in order to preserve what our ancestors entrusted to us, we must remain one people. One city.

She watches steadfast, but she struggles as her son, Kael, is marched down the airstrip.

As Kael and the other non-compliants walk, the people turn their backs on them, shunning them.

MIWA (O.S.)

For without compliance the citizenry will fail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kael looks scared and aware of what's happening, but the other two non-complaints look pale and confused.

The blue cybernetic filaments that we see on the faces in the crowd are glow with life, but for Kael and his fellow exiles those live-wires are dark. They are not connected to the city, or the people anymore, and perhaps that is why Kael looks so frightened. He's literally off-line and alone.

MIWA (O.S.) (cont'd)

This day we have failed 3 times.

Once the three exiles reach the end of the airstrip and come face-to-face with the wall that protects the city, an Officer activates a panel, and a door slides open in the wall revealing a DARK COMPARTMENT within.

Kael frowns and gulps down his fears, until he sees a member of the medical staff, NOLA, begin to administer the mercy rights to the Boy and the Female. An injection is given in the arm, and a canteen of water made from a gourd is handed to them.

Nola makes eye contact with Kael. They know each other very well. She quickly looks away to prevent trouble.

MIWA

Today we let the Dead Zone correct our failures, and tomorrow... tomorrow our citizenry, and our great city become one again.

Miwa looks out at the crowd. The people have their backs turned to the exiles. A rhythmic, slow noise grows louder and louder as they stomp one foot on the ground in unison. It sounds like the thunderous drumbeat of death.

Nola takes the crowd noise as an opportunity to speak to Kael as she preps his injection.

NOLA

(whisper)

Don't look at me, and don't talk.  
Just listen.

She flicks the tip of the needle.

NOLA (cont'd)

These aren't vitamin boost shots. It's gene therapy. I saw the trial results in the lab. It's some kind of genetically modified virus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kael feels the needle penetrate his neck and gives Nola a look of, "you did not just inject me with a virus!".

NOLA (cont'd)  
It's a placebo. I swapped yours out.

In the background the Officers shove the Boy, and the Female exile into the dark compartment inside the wall.

MIWA (O.S.)  
Out of darkness comes light. Out of failure comes might.

NOLA (OVERLAPPING)  
Here. It's from your mom.  
(hands him the canteen)  
Don't die.  
(leans close, whispers)  
I love you.

This is killing Nola, and tears start to fall. An Officer pulls Kael away and shoves him into the dark compartment with his fellow exiles.

MIWA  
The city and we are one.

Her face pinches a little in pain as her son is cast out.

MIWA (cont'd)  
(stronger)  
Lest all of us are none.

The door slams shut sealing in the exiles, and sealing their fate.

INT. WALL COMPARTMENT

Pitch black, but we can see three shadowy figures shifting nervously inside. Not a sound, but we can hear the fearful breaths of anticipation.

QUIET. STILLNESS. And then:

KAEL  
What is--

The SCREECH of metal cuts him off, and the floor drops out from under him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All three exiles free-fall for a moment in the dark, and then land on something hard before starting to slide down at high speed!

INT. CHUTE TUBE

It's dark and shadowy, but we see, and hear Kael, the Boy, and the Female, sliding down a steeply inclined chute.

Up ahead a DEAD END of metal. It looks like they're going to smash right into the wall, and then a DOOR opens at the end. A blast of BLINDING LIGHT hits them before they exit outside.

EXT. DEVIL'S FORGE - DAWN

From the side of the mesa, on which Shine Town sits, a HOLE has appeared, and out tumbles violently the three bodies of Kael, the Boy, and the Female.

The rocky side of the mesa really gives them a beating, but they finally land in a heap on the desert floor.

GROANS. MOANS. DISORIENTATION.

The three exiles start to move and get their bearings. Then it hits Kael, more than the others, (because they had their memories erased), that this is the first time he has ever been outside the walls of the city.

He turns in awe and stares up at the craggy mesa. The walls now separate him from his home, his people, and the life he knew. Regret and sadness hit him hard in this moment.

The only thing that causes Kael to take his eyes off those walls, is when the Boy behind him HOWLS in pain.

He turns to see the Boy holding his leg. He's injured, and Kael moves to help, along with the Female.

KAEL

Don't move.

He drops down in the sand beside him and checks the leg.

KAEL (cont'd)

It doesn't feel broken. Can you stand on it?

BOY

I'll try.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With help from Kael and the Female, the Boy manages to get to his feet. It is at that point that they all lift their eyes to the desolate sight of DEVIL'S FORGE.

The Forge is a huge, vast, wondrous disaster area of death.

FEMALE

What is this place?

KAEL

The Dead Zone.

They stand there for a moment more, none wanting to move, almost mesmerized by the sheer beauty of destruction. Wreckage from the war litters the sand and rock. BUILDINGS partially protrude from the desert floor. Exposed BONES and human remains are scattered through-out. And the unmistakable landmark of a broken AIRSHIP from a long dead Steampunk Pirate lays split in two among other debris.

KAEL (cont'd)

We need to get moving before the  
Ferals find us.

BOY

The what?

Kael opens his mouth to explain, and then realizes there's no point. In fact, they're lucky they don't remember.

KAEL

Everybody got water?

They check their gourd canteens. Kael leaves the Boy's side for a moment to pick his up off the sand. Immediately, he notices his has a hole cracked in the side, and there's no water.

He examines it more closely, gives it a shake and realizes there's something hard RATTLING around inside.

After a quick scan of the terrain he locates a jagged rock, which he uses to smash open the gourd. Inside the canteen falls out a small, quarter-sized, metal disk. It's smooth and high-tech. It's the RESISTOR. A SURGE PISTOL is also inside.

Kael smiles. He doesn't have water, but he has something better. He looks back at the huge walls of the city.

KAEL (cont'd)

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He hits a panel on the Resistor, a field of blue momentarily bursts around him before becoming invisible. The surge pistol lights up, and so does the cybernetic filaments along his hairline.

He smiles big and triumphant. The Resistor works! As long as the device is in his personal space, his tech is unaffected by the Black Veil's particle field.

BOY

What is that?

KAEL

Hope.

(beat)

Let's get moving.

With purpose he leads them further in to Devil's Forge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT TWO

EXT. OUTSIDE OF INDEPENDENCE - TRAIL - MORNING

Long gone is the dust-bowl town of Independence. Abilene, Magnus and his posse, (which consists of: WADE, SQUIRREL, and FLAMING BEAR), are on horseback, riding casually through lush, green prairie. This is cattle country.

Everybody is armed, except Abilene. A few of the horses have interesting and strange augments.

An eager young man, about 16 years old rides up along side Abilene. His name is SQUIRREL, and he's a bit taken with our reluctant hero.

SQUIRREL

They say you've killed eighty men.

Abilene ignores him and keeps her eyes on the trail.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

I mean, you put plenty of folks down when you was bounty huntin' with your Pa, right? Even though them killin's ain't necessarily murder it still counts.

Magnus glances back at Abilene wondering what will get her to react. Nothing so far.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

Ain't it weird seeing yourself on a wanted poster after being the one that usually takes'em down?

It's like he's not even there.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

So how fast are you anyway?

That finally get's Abilene to look at him. She gives him a slight smile, which he enjoys from the pretty girl.

ABILENE

(sweetly)

Give me your gun and I'll show you.

He just about does that, until Magnus drops back between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGNUS

Keep it in your pants, Squirrel. No  
iron of any kind for the lady.  
(to everybody)  
Got it?

The Posse MUMBLE their responses. Squirrel on the other  
hand:

SQUIRREL

(embarrassed)  
Sure, boss.

He moves up front, but only to hide his humiliation.

Abilene checks a glance at Magnus. She's not happy about  
their destination, and by the looks of it neither is anybody  
else, except for maybe Squirrel.

ABILENE

So, you're taking me unarmed into  
Devil's Forge. Sounds like I'd have  
a better chance at the end of that  
rope.

MAGNUS

Can be arranged.

He enjoys matching her attitude. It irks her but she keeps  
it to herself.

ABILENE

Do I get to know why I might be dying  
today?

He only smiles at her. Then a member of his Posse, WADE, a  
smooth-talking gambler butts-in.

WADE

We will be attempting to...  
(uses air quotes)  
... round-up a couple of Ferals.

ABILENE

(disturbed frown)  
Alive?

MAGNUS

Preferably.

Abilene just shakes her head at that nonsense.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

ABILENE

And what exactly do you plan to do with plague-carrying wretches?

WADE

Doc's running tests on them.

ABILENE

She looking for a cure?

WADE

Probably something like that, but I'm not privy to the exact motive. You'd have to ask Duke Bloxham about-

MAGNUS

You talk to much, Wade. Shut it.

(he nods up ahead)

Take five minutes to water the horses.

The conversation with Wade leaves Abilene curious, but her expression suddenly turns haunted when she sees what is up ahead. A BURNED-DOWN RANCH. There's a fragile, bullet riddled, sign hanging over the entrance, which reads, WESTER RANCH, and it has a CIRCLE-W brand. Abilene knows this place all too well, and it troubles her deeply.

She slows her horse as she enters the destroyed homestead.

EXT. WESTER RANCH - CONTINUOUS

While the Posse tend to their horses, Abilene dismounts and carefully takes in the view of: SUN-BLEACHED COW BONES in the PEN. A DESTROYED BARN. OTHER CHARRED RANCH ITEMS. And lastly the BURNED DOWN remains of the MAIN HOUSE.

She can't take her eyes off the Main House. It's almost like it's calling to her. She starts to move toward it, her eyes looking for ghosts, her breathing shallows as if feeling a panic of memories...

Magnus notices Abilene going astray from the group.

MAGNUS

Bear, keep an eye on her.

FLAMING BEAR, (we'll call him Bear for short), is a large, muscular, intimidating Native-American Indian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He GRUNTS at Magnus, and then casually heads over to the Main House, which is nothing more than two broken walls, and some burnt items inside. There is no roof.

As he approaches Abilene, he decides to give her space. He situates the strap of his weapon on his shoulder. (The weapon is a large, automatic, twelve-chamber, rotating crossbow.)

He cautiously steps through the burnt shell of the Main House and lights up an ornate pipe as he watches Abilene rummage through the debris. Bear knows a haunted spirit when he sees one, and he respects her with distance.

Abilene spots a glint of something in the rubble. She kicks away a board to reveal a Bowie knife. She picks it up. Her expression saddens in memory of something. The blade is blackened from the fire of the past, but the stag-horn handle still has legible markings:

INSERT - KNIFE HANDLE

A brand mark of Circle-W, and the initials, A.T.W.

BACK TO SHOT

BEAR

You live here.

(beat)

Everyday.

The gruff, yet soulful voice behind her gathers Abilene's attention, and she turns to see the bear-sized man standing there puffing on his pipe.

She hesitates. She's not supposed to have weapons, and yet here she is holding one that happens to be pointed right at him, but Bear isn't interested in taking it from her.

She looks back down at the knife, and then returns her eyes to his, as if questioning him. His docile demeanor is the answer, but she still moves warily to conceal the knife inside her duster so that there is no mistake about her intentions.

Abilene gives him a nod, and he returns the same as she slips past him, and walks back toward the horses.

MAGNUS

Mount up!

The group does exactly that, and begin to ride out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WADE

We taking the short-cut again?

ABILENE

Short-cut?

Magnus nods at a tall hill not too far away.

MAGNUS

Through Thunder Hill.

WADE

Duke Bloxham has been mining a tunnel right under Devil's Forge for years. Crazy bastard thinks he can just burrow right up the butt of Shine Town, and bypass the Forge altogether.

Abilene notices the controlled anger on Bear's face. She turns to Wade for more.

ABILENE

Ambitious. Or stupid. I can't decide. Where do you get the labor?

WADE

The Duke has an arrangement with the local tribes. They service the tunnel.

A single look at Bear, and Abilene makes the connection.

WADE (cont'd)

It's only half finished. But, yeah. We've been using it to hit-and-run Ferals for a while now.

Abilene looks off with a worried expression -- ain't this mission full of unpleasant surprises?

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET- DAY

Effie heads across the street toward the COUNTY JAIL holding a covered plate of food and a doctor's bag.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Mutt sits at the deputy's desk sleeping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Effie steps through the open door. She hesitates, and then goes for the flirt. Knocking on the door frame:

EFFIE  
Sleeping on the job, I see?

MUTT  
Just following doctor's orders.

She enters and tries not to be obvious that she is looking for something -- a set of keys.

EFFIE  
I have a couple more you can follow.  
Hungry?

She sets down the plate, and he dives in like a starved dog. It's a little repulsive, and any idea of flirting her way through this disappears right off her face.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
Geez, Mutt. You even gonna chew it?

MUTT  
What? You said eat.

She looks at his wounded leg.

EFFIE  
Is it safe to change your bandage or are you going to mistake me for a chicken wing?

MUTT  
By all means, Doc. My body is yours.

He props his leg up on the desk top, and leans back in his chair while gnawing on a bone. That's when Effie sees a large ring of KEYS hooked to his belt loop, right around his crotch.

Adopting a professional manner, Effie unwraps the bandage and examines the wound.

EFFIE  
Looks good. No sign of infection.  
How about the pain?

MUTT  
Ain't too bad-OW!

He jumps when she accidentally, on purpose, pokes the area too hard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EFFIE

Sorry. I need to clean, and redress it.

Enjoying watching her work and how close her hands are to his nether-region, Mutt stops eating for a second to lust after her.

MUTT

How come you and I quit?

EFFIE

Pfft. We never started. And you're a bit of a jerk.

MUTT

(pouts)

But I'm a lovable jerk?

EFFIE

Ehn.

(shrugs indifferent)

There's been moments where you didn't exactly induce vomiting.

That's all he needed to hear. As she finishes wrapping his leg, he grabs her hand before she can pull away.

MUTT

You know I wanted to save you the other day, right?

She swallows a little bile in the throat, and then takes his hand in hers. A smile and a couple of nods.

EFFIE

Sure, Mutt. I know it's not your fault you're whipped.

His expression changes to one of pain. He looks down and sees a SYRINGE sticking out of his leg and Effie pumping him full of something. She pulls the needle out and smiles sweetly.

EFFIE (cont'd)

Pain killer. Sorry. Should have warned you. It may cause drowsiness so don't--

His head flops to one shoulder and he is out like a light. Effie looks at the dosage, it was probably a tad too much. She shrugs and tosses the needle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Now to get to work. She unhooks the key ring from Mutt's belt loop, being very careful not to touch any of his crotch-parts, and then quickly steps over to the gun rack on the wall.

After a few failed attempts, Effie finds the right key and pops the lock on the rack. But instead of lifting the safety-bar on the guns, she feels around the back of the shelf. She knows exactly what she's doing. She finds the LATCH and flips it. One tug later and the shelf swings on its hinges to reveal a SAFE.

A smile like we haven't seen before pulls on Effie's lips. She's in love. This is one of her hidden talents.

EFFIE (cont'd)

Pretty baby.

MUTT

Mmm... Sexy.

She checks and he's still heavily doped.

From her bag she pulls a safe-cracking kit and gets to work dialing in the right combination. Success! The safe's DOOR OPENS to reveal the mother-load of blackmail info. RECORD BOOKS and SALES LEDGERS.

Effie begins thumbing through a record book, and she soon finds what she's looking for: A full page of suspiciously deceased landowners in the town of Independence with no living relatives listed, and one buyer for the vacant properties.

INSERT - PAGE

Chapman Homestead. Fire. Owner deceased, Jan. 9th '45. No living relatives. Deed transfer to Duke Edward Bloxham.

Wester Homestead. Fire. Owner deceased, Jan. 9th '45. No living relatives. Deed transfer to Duke Edward Bloxham.

Kaprelian Homestead. Fire. Owner deceased, Jan. 9th '45. No living relatives. Deed transfer to Duke Edward Bloxham.

BACK TO SHOT:

Effie rips out the page, puts it in her pocket and moves on to the SALES LEDGER. She flips through, finds the correct page and stops. There's a list of names sold to pirates as slaves. One in particular catches her attention:

INSERT - PAGE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Jan. 11th '45.

Wester, Lila - Age 13 - Female - Slave - SOLD for 60 pieces - CAPTAIN HAPPY JACK - AIRSHIP, HAPPY JACK.

BACK TO SHOT:

EFFIE

Happy Jack. Oh, crap...

She's terrified of the name. She rips this page out too, replaces everything, locks it back up and slips out. No-one is the wiser.

EXT. DEVIL'S FORGE - DAY

Our trio of exiles, Kael, the Boy, and the Female dredge through the endless sand, blistering sun, and dry air. It's clear they've been walking for a while by the angle of the sun and the landmark AIRSHIP in the distance behind them.

They all show signs of heat exhaustion - their skin is sunburned, lips are cracked and they are fatigued from the death march that Kael is leading them on.

FEMALE

Wait. I have to stop. I can't-

She falls to her knees and fumbles for her canteen. She is drenched in sweat, as are they all, but she looks the very worst. She's pale and feverish.

Kael helps the canteen to her lips. He gets a good look at her and realizes he may be killing them.

KAEL

We need to get out of the sun.

(to his right)

In there.

Out of the depths of the sand protrudes something reminiscent of the Space Needle's top, arching out of the ground. Most of the windows are blown out, and the BUILDING looks like the rib-cage of a long-dead prehistoric animal. It doesn't look safe, but there's shade inside.

Kael and the Boy help the Female up and they make their way through one of the busted windows.

INT. SPACE NEEDLE-LIKE BUILDING - DINNING AREA

It's dark. Strange creaking noises are heard as they enter and settle in. Toppled tables, etc.

KAEL

Careful.

They clear a space and set the girl down. Kael and the Boy take a break beside her.

BOY

So, how come we can't remember anything, but you do?

A trace of guilt on Kael's face. He wets a cloth with water and lays it on the Female's forehead.

KAEL

It's complicated.

BOY

Are you sure you know where we're going? It's been hours. There's nothing out here.

Kael reassures him with a knowing smile.

KAEL

Trust me. Before we left, my mother uploaded the necessary data to me. We just need to make it to the Air Isles.

BOY

How far are they?

KAEL

You don't want to know.

BOY

Okay, but what's there?

KAEL

The Black Veil site.

METAL CLATTERS! Something moves behind them and they all jump to see what it is.

A FIGURE is standing at the darkest end of the dinning room. It's outline is thin and frail, but human shaped.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

BOY

Hello?

Kael puts a hand over the Boy's mouth to shut him up. It's too late, another Figure appears, then another, a total of FIVE FIGURES in all. They start to slowly rock from side-to-side as if tasting, or sensing the air.

KAEL

(whispers)

Ferals. We need to go. Now.

They cautiously get up and move toward the window from which they came in, but they don't get far before the Female passes out. The NOISE she makes as she takes a chair down with her instantly draws out the Five Ferals, and they come FAST, sprinting, and leaping over debris!

KAEL (cont'd)

Feck! RUN!

The Boy tries to help the Female, but she's unresponsive, and Kael drags him away anyway.

EXT. DEVIL'S FORGE - CONTINUOUS

Kael and the Boy pour out of the window and start running like hell. Behind them the Five Ferals are in pursuit.

Now that the Ferals are in the sunlight their hideous details are clear: Eyes marred with cataracts, skin almost see-through if it wasn't so dirty, flesh that is blistered and pustular, rotten teeth and gums that bleed. They are disgusting, and they are gaining on Kael and the Boy.

KAEL

Go, go, go!

He pauses for a split second to turn and fire the Surge Pistol at the incoming Ferals. He misses twice, gives up, and starts running again.

Up ahead Kael sees that the Boy has reached an obstacle that is severely slowing him down. A tall SAND DUNE with no way around it.

Kael turns and randomly fires behind him. This time he HITS a Feral and it goes down tripping another behind it. It's a very brief victory as the tripped Feral bounces right back up. FOUR FERALS now continue pursuit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kael reaches the dune and starts the same struggle as the Boy. He slips and slides. He's losing ground as much as he gains. He glances back to see that the Ferals are doing much better at managing the loose sand than he is.

The Boy slides, Kael reaches out, but misses.

KAEL (cont'd)

No!

The Boy is headed right for a Feral. No time to help, or watch, Kael's leg is grabbed by another Feral. He tries to kick himself free. He starts to slide, and then:

The THUNDEROUS SOUND of horses pound the ground. Over the crest of the dune five horses and their riders, Magnus, Abilene, Wade, Squirrel, and Bear drive down the slope.

Abilene uses her horse as a weapon and tramples the Feral attacking Kael. Kael and the Feral roll back down to the bottom.

Squirrel ropes a Feral and drags it off the unconscious Boy, while Bear and Wade round up the other two.

Meanwhile, Abilene is off of her horse and holding up her hands in surrender.

ABILENE

You okay?

Shocked to see another normal human in the Dead Zone, Kael has the Surge Pistol aimed right at her. He's confused and freaking out.

KAEL

Stop! Don't come any closer!

She takes a step. He shoots the Surge Pistol into the ground as a warning. It turns the sand to glass. The weapon gets Magnus's attention, and Abilene's. It's unlike anything they've ever seen before.

ABILENE

Easy. I just saved your life. I'm not going to--

WHACK! Magnus hits Kael with the butt of his rifle.

ABILENE (cont'd)

Really? He wasn't going to shoot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGNUS

Don't care. But since you do, he's  
your baggage now.

Magnus hops down from his horse as Abilene approaches Kael's  
body. She reaches for the strange the Surge Pistol, but  
Magnus scoops it up.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Uhn-uhn.

He looks it over, tries to shoot it, but it won't fire for  
him. The weapon is dead. Next to him, Abilene looks Kael  
over. She notices the odd blue filaments highlighted under  
his skin along his hairline.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

That ain't normal. Plague?

ABILENE

No. Something else.

She glances back at the distant glint of Shine Town. Magnus  
follows her gaze.

ABILENE (cont'd)

I think he came from there.

Magnus is enlightened with a new objective.

MAGNUS

We got ourselves a genuine Shiner,  
boys.

WADE

This is one too, I think.

He nudges the shoulder of the unconscious Boy. The Boy  
MOANS.

WADE (cont'd)

Still breathing, but he doesn't look  
so good. No bites, or scratches from  
the Ferals. No signs of plague.

Magnus shoves the Surge Pistol under his belt, and draws his  
gun.

MAGNUS

Change of plans.

He walks right up to where Squirrel is hog-tying a Feral,  
and shoots the creature in the head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAGNUS (cont'd)  
 (at Kael and the Boy)  
 Take these two instead... Kill the  
 rest.

GUNFIRE opens up on the captive Ferals.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET- DAY

In front of the SURGICAL CLINIC there are horses tied to the hitching post. Magnus, Abilene and the rest of the posse are back.

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - LAB

The lab is a clean, white tiled room. There's medical equipment all around. On a metal table at the far side of the room is the unconscious Boy hooked up to an I.V. Abilene is standing near him, arms folded, attentive to what is going on across the room.

On the opposite side of the room Kael is tied to a metal chair. He's awake and alert, but he's not talking. Effie is examining him. She sees the faintly glowing blue veins along his hairline and frowns.

EFFIE  
 These are beautiful. What kind of  
 augment is it?

She looks at him, and he looks at her as if for the first time realizing the lies he's been told by his people.

KAEL  
 You're not Ferals.

EFFIE  
 (smiles)  
 Neither are you. Looks like we have  
 something in common.

Effie casts a glance back at the boy.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
 Are you together? Where did you come  
 from?

Kael surveys the other people in the room. There's Effie, whom he finds comforting. Abilene is at the back of the room guarding the Boy -- he's neutral about her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lastly, there's Magnus, and when Kael sees his stern face he instantly clams up.

Abilene spots the danger in his silence when Magnus strengthens his posture. She breaks the quiet.

ABILENE

We know you're from Shine Town.

KAEL

Shine...?

(sarcastic chuckle)

Is that what you people call it?

EFFIE

What do you call-

She's shoved out of the way and Magnus steps in, a force of nature.

MAGNUS

You people? Your kind have been killing my kind since you dropped the bomb on us.

Kael looks surprised, and confused.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

That's right we know it was you.  
You're the only ones left with this  
type of technology.

He whips out the Surge Pistol, and Kael flinches away, until he realizes that the pistol isn't in the Resistors's range.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Start talking. Who are you and why  
is your city the only place on Earth  
with working tech?

Kael glares at him in stubborn silence.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Fine. Hard way.

He punches Kael in the gut with his augmented arm. It knocks the wind out of him.

EFFIE

Sheriff, wait.

She doesn't dare physically intervene, and he doesn't listen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGNUS

I saw you use this.

(waggles the Surge  
Pistol)

Nothing like this is supposed to  
function out here. What is it, and  
how does it work?

Kael clinches his jaw in resolve. More silence, which earns him another hard hit right in the sternum. The impact curls Kael and he wheezes in pain.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

I can do this all day, Shiner. This  
arm doesn't get tired.

He hauls back his augmented arm. He's seconds away from throwing another punch, but stops when he sees Kael go wide-eyed at something behind him.

The Boy sits up on the table and grabs Abilene, sinking his blood stained mouth into her shoulder. She throws him off and he lands in a corner of the room. The Boy SHRIEKS!

Everybody is in a panic and backs away. Kael who is tied to the chair is left helpless.

The Boy rises from the floor. He has become Feral. He sways back and forth, sensing the air, and then he charges!

Magnus goes for his gun using the increased speed of his augmented arm, but Abilene beats him to it, plucking his weapon from his holster and shooting the Boy in the head.

The Boy hits the floor. There's blood spatter all over the white tile. In that moment nobody moves, unsure of what just happened.

Magnus looks over as Abilene offers his gun back. Her eyes are still staring at the Boy when Magnus swipes the weapon from her.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

(to Effie, angry)

I thought you said he wasn't Feral?

EFFIE

He isn't... wasn't. The tests were  
negative. I don't understand.

Abilene winces and touches the bite wound on her shoulder. Effie immediately checks it. It's deep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAGNUS

Well, you fecked up somewhere. This one is on you, Doc. You're putting her down.

That hits Effie hard. Full of regret and sorrow, she looks at Abilene. Oddly enough Abilene isn't that concerned.

Magnus hauls Kael to his feet and starts dragging him out of the room. Kael can't take his eyes off the Boy. He knows what transformed the Boy, we can see it on his face.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Come on. We're going to finish this conversation elsewhere.

Alone with Abilene, Effie turns to her and quickly shifts into Doctor-mode, tending to the wound on her shoulder.

EFFIE

I am so, so sorry. I don't know what happened. He tested clean not ten minutes ago.

She applies compression to the wound to stop the bleeding.

ABILENE

It's fine.

Abilene rolls up the sleeve on her shirt and shows Effie the scar from a bite mark on her left forearm.

ABILENE (cont'd)

I'm immune.

Flabbergasted, Effie grabs her arm for a closer look.

EFFIE

What is-? Is this-? How? When?

ABILENE

Thirteen years ago.

She looks at Effie. She's starting to trust her.

ABILENE (cont'd)

(just the facts no  
emotion)

My family owned a ranch outside of town. It was attacked by a group of men. They burned it down and came after me. I ran. Ended up in Devil's Forge where I was bitten.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ABILENE (cont'd)  
 (shrug)  
 I lived.

Suddenly, Effie understands it, all of it.

EFFIE  
 You're the one. The stories about a  
 little girl surviving in the Forge,  
 beating the plague -- they're true.

Abilene nods.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
 So you're not going to die?

Abilene nods again, and Effie sighs a deep relief, and then  
 focuses on sterilizing the wounded shoulder.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
 Okay, this means I can start working  
 on a vaccine from your blood. I'll  
 need to take a little right now to  
 confirm it though.

Abilene offers her arm, and Effie preps a syringe.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
 (beat, frown)  
 Wait... you said thirteen years ago?  
 Is that why you wanted information on  
 the Wester family? That's your  
 family. Lila's your sister.

Another nod from Abilene, this time with a hint of sadness.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
 I thought your last name was Larkin?

She draws the blood from Abilene's arm.

ABILENE  
 That was the name of the bounty  
 hunter that found me. He thought it  
 was best to hide my true identity.  
 He raised me as his own.

Effie gives a little eyebrow twitch that it makes sense, and  
 then starts to wrap the shoulder wound.

EFFIE  
 (cautious)  
 Did you kill your father? I mean  
 Larkin, not-

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (5)

Abilene shakes her head, "no".

ABILENE

Larkin was gut-shot in a gunfight. My bullet ended his suffering.

(beat)

Before he died he confessed that he was one of the men responsible for murdering my family. Told me to come here to find answers.

Effie holds her gaze for a moment. Abilene's honesty touches her, and then:

EFFIE

I think I did.

She gestures for Abilene to follow her out.

INT. EFFIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Effie unlocks a drawer in her desk and pulls out the torn pages she stole from Magnus's safe. As Abilene joins her she hands them over.

EFFIE

Here. Three families, including yours, were wiped out by a fire on the same day.

Abilene wears a heavy, angry frown as she reads the page.

ABILENE

No heirs, and then Duke Bloxham buys up the land.

EFFIE

The Duke owns everything around here.

ABILENE

They wouldn't sell to him, so he killed them all. And now I know why he wanted my family's property. Thunder Hill. He's tunneling into Shine Town.

EFFIE

He didn't kill all of the heirs. Not you. Not Lila.

She directs Abilene to the other page and points.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EFFIE (cont'd)  
Magnus's sales ledger. He sold your  
sister as a slave to the pirate Happy  
Jack.

Abilene's expression grows even darker as she reads.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
Guess you won't be killing Magnus  
just for me.

ABILENE  
No.  
(beat)  
I won't be killing him at all.

EFFIE  
(frown, disbelief)  
What? Now wait a minute. We had a  
deal.

Abilene pockets the torn pages and heads for the exit, Effie  
follows growing angrier with every step.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
I risked my life to get you that  
information. You said you'd kill  
him! He slaved-out your sister!

Abilene exits, not showing an ounce of sympathy as Effie  
shouts after her.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
You owe me! Do you hear me? You owe  
me this!

Effie stares outside for a moment, utterly staggered by the  
sudden betrayal. Once again desperate, and alone she slams  
the door shut.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT

A light is on in the window, but the rest of the town is  
mostly asleep.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

Kael sits on the bunk while Effie cleans the cuts on his  
face. He's tired, bruised, battered and bloodied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EFFIE

The Boy. Your friend. Did you know  
he was Feral?

Kael studies her. He's obstinate at first, but as she gently  
handles him, he softens to her touch.

KAEL

He wasn't.

(beat)

The citizenry did that to him before  
we were exiled. They do it to all  
non-complaints -- to protect the  
city.

(beat)

They turned them all into bio-  
weapons.

By his troubled look, the reality finally sinks in. All the  
lies.

EFFIE

You too?

He shakes his head, "no", and Effie accepts it for now.

EFFIE (cont'd)

So you're an exile from Shine Town.  
Why? Are you a criminal?

KAEL

(humorless laugh)

By their standards, yes.

EFFIE

What did you do?

KAEL

I thought differently.

EFFIE

That doesn't sound so horrible.

He stays quiet, and she gets nervous.

EFFIE (cont'd)

So what were these terrible thoughts  
you had?

His eyes narrow on her for a moment. Should he trust her?  
Should he trust anyone?

Effie mistakes his look as aggression and backs off little.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAEL

I'm going to stop the Black Veil's  
particle field.

Relieved that he isn't a serial killer, Effie relaxes, but:

EFFIE

(confused)

The bomb? I didn't think it was  
possible to stop the EMP effects.  
How?

KAEL

It's not an EMP. Get me out of here  
and I'll show you.

Effie takes it as a joke, but then sees that he's dead  
serious. She glances behind her -- they are alone-- then  
she looks back at him with a matching expression.

EFFIE

With this?

From her pocket she pulls out the Resistor. She's not just  
a Doctor, and a thief, she's a darn good pick-pocket too.

Kael's eyes flash to the device.

EFFIE (cont'd)

I found it while I was checking you  
for broken ribs.

He snatches the Resistor from her and turns it off. The  
blue filaments along his hairline go dark. She notices.

KAEL

Yes, with this. I need to get to the  
Air Isles and find the Black Veil  
site.

EFFIE

The bombsite? Why? What's left of  
it?

KAEL

Black Veil wasn't a bomb. At least  
it wasn't supposed to be.

That raises a curious eyebrow from Effie. She's never heard  
that before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KAEL (cont'd)

The point is I can change things for everyone, restore technology and power to the world, make things better, but not if I die in here.

His hopefulness becomes Effie's ticket out of here. She thinks on it for a moment and then:

EFFIE

We'll need a ride -- pirates specifically, but I can get those.

KAEL

We?

EFFIE

I'm trapped here just like you. If you promise to take me with you, I'll get you out of here.

He considers it. What better offers are there? Kael nods and hands her the Resistor.

KAEL

Take this. It will make the Surge Pistol work in proximity. Press here to turn it on.

He shows her how to operate the Resistor.

EFFIE

I'll keep it safe. I'll be back.

She packs up and places the Resistor in her DOCTOR'S BAG. Kael looks worried as she leaves.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Effie enters, having just left Kael in the jail section. She sees Magnus at his desk, waiting for her, and she approaches, eyeing the Surge Pistol nearby.

MAGNUS

How is he?

EFFIE

You beat the snot out of him, how do you think?

(beat)

He needs rest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGNUS

He's got till tomorrow when the Duke arrives. Get anything out of him?

She glances back from where she came. She swallows a "no", and instead answers:

EFFIE

He was banished. So was the boy. Apparently, the Shiner's turn their exiles into Ferals -- use them as some kind of biological weapon to protect the city.

MAGNUS

Smart. If the Ferals don't kills us the plague will. Why is he here, and not like his friend?

Conflicted, Effie hesitates. She grips the handle of her Doctor's Bag wherein the Resistor lies.

EFFIE

He thinks he can restore technology to the rest of the world.

Magnus proudly smiles.

MAGNUS

Oh, you are good at getting people to talk. Bloxham will be glad to hear all about this.

(beat)

Anything else?

She pulls the Doctor's Bag into her arms and feels the latch. There's one more vital piece of information she has inside the bag.

EFFIE

Yeah.

(thoughtful pause)

What's it going to take for me to earn my freedom?

Irritated, Magnus throws the Surge Pistol in his desk drawer and slams it shut.

MAGNUS

Your unadulterated death. Now get.

Effie lowers the Doctor's Bag and leaves.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - DAY

On a nearby PORCH Abilene patiently awaits a STAGECOACH as it pulls in. The door opens and a shiny set of BOOTS step out, followed by a fancy pair of WOMEN'S SHOES. It's LADY ISOBEL BLOXHAM, and her father DUKE EDWARD BLOXHAM, and they are quite the stylish pair. Prim and proper aristocrats, without a spec of dirt on them.

Abilene stands a little straighter as Magnus greets the Duke and the Lady.

MAGNUS

Duke Bloxham, welcome back.

They exchange a handshake, and then Magnus turns to Isobel.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Lady Isobel, you are looking as lovely as ever.

ISOBEL

You are too kind, Sheriff. Thank you for having us.

Lady Isobel looks completely out of place in this dirty little town, but her expression leads us to believe that she likes the rustic feel. It's exciting!

DUKE BLOXHAM

How have you been, Sheriff? Is everything in order here?

MAGNUS

Well and good, Duke. Mr. Kael is awaiting your arrival.

And apparently so is somebody else. The Duke lifts his gaze to Abilene who is fast approaching.

DUKE BLOXHAM

And who is this intriguing young woman?

MAGNUS

(turns to see)

Ah, that's Abilene Larkin-

Abilene's FIST bypasses the Duke's offered hand and strikes him in the face with lightning speed. She's a hardcore, nasty street brawler. He falls back and she's on top of him throwing another punch, before she decides to choke the life out of him.

(CONTINUED)









CONTINUED:

EFFIE

On the table. Use the restraints until I can get a sedative in her.

ABILENE (OVERLAPPING)

Let go! I'll kill you! No!

The two men SLAM Abilene down on the metal table and it stuns her for a second, but she quickly starts wrestling with them again when they try to strap her in.

Effie scowls back at them.

EFFIE

Enough with the manhandling, damnit! I have enough to do without you adding to her injuries.

MUTT

She won't stop fighting-OW!

Abilene uses the only weapon she has at this point and she bites Mutt's hand. Her teeth draw blood.

MUTT (cont'd)

She bit me! She feckin' bit me! I'm gonna die!

Effie sharply throws a roll of gauze at him. It hits Mutt in the face, but he catches it.

EFFIE

She's not an active carrier of the plague, idiot. Wrap it and you'll live.

(smirk)

Maybe.

When Abilene sees Effie turn with a syringe in her hand, a burst of energy spikes, and she knocks Magnus back with her foot. She's off the table and seconds from the door until Magnus bear hugs her from behind.

MAGNUS

Oh no you don't darlin'.

ABILENE

Get off me!

She tosses her head back and CRACKS Magnus in the nose with her skull. The pain causes Magnus to instantly release her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Abilene reaches the door and opens it a fraction, but it is Effie who stops her. With one hand she slams the door shut, while the other hand shoves a loaded syringe into Abilene's neck.

The initial effects of the sedative are immediate and Abilene starts to weaken, and then slides down. Effie catches her, and her next words are much softer than the attitude in the room. Abilene is the only one that hears them:

EFFIE  
(whispers)  
I got you.

MAGNUS  
Sonuva-! I think she broke my nose.

EFFIE  
A little help here, please.

Magnus and Mutt take Abilene's limp body and drop her hard on the table again, only this time there's zero struggle. They strap her in.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
I said take it easy.

MUTT  
What's the point, she's gonna be dead anyhow.

Effie narrows her eyes on the man. Never having seen that kind of fierceness in the young woman before, Mutt takes a step back.

EFFIE  
The point is that her blood is going to save us from the plague. But in order for me to do that I need her alive long enough to work up a vaccine. Now get out. I have work to do.

Holding a bandanna to his bloody nose and tilting his head back, Magnus shoves Mutt out of the room with him.

MAGNUS  
Let's go. Give the Doc some peace.

Alone, Effie turns to Abilene and gives her a hard look while she hooks up an I.V.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Abilene is groggy, but aware enough to recognize Effie's expression, and it worries her that revenge is on the way from the woman she betrayed.

ABILENE

Doc. Don... don't do it.

Effie puts a comforting hand on Abilene's right wrist, but her expression stays resolute.

ABILENE (cont'd)

Please.. don-

She SCREAMS in pain as Effie pulls the knife blade from her hand. A few seconds later the sedative takes hold.

Effie applies compression to the wound, and then grabs a suture kit but stops in thought for a moment. As she studies Abilene's peaceful face, Effie's brow begins to furrow in concentration, and then a crooked little smirk forms on her lips. Is this the look of payback for the betrayal?

Effie turns to the instrument tray and trades the sutures for a scalpel. She removes the gauze from Abilene's hand, flattens her palm on the table and begins to cut the wound deeper and wider.

There is a reason behind her actions, but we will find that out later. For right now, the expression on Effie's face is one of revenge.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - DAY

The normal hustle and bustle of life leads us to the SALOON.

INT. SALOON

This is one of the cleanest, well-kept establishments in town. A great deal of effort has gone into making this bar/gambling spot both warm and swanky. All of the EMPLOYEES are dressed nicely, even if the PATRONS are not.

There is a dining area, a classic bar, a small stage for live entertainment, a piano, and a gambling area where Isobel, Squirrel, Wade, and Flaming Bear are indulging in a friendly game of poker at a nearby table.

Everybody at the table holds their cards close, and everyone is wearing a poker face -- some better than others.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SQUIRREL

Call.  
 (shows cards)  
 Pair of eights.

One by one they lay down their cards. Bear has nothing and says nothing. He's not really here to play so much as to keep an eye on Isobel.

WADE

(proudly)  
 Straight.

All eyes turn to Isobel, the most feminine creature they have ever seen. She looks at them, smirks a little and lays her cards down on the table with a snap.

ISOBEL

Sorry, gentlemen. Full house.

Everybody, except Bear, is disappointed at the loss. Isobel shrugs and sweeps up the winnings. She's a card shark.

WADE

If I didn't know better, I'd say you were holding cards on us.

ISOBEL

(mock horror)  
 Why that would be cheating, dear sir, and a Lady never cheats.  
 (wink)  
 We do however manipulate luck from time to time.

Wade smiles and dangerously flirts with her.

WADE

Not to insult the Lady, but would this be one of those times?

Isobel returns his smile. She's enjoying herself.

ISOBEL

Let's just say I don't need luck when my opponent isn't nearly as clever as he thinks.

SQUIRREL

Ha!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WADE

(chuckle)

Oh, is that right? Have you considered that perhaps your opponent is letting the Lady win because it is the gentlemanly thing to do?

SQUIRREL

Yeah, and her father would lash you for cheating her out of his money.

And that instantly brings down the lighthearted mood. Isobel doesn't particularly like that reference to her father, and violence, and it is visible in her subdued expression.

Wade smiles through the awkward moment.

WADE

Just because you don't understand the rules of the game doesn't mean I cheat.

(beat)

Now then, would the Lady be so kind as to deal us in?

Isobel smiles, though not as carefree as before. She shuffles the cards in a bridge, showing off her skills. She deals.

ISOBEL

Is it true, the woman that attacked my father is the Black Veil?

WADE

Yep.

SQUIRREL

She's the fastest gun in the whole broken-Earth.

ISOBEL

What is she like? I mean, aside from murdering people.

WADE

She seemed decent enough to me.

(beat, shrug)

Any idea what she's got against your father?

Isobel situates her cards and shakes her head "no".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SQUIRREL

Probably hates him the same as  
everybody else he's wronged.

Wade kicks him under the table and he YELPS. Squirrel  
realizes what he's done when he sees Isobel's troubled face.

ISOBEL

My father may be a shrewd  
businessman, but he has always dealt  
fairly with the people.

Bear lifts a quiet eyebrow.

WADE

Of course, Lady Isobel. We all know  
the Duke to be a respectable man. I  
believe what Squirrel is implying is  
that there are winners and losers in  
every aspect of life, and some lesser  
folk may resent your father for his  
good fortune.

ISOBEL

(defensive)

He does charity work, you know. Lots  
of it. We make donations all the  
time.

WADE

Yes, ma'am. Your generosity is  
widely appreciated in these parts.

Isobel makes a little "Hrmp" noise meaning, "You're damn  
right it is."

Another awkward quiet, and then:

BEAR

You people talk too much and say very  
little.

Isobel looks at Bear, then at Wade and both share a snicker  
and a smile.

EXT. SHINE TOWN - DAY

A full day after the exile, and the city has returned to  
it's normal routine.



INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Miwa stands in front of a HOLOGRAPHIC MAP of Tesla City. Every detail of the city is shown in a movable 3-D blueprint - buildings, trees and even green beacons of light that represent people moving around the environment. One of those beacons is right outside Miwa's door.

CHIMES ring out from the door behind her, but Miwa doesn't turn around, instead she shifts the map to an area outside of Tesla - the Dead Zone.

MIWA

Enter.

In walks Kael's girlfriend, Nola. She is nervous and it shows.

NOLA

Madame Director, you wanted to see me?

Miwa briefly glances back to welcome her with a nod, and then returns her disturbed expression back to the map. She manipulates the holograph with her hands and it zooms in on Devil's Forge. There is one green beacon of light in the void.

MIWA

I lost him.

Not understanding, Nola frowns. She cautiously steps beside Miwa.

NOLA

Who?

MIWA

Kael.

She notes Nola's confused reaction.

MIWA (cont'd)

He was right. The Resistor works. Moments after the exile he came online just outside of the walls, and then traveled here...

She points deep inside Devil's Forge.

No longer nervous, Nola steps up to the holograph. There is a recording of VITAL SIGNS escalating in the top corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NOLA  
His vitals went off the charts.  
Something happened.

MIWA  
It was a placebo you gave him?

NOLA  
(slightly offended)  
Absolutely.  
(second guessing, and  
then)  
No, this isn't the effect of the gene  
therapy drug. His reaction is from  
stress. The virus is gradual, this  
was fast. Outside stimuli must have  
caused the spike.

Miwa takes a deep breath. Nola clinches her jaw. They both  
know what it was.

MIWA  
Ferals.

NOLA  
But look...  
(pointing at HEART  
RATE LINE)  
... his vitals drop rapidly, and  
continued to stabilize from there.

MIWA  
He made it past the Feral boundary at  
that point, and then ended up here.

She manipulates another point on the map. It's the Town of  
Independence.

MIWA (cont'd)  
Vitals spiked again, and then he  
completely went offline.

NOLA  
You think he's--

MIWA  
It could mean anything. The tracking  
device could have failed, or perhaps  
the Resistor failed, or he had to  
shut it down for some reason.

She sees Nola's deeply worried look, and knows what she's  
thinking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIWA (cont'd)

He's not dead, Nola.

(beat)

He... he can't be...

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

Kael is slouched on his bunk looking disinterested, but comfortable. He is still bruised from the beating Magnus gave him the day before.

Duke Bloxham is inside the cell and pulls up a chair across from Kael's position. He's wearing a bandage on his neck, and has changed into fresh clothes.

Everyone seems at ease, except Magnus who is uncomfortable with his bruised nose. He stands outside the cell watching.

BLOXHAM

Mr. Kael, I would like to take the opportunity to formally apologize for any mistreatment that you have received, and I also wish to offer you my personal assurances that such behavior will not transpire again.

Kael stares at the wall. His anger is muted, but it's visible in his eyes.

KAEL

Who are you to make such promises?

BLOXHAM

Duke Bloxham, the proprietor of these here fine estates.

KAEL

How about you further assure my safety by letting me go. I've done nothing criminal here. Your men kidnapped me and attacked me without cause.

Bloxham smiles at that.

BLOXHAM

Oh, I agree wholeheartedly. You've committed no crimes, and you are a free man, indeed.

Kael sits up ready to accept those words and leave, but he stops when Magnus blocks the cell door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLOXHAM (cont'd)  
But just hear me out, Mr. Kael. It would be very irresponsible on my part to let you walk out of here unprotected.

Kael shakes his head at the pathetic excuse and leans back on his bunk again.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)  
You see, you're the first person from Shine Town...  
(pause, frown)  
Is that what you call your home?

KAEL  
Tesla City.

BLOXHAM  
Clever. The standard unit of magnetic flux density.

Kael is surprised he knows that. The Duke notices.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)  
We do have books out here, Mr. Kael. We do read about our past technology, even if it doesn't work in our current condition.  
(beat)  
Anyhow, as I was saying, being the first of your kind to reach these parts has put a high price on your head. Not to mention your isolation makes you vulnerable to our rustic ways out here in the Dead Zone, is that what you call it?

KAEL  
I'm familiar with your ways.

He slides an angry glare at Magnus, who shrugs innocently.

KAEL (cont'd)  
So, what do you want with me? Are you going to keep me locked up? Beat me some more?

BLOXHAM  
No. Nothing like that. I am not one of your Feral guard dogs.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

(beat)

I want you to achieve your goal. I'm going to get you to the Air Isles and help you restore technology to the world.

Kael sharply looks his way with varying degrees of surprise and confusion working through him. How did Bloxham know about his plans? Then it hits him: Doc Harper. He scowls.

KAEL

She told you everything, didn't she.

MAGNUS

Yes, she did. Doc Harper is a real sweet-talker, ain't she?

Sickened by the betrayal and his own stupidity for trusting Effie, Kael wags his head at himself.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Never trust a pretty girl.

Kael strikes back with the only weapon he has, his words.

KAEL

So what? You have the Surge Pistol, you have the Resistor, but you still don't have me. I know the location of the Black Veil site. You'll never find it without me.

BLOXHAM

(frown, at Magnus)

We have the Resistor?

Magnus crinkles his brow in thought, and then rolls his eyes when he realizes:

MAGNUS

Doc has been holding out on me it appears.

Kael considers what that means and he hints of regret. Was Doc Harper keeping their deal and her promise? Did it matter now? Their plan was blown.

BLOXHAM

This Resistor, is that what will fix things?

Kael doesn't respond, but that's answer enough for the Duke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BLOXHAM (cont'd)  
Bring Doc Harper here will you,  
please?

Magnus nods and leaves. A touch of worry settles on Kael's face, but it disappears when Bloxham turns back to him.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)  
I'm not out to hurt anyone, son.  
Believe it or not we want the same  
thing.

He gets up from his chair and takes a few thoughtful steps.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)  
Let me ask you something. Why are  
you out here risking your life?  
Don't you have everything you could  
ever want in Tesla City?

Kael considers the Duke for a moment and decides that it wouldn't hurt to answer honestly.

KAEL  
Technology isn't everything. It  
can't feed us, or sustain life. We  
need the rest of the world to  
survive.

That is exactly what the Duke wants to hear.

BLOXHAM  
And we need you. We've been in the  
dark for far too long. Haven't we  
all been punished long enough for the  
deeds of our ancestors?

(beat)  
You see, I believe we can both  
benefit here, Mr. Kael. Your  
technology won't just enrich our  
lives, it will ease our suffering,  
and our resources can replenish  
yours.

Kael can't help but agree with that logic.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)  
We have much to gain from each other.  
Let me help you reach your  
destination, and we can set the world  
right again.

Kael holds his stare. He gives nothing away.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Nola rubs her brow free of worrisome thoughts that Kael may be dead.

NOLA

Of course. You're right. He went offline for a good reason. To protect himself maybe.

(beat)

How are you able to track him?

MIWA

The same as here. We're all tagged for safety purposes. As long as the Resistor is active it sends his signal to the Kotlas satellite in orbit.

Nola nods.

MIWA (cont'd)

The signal is bounced back down our corridor to us.

She manipulates the map again and it shows a corridor free of the Black Veil's particle field. Tesla City is inside this corridor and it extends all the way through Earth's atmosphere.

MIWA (cont'd)

It also updates the map in Kael's proximity. There's a town here now.

She puts the map back on the Town of Independence, and Nola steps closer in awe.

NOLA

There are people in the Dead Zone? Alive? A civilization?

MIWA

There have always been survivors.

NOLA

How-why haven't we been told this?

Miwa turns and takes Nola by the shoulders to get her point across how important this is.

MIWA

Because they've been trying to kill us for years.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIWA (cont'd)

Nola, listen to me, the citizenry cannot know that life exists outside of these walls.

NOLA

Why?

MIWA

They aren't ready for it, and we aren't ready to absorb the repercussions. Not yet.

Nola breaks from Miwa's grasp and paces in thought.

NOLA

All this time? We can survive out there? We can live? People have a right to know.

Miwa grabs Nola again, this time more firmly.

MIWA

No. It's too dangerous. It would break the citizenry.

Nola shakes her head in disbelief.

MIWA (cont'd)

Nola, we aren't prepared to deal with what is outside. Listen to me, I need to know that you won't tell anyone about this. It's not the right time. It will put all of us in jeopardy.

(beat)

We have to be smart about this, Nola.

Nola considers it, and understands the reasoning behind the secrecy, but she doesn't have to like it. She nods and then:

NOLA

How are you going to hide our conversation from the port exchange? We are connected right now.

Miwa lets her go, satisfied of her silence.

MIWA

As soon as you walked into this room you passed through a firewall. No one can see or hear us. We're safe here. We can't be monitored.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

NOLA  
 Isn't that just as bad? If we go  
 offline our signal-drop will alert  
 Compliance Control.

MIWA  
 I'm ghosting our signal. A trick I  
 learned from Kael.

A smirk from Nola, but her smile fades when she remembers  
 the reason why Kael isn't here.

NOLA  
 (quiet anger)  
 You should have listened to him.  
 It's your fault he's dea-- he's not  
 here.

That stings a lot, but it isn't something that Miwa hasn't  
 already condemned herself for.

MIWA  
 Once he posted propaganda to the  
 citizenry there was nothing I could  
 do to save him.

NOLA  
 It was the truth!

MIWA  
 I know, but there is a certain course  
 that needs to be taken to make our  
 transition to the outside world  
 safely. I tried to explain it to  
 him. He was impatient and wouldn't  
 listen.

NOLA  
 You always discouraged him in  
 everything he did.

MIWA  
 I was protecting him--  
 (she wags her head  
 clear)  
 I didn't ask you here to debate my  
 parenting skills. I wanted to talk  
 to you, to see if you still believe  
 in my Son's vision of life outside  
 these walls.

NOLA  
 I never stopped.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NOLA (cont'd)  
 (confronting her)  
 But why have you suddenly taken up  
 his mantle?

Miwa looks away, regretful.

MIWA  
 Where do you think he got his ideas  
 from?

A surprised, yet questioning look from Nola. Is Miwa a  
 rebel?

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - OPERATING ROOM

Effie cuts the last stitch in Abilene's palm and begins  
 bandaging her hand. She glances at Abilene more sympathetic  
 now, and more worried.

EFFIE  
 Sorry about this, but I need you.

Abilene is on the edge of consciousness. She GROANS and  
 rolls her head in Effie's general direction.

In walks Magnus. He stops and looks at Abilene who is  
 unconscious, and then Effie. He's about to blow her secret  
 wide open.

MAGNUS  
 How did it go?

EFFIE  
 She's stable. Concussed, but stable.  
 She'll be out for a little while.  
 I'm just finishing up here, and then  
 I'll get started on the vaccine.

Magnus nods like he cares, but he doesn't. He's not  
 interested in that at all.

MAGNUS  
 Uhn-huh. Anything else pressing on  
 your mind that I should know?

He starts to approach her from the other side of the  
 operating table. It's a slow walk, giving her time to  
 confess her sins, but to Effie it looks more like he's the  
 predator and she's the prey. Her throat tightens, but she  
 fakes her confidence and innocence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EFFIE

No. Drawing blood and processing it  
will take a while.

MAGNUS

Not what I mean.

He approaches Abilene on the operating table and rests both hands by her head. Effie is sensitive to his proximity, but holds steady.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

I don't require much from you, Doc.  
Do your job, do what I ask of you,  
and don't-

(slams hand on table  
near Abilene's head)

-LIE TO ME!

He backs off, composing himself.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

I'm a simple man, with simple  
requests.

The outburst clearly scares the crap out of Effie and her confidence shatters momentarily.

EFFIE

I haven't-

(stronger)

I have done everything you've asked.  
I'll get the vaccine, and then I'll  
kill her.

MAGNUS

Will you? Or are you hiding  
something about her too?

He's standing right next to Effie now, staring her down. In that moment the young woman stops breathing, and then tries to match him.

EFFIE

I don't know what you're talking  
about. Now leave. I have work to  
do.

A smile from Magnus, and then he latches his augmented hand to Effie's throat. He backs her up against the table Abilene is on, JOLTING the patient. The collision jostles Abilene's senses and consciousness stirs a little.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She's not quite as sedated as Effie indicated, but Magnus doesn't notice.

MAGNUS

You withheld information from me.  
You lied. And now you're doing it  
again.

Effie CHOKES under his grasp. Her HANDS FUMBLE behind her until she finds the WRIST STRAP on Abilene's right hand. She loosens it.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Kael told us he gave you the  
Resistor.

Another alliance broken, and so is Effie. Magnus can see the fear in her eyes.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Yeah. I thought so.

He lets her throat go, only to place a heavy grip on her arm instead.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Go. The Duke wants to talk to you.  
You can plead the value of your life  
to him.

They exit.

Abilene rolls her head toward the door, eyes opening, as if she heard it all. But she's still too groggy to move.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

There is an unwavering frown on Nola's face.

NOLA

You? You were a non-compliant?

Miwa sighs. It's time to open up, or lose an ally.

MIWA

Before I was chosen as Director I had  
radical ideas, just like Kael. I  
took this job believing that I could  
make a difference, but circumstances,  
and the bigger picture got in the  
way.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIWA (cont'd)

(beat)

I had to comply in order to stay  
alive, and keep Kael alive.

NOLA

You sold out.

MIWA

We all did, a long time ago.

(gestures around)

Behind these walls we are given all  
the protection in the world, and from  
the world, and from ourselves. We  
gave up our freedom for the promise  
of safety.

She approaches Nola earnestly, and honestly.

MIWA (cont'd)

My Son was right. We haven't the  
resources to sustain us. It's time  
we plan for a change.

(beat)

I don't know if Kael is alive and can  
do what he promised, but we need to  
be ready if he stops the particle  
field, and more importantly if he  
doesn't. He trusted you Nola. I  
trust you and I need your help to do  
this.

Nola gives her a hard suspicious look.

NOLA

How do I know this isn't a trap?

MIWA

Because...

She pulls out a small clear DATA CHIP from her pocket and  
holds it out to Nola.

MIWA (cont'd)

I'm guilty of treason.

(beat)

This is evidence that I exiled Kael  
without following protocol, and that  
I uploaded information to him  
pertaining to the location of the  
Black Veil site. If you think at any  
point that I am setting you up,  
release it to Compliance Control.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Was she for real? That's the expression on Nola's face. She looks from Miwa to the chip, hesitates, and then takes it.

NOLA

For Kael.

(beat; thoughtful)

What do you need from me?

MIWA

Continue looking into the gene therapy drug.

NOLA

I am.

MIWA

And I need people. Everybody that my Son was in contact with. Let them know that his vision is still alive and that we need them.

There's uncertainty on Nola's face as she looks down at the Data Chip in her hand -- it's her safety net. She looks back to Miwa, and nods.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

KAEL

All right. I'm with you.

At the same time he speaks those words, Magnus hauls Effie into the area and shoves her through the open door of the cell.

Effie frowns at Kael after hearing what sounds like a pact with Bloxham.

BLOXHAM

Doc Harper. Good news. The information you provided us with has led to a monumental agreement. Mr. Kael, here, has accepted my offer to help. All we need from you is the Resistor.

(beat)

I understand that you've been keeping it safe for us?

Effie swallows hard and looks at Kael. There's hurt in her eyes. How could he do this to her? She looks at Bloxham and gives the honest answer:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EFFIE

I don't have it.

Bloxham turns to Kael curious about who to believe.

KAEL

She's lying. I gave it to her. She was going to free me and I was going to take her with me.

Effie's eyes turn murderous toward him. Magnus laughs.

MAGNUS

Wow. I ain't never seen so much backstabbing.

EFFIE

You dumb Shiner. All you had to do was keep your mouth shut. I was going to help you. We were getting out of here together.

KAEL

You're the one-

BLOXHAM

Enough.

(to Effie)

Where is it Doc? I'm asking you politely. Please respect that.

The impending doom in his voice, though sugar coated, is certain. Effie fortifies her strength and resists the urge to tell him. She knows what it will mean if she fails.

EFFIE

I said I don't have it.

Disappointed, Bloxham steps out of the way and nods to Magnus. Instantly, the Sheriff backhands Effie into the cell bars. Kael tenses to intervene, but Bloxham stills him with a single look.

KAEL

Just give it to them. You don't have to do this.

BLOXHAM

Listen to the sensible boy, Effie. I don't want to hurt you. You're too damn good of a surgeon to lose.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

(beat)

It's not too late to walk away from this.

Effie wipes the blood from her split lip and glares at Kael.

EFFIE

Fool. He's been trying to take Shine Town for years. He doesn't want to help you, he wants to help himself to your city and your technology. He's going to kill your kind when he's done, starting with you-

Bloxham hits her so hard in the gut that she doubles over on the ground in the fetal position.

BLOXHAM

Where is it! I won't ask again.

Effie, breathing hard, staggers to her feet using the bars behind her to lean on. She nods as if she's giving up, and then SPITS in his face.

EFFIE

I'm done owing you.

Bloxham flinches and wipes himself clean with a fancy handkerchief. He laughs a little.

BLOXHAM

Didn't know you had it in you, Doc. Well, I can't kill you, but I can make you wish you were dead.

He nods to Magnus, and the Sheriff starts his dirty work, beating her.

Kael can't stand to witness this brutality and he launches from his bunk to do something, but Bloxham wrangles him outside of the cell, and pushes him up against the bars, holding him there to watch.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

I hope you're not the one lying, son.

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - OPERATING ROOM

The sedative is wearing off and Abilene is fighting to come to her senses. She knows she has to get up and get moving. Her eyes flutter open, and her fingers twitch on her bandaged right hand, but she winces in pain.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Feeling the straps holding her down, Abilene forces herself to focus. She looks down at her pained right hand and sees the loosened wrist restraint. She wriggles her hand free.

Once she gets her left hand free the rest of the restraints come off much faster.

She sits up, touches her aching head, and then slides off the metal table. Her balance is off when she tries to move, and she grabs the metal instrument tray spilling some of the contents. The CLATTERING noise echoes loudly as items hit the floor.

She pauses, and then looks at the door expecting somebody to have heard the noise. Nothing happens in response.

She looks back at the instrument tray for a weapon of some kind and as luck would have it, her bloodstained Bowie knife is right there. She slips it under her belt, and dizzily heads for the door.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET - DAY

Abilene clumsily exits the Surgical Clinic. The sun is blindingly bright. She shields her eyes, and then the shadow from a cloud falls across the entire town.

Abilene hears the GASPS and MURMURS from PEOPLE nearby, and thinks it's for her, until she follows their gazes up, and up. Then her expression changes to match their astonished looks.

Directly over head is a massive steampunk PIRATE AIRSHIP casting it's giant shadow across the entire town.

The airship's name reads, BLOOD RAVEN, and it is a menacing hunk of wood and machinery.

A FEW PEOPLE nearby scurry off toward shelter and safety.

Mutt heads for the County Jail.

Abilene takes cover in an alley. But a FEW BRAVE SOULS venture further out take a closer look at the Airship. One such soul is Isobel who emerges from the saloon with Bear, Wade, and Squirrel.

When Isobel sees the ship she is in awe of this strange, and exciting work of art. The large vessel is an ornate masterpiece of mechanical engineering, and old-world, seafaring beauty. It is a true terror in the sky.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

Bloxham still has Kael pressed against the outside bars of the cell, while Magnus works on Effie. He tosses the young girl onto the bunk. It's obvious what is coming next. It could only be one thing. Rape.

KAEL

Don't. Don't do this.  
 (pleading with Effie)  
 Just tell them where it is!  
 (at Bloxham)  
 I won't help you if you do this. Put  
 a stop to it now!

BLOXHAM

Magnus.

The Sheriff stops and looks his way.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

Stop being a gentleman.

Terrified, Effie puts up a brave front. Magnus starts to unbuckle his belt.

KAEL

No!

Just then Mutt barges in, panicked and out of breath.

MUTT

Pirates! It's the Blood Raven.  
 Captain Slagg. He's here.

For the first time we see Bloxham looking slightly shaken, and off his game.

BLOXHAM

Bullshit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACT THREE

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET

The pirate airship BLOOD RAVEN looms over the town like a bird of prey. In its grand shadow stands Duke Bloxham, Wade, Squirrel, and Flaming Bear, on-guard and ready for anything.

TOWNFOLK watch in an uneasy silence as a dust cloud blurs the view. Several pairs of PIRATE BOOTS exit a small, but well-armored LANDING CRAFT.

Isobel stands at the edge of the SALOON'S PORCH, excited, frightened, and worried, but mostly excited.

Abilene stays out of sight in the ALLEY between two stores. She's nervously observing the scene, and feeling all too trapped to make a move toward escape.

As the dust settles we get our first look at the sky pirates. CAPTAIN SLAGG is in his early thirties, wears a full beard, and is the most well-dressed out of his crew. He carries with him a large cutlass, and a unique pistol -- both weapons have interesting steampunk alterations to them.

The Duke and his posse move to greet Captain Slagg and his chosen crew. Now, mere feet apart the contrast in both groups is perfectly clear. Though both parties are wearing full-on steampunk attire they couldn't be more different, or more at odds. Cowboys vs. Pirates. The Duke vs. The Captain. Sky vs. Land. A clash of titans hangs in the air.

BLOXHAM

You've wandered a long way from home,  
Captain Slagg.

Slagg glances back at his hovering ship. His home.

SLAGG

Not really, Duke.

He lays his gaze on the Duke once again and the stare between them is tension filled. Not only do these two men hate each other, but the two cultures do as well.

SLAGG (cont'd)

I get the distinct impression that  
yer not here to welcome me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLOXHAM

The agreement is that your kind don't venture into these parts unless you've been invited for trade specific reasons, and I certainly did not make such a request, Captain. So either you're lost, or you're here to break the peace treaty. Which is it?

Not the least bit intimidated, Slagg grins.

SLAGG

I won't be the one breaking any truce today, Duke. But let us be clear, I was called here, but not by you, and I have business here, but not with you.

BLOXHAM

Well, now we're getting somewhere. Therein lies your problem, Captain, because I am the only one that makes trade deals around here, and I can assure you, as plain as the stink on your beard, that you and I have no business together. Now, please remove your little boat from my sky. You are blocking my sun.

Slagg smirks and glances back at his ship, his pride and joy. It is indeed blocking the sun. His CREW on board are eagerly awaiting the Captain's orders, but he gives them none. Slagg turns back to the Duke, unimpressed with the man.

SLAGG

Aye. Can't do that. See here, whether ya like it or not, it has come to my attention that you have in yer possession a living, breathing Shiner.

(steps forward)

Now, if that be so then ye have already broken the agreement by not calling a parley, and thusly I have a right to be here as a representative of the Air Isles.

BLOXHAM

The only people you represent is yourself. I don't know who contacted you, but somebody is pulling your leg, Captain.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

The Shiners are right where they have always been, tucked behind their impenetrable walls.

The Posse behind Bloxham AGREE, and then dare Slagg to say otherwise with their tough-guy glares.

SLAGG

Sodding aristocrat. Produce the Shiner, or we'll leave your town a burnin' heap.

Bloxham confronts with a single step forward.

BLOXHAM

I told you we don't have him. Get on your boat and leave. Now.

SLAGG

(smiles)

Aye, so it is a he. The informant said as much.

Bloxham smiles at the mistake, and then sighs. He backs up into the Posse behind him and signals with a hand gesture.

Suddenly the Posse produce an array of weapons and take aim on the Pirates, but just as quickly the Pirates do the same.

SLAGG (cont'd)

Are ye certain ya wish to start another war over such a small thing, Duke? Ya hardly survived our last one.

BLOXHAM

Same could be said about you.

A good old Mexican stand-off. Both men refuse to back down.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

Effie and Kael share the same locked cell. Mutt stands guard, anxiously fondling a set of keys. He tries to stretch his neck around a corner to see what is going on outside the window in the other room.

Kael is standing at the far end of the cell with arms crossed in defiance. He's trying to ignore Effie who is on the bunk and hurting bad from the beating. He's pissed at everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Effie winces protectively at her ribs. She coughs, and its agony.

EFFIE

Mutt, please.

(cough, spits blood)

The rib is pressing on my lung.

(wheeze)

I'm having trouble breathing.

She tries to get up, and it grabs Mutt and Kael's attention. Her effort fails and Kael is forced from his position to catch her and help her to the floor. Suddenly Effie starts to have a seizure in his arms.

KAEL

Do something!

Mutt looks worried, but conflicted.

MUTT

Like what!

KAEL

Open the fucking door and help me hold her down!

Mutt hurries to unlock the cell door. Once the key is turned and the door starts to move, Effie kicks the metal frame right into Mutt's face. He stumbles back, bloodied and dazed.

Effie is on him fast, stripping his gun from his holster and holding him at bay with it.

MUTT

What the--

KAEL

You were faking?

Effie just shrugs.

EFFIE

(at Mutt)

In the cell. Trust me, you're better off. Go on. Get.

Mutt staggers into the cell with Kael. Kael stands there in shock at what just happened.

MUTT

Magnus will kill you for this, Effie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EFFIE

I've been dead a long time, Mutt.  
It's time I start living again. Give  
the keys to Kael.

He does. Kael looks at her with a blank stare.

EFFIE (cont'd)

(at Kael)

Well? Let's go. Lock it and c'mon.

Kael jump starts and follows her into the next room after locking Mutt inside the cell.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Effie tucks the pistol under her arm and unlocks a drawer in Magnus's desk. Kael takes a peek out of the front window and sees the two groups in a heated stand-off.

KAEL

We can't leave through the front  
door. Is there a back exit?

Effie reaches in the drawer and pulls out the Surge Pistol. Kael just about smiles until she turns Mutt's pistol on him.

EFFIE

Nope.

She tucks the Surge Pistol in her belt and maneuvers Kael toward the door with Mutt's gun. He stops, refusing to go any further than the door knob.

KAEL

You're kidding me. They'll kill us.

EFFIE

Maybe.

She wags the barrel of the gun at him to go.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Guns still drawn on each side, Slagg and Bloxham are a trigger-pull away from war.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLAGG

Don't be a fool, Duke. Word will spread across the Isles that you're hiding a Shiner. Do you really think you can keep him all to yerself?

(beat)

More will come and they'll rip yer puny mud hole apart until they find him. And if my kind don't kill you, your kind will. Now, hand him over and I'll be glad to take your doom with me.

BLOXHAM

I only deal with Happy Jack. When he gets word that you're trying to weasel in on my exclusive merchandise, he'll eat you alive, son.

Slagg straightens up at the mention of Happy Jack, as does Abilene in the Alley shadows.

SLAGG

So ye know the Bastard of the Skies, do ya? Well then, that makes this trip even sweeter. Maybe we'll just wait here and see if he turns up.

That was not the reaction Bloxham wanted, and it ticks him off.

BLOXHAM

Enough of this -

Just as he's about to give the order to fire, Kael and Effie exit the County Jail. The interruption from them breaks the tension between the two groups, but only a little.

Abilene's frown is directed at the battered condition Effie is in.

EFFIE

I got your Shiner right here, Captain. Do we still have a deal?

Bloxham is surprised to see Effie free, and even more so that she has the guts and smarts to arrange this whole thing.

SLAGG

Aye, Lass. I'll give ya safe passage on my ship.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

SLAGG (cont'd)

If all that ye say is true and this young lad has knowledge of the Black Isle.

Kael frowns. Black Isle?

BLOXHAM

Effie, if you do this, I'll kill you myself, right here, right now.

From behind we see Isobel's face register the venomous promise from her father, and she doesn't like it.

Effie ignores the threat and directs herself to Captain Slagg. She pulls back her jacket to reveal the Surge Pistol, and Captain Slagg immediately zeros in on the high tech looking weapon.

EFFIE

I can prove him, but I need her to do it.

She exposes Abilene's hiding spot with a POINT in her direction. All eyes turn to the famous gunslinger, and she is not happy about it.

EFFIE (cont'd)

(shouts)

You want to find your sister? Here's your chance.

Abilene scowls, considers the offer, and then shakes her head, "hell no". She turns and ducks behind the back of a building.

SLAGG

Fetch her here.

A SCRUFFY PIRATE takes off after Abilene, but he doesn't get far before a GUNSHOT RINGS OUT and drops the Scruffy Pirate dead in his tracks.

We follow Slagg's cold glare back to where the bullet came from. Bloxham.

ISOBEL

Daddy!

She starts to run toward him, but Magnus motions hard for her to stay put. She does, but not before Slagg takes note of her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BLOXHAM

I won't ask you again. Go back to your sky-rocks, or die down here at my feet.

Slagg sneers. It's not clear what he intends to do, back down, or fight.

Effie sees the Captain's indecision, and takes matters into her own hands. She turns her gun on Bloxham and SHOOTs him.

Bloxham goes down with a shoulder wound and all hell breaks loose with both groups shooting at each other as they dive for cover.

FROM ABOVE, the GUN DECK opens up on the Blood Raven's port-side. A row of pimped-out looking Frankenstein CANNONS emerge. They FIRE! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Bloxham and the Posse hunker down behind the wall of a BANK. Effie and Kael duck under the porch of the GENERAL STORE. Buildings all around are decimated by the cannon fire. However, the Bank is a well-fortified, war era building that is nearly bomb-proof.

Nearby, we see the General Store take a hit and the porch collapse down on Kael and Effie.

Meanwhile, outside of the Bank, Bloxham favors his bleeding shoulder and grabs Squirrel.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

Get to the Hellstorm and kill that fecking ship! Kill them all!

Squirrel hesitates, until Bloxham shoves him out into the open and he has no choice but to run for his objective. The STABLES.

As Squirrel makes a run for it, the Posse try to cover him. Pirates are dropping down from the sides of the ship on bungee cords, some of which detach and land, other BUNGEE PIRATES grab people and haul them back onto the deck of the ship as prisoners.

Squirrel just misses being one of the people snatched up when he shoots a Bungee Pirate in the head. The lifeless body bounces back up and Squirrel makes it to:

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Rows of spooked augmented HORSES stir as Squirrel bursts through the doors. He almost runs smack into a horse that is saddled and ready to ride. He stops as he feels a cold BLADE press against his neck. It's Abilene's bloodstained BOWIE.

ABILENE

Don't twitch.

SQUIRREL

N-no problem.

He freezes with his pistol in his hand. Abilene takes the weapon from him and immediately turns the gun on him. She moves in front of him and his eyes widen.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

Don't kill me. I ain't here for you,  
I swear.

Abilene backs toward her horse ready to mount.

ABILENE

Stay put and we won't have to make an  
issue out of this. Turn around.  
Hands up.

Trembling a little, Squirrel does as he's told and closes his eyes. He MUMBLES a prayer, and the next thing he hears is a horse taking off at full speed, nearly knocking him over as it races by.

He opens his eyes to see Abilene on horseback fleeing from town like a bat out of hell.

After letting out a breath, and realizing he's still alive, Squirrel climbs up to the LOFT.

He tosses aside stacks of HAY to reveal a wicked looking gunners chair with two huge machine gun mounts. He sits, cocks the receiver on the dual weapon and lets loose a hail storm of bullets aimed directly at the bow of the Blood Raven.

SQUIRREL

Ya-hoo! Suck on that you filthy  
feral humpers!

Chunks of wood are blown off the ship, as well as a few unlucky pirates.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Bloxham, Magnus, Wade and Bear are pinned down on one side of the old-war era building. GUNFIRE with the pirates is exchanged.

Bloxham spots FIVE PIRATES headed for Effie and Kael who are wriggling themselves free of the collapsed porch.

BLOXHAM

There!

(to Magnus)

Don't you let them get taken.

Magnus nods to Wade and they both step up their shooting to hold off the Five Pirates from reaching Effie and Kael. It works and the Pirates are forced to take cover, and return fire.

A SCREAM belonging to Isobel catches Bloxham's ears. He looks across the street to see Isobel being chased by TWO PIRATES. They all disappear around the corner of the Saloon.

Bloxham grabs Bear and yanks him over. The Duke is ravenous and desperate, a deadly combination.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

You bring me my little girl safe and sound and I'll give you and your tribe their freedom.

Those words spark life in Bear's eyes. He nods, raises his huge twelve chamber automatic crossbow and starts raining down arrows on anyone standing in his way. He's a terminator, shooting and tossing aside Pirates like rag-dolls.

He heads down the side of the Saloon where Isobel disappeared.

EXT. BACK OF SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Bear comes around the corner just in time to see Isobel snatched up by a BUNGEE PIRATE, and taken back to the ship.

Failure sweeps over Bear's face. The Two Pirates on the ground hesitate to attack the large man while his weapon is pointed at them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bear looks at them, and the Pirates tense, ready to attack. He DROPS his weapon, drops to his knees, and places his hands on his head in surrender. They take his auto-bow and him.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF TOWN - HILL TOP

Abilene slows her horse and turns the animal around. In the not too far distance is the Town of Independence. The Blood Raven airship is blasting away with its cannons, and taking heavy fire itself from the Hellstorm. The scene is bloody destruction everywhere. The tiny town can't take much more punishment, and the Blood Raven is smoking from too much abuse.

Conflicted, Abilene glances behind. The safe path awaits her, but she just can't seem to order her horse to turn around. Instead, she looks back at the burning town, her town, and sees the STABLES EXPLODE in cannon fire. The final trail of machine gun fire hits the Blood Raven, and then stops.

Something deep pierces Abilene's already troubled face. She shakes her head at herself as if having an inner-argument on whether to leave, or go back. The scene of Independence burning plays with her emotions as it reminds her of her childhood home burning to the ground.

Pulling herself together she toughens-up and looks into the VALLEY below. There is a large herd of WILD BUFFALO peacefully grazing.

Abilene kicks her horse into high gear and rides straight toward the unsuspecting herd.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Effie finally frees herself from the pile of porch debris. She has a few more cuts and bruises, but she's okay.

A GRUNT from Kael grabs her attention.

EFFIE

One second. I'll get you out. Are you hurt?

They both flinch as GUNFIRE ZINGS awfully close. The Pirates and Posse are trying to keep each other away from the prize... Kael.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAEL  
(pained)  
My leg. I think it's broken.

Effie checks his right leg, which is pinned beneath a heavy wooden beam. She gives him a reassuring smile and he instantly looks worried.

KAEL (cont'd)  
That bad, huh?

EFFIE  
Well, it ain't broke, but you're skewered through and through. Good news is, it looks like it missed the main artery.

KAEL  
So I'll just bleed to death slowly.

EFFIE  
(grin)  
That's the spirit.  
(beat)  
I'll get you out and take care of it.  
You'll be fine.

KAEL  
Fine?! I've been kidnapped, tortured, lied to, shot at, and used as bait for the pirate people. I am not fine!

Effie finds another piece of wood for leverage and wedges it under the beam that is pinning Kael's leg while he rants.

EFFIE  
Welcome to my world, Shiner.

KAEL  
Don't you- You did this! This is your fault!

EFFIE  
(more sympathetic)  
Look, I'm trying to help you. You need to get to the Air Isles, right? Well, Captain Slagg has a ship for that. We just need to get Abilene and everything will be peachy.

Kael's reply is an angry GROWL as Effie lifts the beam from his leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He rolls out in agony and reaches for his leg, but stops short when he sees a sharp piece of wood piercing his right calf.

KAEL  
Nugh! Get it out.

EFFIE  
Working on it.

Calm, purposeful and professional, Effie tends to the problem. She slips off her jacket and ties the arms around his leg, just above the injury. She looks at him earnestly.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
This is going to hurt. A lot.

KAEL  
Just do it!

She's just about to pull it out when a GUNSHOT hits the ground right in front of them. This is getting intense, but she uses the momentary distraction to remove the piece of wood from Kael's leg.

Kael SCREAMS out in pain. He writhes around for a few seconds while Effie works on stopping the bleeding by using her tied jacket as compression. Gritting his teeth in pain, or is it anger, Kael manages to speak:

KAEL (cont'd)  
Slagg isn't any more trustworthy than the Duke. How do you know he won't kill us once he gets what he wants?

EFFIE  
Well, I'm betting he'll try, but for right now he needs us alive.  
(looks at him)  
Take a wild guess at what the Black Isle is?

Kael considers it as Effie continues to stabilize his injury. Then it dawns on him, and any sign of anger leaves his face.

KAEL  
The Black Veil site.

EFFIE  
Congratulations, you're not a total idiot.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

EFFIE (cont'd)

They think there's hidden treasure there, which I guess is true if old crap that killed people is your idea of treasure.

Kael wags his head, he's tired, and doubting himself. Effie sees it and frowns a little.

EFFIE (cont'd)

What?

KAEL

This was a mistake, coming out here. If they get their hands on that kind of tech-

EFFIE

They'll what? Kill each other? Look around, been doing plenty of that on our own without your fancy tech. I thought you wanted to rescue the world, help your people?

KAEL

At the cost of destroying it again?

EFFIE

You don't know that.

KAEL

Maybe Calix Amias was right. In the wrong hands the technology of today is the weapon of tomorrow. Do we deserve that kind of power again?

Effie doesn't like the sound of that. She finishes with his leg and grabs his shirt hard.

EFFIE

No. You don't get to decide that for the rest of the world. You don't get to quit. Your people are depending on you to fix things. I'm depending on you. Now get up, and stop your belly aching.

She starts to help him up, and he resolves to follow for now.

EFFIE (cont'd)

(beat, softer)

Besides Calix Amias was a prick.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (4)

Kael gives her a questioning look, shocked that she knows who he is.

EFFIE (cont'd)

What? He's the father of the Black Veil bomb. He blew up the Earth. I read history, even it's not entirely accurate, according to you.

(beat)

Let's go find Abilene and get to the ship.

Kael still doesn't like the plan, or Effie at this point, but right now there's no better option.

KAEL

What do we need her for?

EFFIE

I gave her the Resistor.

KAEL

You what? Why?! She works for the Sheriff.

Effie gets him upright on his feet.

EFFIE

She don't work for anyone. And she was the safest place I could think of.

She stops at a RUMBLING SOUND. They both look down at the ground and see vibrations moving the dirt.

KAEL

What is that? Earthquake?

EFFIE

No, I don't think so-

As she looks off down the street her eyes go wide in horror.

EFFIE (cont'd)

Oh, feck. Stampede!

A huge dust cloud carrying angry wild Buffalo begin to rampage through the streets of Independence, trampling anything in the way including people.

The beastly invasion breaks up the fighting in the streets, forcing both Pirate and Cowboy to seek refuge, or die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Behind the herd is Abilene on her horse, driving the animals down the middle of town. Through the heavy dust cloud she spots Effie helping Kael out of the way of a particularly MAD BULL.

The Bull is charging right for Effie and Kael. It's horns are aimed and ready to gore, but Abilene cuts-in on horseback, and kicks the Bull's head away. The animal veers off course taking some of the wild herd with him, which clears a path for Effie and Kael to slip behind the remains of the GENERAL STORE.

Effie leans Kael against the only wall still standing from the General Store. She turns and smiles as Abilene joins them on horseback.

ABILENE

If you don't come with me right now,  
you'll either die by the Duke's hand,  
or Slagg's. I'm offering you a way  
out, a way to live.

KAEL

I...

It looks like he's just about to take the offer when...

EFFIE

The Captain promised us safe passage.  
We need his ship to get to the Air  
Isles. The Black Veil site.  
(nods at Kael)  
He's going restore power and  
technology to the world.

Abilene gives Kael a questioning look. He shrugs a "yes", and Abilene quickly decides not to care.

ABILENE

Then you're on your own.

EFFIE

Wait! Don't you want to find out  
what happened to your sister? Come  
with us. You can track her down.  
That's what you do, right?

ABILENE

Pretty damn sure she's dead. Slaves  
don't exactly have a long life  
expectancy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

EFFIE

She could still be alive. She could still be out there.

ABILENE

Hate to break it to you, Doc, but your plan is all kinds of fecked up. There's a reason why we stick to our own kind. We fought a damn war over it. The pirates will either enslave you, rape you, or kill you.

Effie steps up to the horse and rests a hand on Abilene's leg.

EFFIE

Kael is going to change things, make things better. Doesn't that mean anything to you? Ain't it worth trying?

Effie's words seem to inspire Kael a little.

Conflicted, Abilene considers the offer. She shakes her head, "no", and then adjusts her horse to break contact.

ABILENE

I thought all you cared about was your freedom. This is it. I'm giving it to you. Last chance.

Effie sadly backs away.

EFFIE

I can't go, and neither can you. We need you.

She looks hard at Abilene's bandaged hand almost ready to confess something.

KAEL

She's not interested.  
(at Abilene)  
Give me the Resistor and leave.  
We'll be fine without you.

ABILENE

(frown)  
The what now?

Effie looks off to the side. Someone is coming, but she keeps it to herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

KAEL  
My device. About this big,  
(holds up fingers)  
flat, round?

ABILENE  
I don't have anything of yours,  
Shiner.

Kael looks at Effie, and Effie looks caught, not wanting to explain things just yet. Luckily, Slagg and his men surround them with weapons drawn.

SLAGG  
Willing or no, you'll be joining me  
on my ship. You have a deal Doctor  
Harper.

Before Abilene can make a move, Slagg stabs her horse through the heart and it falls dead instantly, taking the rider, Abilene, with it to the ground.

Effie pulls Kael along to join Slagg. Slagg takes the SURGE PISTOL from Effie's belt. Meanwhile, the OTHER PIRATES disarm Abilene and take her into custody.

SLAGG (cont'd)  
Set sail at once, Lads. We got what  
we came for.

EXT. SKY - BLOOD RAVEN - HELM

Badly damaged, the airship limps through the open sky toward the Air Isles. There are noticeable bullet holes throughout the hull and decks. Smoke spews from the struggling engines, and yet the ship is still airborne.

Slagg and his First Mate, QUINT, a bald young man with tattoos all over his body, stand at the helm talking.

QUINT  
Doc Williams is dead. Got hit on  
deck while tending to the men. The  
main engine is holding together, but  
we'll have to make port at the  
nearest repair isle.

SLAGG  
Aye. The Pit, me thinks. Less  
traffic and less attention. Best lay  
low after the dust-up on land.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Quint nods.

QUINT  
Is the lad really a Shiner? Can he  
take us to the Black Isle?

Slagg pulls out the Surge Pistol from under his coat. It is technology they have never seen before.

SLAGG  
He better hope so, but I'll be  
betting that my real treasure will  
show up long 'fore then.

Quint slides a questionable slide-long glance at the Captain.

QUINT  
Happy Jack.

SLAGG  
Aye.

He spits at the name, and then stares out at the sky with anger filling his eyes. Quint seems a little off-put with the obsession in his Captain, but keeps it to himself.

SLAGG (cont'd)  
Have our guests settled in to their  
quarters?

QUINT  
(smirk)  
Aye Cap'n. Safe and sound just as  
you ordered it.

Slagg returns the Surge Pistol to his side and we catch a glimpse of BLOOD on his nice white shirt. He is injured.

SLAGG  
Good. Bring Doc Harper to my cabin  
at once. It's time we renegotiate  
our deal.

Quint nods and Slagg heads off to his quarters.

INT. BLOOD RAVEN - HOLD

Folks from Independence share this dank, dark, and filthy Hold. Some are chained up, but there are so many people that there aren't enough shackles to hold them all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Notably Squirrel, Wade, Isobel, Flaming Bear, Abilene, Effie, and Kael are among the captured, non-shackled, residents of Independence.

ABILENE

Excellent plan. Call the crappiest people on the planet and ask them for help. You know, maybe we'll all get to meet my sister when they sell us as slaves.

The animosity in the air is palpable between our heroes.

ISOBEL

I am not slave material. If anything I will be held for ransom.

ABILENE

Oh, shut up.

KAEL

I have to admit, the lady has a point.

ISOBEL

Thank you.

KAEL

Not you, her.

He indicates Abilene, and Isobel is offended enough to pout in silence.

EFFIE

How else did you plan to get to the Air Isles - walk?

KAEL

You betrayed me. You sold me out, and now we're prisoners.

EFFIE

Hey, you're the one who broke our deal, you rat bastard, siding with the Duke.

He glares at Effie.

KAEL

How was I supposed to know that you didn't tell him about the Resistor. You told him everything else!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ABILENE

So you both screwed each other. You got what you deserved, the rest of us didn't.

The Independence RESIDENTS agree among themselves.

EFFIE

Excuse me, if you hadn't screwed me first none of this would have happened. All you had to do was keep our deal and kill Magnus.

ABILENE

I needed him alive to get to Bloxham. I was going to kill them both!

Effie suddenly "gets it".

ISOBEL

My father has never done any harm to anyone, let alone you. He's always helped the people of Independence. He brought work and good money to that backwater town.

(at Wade)

No offense.

Wade shrugs indifferent.

ISOBEL (cont'd)

And you...

(angry; at Effie)

You shot my daddy. He's only ever showed you kindness.

ABILENE

Your precious father slaughtered my entire family and ruined my life.

The blunt statement almost has Isobel believing it, and then:

ISOBEL

That is a disgusting lie. He would never- He showed you mercy after you tried to murder him. You are the killer, not him.

ABILENE

You're really not that dumb, are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ISOBEL

Everybody knows you shot your own father. You're a murderer and one day you'll hang for it.

Abilene glares at her and Isobel glares back. Effie looks between them both, knowing the truth about Abilene's history.

EFFIE

Why didn't you tell me that was your plan?

Abilene looks at her still holding venom for Isobel. It spills out with the truth.

ABILENE

Because I didn't trust you.

KAEL

Wish I hadn't.

EFFIE

(snaps)

None of us would be here if you had just stayed behind your walls, Shiner.

ISOBEL

That is so true.

KAEL

This is not my fault.

(at Effie)

Why would you tell the Sheriff anything we talked about? We had a deal?

Effie takes a moment to gather her regret, and it shows.

EFFIE

(softly)

I thought it would buy my freedom.

KAEL

So you saw an opportunity to use me for your own selfish needs, and you took it.

(at Abilene)

You were right. She doesn't care about anything but herself.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (4)

ABILENE

Can we all just agree that we're a bunch of backstabbing assholes, and figure out a way not to die in here?

The group agrees with that. A moment of silent thinking passes. Effie looks around and lands on Kael and Abilene.

EFFIE

Well, you two are safe. You both have something Slagg needs. And Lady Isobel will probably be held for ransom. I'm a doctor so...

WADE

The rest of us are fecked. Got it. Thanks.

ABILENE

My bounty isn't going to buy me a whole lot of time.

EFFIE

No, but that will.

Effie's eyes drop down to Abilene's bandaged right hand. Abilene lifts her hand and looks at, then narrows her eyes at Effie.

ABILENE

What did you do?

EFFIE

(hesitant)

I may have implanted Kael's Resistor in your hand.

Abilene snaps a furious look at Effie, but it is Kael who beats her to a response.

KAEL

You what?!

The cell door SHRIEKS open and a PIRATE GUARD motions for Effie.

PIRATE GUARD

Cap'n wants to see you. Now.

Effie looks around at everybody, not wanting to leave, worried that she might not be coming back. The Pirate Guard reaches in and yanks her out with brute force.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Abilene jumps up to intervene...

ABILENE

Hey!

... but Wade stops her.

WADE

Now ain't the time to pick a fight.

The cell door SLAMS SHUT.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET - DUSK

PEOPLE are picking up the pieces left behind in the fight with the airship. Bloxham wanders the destruction in a daze. His arm is in a sling. His town is destroyed and his daughter is missing. He is devastated, and on the verge of insane rage.

Magnus and Mutt approach, and Bloxham lifts his head awaiting the news.

MAGNUS

No sign of Lady Isobel, Duke. I'm sorry. They took her.

MUTT

They took the whole damn town.

Bloxham barely has himself under control. He paces and seethes, each step, each word growing more and more heated.

BLOXHAM

They have my little girl. They'll do things to her. They'll-- I'll kill'em. I'll kill every last one of those sons of bitches!

He snaps and SHOOTS an innocent BYSTANDER in the head. There's no calming himself, and no reason to even try to hide his rage any longer. What's the point? Isobel is gone. She won't see what an awful man he really is.

When he turns to Magnus and Mutt, they both rock back on their heels expecting a backlash. Bloxham grabs Magnus by the shirt and hauls him inches from his face.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

Spread the word. Put a bounty on Slagg and his entire boat.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

Half a million pieces to anyone who brings my daughter back alive, and Slagg's head.

He shoves Magnus away and paces in thought.

MAGNUS

And the Shiner?

That forces a strained scowl from Bloxham.

BLOXHAM

Call a parley. If Slagg wants the whole world hunting him, then wish granted. We're going to unite with the Air Isles.

He walks off. Mutt looks at Magnus with fear in his eyes. The Duke's statement is bold, crazy, and dangerous.

EXT. SKY - BLOOD RAVEN - NIGHT

A star filled sky, and the airship slowly limps along. We focus down on the Captain's Cabin.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Slagg is laid-out on his navigation table with his shirt off. He's guzzling a bottle of booze to dull the pain in his side. His entire chest and abdomen has a sculpted metal plate embedded in his flesh. It's an ugly, crude looking augment.

Effie tends to the bullet wound in his right side. She's using forceps to root around for a bullet fragment. A nearby bowl shows three pieces of lead already removed.

EFFIE

Almost got it. Last one. Don't move.

SLAGG

Ya remind me of her. My beloved. Celest.

EFFIE

Oh, good. You're drunk.

SLAGG

Ashen hair. Eyes as green as the Isles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EFFIE

Mine are brown.

SLAGG

A gentleness that drew people to her-- Ow! Damn it, lass!

EFFIE

(smirk)

Said don't move.

SLAGG

Aye, she caused me a lot of pain too. Just like her, you are.

EFFIE

Sounds delightful. I'd like to meet her.

Slagg clinks the bottle of booze to his chest plate.

SLAGG

Aye, she's how I got this. Ripped out me rib cage and spilled my guts on the deck. Happen right out there.

EFFIE

She did that to you?

SLAGG

(laughs)

Lass wouldn't harm a soul. Happy Jack did this to me, after he performed heinous acts on my Celest.

(takes a swig)

I died that day with my beloved.

Effie looks disturbed, uncomfortable and sympathetic.

EFFIE

Sorry.

SLAGG

Don't need your pity. I'll mourn when the bastard is dead.

A CLINK as Effie drops the last bullet fragment into the bowl.

EFFIE

You're lucky. No internal bleeding. I'll sew you up and you should be fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SLAGG

I kept my word. I gave you safe passage.

EFFIE

Thank you.

SLAGG

But I can't give you your freedom.

Effie stop the suture job.

SLAGG (cont'd)

Don't look so surprised. You know how this works. You're either an asset to me and my crew, or you're property. Your choice, lass.

Slagg winces suddenly and looks down to see a scalpel pressed to his freshly stitched side.

EFFIE

I've taken a life before.

Slagg studies her, and then grins.

SLAGG

No lass, you haven't. Not with evil in your heart. I can see it in your eyes. You couldn't even kill the Duke when you had the chance.

EFFIE

I missed.

SLAGG

Bollocks.

(beat)

You can kill me all you want, lass, but I promise you this -- you'll have none better than me. I'll give you your own cabin, medical supplies, and freedom on board. You'll have food, water, and a promise of safety. But if ye cross me, I promise an endless death.

Effie's expression flattens, she shakes her head and sets down the scalpel.

Slagg reveals the gun he had on her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SLAGG (cont'd)  
A deal then! Quint!

The cabin door opens, Quint is right outside.

QUINT  
Aye, Captain?

SLAGG  
Give the lass Doc Williams' Cabin.  
See to her needs and let it be known  
that she is mine.

Quint nods, and gestures for the lady to exit.

SLAGG (cont'd)  
Doc Harper. Thank you for your  
services. I truly enjoyed your  
company.

Effie just kind of nods and leaves with Quint.

INT. HOLD

Everyone is resting, except Abilene who is wide awake and looking at her bandaged hand. She turns to Kael who is also unable to sleep. Their conversation is quiet.

ABILENE  
Who beat the Doc?

KAEL  
Same person that did this to me.  
(indicates his  
bruised face)  
The Sheriff.

Abilene fights back an expression of guilt for not shooting Magnus when she had the chance.

ABILENE  
What did she do?

KAEL  
She wouldn't tell the Duke where the  
Resistor was. She was protecting  
you, I suppose.

That forces a frown of emotion on Abilene's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAEL (cont'd)

Of course, she also stuck the damn thing in you, which put you in danger in the first place, but whatever.

That was true too. Abilene agrees with a nod, and then looks thoughtfully at her bandaged hand again.

ABILENE

Can you really do it?

Kael looks her dead in the eyes. We see Isobel awake and listening.

KAEL

What you have in your hand will fix things, make things right.

ABILENE

How does it work?

KAEL

It's a similar principle to a Faraday cage. You see, the Black Veil particle field doesn't fry electronics. It's not an EMP like most people think. Tech still functions out here, it's just that the electrical current in the circuitry is blocked by the particles.

Abilene rolls her eyes at the science-talk, and almost gets her chance to interject, but Isobel interrupts. She is intrigued, not just with the knowledge, but with Kael.

ISOBEL

Like a clogged artery. It stops the flow of blood?

Abilene flashes a frown at Isobel. How long has she been awake and listening?

KAEL

(surprised and happy)

The Black Veil Particle was supposed to temporarily saturate our atmosphere, just long enough to stop the weapons of war, and talk peace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Now Wade is awake and interested, which gets another eye-roll from Abilene when she tries to stop Kael from talking, but is yet again interrupted.

WADE

Wait. If it ain't a bomb, why did it blow up the Earth?

KAEL

It was... is a very large particle accelerator. And the only way to power it was to tap into the Earth's core.

SQUIRREL

That sounds like just about the stupidest thing I ever heard. Everybody knows you don't go poking around the belly of a beast.

Abilene glares at Squirrel. Even he is interested?

ISOBEL

So if it blew up, why are we still without power?

KAEL

My guess, it's like you said,  
(at Wade)  
it blew up the Earth, not itself.

ISOBEL

And the Resistor thing in her hand,  
(nods at Abilene)  
how is that supposed to help?

KAEL

It emits an opposing particle field that repulses the Black Veil's effects so that "blood" can flow through the circuits again.

Abilene gives him a dull flat look of impatience.

ABILENE

(sarcastically)  
Fascinating. But when I said, "how does it work", I meant how do I turn it on?

Now it's Kael's turn to be frustrated because his genius is lost on the woman who holds his precious invention.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

KAEL  
It's touch sensitive.

ABILENE  
(mocking)  
You mean it has a button.

KAEL  
(sighing)  
Yes. It has a button.  
(beat)  
Assuming our friendly Doctor  
implanted it correctly, you should be  
able to apply the appropriate  
pressure to your-- yeah, that's  
probably going to hurt.

He sees the raw stitches on Abilene's wounded palm when she unwraps it. It's ugly, and crusted with blood. She looks at Kael.

ABILENE  
This will make your tech work out  
here? Your weapon too?

He nods as Abilene starts to catch up intellectually. She hesitates knowing that this is going to be painful, and then she presses her left thumb into her right palm. She winces and grits her teeth. A bit of blood is spilled from her hand.

Nothing happens. She looks disappointed.

ABILENE (cont'd)  
It's not working -- oh...

When she looks at Kael for an answer she finds it. The blue filaments under his skin are glowing once again.

Isobel sits up in awe -- or in love.

Kael closes his eyes. There's rapid eye movement under his eyelids. He seems to be getting his cyber-fix of information. It feels good to be online again.

INT. SHINE TOWN - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Miwa stares at the holographic map of Tesla City. She should be working, but she can't concentrate when her son is MIA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, when she's just about to shut it all down, the image of the map changes. A download is in progress from the Kotlas satellite. A new landscape begins to appear. It's the Air Isles.

Then an ALERT pops up: CONNECTION ESTABLISHED.

MIWA

Kael?

Relief on her face. He's Alive!

SMASH TO BLACK

THE END