

Solitude

Copyright (c) 2017 This
screenplay may not be used or
reproduced for any purpose
including educational purposes
without the expressed written
permission of the author.

Solitude

OVER BLACK-

Flames crackling and falling debris can be heard.

BLAST FROM DARKNESS ONTO:

EXT. DEMOLISHED BUILDING - SUNSET

An INJURED MAN lying on the ground next to flames and a crumbled building. He has dark hair and a rough face.

Voices can be heard groaning indistinctly around him.

The Injured Man slowly rises.

He struggles as he limps through the wreckage.

AN ALARM blasts through the silence, aside from the crackling fire.

The Injured Man comes upon an INJURED GUARD.

The Injured Guard is groaning as he rolls on the ground, feeling around his body to ensure he still has all limbs attached.

Injured Man stumbles over to the injured guard, in one swift motion snatches up his PISTOL.

The Injured Guard watches as he does this. He cowers in fear.

INJURED GUARD

Ugh-- No-- Please--

BLAM!!! Injured Man shoots him while he's down. Finishing him off.

The ALARM continues to blare.

Distant shouting can be heard from OTHER GUARDS.

The Injured Man continues limping towards a LARGE PALACE as we...

SNAP TO BLACK.

OPENING TITLE: SOLITUDE.

FADE IN:

INT. DEREK HENDERSON'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A spartan bedroom with a bed and little else.

Light barely shows in through the shades.

A dark haired, bearded, rugged yet handsome DEREK HENDERSON (late 20's) is sound asleep in his bed until his alarm abruptly wakes him. Derek is the "injured man" from before.

He slides out of bed and mopes to his kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DEREK'S HOME - MORNING.

His kitchen is also modern, symmetrical and bare. An island resides in the middle.

He lazily prepares his coffee and skips breakfast.

Derek is a zombie as he makes his way out the door.

EXT. DEREK'S HOME - MORNING.

A bleak urban landscape.

The city is surrounded by HIGH WALLS on all sides.

Derek feebly shuffles out of his house on this cold, dreary day.

He shuffles down the cobblestone path to The Watch Headquarters.

Across the street, UNIFORMED GUARD #1 beats A BLOODIED MAN with a baton.

UNIFORMED GUARD #2 frisks a NERVOUS WOMAN. Derek is oblivious.

A FIRING SQUAD of GUARDS executes five other TOWNSPEOPLE with rifles. The Townspeople drop to the ground after scattered, loud BANGS of five different rifles.

Derek barely flinches in response to the gunshots.

He then barges into his workplace, "The Watch" Headquarters.

INT. THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

A large room filled with desks arranged in neat rows. At each desk sits a WATCH HEADQUARTERS EMPLOYEE hunched over a computer.

Derek glides on by the other desks, purposefully ignoring his cohorts to stop by the desk of a young, timid, golden-haired reporter: RYAN GILROY (early 20's).

DEREK

I need that story on my desk by the end of the day.

RYAN

Please, I-- I need more time. Can you just--

This is the last thing Derek wants to hear right now.

DEREK

Look, Ryan, I have no room for reporters who don't write stories.

RYAN

I know, I know. Just-- Please, I can finish this. I swear I--

DEREK

I can easily have you replaced.

RYAN

You can trust me, Derek. Please, just this one chance.

Derek huffs, gives it some thought.

DEREK

You know exactly who doesn't care for second chances.

Ryan's heart sinks and nearly turns pale.

DEREK (CONT.)

But he doesn't have to know. For now.

Derek strides away.

RYAN

I'm sor-- tha-- thank you, Derek.

Ryan can only watch as he goes.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - MORNING.

Derek hangs his coat on his coat rack. He drops into his chair at his desk. A note catches his eye.

NOTE: Five Weaklings will be executed today. Please write a story linking them to the Degenerates immediately. - Meyer

COMMITTEE of "THE WATCH" all file into his office without any warning.

Muffled, unintelligible voices fail to capture his attention. At last, the noise penetrates his brain.

BOARD MEMBER

Derek? Are you alright?

Derek takes a bit longer to answer this than the Board Members would like...

DEREK

What? Yeah, no I'm fine.

The Other Board Members exchange glances.

DEREK (CONT.)

Is everything okay?

The Board Member slightly hesitates before he begins.

BOARD MEMBER

One of our supply trains was hit again. The public can't know the truth.

Other Board Members' eyes remain peeled on Derek.

BOARD MEMBER (CONT.)

Think you can handle it?

Derek's eyes scan all the other men in the room, before landing on the Board Member.

DEREK

Right, of course. Is there anyone in particular who should--

BOARD MEMBER

Do you think He cares who writes the damned thing? Just get it done.

Derek nervously hesitates a moment.

DEREK

Of course.

The Lead Board Member eyes his peers and gestures for all to leave. They all file out of the room.

Derek runs his hands over his eyes and then his face, shuffles his papers, and gets to work.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - DUSK.

Derek packs up his things in his briefcase, rises to grab his coat, and makes his way home.

EXT. THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - DUSK.

Shortly after leaving, Derek is frantically approached by a HOMELESS MAN.

HOMELESS MAN
Sir! Please! You've got to help me!
I--

P.O.V. - DEREK.

BANG! The Homeless Man's head explodes.

Derek looks on in terror. A loud ringing sound is all that is heard.

He braces and covers his ear on one side.

A TRIGGER-HAPPY GUARD slowly approaches Derek. He is wearing a dark, sleek mask to conceal his identity. Much like most other guards.

END P.O.V.

EXT. COBBLESTONE PATH - NIGHT.

TRIGGER-HAPPY GUARD
Relax, I saw the whole thing.

The Trigger-Happy Guard pats Derek on the shoulder and struts back to his post.

Derek regains his bearings and continues on toward his home, still struggling to regain his hearing.

INT. DEREK'S HOME - NIGHT

Derek slams the door as he meanders his way in, tossing his keys aside and makes a bee-line to his fridge for an ice pack for his head.

He applies the ice pack to his head, walks over to his bedroom, and slams the door behind him.

INT. DEREK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Derek glides to his bed, takes a seat next to his nightstand, and picks up a framed picture.

PICTURE FACE: A happy photo of JAMES and LISA HENDERSON (40's). James is an older, slightly shorter version of Derek. Lisa is a gorgeous blond, long-haired woman with crystal clear blue eyes.

Derek, melancholy, longing for his family once again, places the photo back on the nightstand.

He sighs.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Derek arrives at a grocery store, weakly shuffling through the automatic double doors.

He picks up a cereal box and finds a note on the back.

NOTE reads: "Pavilion at 5:00 PM"

He glances down at his watch.

DIGITAL WATCH FACE - 4:43 PM.

He has a moment of contemplation before checking out and leaving.

He steps outside and glances over at the Pavilion.

Derek thinks for a moment.

He walks towards it with apprehension.

Derek then slowly approaches and examines an empty bench and an occupied bench before carefully taking a seat.

A MYSTERIOUS MAN (mid 50's) occupies the bench, he is dark in complexion, middle aged, but looks as if time has weathered his face with no shortage of scars or wrinkles.

The Mysterious Man sets down his newspaper diagonally on top of a trash can with purpose and smoothly glides away.

Derek eyes the Mysterious Man.

He looks around and back at newspaper, waits a moment before walking over, then carefully examines newspaper.

THE NEWSPAPER shows many lines of Derek's articles struck out in black.

Derek looks over his shoulder before he attempts to decipher the message.

He nervously stuffs the newspaper in his briefcase and heads home.

INT. DEREK'S HOME - THEATER ROOM - NIGHT

Derek is a zombie on the couch staring at his large TV screen.

His TV room is something of a mini theater room. It's symmetrical like the rest of the house, but has a certain bareness to it.

He then glances over at his briefcase, but quickly dismisses it once he reaches for the remote and turns on the TV.

MAN ON COMMERCIAL (O.S.)

Do your part, report any suspicious activity to your local Protector. Please alert them to any and all conversations. Remember, social interaction is strictly prohibited. Anyone who is speaking to anyone for any reason will be punished with extreme prejudice. Do your part, help us bring down the treasonous rebels who threaten our way our life and our very well-being.

Derek's blank, emotionless stare as he changes the channel.

MAN ON COMMERCIAL

--the filthy Degenerates are responsible for all the flaws and wrongdoings that exist in our world of today. Do your part, help us--

He flips the channel again.

MAN ON COMMERCIAL

--report this activity immediately. They're likely to be a filthy degenerate scum--

Derek turns off the TV and shakes his head.

DEREK

Alright, shut your mouth.

Derek sighs. He glances at the briefcase. He snatches it up and heads downstairs.

INT. DEREK'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

He steps down and reads message under the stairs in blind-spot of the basement security camera.

He desperately tries to decipher the hidden message.

Derek then clumsily stuffs the newspaper in his briefcase.

He glances at the menacing camera up in the corner of the room.

INT. DEREK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Derek lets his coat fall to the floor, tosses his briefcase aside, then slowly drags his feet over to his room and calls it a night - but lies restless in bed.

INT. DEREK'S HOME - DEREK'S BEDROOM - MORNING.

Derek's greatest enemy, the alarm, wakes him, but he struggles to actually get up.

Light pours in through his shades - sunnier than yesterday.

He grunts and places his hands over his face.

EXT. THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - MORNING.

Derek attempts to make his way towards work before he's approached by two guards.

PUSHY GUARD

Derek, if you'll follow us this way, please. The Sword would like to speak with you.

Derek is hesitant.

DEREK

Right, sure.

The guards escort Derek down the road.

EXT. PALACE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Large double doors open for them, they proceed in.

This is the longest walk ever for Derek. Fear always follows him with any visit to The Sword.

MEYER "THE SWORD" ERATORN (late 50's) is a large-faced, stout, short blond haired, blue-eyed, domineering man with a booming voice. He commands every room he occupies.

MEYER ERATORN "THE SWORD"
Derek! Thank you for coming.

Derek nods to him.

MEYER (CONT.)
(gesturing to a seat)
Have a seat if you please.

Derek opts to stand.

DEREK
Thank you.

Derek looks around a moment.

DEREK (CONT.)
What can I do for ya, Meyer?
(short beat)
Can I call you Meyer?

MEYER
Of course, of course you can!
(clears throat)
Sorry for that nasty bit of
business yesterday, but you know it
had to be done.

DEREK
I understand.

Uncomfortable pause.

DEREK (CONT.)
So, uh-- what did you need to see
me about?

Meyer hesitates a brief moment.

MEYER
Derek, I want you to be honest with
me.

DEREK
Always.

Meyer analyzes Derek.

MEYER
What are your thoughts on The
Watch?

DEREK
What do you mean?

Short beat.

MEYER
Do you think it's...effective? What
you do?

DEREK
Absolutely. What we do
is...paramount. It's--

MEYER
You misunderstand. Do you truly
believe the people eat this shit
up?

DEREK
I wouldn't be very good at my job
if they didn't, sir.

MEYER
That was not my question.

Meyer rises from his seat and paces.

MEYER (CONT.)
Derek, there's a reason you're my
Chief Editor.
(beat)
Am I wrong to trust you with this?

DEREK
What brought this on, sir?

MEYER
Meyer, please.

Derek nods.

DEREK
Right, Meyer.
(brief pause)
Have I done something wrong?

Meyer attempts to get a read on him.

An uncomfortable air fills the room.

MEYER (O.S.)
Listen, Derek. This society
functions solely on the loyalty of
its members.

Derek tries his best to follow along, his face contorted in confusion.

MEYER (CONT.)
Without each moving part working
seamlessly, we crumble.

Meyer paces, closer to Derek.

MEYER (CONT.)
I need the people's uncorrupted
allegiance. Or this is all for
naught. Do you understand?

Derek can hardly face him, but he nods in agreement.

MEYER
Good.

Beat.

MEYER
Has everything been alright?

DEREK
I'm fine. Really, I've been okay.
(beat)
Why do you ask?

Meyer lets out a heavy sigh.

MEYER
Derek, I know the pressure you must
be feeling at this point.

Meyer looks into his soul.

MEYER (CONT.)
Do I need to worry about you?

Brief pause.

DEREK
Absolutely not.

Meyer leans back in his seat.

DEREK (CONT.) (O.S.)
I can handle this.

Meyer smirks.

MEYER

I see a bit of your father in you.

Brief pause.

MEYER (CONT.)

I promise you it's a good thing.

Derek half-smiles a moment before it fades.

Meyer's smile quickly turns to a frown.

Beat.

MEYER

Let's get back to it, now, huh?

Derek plods away, but then looks back over his shoulder at Meyer, who nods back.

Meyer looks on with suspicion.

As Derek is escorted out, he glances over and sees a red-haired beauty: JAELE ERATORN (mid 20's). She is average height, petite, and always has a mysterious aura about her.

The way she constantly smirks only adds to the enigma.

Jaela matches his gaze while giving a confident wave of the hand.

Derek responds with an awkward wave of his own accompanied by a half smile.

Pushy Guard shoves Derek forward.

PUSHY GUARD

Come on, let's go! Keep moving.

Pushy Guard and his PARTNER continue to escort Derek out of the palace.

EXT. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Derek looks to the sky as he pushes his way out of the Palace, breathing in his encounter.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - DAY

Derek kicks back in his office, hands locked behind his head.

He then straightens up and picks up a NOTE on his desk.

He is in deep concentration as he reads the note.

INT. RYAN'S DESK - THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Ryan is staring blankly at his computer screen, expecting the page to write itself.

A group of GUARDS show up in the doorway of the entrance who look to Derek.

Derek stands outside his open office door, arms crossed.

He nods to them.

The Guards take a terrified Ryan away.

Derek's face shows a shred of remorse.

The door slams behind the guards and a screaming Ryan.

Derek mopes back into his office.

INT. PALACE THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Meyer sits on his throne as Derek stands before him.

MEYER

You did the right thing, Derek. The headlines are all that matter.

Derek can't look him in the eye.

DEREK

Right, I know.

MEYER

If you're having doubts, I need to know about it.

Derek can't muster a response.

MEYER (CONT.)

I can't have you questioning your decisions, Derek. Leave it, and move on.

DEREK

I've got it under control.

Meyer sits back, satisfied enough.

MEYER

I need you to write a story about
the kid.

Derek lifts his eyes to meet Meyer's.

DEREK

What would you have me say?

MEYER

I'll leave that to you. That's your
job, isn't it?

Beat.

DEREK

Can I ask you something?

MEYER

Please.

Brief pause.

DEREK

Have we actually made any progress?

Meyer sits up in his seat.

MEYER

What are you asking?

DEREK

Look, I know what our aim is here.
But are we really fooling anyone?

MEYER

Let me tell you something.

Meyer approaches Derek and places his hand on his shoulder.

MEYER (CONT.)

There is no absolute control,
no real order, without fear.

Meyer turns his back to him and paces towards the Throne.

MEYER (CONT.)

Fear is the only way to rule.

Beat.

DEREK

The Degenerates-- are they real or not?

Meyer takes his seat back.

MEYER

What do you think?

DEREK

Given the nature of my position--

MEYER

Look, Derek, it's not your job to worry about such things.

Derek paces a couple steps towards Meyer.

DEREK

It is my job to worry, too, you know.

MEYER

That is not your primary focus. Your focus should be on writing that story for me.

Derek waits a beat.

DEREK

I'd better get to it, then.

Meyer nods.

MEYER

Make it compelling.

Derek nods and makes his way for the exit.

He looks to his right in hope of finding Jaela.

No one occupies the doorway.

A disappointed Derek continues on down the hallway.

EXT. PALACE ENTRY - COBBLESTONE PATH - NIGHT

Derek witnesses a Guard beating a WEAKLING with his bare hands in his dumpster home.

Derek looks away quickly and picks up his pace.

INT. DEREK'S HOME - THEATER ROOM - NIGHT

Derek sits on his couch and puts his face in hands.

He waits a moment, then heads for the basement.

P.O.V. - SECURITY CAMERA - BASEMENT

Derek walks slowly down the stairs, glances up at the camera, and disappears from view once he walks under the stairs.

INT. DEREK'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Derek snatches the newspaper from the briefcase.

He becomes wide-eyed as he realizes the hidden message on the newspaper.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Derek opens the door with his head down, but sees board members waiting in his office.

DEREK

Door locks exist for a purpose.

The Board Member looks stern.

BOARD MEMBER

We need to talk.

EXT. GROCERY STORE/PAVILION AREA - DAY

Derek glances over at an empty pavilion on a gloomy, grey day.

He looks back down as he approaches the grocery store.

EXT. PAVILION - DAY

Derek is now coming out of store, bags and briefcase in hands.

He sees the Mysterious Man sitting on a bench at the pavilion.

He makes his way over and sits on bench across from him.

He is scribbling frantically on the newspaper.

He rises to set it on a garbage can next to the Mysterious Man.

Mysterious man eyes the newspaper quickly then looks back forward.

Derek leaves for home without a word nor a glance.

P.O.V. - SURVEILLANCE CAMERA

The camera is watching the pavilion, moves to the Mysterious Man, and then to Derek as he walks home.

Mysterious Man slowly brings himself up to grab the newspaper.

He reads the note.

NEWSPAPER FACE - "YOU ARE NOT SAFE. THEY ARE LOOKING FOR YOU."

Mysterious Man tosses newspaper in the trash and vanishes.

EXT. COBBLESTONE PATH - PALACE ENTRANCE - OVERCAST

As Derek marches to the Palace and sees what appears to be a MOTHER and her SON shuffling down the road in opposite directions toward each other.

The Mother and Son think they recognize one another.

MOTHER

Psst.

Mother tries to gesture to Son to get him to come with her.

An AGGRESSIVE GUARD witnesses this, the son then brushes shoulders with the mother. Did he hand something to her?

The Aggressive Guard vigorously approaches the two, and aggressively lifts the son up off the ground.

AGGRESSIVE GUARD

Hey, you! Get over here!

Derek reluctantly slogs over to the Aggressive Guard.

AGGRESSIVE GUARD

Derek, what happened? Is there anything you can tell us?

DEREK

I don't know-- I didn't see--

AGGRESSIVE GUARD

Did they...speak to one another...or **not**?

Derek desperately looks around for help. There is none.

DEREK

I-- I think so. I'm not--

Aggressive Guard unholsters his pistol and lets off a round in son's temple.

The son's skull shatters, fragments and brains scatter about.

Mother continues on, seemingly unfazed.

Her emotionless face as she walks along as if nothing happened.

A lone tear drips down her deadpan face.

ANOTHER GUARD bounds over to Aggressive Guard and Derek.

They indistinctly confer with one another.

Derek is noticeably uncomfortable.

They let loose rounds into The Mother's head.

She flops to the ground.

Derek, in shock, acts as if he saw nothing.

AGGRESSIVE GUARD

Thank you for your help, sir. Be safe out there.

Derek glances back, nods, and continues on.

INT. PALACE THRONE ROOM - DAY.

Derek confronts Meyer in throne room.

DEREK

If we don't stop this senseless violence out on the streets, we're going to start running out of people to kill.

MEYER

Have you not heard I single word I've told you?

DEREK

It's needless. We already have complete control of the people. They've all fallen in line.

MEYER

You don't know that for certain.

DEREK

There won't be a society left to run if we've wiped them all out!

MEYER

We can always make more.

DEREK

Listen to yourself! You do realize how long it would take to raise the population--

MEYER

The fewer people we have, the lesser the chance of a successful revolt.

DEREK

A ridiculous notion.

A brief beat.

MEYER

I think it's time I told you something very important.

EXT. FLASHBACK - PALACE - DAY.

Toddlers Derek and Jaela, Lisa, James, Gilda and Meyer all meander down the path from the Palace to The Watch HQ.

GUARDS are scattered about, flanking their sides. Half on-watch of their path.

James turns to Meyer.

JAMES

I can't thank you enough for this opportunity, Meyer. I'm truly grateful.

MEYER

I couldn't think of anyone better for the job, truth be told.

JAMES

I'm very excited to start. I can't tell you how long I've waited for this.

MEYER

Works out perfectly. I've always had my eye on you for it. I'm eager for you to start as well.

James and Meyer continue to chat indistinctly.

Jaela and Derek playfully skipping and galloping along side one another.

Lisa turns to Gilda.

LISA

Looks like we'll be seeing a lot more of each other now, huh?

Gilda chuckles.

GILDA

Sure seems that way, doesn't it?

LISA

This will be great for the kids, too.

GILDA

I'm really glad that they'll be friends, too!

LISA

And who knows, maybe...

Lisa cracks a smile. Gilda laughs.

GILDA

Keep talking like that and it just might happen.

Lisa laughs.

LISA

It's funny, James and I were talking about how we needed some friends other than our boring old neighbors.

GILDA

We don't have many neighbors, ourselves!

Lisa chuckles.

GILDA (CONT.)

It's good, this worked out for both families.

LISA

I'm very happy that it--

Suddenly Guards on all sides are ambushed by A MOB brandishing weapons of all kinds.

The Guards are not prepared. Their fingers frozen on the triggers of their rifles.

A MOB MEMBER smacks GUARD 5 across the face with a cast-iron pan.

A CRAZED MAN is butchering GUARD 6 with a kitchen knife.

A CRAZED WOMAN is searing GUARD 7's face with a cordless hot iron.

MOB LEADER swings a baseball bat and connects with GUARD 7's head.

MOB MEMBER 2 is repeatedly stabbing GUARD 8 with a pitchfork.

OTHER MOB MEMBERS pick up rifles from the dead guards and GUNFIRE ERUPTS.

The chaos is disorienting.

PROTECTOR OF THE SHIELD

Protect The Sword!

A PROTECTOR OF THE SHIELD swiftly beams toward Meyer and tackles him.

MEYER

What the hell are you doing?!

The guards give each other a fearful glance.

MEYER (CONT.)

(frantic)

Shoot back already!!

The Guards finally come to. They return fire on the Angry Mob.

Lisa catches a stray bullet and slumps limp to the ground.

Gilda shrieks as she scurries over to Lisa's motionless body.

Gilda is immediately swarmed by knife-bearing CRAZIES.
The Crazies endlessly plunge their blades into her chest.

MEYER
Someone help my wife! Please! Do
something! Now!!

James is frantically searching for Derek, Jaela, and Lisa.
Lost amongst the chaos.

Derek and Jaela have hidden behind a dumpster, their ears
covered by their hands.

James jumps up and heaves himself towards them.

He grabs their hands and rushes them to the Palace doors.

EXT. PALACE DOORS - CONTINUOUS.

Before he can hand them off to a PROTECTOR, he catches three
bullets to the back. One goes through and catches the
Protector on the shin. He falls forward. The Protector hits
the floor.

As he crawls backwards, GUARD 1 stomps over to grab Derek
and Jaela.

James' corpse lies face-down.

Meyer is pushed inside by the Protector of the Shield.

But not without a fight.

INT. PRESENT - PALACE THRONE ROOM - DAY.

Derek is in utter disbelief.

DEREK
The Weak... **They** killed my
father...**and** my mother?

MEYER
They were ravenous. They could not
be stopped.

DEREK
I was always told that they--

MEYER
I know. We don't always want to
hear the truth. Ignorance can be
far less painful.

Meyer rises from his seat.

MEYER (CONT.)

There was only one way to ensure
the people would never dare try
something like that again.

Derek looks on with intrigue.

MEYER (CONT.)

Terror.

Meyer is now pacing before Derek.

MEYER (CONT.)

One fatal mistake I made. I had the
power right in my hands-- I placed
too much trust in the people. You
show any sign of weakness, and
that's when they use it against
you.

Meyer slowly makes his way down the stairs towards him.

MEYER (CONT.)

So you see, Derek. My men had no
training. Those rebels tore them
apart. A strong military force is
imperative to a successful kingdom.
Always has been.

Brief pause.

MEYER (CONT.)

I never thought I'd need it. I
always thought that peace was the
way.

Meyer approaches Derek, places his hand on his shoulder, and
looks him dead in the eye.

MEYER (CONT.)

But a peaceful man may as well be a
dead man, do you understand me?

Derek nods.

MEYER (CONT.)

I did what I had to do to make
certain that would never happen to
what's left of my own family. You
do believe that, don't you?

Derek nods.

Meyer lunges back up to his throne.

MEYER (CONT.)

And that includes you. From that day forward, I made a promise to them. Your parents. They weren't around to hear it, but I assured them, as they lie peacefully in their graves-- that I would protect you. Everything I've done has been for Jaela, and for you.

Derek is nearly in tears.

MEYER (CONT.)

So don't you dare question the way I lead my people.

Derek paces.

DEREK

I'm not trying to tell you how to lead your people. I'm only giving you my perspective.

MEYER

Your perspective is weak and naïve, but noted.

Derek is looking away, but Meyer practically forces him to face him.

MEYER (CONT.)

Your father loved you, more than you could ever know. Don't you want to honor his memory?

DEREK

There isn't much honor in leading our own people to the slaughter.

MEYER

And those are the same people who slaughtered your parents. Slaughtered my wife. What I've done for you-- what your father wanted for you--

DEREK

I'm only trying to tell you that violence doesn't have to be the only way. You can lead in a way that inspires the people to rally behind you.

MEYER

And I'm telling you that it doesn't work. Being weak kills those you love.

Beat.

MEYER

You know, I gave your father the same position you hold today. I saw to it that you would be safe-- and I made sure you would take his place.

Derek meets Meyer's gaze.

DEREK

(solemn)

I'm sorry. I never knew that.

MEYER

He didn't live long enough to see his full potential. The love he had for you--

Meyer fighting back tears.

MEYER (CONT.)

It was hard for me to love Jaela in the way he loved you. She was a constant reminder of all that I had lost that day.

Derek smiles briefly before it's overtaken by his frustration and sadness.

Beat.

DEREK

I'm thankful for all you've done for my family.

Meyer's eyes tearing up, staring deeply into Derek's.

MEYER

Please, don't make me forget how good your father was to me.

Derek nods. He hesitates a moment before he turns to leave.

Derek slams the door to the Throne Room.

INT. PALACE HALLWAYS - CONTINUOUS.

As he is stomping out, Jaela pulls him into a side hallway where she gives him an aggressive, yet passionate kiss.

He is unsure how to react, backs away slowly, realizing the implications of what he's done, and leaves in a controlled rush.

Jaela looks self-assured in her rebellious act.

INT. DEREK'S HOME - NIGHT

Derek is pacing back and forth between his kitchen and theater room.

An abrupt knock on the door is heard.

Derek stares at the door.

He takes a deep, but short breath unsure about opening the door to his doom.

Another knock is heard, louder this time.

He takes his time answering the door.

He opens it to a guard he has surprisingly never seen before: A PROTECTOR of the SHIELD. The protector showcases a dark, intimidating mask to conceal his identity. His voice is deep and purposeful, although monotone.

PROTECTOR

Evening, Derek. Just need your statement on your visit to the Palace today. There was an incident.

Derek looks as if he has just seen a ghost.

DEREK

What-- what kind of an incident?

PROTECTOR

An unknown perpetrator assaulted The Sword's daughter.

Derek's heart is pounding.

PROTECTOR (O.S.)

Couldn't get a solid visual on the suspect in question from the cams, but we know who was coming in and out today.

Derek's eyes are frantic.

PROTECTOR (CONT.)

We understand you were at the Palace today. You wouldn't happen to know anything about it, would you?

Derek hesitates a brief moment.

DEREK

I-- I have no idea. I was there, but, I never saw her. I spoke with Meyer on some pressing matters and left as soon as we were done.

PROTECTOR

It seemed to be around the time you were there. Are you sure you didn't see anything out of the ordinary?

DEREK

No-- I think I'd recall if I did.

Derek can't tell what his stare looks like behind the mask.

DEREK (CONT.)

Sorry I couldn't be of more help.

After an uncomfortable moment, the Protector shakes his head and scribbles something down on his pad of paper.

PROTECTOR

Alright, thanks anyway. We're gonna find the bastard, rest assured.

DEREK

Yeah, I hope so too.

PROTECTOR

Hope? We will find him. There's no hoping for the inevitable.

A bit of nervous laughter escapes Derek's mouth.

DEREK

Well, thanks for everything you do. Seriously. It doesn't go unnoticed.

PROTECTOR

Much obliged.

The Protector nods as he turns to leave.

Derek nods back and wastes no time shutting the door.

He breathes in a sigh of relief, looks side to side, and scurries to his kitchen for a stiff drink.

P.O.V. - KITCHEN CAMERA

Derek and his camera have a staring contest as he takes a confident gulp of his drink.

INT. KITCHEN COUNTER - NIGHT

He then lets out a noticeably frightened breath of air.

EXT. PALACE ENTRANCE - DREAM SEQUENCE - NIGHT

Derek slowly enters the palace double doors brandishing a pistol.

He sneaks through hallways and corridors to the throne room.

Dead Silence.

INT. PALACE THRONE ROOM - DREAM SEQUENCE CONTINUED

One lone light shines on the center of the room.

The Sword is barely shown in the light.

Derek lowers his pistol in bewilderment.

The Sword has Jaela held up like a doll by her hair.

Derek raises his pistol, taking aim at The Sword.

Meyer with a clean slice beheads Jaela.

Her body slumps to the floor.

Derek wastes no time in shooting down Meyer.

Meyer falls to the ground.

Derek looks on in horror as Jaela's head continues to roll.

He slowly approaches Meyer's dead body.

Upon a closer look, Meyer's corpse actually has Derek's dead face on it.

INT. PRESENT - DEREK'S HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING

Derek frantically wakes up in a panic at his kitchen table, unaware of what time it is.

Considerable time has passed.

He quickly checks his watch.

DEREK

Fuck.

EXT. COBBLESTONE PATH - THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Derek lunges towards the front door.

INT. THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

He barges in the front door and shuffles past his peers.

All eyes are on him.

INT. DEREK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Derek shuts himself in his office.

He leans his elbow on his desk, hand covering half his face.

He begins typing an article without a care for its quality.

ARTICLE reads: "'The Watch' reporter Ryan Gilroy associated with underground rebellion group more commonly known as the Degenerates."

HEADLINE: "The Watch reporter found guilty of conspiracy to commit high treason"

EXT. PATH FROM THE WATCH TO PALACE - DUSK

Derek shuffles his way to the Palace.

INT. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

He slowly looks up, afraid to face The Sword.

Derek is hesitant as he knows this is his walk of death.

Suddenly, Derek is pulled into a hallway by Jaela.

DEREK

What the fuck are you--

Jaela gestures to her lips, hushing for him to be quiet.

JAELO

(whispering)

Follow me, I have something I want to show you.

Derek gives some resistance.

DEREK

I can't--

JAELA

(still whispering)

Come on, let's go!

He shakes his head.

She grabs his hand and tugs him along.

Finally, Derek reluctantly follows.

INT. PALACE CATACOMBS - DUSK

Jaela tugs him through a series of hidden hallways to a place behind the Palace.

EXT. PALACE HIDDEN GARDEN - DUSK

Jaela yanks Derek past a beautiful garden that leads to a very small stream of water in the Palace's backyard.

She then sits them both down at the bank of the tiny stream. There is a hole in the tall exterior wall high up, just at a perfect position to see the Moon and the stars. And in a blindspot of the cameras only Jaela seems to know about.

DEREK

(soft, but sharply)

Are you insane?

JAELA

Would you relax a moment?

DEREK

Relax?

Jaela gently touches his arm. He looks at her hand.

They stare at one another for a beat before Derek stares off into the distance.

Jaela stares at him a beat.

JAELA

You ever wonder what's out there?

Derek takes in the view.

DEREK

Not really.

(brief pause)

(MORE)

DEREK (cont'd)

You?

JAELA

My father has always said that we don't know what lies beyond these walls. He says he's protecting us from what's out there.

DEREK

And what do you believe?

She matches his gaze. Smirks. Half shrugs.

JAELA

What were you doing coming around here, anyway?

DEREK

A Protector showed up at my doorstep. He wanted to know what happened.

JAELA

And? Did you tell him?

DEREK

I wouldn't be here if I had. I wanted your-- Meyer to hear it from me, directly. I couldn't stand the thought of withholding that from Him.

JAELA

I don't think you need to tell him anything.

Beat.

DEREK

You know, in doing what you did, you may have thought of the best way of getting us killed.

JAELA

Do you really think my father would get rid of the only family that he has left?

DEREK

You think that's beneath him?

Jaela hesitates a beat.

JAELA
It's wise of you not to
underestimate him.

She places her hand on his.

Both share silence for a moment together.

JAELA
Aren't you wondering how that hole
came to be?

Jaela rubs his hand back and forth.

DEREK
I'm wondering how much time I have
left now after the stunt you
pulled.

JAELA
Boy, you sure are one for drama,
aren't you?

Jaela gives him a playful shove.

JAELA (CONT.)
Takes two to tango, you know.

Derek can't help but let a smirk slip through.

A beat.

He shakes his head.

JAELA
You know, it's quite noble of you
to admit to him what really
happened. It's incredibly foolish,
but admirable.

Derek's eyes remain off Jaela. He continues staring off into
the dark. The stars.

DEREK
I've been thinking that some of the
choices I've had to make...

Brief pause.

DEREK (CONT.)
Lately, I-- I don't know-- I--

Jaela moves her head dangerously close to Derek's.

Derek is hesitant. He tries to pull back.

He can't help himself.

DEREK

Do you really think that's the best
idea right now?

She inches closer, motions to kiss him.

JAELA

It's the only thing to do right
now.

They kiss, slowly. Passionately.

DEREK

Well, it can't get much worse,
right?

JAELA

One kiss against another won't make
any difference.

Derek nods in agreement.

DEREK

I suppose that's solid logic.

JAELA

(softly)

This defies all logic. But I want
to do it anyway.

Derek and Jaela continue kissing.

EXT. PALACE ENTRANCE - COBBLESTONE PATH - NIGHT.

Derek is gliding on home, but this night is different.

Once he approaches an alley, he is ambushed by an ATTACKER.

Derek desperately attempts to redirect the knife into his
attacker's chest, but is soon overpowered.

The Attacker removes one hand from the knife and swiftly
jabs Derek in the face.

Derek staggers backward.

The Attacker places both hands on the handle of the knife
and presses forward.

Derek tries repelling the knife, before he is promptly stabbed in the gut.

He groans as he slides to the ground.

The Attacker scurries away to leave him for dead.

P.O.V. - DEREK

Derek's vision is blurred, but he can barely make out what lies before him.

Attacker sprints down the alley.

Suddenly, The Attacker is stopped in his tracks at the end of the alley.

He is close-lined by a SHADOWY FIGURE.

Derek is on the ground, clutching his wound.

The silhouette of a man slowly approaches him.

He kneels down beside Derek.

He looks up to a SECOND MAN before Derek fades to black.

INT. SEWER TUNNELS - NIGHT

Derek wakes up weakly from his seemingly short coma in a dark, musky tunnel.

His vision is blurred for a time.

He then notices TWO MEN sitting across from him.

Derek is laying on a cot across from the two men who found thin, military medical beds to sit on next to supply crates that are quite obviously empty.

AEDUS (mid 30's) is a blonde, skinny, matter-of-fact man. An obvious leader.

MACKAY (early 30's) is dark-haired, medium build. His ego, wit and sarcasm fills every room he's in.

Derek groans as he leans up on his cot.

DEREK

What is this place?

Not a sound.

DEREK (CONT.)
Where have you taken me?

MACKAY
(whispering)
Keep your voice down!

Beat.

DEREK
(softly)
So, you must be the--

AEDUS
(in a low voice)
Yes. How very-- astute of you.

Short beat.

DEREK
What's your big play here, huh?
What do you aim to do with me?

Mackay pushes himself from leaning on the wall and paces toward him.

DEREK (CONT.)
Ransom me out until he meets your demands?

Mackay towers over him a moment before he SMACKS him across the face with his backhand.

Derek cowers away.

AEDUS
Relax.

Mackay takes his position on the wall again.

Aedus leans out from his seat.

AEDUS (CONT.)
In an ideal world, that'd be our plan.
(brief pause)
This world he has crafted--
it's...far from ideal. You're a smart man. You must know this by now.

MACKAY

We're going to be more...methodical
with our approach.

Derek cannot see through the darkness, but can only make out
their silhouettes.

DEREK

What do you hope to accomplish?

Aedus and Mackay give each other a look.

MACKAY

Not so smart anymore.

Derek glares at Mackay, but he pays no mind.

AEDUS

You need not understand our plight.
But you do know of it. Therein lies
the answer you seek.

DEREK

It's not going to go as you'd hope.
You must know that, too.

MACKAY

You'd better hope that it does.

Beat.

DEREK

No one has ever escaped from here.

MACKAY

No one has ever tried.

DEREK

People **have** tried, and none have
succeeded.

AEDUS

We're going to do it right.

DEREK

What makes your plan any different
from those that have failed?

AEDUS

We'll have help on the inside.

This hits Derek pretty hard.

MACKAY

And if you don't, you'll meet a similar end.

(brief pause)

So, for your sake, you should offer your cooperation.

Beat.

DEREK

If you knew anything about me, you'd know exactly why I can't help you.

Aedus approaches Derek slowly.

He crouches down at his side.

Mackay remains leaned up against the wall, watching over his shoulder.

AEDUS

I think that's exactly why you will.

Derek takes this in.

DEREK

So, do you just expect me to know who you are?

Aedus and Mackay shoot each other a glance.

AEDUS

I'm Aedus, and this is Mackay.

Mackay nods.

DEREK

That doesn't help.

AEDUS

You already know who we are.

Short beat.

DEREK

You're not supposed to exist.

MACKAY

And yet, here we are.

Mackay sarcastically bows to Derek.

DEREK
So why me, then?

MACKAY
We picked the first guy we could
find. You were just lying there,
so--

AEDUS
You know the answer to that, too.

Derek's eyes dart back and forth between them.

DEREK
And just what exactly do you think
I'll be able to do for you?

MACKAY
(to Aedus)
You sure we picked up the right
guy?

Aedus shrugs him off.

MACKAY (CONT.)
Not as smart as we thought.

AEDUS
Don't play games with us. We know
how often you meet with Him.

DEREK
How do you know this?

AEDUS
We have eyes where we need them.

MACKAY
We're more connected than you might
think.

Derek is a bit spooked.

DEREK
If you have eyes everywhere, then
why do you need me?

AEDUS
Our eyes are just eyes. They don't
have clearance, and they aren't
you.

DEREK

Whatever it is that you want, he won't let me in close. He'll kill me. You know that, don't you?

Aedus turns back and shuffles over back to his seat on the medical crate next to Mackay.

MACKAY

What, you don't think he sent that man to kill you?

Derek shrugs.

DEREK

Did he or didn't he? Because I don't know, and apparently you guys know a whole lot more than I do, so feel free to enlighten me.

AEDUS

He's far more calculated than he is impulsive. And believe me, he would done it on his own terms.

DEREK

I think I know the guy well enough to know that he does act on impulse.

MACKAY

That was just some random, deranged Weakling. Chalk it up as coincidence.

DEREK

I don't buy into coincidence anymore.

AEDUS

It doesn't add up. He needs you. He knows better than to get rid of you that quickly.

DEREK

He has a reason to now!

Aedus and Mackay give each other a quick side glance.

AEDUS

No one is ever safe here. I think you of all people should know that.

Mackay nods in agreement.

Beat.

AEDUS

Listen, we **are** getting out of here. Whether you're coming with us or not. And we're bringing as many with us as we can.

Derek gives that some thought a moment.

DEREK

Have you both completely lost it?

Aedus and Mackay side glance each other.

DEREK (CONT.)

How do I know you wouldn't just kill me after I've exhausted my usefulness?

AEDUS

You don't.

MACKAY

You don't.

Derek is a little weirded out.

DEREK

So what, then? I just have to trust you?

MACKAY

Well, we did just save your sorry ass, didn't we?

Derek mulls this over.

DEREK

What **exactly** do you need from me?

AEDUS

We need train schedules. Security camera positions, guard shifts and patterns. We know there is a shipment of weapons and ammunition headed this way. We need to arm our men if we have any shot in hell at this. That's our only ticket out of here.

DEREK

And how would I go about doing that?

MACKAY

That's for you to figure out.
You're not a very smart man, but
you can be resourceful.

Derek ignores this and turns his attention to Aedus.

DEREK

We can't do this on our own. Even
if I agreed to help.
(brief pause)
How much support do you have?

MACKAY

Enough.

Derek is skeptical.

DEREK

Show them to me.

Aedus and Mackay look at each other, then back at Derek.

Aedus gestures to Mackay to help Derek up and lead him to
the other room.

INT. SEWERS - BARRACKS - NIGHT

MACKAY helps DEREK limp over, down the tunnels of the
sewers, to a large room that serves as a barracks.

The DEGENERATES all look to the men standing in the doorway.

Some stand to attention in respect of their leaders, others
continue sharpening knives and other preparation procedures.

MACKAY

Is this enough proof for you?

Derek stares in amazement.

AEDUS

We'll nurse you back to health,
then you will help us.

This ought to give Derek something to think about...

SNAP TO DARKNESS.

INT. SEWERS - DEREK'S BEDSIDE - MORNING

Derek is sitting on his bed - Aedus sitting across from him.

Mackay is standing, leaning against a wall, looking up at the manhole cover. Light barely shows through the small hole.

AEDUS

I don't think I need to tell you what's at stake here. You've seen what happens to people who cross him.

DEREK

That's easy for you to say-- you don't have to get close to him.

MACKAY

Isn't it clear to you that he's always wanted a son? You're like the son he never had. You've always been close to him. This will be as if nothing has changed.

DEREK

Everything has changed.

Aedus and Mackay look to each other.

Beat.

Derek shakes his head.

DEREK

You've tasked me with the impossible. You're asking too much.

MACKAY

You seem to forget a very important detail. You already made this more difficult for yourself.

What? How do they know?

DEREK

What are you talking about?

Mackay knows that Derek knows what he's talking about.

DEREK (CONT.)

How do you know that?

Mackay gives him a knowing shrug.

Aedus nods in agreement.

They all know.

DEREK (CONT.)

Right.

Derek takes a moment to process this revelation.

DEREK

So why would you pick a dead man to fight your fights for you?

MACKAY

There's no risk in tasking the dead with the impossible.

DEREK

He's way too smart to allow anything like this go unnoticed.

Derek's eyes beam at Aedus.

DEREK (CONT.)

I can't allow myself to walk into certain failure.

AEDUS

We no longer stand to lose anything anymore, do you?

Beat.

DEREK

Where he doesn't have eyes, he has ears. Where there aren't eyes or ears, there's cameras. He's everywhere. It's useless.

MACKAY

Do you really think you're in a position to negotiate with us?

DEREK

Who would I be fooling here?

AEDUS

You practice the art of deception every day of your life. Is this any different?

DEREK

This is different. Deceiving the people brings me no challenge.

MACKAY

So, consider this to be your first challenge. Deceive the master of deception.

Brief pause.

DEREK

Look, I don't think you realize, his family, my family. They were murdered by people like you. What makes you think I would help the same people who would do something like that?

Mackay slowly paces toward Derek and stands over him.

MACKAY

You think anything He has done is any better?

Derek stares right up at Mackay, not to be intimidated.

DEREK

He has a good reason for all that he's done. I'm not sure I could ever rule in the way that he does, but I get why he's doing it.

Aedus hesitates a brief moment.

AEDUS

I understand your apprehension here. But, you can't believe a word this man says.

Mackay glides back over to the wall and leans up against it.

MACKAY

He only means to win your unwavering support.

Mackay folds his arms.

AEDUS

What he's doing-- it's beyond inhumane.

Derek looks to Mackay.

Mackay gives a sideways glance to Derek briefly, then looks back to Aedus.

AEDUS (CONT.)

So you have a choice here. All I know is that we need your help to put an end to all this. The people need not suffer any longer for the deeds of the few. Be the solace its people so desperately wish to seek.

MACKAY

Or, you can continue to serve the most corrupt individual so consumed by evil, he tricks the devil into believing he's looking himself dead in the mirror.

DEREK

Forgive me if it's difficult to place trust in two people who dragged me into a scum hole making unwarranted claims about a man I've known practically my whole life and all the while trying to persuade me to betray the most powerful man here and help resurrect the same group that killed my family in a failed uprising.

Mackay lets out a light chuckle.

MACKAY

It doesn't sound near as glamorous when you put it that way.

AEDUS

Come now, I must show you something.

Mackay jumps to help Derek up and both follow AEDUS down a tunnel.

INT. SEWERS - BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

Aedus stops at a doorway, Mackay helps Derek in and sits him down.

Across from him sits the Mysterious Man.

DEREK

You?

Mysterious Man nods.

MACKAY

He cannot speak. His tongue was removed during the Ban.

DEREK

Why? What happened?

Mysterious Man's blank, emotionless stare.

INT. FLASHBACK - WALKER RESIDENCE - DAY

DARIUS WALKER (Mysterious Man) and his gleeful wife MARTHA WALKER are in their kitchen cooking.

Martha Walker is African American, short with beautiful curly hair.

PROTECTORS of the SHIELD break down the door.

AEDUS (V.O.)

*The Sword, after the uprising,
began enacting strict laws and
aggressively attacking the people.*

Protectors beat both Darius and Martha with batons.

They then grab them by their arms and tie them up to chairs.

AEDUS (V.O.)

*He sentenced everyone to a life of
Solitude. Outlawing marriage.*

Protector motions to another Guard who hands him the kitchen knife from the table.

Darius must watch as they rip Martha's tongue out.

Martha lets out gargling noises.

As he watches them carry her away, he struggles in attempting to escape.

AEDUS (V.O.)

*He forced all the men into slavery.
And the women to confined to the
Orphanage.*

Protector slowly makes his way behind Darius.

He lifts the knife to his face and grabs his jaw.

EXT. FLASHBACK - PATHWAY TO ORPHANAGE - DAY

GUARDS carry Martha out to the ORPHANAGE.

AEDUS (V.O.)
*Her life was spared, but not for
 long.*

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - ORPHANAGE - LATER

Guards 1 and 2 stand outside delivery room.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - ORPHANAGE - LATER

Guard 3 inside delivery room standing before hospital bed.

Martha lies on the hospital bed. Tear rolls down her face.

Guard 3 begins unbuckling belt.

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - ORPHANAGE - LATER

Guard 1's stern, emotionless face.

WEAKLY WOMAN looking on in terror at Guard 1.

Guard 1 looking forward, then briefly glances at Weakly Woman, then back forward unfazed.

All the while, bed knocking against wall in delivery room.

MARTHA letting out periodic yelps.

AEDUS (V.O.)
*They kept her at the Orphanage
 until they realized--*

EXT. DELIVERY ROOM - ORPHANAGE - LATER

Screams and moans come from the delivery room.

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - ORPHANAGE - LATER

Martha bears stillborn child.

Guards converse indistinctly, nod and make a decision.

GUARD 1
 Bring her here, please.

Guards 2 and 3 approach Martha's bedside as she whimpers.

EXT. ORPHANAGE - DISPOSAL SITE - CONTINUOUS

Martha is brought outside by Guards 2 and 3 in front of a pile of dead mothers.

Martha sobs.

Guard 1 raises his pistol and shoots Martha in the back of the head into the pile of corpses.

INT. PRESENT - SEWERS - BRIEFING ROOM

Derek is in complete, utter disbelief.

DEREK
Good fucking god.

MACKAY
Now, do you see the other side here?

AEDUS
We don't condone what was done to your family. But, this-- this is monstrous what he's doing.

DEREK
I don't understand. I can't--

AEDUS
He's risking everything to help us. Why can't you?

DEREK
You really think I can just forgive what was done to my family that easily?

AEDUS
What makes your situation worse than ours? Worse than his?

Aedus points to Darius.

MACKAY
He seeks retribution. You of all people should understand that.

AEDUS
There's a lot of death on both sides of the aisle here. But don't you see what he's done to this place? To his own people?

MACKAY
Don't just take it from us. Take a moment to look around you, next time you're topside.

DEREK
 (to Darius)
 I'm so sorry for what happened to
 you. But you have to see it from my
 position as well.

Derek lets a moment pass.

DEREK (CONT.)
 I never did get your name.

MACKAY
 He can't speak, remember?

Whoops.

MACKAY (CONT.)
 It's Darius, by the way. His wife's
 name was Martha.

AEDUS
 Solitude was once a peaceful place
 before all this. Now...

Derek takes it all in.

Beat.

AEDUS (CONT.)
 He's never ventured from the Palace
 since the attempt on his life. His
 fear of assassination and rebellion
 has led him off the deep end.

DEREK
 He told me what happened.

MACKAY
 Maybe he did. But there's quite a
 bit he left out...conveniently.

Aedus and Mackay look at each other.

EXT. FLASHBACK - TOWNHOMES - MORNING.

PROTECTORS stand outside WEAKLINGS' townhouses.

PROTECTOR rips SCARED WOMAN and FRIGHTENED CHILD out of
 their home, and drag them through the street.

A WEAK MAN stands in the doorway, leaning out looking for
 his wife and child.

WEAK MAN

Wha-- What are you doing? Where are
you taking the--?

Protector pummels him in the chest with the butt of his
rifle.

The Weak Man clutches his chest, and curls up on the ground.

Protector stomps back down the stairs and heads toward the
next house to do the exact same thing.

The process has begun at the other houses across and down
the street.

INT. ORPHANAGE HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS.

PROTECTOR 2 barges open the door with SCARED WOMAN's head in
his hand, holding her by the hair.

Protector 2 tosses Scared Woman on the hospital bed.

Three male NURSES wearing white scrubs strap her down to the
bed.

The Nurses scurry away.

In the background, similar procedures are going on,
including a child birth.

Nurses wheel away a NEWBORN BABY in a sealed case with air
holes.

Protector 2 climbs up on the bed over her, he closes the
curtains around the bed.

INT. ORPHANAGE SCHOOL PORTION - CONTINUOUS.

Protector leads the Frightened Child down the hallway and to
the CLASSROOM door.

INT. FLASHBACK - CLASSROOM - ORPHANAGE - DAY

TEACHER in front of class full of children lecturing
Propaganda.

The door swings open, Frightened Child files in.

Teacher directs him to his desk.

TEACHER

We must remember that we are The
Weak. We are nothing without The

(MORE)

TEACHER (cont'd)

Shield. The Shield protects us from the forces that exist beyond these walls. The Sword looks out for us, and we must do our part to ensure that this society thrives. We must repay The Sword for all that he has done for us. We would not be alive without him providing us with all we need to be healthy, safe, and prosperous. We must be thankful and extend him our gratitude in every waking moment.

Classroom whiteboard reads: "DO YOUR PART"

INT. FLASHBACK - PALACE BASEMENT - LABORATORY - DAY

White-coated LABORATORY WORKERS slave tirelessly on the formula for the "apathy shots."

A large beaker labelled "Apathy Serum" is filled with a green serum. A LAB WORKER grabs the beaker with his white-gloved hands.

INT. FLASHBACK - ORPHANAGE LABORATORY - DAY

A long line of WEAKLINGS await SCIENTISTS in white lab coats holding syringes to pierce their skin and inject them with a serum.

WEAKLING's arm is pierced. SCIENTIST injects her full of a serum.

She is immediately affected by it. She begins the slouch, her demeanor slower, her face emotionless.

The next WEAKLING 2 in line is given the same treatment. Same deadpan face.

EXT. FLASHBACK - TOWNHOMES - MORNING

Protectors are attaching explosive collars to the necks of WEAKLINGS before loading them single file on a LARGE BUS.

EXT. FIELDS - CONTINUOUS.

The bus unloads the Weaklings to work in the fields under Protector supervision.

The Weaklings slave away.

A FRIGHTENED WEAKLING drops his farm equipment and hopelessly flails as he sprints away.

The Protectors watch as he goes.

An AGGRESSIVE PROTECTOR raises his rifle and takes aim at him.

Another PROTECTOR grabs his rifle and slowly lowers it.

PROTECTOR
No, let him go. Just watch.

Some Weaklings look up from their work to witness--

BOOM! The explosive collar detonates. His head explodes.

The momentum carries his body a few yards forward before dropping limp in the field.

Protectors have themselves a nice laugh.

The gawking Weaklings return to their labor.

INT. PRESENT - SEWERS - BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING.

Derek is in shock.

DEREK
(whispers)
Fuck...

AEDUS
The Sword got what he wished. Now,
everyone falls in line.

Beat.

DEREK
(to Aedus)
Just what makes you think I would
defy this man now, knowing what
he's capable of?

AEDUS
If not for yourself, do the right
thing here. These people-- no one
deserves what they've suffered.

Beat.

MACKAY
So, you join us, or suffer the fate
of everyone else.

DEREK

Threatening me will do you no good.
I'm dead regardless.

Mackay looks to Aedus. Shit.

MACKAY

You can either choose to die in the
grave you've dug for yourself, or
we can help you see your way out of
it.

Derek's mind is racing.

AEDUS

Look, we can't force you into this.
But I know you'll make the right
decision. The only decision.

Derek processes this.

INT./EXT. SUPPLY TRAIN - SUNSET - DREAM SEQUENCE.

Derek sneaking through train, snooping through boxes,
finding weapons. He then opens boxcar door, looks outside,
sees Jaela being held by PROTECTORS.

Protectors in Jeep riding along side train perpendicular.

Protectors are being particularly rough with Jaela.

Derek and Protectors engage in a firefight with automatic
weapons.

He lays down some suppressing fire on the Protectors not
near Jaela, returning fire.

Derek takes cover after Protectors pepper the train with
rounds.

DEREK

(whispering to self)

Shit!

Derek reloads a fresh magazine and tosses the empty aside.

A protector begins using Jaela as a human shield.

Derek peeks back out, but can't get a clear shot.

Train goes behind a wall as it goes through a tunnel.

The Jeep is no longer visible.

DEREK

No, no no no no! **No!**

INT. SEWER TUNNELS - MORNING

Derek shudders awake in his bed.

He takes in the fact that it was all just a dream.

Derek eyes the ladder up to the manhole.

He is contemplating leaving, still clutching his gut.

Derek then lifts himself out of bed and shuffles towards the ladder.

MACKAY

Whoa, whoa. You can't just leave!
You're in no physical state--

DEREK

I think I know my own body. I'm
fine.

AEDUS

You're not. You need rest.

Mackay stops him in his tracks.

Aedus puts his hand on Derek's shoulder.

AEDUS (CONT.)

What's the rush, anyway?

DEREK

I just had a dream-- They had
Jaela.

(beat)

There was nothing I could do.

AEDUS

You can't let this cloud your
judgment. You have to keep your eye
on the bigger picture here.

DEREK

I have to do something. I can't
just sit around here and wait for
something drastic to happen.

MACKAY

So you're just gonna get ahead of
the game by going out and doing
something drastic instead?

Derek rises as if to leave.

MACKAY (CONT.)

She is going to cause you to make a mistake.

AEDUS

A mistake is something we simply cannot afford.

Derek, clutching his wound, slowly approaches the ladder.

MACKAY

What are you going to tell him?

Derek reaches the ladder. He places his hand on it, the other still clutching his gut.

DEREK

I escaped.

MACKAY

And?

Aedus nervously anticipates his answer.

DEREK

My own version of the truth.

Derek weakly climbs up the ladder.

Aedus and Mackay watch him go, until finally turning to face one another. They disappear into the shadows.

EXT. PALACE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Derek then hobbles his way to The Palace.

INT. PALACE MAIN CORRIDOR - NIGHT

He weakly pushes his way through the front door.

INT. PALACE THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Once he reaches the throne room he collapses before The Sword.

INT. THE PALACE ROYAL INFIRMARY - DAY.

Derek wakes on a hospital bed. IV, EKG, the whole nine.

He regains his bearings and sees The Sword is sitting at his bedside.

MEYER

What the hell happened to you?

Derek groans, shifts, and adjusts.

MEYER (CONT.)

Are you alright?

Derek nods.

DEREK

I was ambushed by a madman in an alley.

MEYER

And then what?

Derek hesitates a moment.

DEREK

Dark. Nothingness.

Short beat.

MEYER

Do you know where they took you?

Meyer gives him a soul-piercing look.

Derek battles internally.

DEREK

No, they cloaked my head in a dark hood. I couldn't see a thing.

MEYER

Do you know why they turned you loose?

DEREK

They didn't, I escaped.

MEYER

No one escapes them.

DEREK

I never said it was easy.

Meyer leans forward, closer. His eyes are menacing.

MEYER

Derek, the fact that you survived a run-in with the Degenerates is

(MORE)

MEYER (cont'd)
nothing short of a miracle. I'm
sure you can understand the nature
of my skepticism.

DEREK
I don't know what more you want
from me beyond the truth.

MEYER
Did you tell them anything they can
use against us?

Derek looks away nervously.

MEYER (CONT.)
Derek, what did you tell them?

Derek grimaces.

MEYER (CONT.)
What do they know about us?

DEREK
I gave them nothing. You have
nothing to fear.

MEYER
And what do you have to fear?

Derek begins to noticeably crack.

MEYER (CONT.)
If you've discovered the true
nature of your own fear, your mind
will make clear for you exactly
what to tell me next.

Derek struggles to hold back.

DEREK
They're in the sewers. They seem to
be led by two men-- and they have a
small army.

Meyer remains stone-faced.

MEYER
Nothing we can't handle.

Derek tries to mask his nervousness.

Short beat.

MEYER

Is there anything more you can tell me about them?

Derek is borderline delirious from the anxiety he is feeling.

DEREK

I promise you, that's all I could surmise from my perspective.

Meyer gives him a deep glare.

DEREK (CONT.)

They held me hostage and nearly killed me, what more could you possibly want?

MEYER

There had to be something.

DEREK

There's nothing! Nothing!

MEYER

Alright, enough. I believe you.

Beat.

MEYER

I have to make it up to them.

DEREK

What? To whom?

Meyer ponders this a bit.

MEYER

I let them down. I'll never forgive myself for what happened that day. It's like a nightmare I never woke up from. I can still feel the terror I felt that day. It's indescribable. Like someone is standing on my chest each time I think about it. I can't breathe. My heart is sore. The life is drained right from me. Their souls are now like an aura of pain all around me.

Derek lets it sink in.

DEREK

I'm sorry.

MEYER

(softly)

I don't know, it sounds ridiculous,
but--

DEREK

No, I don't think it's ridiculous
at all. I-- can't imagine. I
know it must be difficult.

MEYER

The worst part is, the whole thing
could have been prevented. I failed
them-- I failed.

Meyer fights off breaking down in front of him.

DEREK

I'm sure there was nothing that
could be done.

(short beat)

I'm sorry you had to go through
that.

MEYER

You're lucky you weren't forming
memories then. You wouldn't want
that weighing on your mind.

They share the silence together a moment.

MEYER

My men will take care of them, I
assure you.

Derek weakly nods his head.

DEREK

They think I'll be helping them.

MEYER

Let's use that to our advantage,
then. We'll hit them before they
know what's happening.

Derek nods emphatically.

DEREK

Shouldn't we wait? You know, until
I--

Meyer shakes his head.

MEYER

We can't afford to wait any longer.
We have to hit them now.

Derek maintains his poker face. Barely.

MEYER (CONT.)

They're just holding on to a
hopeless cause. Hopelessness is all
they have. We hit them at their
weakest.

DEREK

They do have hope, but hope breeds
stupidity.

MEYER

That's what I'm counting on.

Derek nods.

Beat.

MEYER

Thanks for letting me vent, by the
way. I hadn't ever talked about it
to anyone else before.

DEREK

We all have something we shouldn't
hold onto.

Meyer nods, rises, and strides to the door but turns back to
him in the doorway.

MEYER

Your path has been illuminated for
you. Don't wander this time.

Derek nods weakly in agreement.

Meyer takes his time in leaving.

Derek waits a moment, undoes the IV, and slips out of bed.

INT. PALACE HALLWAYS - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

He then carefully scans the hallways for guards before
he sneaks to the control room.

JAELE (O.S.)
You healed up fast.

Derek, scared shitless, immediately turns to face Jaela.

DEREK
(loudly whispering)
You're gonna give me an aneurysm!

JAELE
I don't normally have that kind of
effect on people.

DEREK
(sharply whispering)
Do you usually sneak up on people
like this?

JAELE
Actually, no. I usually don't
have anyone to sneak up on.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jaela slowly struts into the Control Room, shutting the door
behind her.

JAELE (CONT.)
Do you usually snoop around where
you shouldn't?

Jaela slowly paces toward him.

DEREK
If I wasn't supposed to be here,
wouldn't you think this would be
better guarded?

Jaela inches closer to him still. Derek has nearly backed up
to the end of the room by now.

DEREK (CONT.)
Seriously, there should be a guard
here.

Jaela is in his face.

DEREK (CONT.)
This is weird.

Derek is backing away even still.

JAELA

It doesn't have to be weird. You're making it weird.

Derek chuckles.

Jaela moves in for a slow, passionate kiss.

She moves her hand to his crotch.

Derek pulls away.

DEREK

Besides, who says I shouldn't have access to this type of information anyway?

Jaela likes a good challenge.

JAELA

Why do I doubt that so much?

She puts on her patented smirk.

DEREK

Because you're skeptical of unfamiliar men?

JAELA

I think I've familiarized myself with you sufficiently.

Jaela moves in again. Derek is done for.

DEREK

I suppose so.

Derek gives her a smirk.

She returns the favor.

DEREK (CONT.)

Why did you kiss me, anyway? The first time, I mean. You didn't know me well at all then.

JAELA

Do you think my father lets me know anyone?

She runs her hand up his arm. He sees this. Oh boy.

DEREK
He might have a good reason for
that.

Jaela backs away this time.

JAELA
Don't you think it's a bit
unreasonable to shelter me from the
outside world completely?

DEREK
He does that to everyone, if you
haven't noticed.

JAELA
I'm his daughter. This is
different.

Derek nods in agreement.

DEREK
Not a single person?

JAELA
Suitors don't make it past the
front door.

Derek makes a motion as if to leave.

DEREK
Well, I best be going then!

But he does not.

Jaela laughs. She puts her hand on his chest to stop him.

JAELA
Are you telling me you're a suitor?

Derek takes a step back.

DEREK
As appealing as that sounds, I'm
inclined to avoid that risk at all
costs.

Derek smirks and shakes his head.

JAELA
Am I not worth the risk?

DEREK
I never said that.

She slowly makes her advance.

JAELA
Do you love me?

DEREK
I've enjoyed our time together. I
don't know that I'd call it love
after just a short time.

She's dangerously close to him again.

DEREK (CONT.)
And you?

He wants to back up further, but something is stopping him.

JAELA
It sure feels like love. And I
think just the feeling of it is
good enough for love.

Jaela stares affectionately at him for a beat.

Derek returns the favor.

JAELA (CONT.)
So, on the subject of what you were
doing in here...

Derek pauses longer than he'd like.

DEREK
Your father has me on some sort of
secret assignment. And I've not
been doing the best job with
it...if I'm being honest.

JAELA
If you're being honest.

Both share a quiet laugh.

JAELA (CONT.)
So that's why my father has such a
close eye on you, your job must be
important.

DEREK

I'm the most important person to him, well, second only to you.

JAELA

This is only if you're being honest with me...how can I know you're trustworthy?

DEREK

Your lips meeting mine has made that pretty clear.

JAELA

Clear as mud?

Derek softly chuckles. She shows him her patented smirk.

DEREK

I have to be going, before anyone catches us.

JAELA

Catches us? Were we up to no good?

She makes her slow approach to him.

DEREK

Something like that.

Jaela smiles at Derek as he marches away.

He turns back to her before opening the door to leave.

DEREK

Can you answer me something?

JAELA

Sure, what is it?

DEREK

What do you hope to find in this life? Your purpose can't just be sneaking up on me and putting my life in danger.

Jaela snickers.

JAELA

I just hope to find fulfillment in this life. And I can't help but think I'll only find it outside this place.

DEREK

And how do you suppose you'll do that?

JAELA

I've got something incubating beneath the surface.

Holy fuck.

DEREK

Wait, they're? Do you mean--?

Jaela nods.

DEREK

But what-- How-- I mean what do we-- What should--

Jaela places a finger on his mouth.

JAELA

Do you trust me?

Derek nods emphatically.

Jaela stares deeply into his eyes.

JAELA (CONT.)

Then join us.

Derek's mouth is agape. This changes things.

INT. SEWERS - NIGHT.

Derek is frantic as he paces in front of Aedus and Mackay who are seated before him on the supply boxes.

DEREK

Why didn't you tell me about her?

MACKAY

We didn't think you would keep your composure.

DEREK

You can't keep me in the dark!

AEDUS

Can you keep your damn voice down?

Derek collects himself.

DEREK

This doesn't change the fact that they can still see us everywhere we go.

MACKAY

You seriously don't think that she can take care of that?

DEREK

Then why did you need me in the first place?

Aedus and Mackay look to one another.

AEDUS

We needed insurance.

DEREK

Is that what I am to you?

MACKAY

I wouldn't say you're even worth that.

DEREK

He's going to come at you with everything he's got! You need me!

Uh oh.

AEDUS

How much time do we have?

Mackay slowly paces toward Derek.

MACKAY

What did you say?

AEDUS

Listen to me.

DEREK

(to Mackay)

I don't know, did I stutter?

MACKAY

How would he know where we are?

AEDUS

How long do we have?

MACKAY

You didn't tell him, did you?

Oh shit.

DEREK

I was afraid, I needed to gain his trust. But this can still work, you have to trust me.

MACKAY

You just got done saying that he will come at us full force with our pants down, are you insane?

DEREK

You said it yourself, you have the upper hand having the--

Mackay lunges at Derek and pins him against the wall.

Aedus rushes over to stop him.

MACKAY

I knew you would fuck this up!

Derek clinching at his throat, trying to push away from Mackay.

AEDUS

Mackay, get off him! We need him.

Mackay's grip is unrelenting.

MACKAY

We stopped needing him the moment he fucked us.

Derek tries his best to muster a clear response.

DEREK

Watch what you say to me. Don't forget that he still trusts me!

MACKAY

You're done making the decisions around here!

DEREK

I was never making the decisions to begin with! But you need me on that train, remember? Without me, you're lost. You're nothing. So go on, kill me.

Mackay tightens the grip he has on Derek's throat.

AEDUS

That's enough! Get off him!

Aedus separates the two.

Derek takes a moment to regain his strength to speak.

DEREK

While his men are down here in the sewers looking for us, we make our escape. I can rob the train, gather some weapons for us, and we pay him a visit.

MACKAY

If he comes down here before you get back, we are not ready to take on his forces without weapons. Time is of the essence.

DEREK

We can trap them in the sewers. With no way to get out, we have free range to do what we please topside. He won't have any guards with him in the palace, he's going to have every man on this.

AEDUS

He's not stupid, he won't do that.

DEREK

Once he realizes none of you are down here, we'll already have control of the train, the weapons, and the palace. His men won't be able to negotiate with us, and they won't know how to react once we have their leader. From there, we ride the train out to freedom.

MACKAY

I don't like it at all.

AEDUS

We don't have much in the way of options.

MACKAY

(pointing to Derek)

Yeah, because you left us with no choice!

DEREK

I can fix this. Just give me this chance, and I'll make it right.

Mackay gives a side glare to Aedus.

Silence fills the room, except a slight dripping of water.

DEREK

I'm sorry, I-- He was bearing down on me. He strikes fear in the heart something fierce.

Derek can't bear to face them.

AEDUS

Fear is only courage waiting to be born.

Beat.

MACKAY

Just-- find out when the next shipment comes in, and we'll handle it from there.

Mackay gives Derek a hard stare, and makes sure he's looking right at him.

MACKAY (CONT.)

But first, we'll need a **big** distraction. If they catch us down here, we're finished.

DEREK

What kind of a distraction?

MACKAY

You'll have to figure that out on your own.

DEREK

That wasn't a part of the deal.

MACKAY

No, but it's the plan now. Thanks to you.

Derek gets in Mackay's face. Mackay sizes him up.

MACKAY (CONT.)

You know what's at stake here. You need to be more willing to sacrifice for the cause.

Derek backs off.

AEDUS

We'll take care of our end of the bargain, the rest is up to you.

Derek nods as he takes it all in.

Beat.

DEREK

But, what's the end game here? Do you even have a plan for when we're all on the outside?

AEDUS

No, we don't. We don't know where we'll go, or what we'll do. But I do know this, we would rather live in coffins six feet under than live here in this god forsaken place for one more day.

Beat.

AEDUS

Hey, look at me.

He obeys.

AEDUS (CONT.)

We'll be waiting for you there at the station with the weapons. On the off chance we're not, assume the worst.

MACKAY

No matter what happens, make sure you finish the job.

Derek nods.

AEDUS

You'd best get going.

Derek climbs his way back up the ladder.

Aedus and Mackay give each other a knowing look.

Both look back up at the ladder/manhole opening.

INT. PALACE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Derek purposefully strides down an otherwise empty hallway. He reaches a doorway with an overhead sign that reads "SUPPLIES."

He pushes through the doorway to enter a ROOM filled with seemingly empty military-looking supply boxes.

Derek searches the room for a while before he finds a MANIFEST.

SCHEDULE reads NEXT ARMS SHIPMENT: DEPARTS 8:00PM, RETURNS 12:00AM.

Derek checks the clock.

CLOCK FACE - 7:37 PM.

DEREK
(whispering sharply)
Fuck!

BACK TO ROOM.

Suddenly, a man's voice shatters the silence.

WORKER
Sir, you can't be here. What are
you doing here?

Derek spins to find a WORKER eyeing him suspiciously.

DEREK
What does the next shipment have
on-board?

Worker notices his Watch badge, outlined in YELLOW LIGHT.

WORKER
I'm sorry, do you have clearance
for this type of information?

Derek stares blankly at the Worker.

WORKER (CONT.)
You'd better identify yourself,
right now.

DEREK
Look, pal. I've got more clearance
than you ever will around here.
You'd better just tell me, or we're
about to have some problems.

WORKER

Sir, if you don't back off, I'm gonna have to get the Protectors of The Shield down here. And The Sword--

DEREK

I talk to The Sword directly everyday. I'm Derek Henderson, the Chief Editor of The Watch.

WORKER

I'm sorry, but I'm gonna need authorization from--

DEREK

Authorization? Authorization, my dick you nobody! Why don't we go ask Him right now?

WORKER

I-- uh--

DEREK

You really don't know who I am, do you? I work with The Sword directly, every single day. So what would he think if he knew you were deliberately wasting my time?

WORKER

I'm-- I'm sorry. I apologize, Derek. Truly I do, I--

DEREK

Come on, then. Out with it already!

WORKER

Right, uh-- The next shipment does have armaments, but I'm not sure what or how much exactly. I think mostly just ammunition for the Protectors.

DEREK

Thanks, now was that so difficult?

Derek storms out the door.

WORKER

I'm sorry, but I don't really understand. Why did you need--

Derek is long gone before he can answer.

Worker looks suspiciously down the hallway.

Worker then retreats back into the room after a brief moment.

Derek is suddenly pulled into a side hallway.

INT. PALACE SUB-HALLWAY - NIGHT.

This hallway is so dimly lit, it's nearly pitch-black.

DEREK

Oh, back for round two, are we?

Derek sees that it's only Darius.

DEREK (CONT.)

What the hell are you doing?

Darius motions for him to shut the fuck up.

DEREK (CONT.)

(now whispering)

Are you insane? You could get us both killed! Are you trying to royally fuck this entire operation?

Darius shakes his head furiously.

DEREK (CONT.)

(still whispering)

Right, you can't talk. Shit!

Darius hands him a note.

Derek raises it to some dim light.

NOTE FACE: DO NOT BOARD THE TRAIN. YOU MAY BE WALKING INTO AN AMBUSH.

DEREK

(whispering)

We have no choice. You have to tell Aedus and Mackay. The next shipment is very soon. You have to go. Right. Now! I have to create a distraction.

Darius nods to him and disappears into the shadows.

Derek begins briskly pacing towards the Palace exit.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - WEAK APARTMENTS - LATER.

Derek waits behind a trash can in an alley.

He cautiously peeks around the corner.

A BUS is unloading SLAVES back into their homes, one-by-one.

Derek sees a SLAVE wearing an EXPLOSIVE COLLAR.

The SLAVE mopes to his apartment.

Derek dashes around the corner and grabs both of the slave's arms behind his back.

The Slave, startled, lets out a gasp before Derek slaps his hand over his mouth.

DEREK
(whispering)
Shh. Shut the fuck up. Do exactly
as I say.

The slave nods nervously.

Derek escorts the slave towards...THE ORPHANAGE.

INT. ORPHANAGE - HOSPITAL WING - CONTINUOUS.

Derek briskly escorts the slave through hallways and corridors.

NURSES look on suspiciously.

Derek smiles and nods to a CONFUSED NURSE.

INT. ORPHANAGE - DELIVERY ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Derek shoves the slave forward, still maintaining his grasp on him.

Slave lets out muffled whimpers.

DOCTORS and NURSES look on in confused suspicion.

A PHYSICIAN sporting a CLIPBOARD approaches Derek and the Slave.

PHYSICIAN
May I help you?

Derek's eyes dart about the room.

DEREK
Something's wrong with this slave.
He won't work.

Slave looks back at Derek, frightened.

Physician tries to wrap his mind around the statement.

He looks to his NURSES. Then back to Derek.

PHYSICIAN
A slave who won't work?

DEREK
What is to be done with him?

PHYSICIAN
Isn't it obvious?

Derek's eyes are frantic.

PHYSICIAN (CONT.)
I don't understand. What would you
like us to do about it?

DEREK
He can't communicate his wants or
needs. I-- I don't know what's
wrong with him.

Physician shrugs.

PHYSICIAN
Well, I'm not so sure this is our
problem. Get this..thing out of my
sight.

Commotion outside the Delivery Room.

Derek glances over his shoulder behind him.

Nurses pointing down the hallway at Derek.

A MASKED GUARD is pointed in the right direction.

Derek turns, with the Slave as a human shield.

The Masked Guard raises his pistol to shoot.

Derek eyes a SCALPEL on the tray beside him.

BANG! The shot is high. It pierces the ceiling above.

Derek raises the scalpel above his head and jabs it downward...

Shouts and gasps are heard all around.

The Masked Guard takes aim to shoot again...

Derek strikes where the collar connects on the back of the Slave's neck.

BANG! Another bullet whizzes past Derek's head.

The Masked Guard continues approaching, his gun still trained on Derek.

BANG! The shot catches the Slave's shoulder.

The collar drops to the floor.

Derek slides open a sliding glass door next to him leading to an outdoor balcony.

He leaps. The collar detonates.

BOOM! A massive explosion obliterates everything around it.

The Orphanage crumbles, splitting it in two. The Hospital Wing almost completely destroyed.

Clouds of dust, smoke engulf the immediate space.

DARKNESS.

OPEN ON:

Flames crackling, debris falling.

Derek, bloody and beaten, struggling to rise.

He limps through the rubble.

An Alarm blasts through the silence.

He stumbles upon AN INJURED GUARD.

Derek grabs the pistol next to the Injured Guard as he rolls around, patting his own limbs to be sure they're still attached.

Derek BLASTS him as he limps on by.

He continues to stumble towards the Palace.

The Alarm continues to blare.

Suddenly, POPS of distant gunfire can be heard.

His head snaps to where he thinks it's coming from - he does not want to believe it, but he knows it's from the sewers.

He hears distant shouting of Protectors as it sounds like they are heading right for the Orphanage.

Or what's left of it, anyway.

EXT. PALACE - CONTINUOUS.

Although noticeably afraid, he continues looking towards his goal and edges forward.

INT. PALACE CORRIDORS LEADING TO THRONE ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

Derek looks nervously at his pistol.

He then gains the courage to raise the pistol, looking determined.

He slowly, weakly makes his way up the stairs, looks down the corridor.

Then, he looks back towards where the sewers would be outside. He looks unsure, worried about his companions.

He shakes this off and makes his way to the control room.

Empty.

Derek feebly makes his way to the throne room. Gun raised, at the ready. But his left arm helps to raise his right arm.

INT. PALACE THRONE ROOM - NIGHT.

Meyer is alone, with one light shining down on the center of the room.

Derek carefully enters the room, his eyes trained on the pistol that's pointed at Meyer.

MEYER

I should have known. I'm
disappointed, but not surprised.

Derek, still propping up his right arm, takes aim at Meyer.

DEREK

This has to end.

MEYER

Why don't you just put that weapon away and we can talk like civilized human beings.

DEREK

Civilized? Nothing you've done all your life has been civilized!

MEYER

You don't know what you're doing. You have no idea the implications--

Derek makes sure Meyer knows exactly where he is pointing his gun.

DEREK

I know exactly what I'm doing.

MEYER

If you did, you would know the rational thing to do here.

DEREK

You're taking life away from the people, and the lives you don't take, you're taking away their freedom to truly live!

MEYER

Individuality is the death of order.

DEREK

Listen to yourself! How can you not care? What is wrong with you?

MEYER

I did care about you! And your father. He set you up for success, and you pissed it all away with your blatant disregard for everything I've done for you!

DEREK

I have been loyal to you! I've done nothing but serve you!

MEYER

You've served me up until the true test of your loyalty.

Derek shakes his head and struggles to keep the pistol raised. He finally lowers it.

DEREK

You're not making any sense.

MEYER

I already made mistakes of my own,
and it cost the lives of our own
families. I couldn't allow them
another opportunity to rise up
again.

DEREK

It's already begun.

MEYER

You're completely oblivious to the
truth. I've already won.

DEREK

You're a fool if you believe that.
Your reign of terror is over.
You'll never know what you've taken
from these people. I can't possibly
give back what you've taken from
them, but I can destroy the man
responsible.

MEYER

That's awfully noble of
you. And how do you intend to do
that?

Derek raises the gun to Meyer.

Derek lunges for Meyer, but is held back by two men who come
from the shadows.

DEREK

What the fuck? Get your fuckin'
hands off me!

The light illuminates Aedus and Mackay's faces.

DEREK (CONT.)

What? No, this can't be. You fucks!
I trusted you!

Darius and Jaela close in from the darkness on both sides of
Meyer.

DEREK

No...no no no how is this even
possible?

INT. FLASHBACK - WALKER RESIDENCE - DAY.

A knife is held to Darius' mouth.

MACKAY (O.S.)
Aedus, take her to the Orphanage.

Aedus nods, clenches Martha, shoves her out the door, and follows.

Mackay holds the knife to a terrified Darius.

MACKAY
Sorry, I'm only following orders.
She can't be saved.

Mackay swings around the chair, crouches to meet Darius eye to eye.

MACKAY (CONT.)
But you can.

Darius struggles with his helplessness. He tries his very best to escape his binds. It's all for naught.

Mackay notices this.

MACKAY (CONT.)
Pledge your loyalty to The Sword.
And you keep your tongue, along
with your worthless life.

DARIUS
What do you want from me? I'll do
whatever you want!

MACKAY
The Sword requires an extra eye on
things. Otherwise, your time will
be spent out in the fields. A
slave, for life.

Mackay gives him an "Oh, come on!" look.

MACKAY (CONT.)
You wouldn't want to wear that
pesky old collar, would you?

DARIUS
I'll be a slave either way. It
makes no difference to me.

Mackay nearly jumps from excitement. Like a madman.

MACKAY

Ah, but see that's where you're wrong! You don't want to suffer the same fate as your wife, do you?

DARIUS

You bastards-- I'll--

Mackay grabs his jaw. He presses the knife to his cheek.

MACKAY

You'd better choose your words carefully here.

Mackay makes sure Darius sees the knife next to his face. He releases his grip and removes the knife.

MACKAY (CONT.)

And while you can.

Mackay paces around Darius' chair.

MACKAY (CONT.)

Do remember, I determine whether or not you get to keep that privilege.

Darius mulls this over.

MACKAY (CONT.)

So...

Mackay leans in close to his face from behind, knife on the other cheek.

MACKAY (CONT.)

I do hope you thought hard about what you'd like to say next.

Darius's breathing becomes heavy as he breaks down into tears.

INT. PRESENT - PALACE THRONE ROOM - NIGHT.

Derek is in utter disbelief.

MEYER

Don't beat yourself up too much, kid. You wouldn't want to spend your final moments that way.

Derek tries to look behind his back at Aedus and Mackay.

DEREK

Tell me why. Look me in the eye and
tell me why you did this!

MEYER

The simple fact that you even have
to ask is exactly why we had to
test you. And that's exactly why
you failed.

Derek squirms to get out of their grasp.

MEYER (CONT.)

What brought upon the notion that
you would escape this once all was
said and done?

Derek realizes his fate.

JAELA

Loyalty to the system is loyalty to
the family!

AEDUS and MACKAY

We live to serve and serve to live.

DEREK

I won't be a mindless cog in your
system.

MEYER

Thank you for confirming my
suspicions.

Meyer nods, shoos Aedus, Derek, and Mackay away with a lazy
motion of his hand.

Derek is taken away by Aedus and Mackay.

DEREK

No! No! Fuck you! Fuck!

Mackay hits the back of Derek's head with the pistol.

Lights out.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

The sky is covered in clouds, it rains lightly.

Crowd beginning to file in.

There is a stage with an execution apparatus on it.

There is a person standing in the apparatus, Derek.

EXT. WEAK DISTRICT - MORNING

Protectors herd the Weak one by one out of their respective homes.

Distant pops of gunfire are heard briefly.

Sparse Weaklings whimper in reaction to the gunfire.

Protectors corral them to the Town Square.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - MORNING

Derek comes to. He finds himself in an execution apparatus.

He stands before a large crowd of the Weak and sparse Protectors.

Some look on in anticipation. Most look down, solemn.

Darius approaches Derek.

DEREK

Is it true? What they did to you?
And your wife?

DARIUS

Every word of it is true.

You can talk?

DEREK

Not every word.

DARIUS

Every word that matters. The bullet
points.

Beat.

DEREK

Why did you do it?

DARIUS

What they did was horrible, but I
wasn't about to be on the hopeless
end of a raw deal.

DEREK

I chose not to serve tyranny.

DARIUS
You chose wrong.

DEREK
Someone had to stand up to him.

DARIUS
I admire your principles, but it's foolish.

DEREK
I don't expect you to understand, being in your cozy position now.

DARIUS
You think I enjoyed this?

DEREK
Didn't you?

DARIUS
I'm just doing what's necessary to survive.

DEREK
I chose to do something about my situation. When it really hits you, the weight of your loss, maybe you'll understand.

DARIUS
I'm hard pressed to find a moment that goes by where I don't feel the pain of losing her. You wouldn't know anything about what that's like.

Darius' glance unwavering, he paces away.

Derek watches him go, tearing up.

Jaela approaches, looks up at Derek.

DEREK
What the hell do you want?

JAELA
Oh, don't be so bitter! You did this to yourself.

DEREK
You play an interesting role in your father's regime. Did he teach
(MORE)

DEREK (cont'd)
you to trick hapless men into
falling in love with you?

JAELA
Oh come on. Don't be so naive. Did
you really think that was love?

DEREK
So, what then? You don't mind being
denied a normal life?

JAELA
What is normal, anyway?

Beat.

DEREK
You have a corrupted view of
society if you think what your
father does is for the good of it.

JAELA
You don't see the bigger picture
here.

DEREK
Your idea of a greater good has no
good in it at all.

Jaela shrugs off his comment, still staring with her
patented smirk.

DEREK (CONT.)
So is this what you'll do? Continue
to blindly serve your father in
this ruse?

JAELA
Once you hop off your soap box,
you'll realize what we're doing
here.

Brief pause.

JAELA (CONT.)
Given the same choice, I think your
father would have been loyal to
him.

DEREK
Don't tell me you think you know
what he would have done.

JAELE

It doesn't matter. You'll be forgotten. Just like him.

DEREK

What I did here will live on beyond my death.

JAELE

You'll fade in to whatever history we decide for you.

DEREK

What I stood for will inspire confidence.

JAELE

Look where 'doing the right thing' has landed you. You could have met a better end had you done what you were supposed to.

DEREK

Everything in Solitude ends in despair.

Jaela lets that one sink in a moment.

She slowly approaches Derek on the stand.

She places her face right next to his, nearly touching.

JAELE

(whispering)

All you had to do was turn them in.

Beat.

JAELE

Have a nice afterlife.

She turns to march away.

JAELE (CONT.)

If there is one.

She raises her eyebrows at him. Still maintaining her smirk.

A furious Derek watches her leave, then sees Aedus and Mackay in the distance.

Aedus looks on with a subdued anticipation.

Mackay gives Derek a nice smile and wave.

Derek looks to the horizon, the sun shines through the clouds where he is looking.

Protector prepares the apparatus for Derek's execution.

Derek lets the tears overcome him.

His head is pulled from his body by the apparatus.

It rips his spine clean out along with his head. His body falls to the ground.

His head and spine are all that are hanging from the apparatus.

All that can be heard is the calm howl of the wind.

His spine blows slightly in the wind. Blood drips down.

INT. THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Ryan is sitting at his desk reading an article while conversing with colleague.

HEADLINE reads: "Chief Editor linked to underground rebellion group"

ARTICLE reads: "Derek Henderson was executed after being found guilty of collusion, sedition and conspiracy to commit high treason. The former Chief Editor of The Watch was coordinating with 'The Degenerates' in a scheme which involved robbing an armed supply train and attempting a coup."

RYAN GILROY

Just when you think you know somebody.

COLLEAGUE

You never really can trust anyone.

RYAN

Those closest to you turn out to be the least trustworthy.

COLLEAGUE

That's the only idea I've ever found to be absolute.

RYAN

Some men don't know the true meaning of loyalty. What a shame.

JOHNATHAN STEADWILER (mid to late 30's) is seen in an office discussing something with an OFFICIAL.

Johnathan is a tall, skinny man with thick sandy blond hair.

Johnathan shakes hands with the Official, scoots his chair back and gets up to leave the room.

WORKER scraping off Derek's name from Chief Editor's office.

Worker places "Johnathan Steadwiler - Chief Editor" name plaque on door.

EXT. COBBLESTONE PATH - THE WATCH HEADQUARTERS - SUNSET.

Johnathan exits The Watch Headquarters and begins his walk home.

On his walk home, he stops just short of an open manhole.

A FRANTIC MAN sprints towards him from an alley brandishing a lead pipe.

Johnathan turns at the last possible moment, but it's too late.

He is suddenly beaten by the Running Man with the lead pipe.

He falls violently into the hole and drops into the sewer tunnels.

INT. SEWERS - DARK.

Johnathan is then dragged by two "Degenerates" and dropped in front of two other men.

The two Degenerates who dragged him leave the room.

Johnathan looks up at Aedus who shows his face in the light.

AEDUS

Hello there, Johnathan.

Brief pause.

MACKAY (O.S.)

Nice of you to drop in.

Mackay shows his face in the light.

MACKAY (CONT.)

We've been expecting you.

90.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END