

APEX

by

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APEX
(PREDATORS 2)

BLACK SCREEN

A THUMPING HEARTBEAT.

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

Billions of shimmering stars suspended in vast nothingness.

More stars enter frame's edge. No known constellations.

Pulling back, away from the cosmos. Falling...

THE HEARTBEAT QUICKENS.

Light pollution DIMS the stars upon entering --

EXT. ATMOSPHERE - DAY

The darkness of deep space gives way to a bright sunny day.
Blue skies. A horizon.

EXT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET - DAY

An expansive mountainous terrain covered in dense JUNGLE.

FLYING FORWARD INTO the jungle forest and --

Piercing the treeline of exotic tropical foliage to find --

ELLA, petite, fit and lean, runs at primal-panic top speed.
Vengeful intensity in her eyes.

She's bleeding from a hairline wound and breathing heavily.
Her tight clothes spattered with luminescent GREEN BLOOD.

RAPID FIRE GUNSHOTS echo from a mountain summit behind her...

...Followed by a sequence of DETONATIONS!

Then more GUNFIRE.

Ella doesn't flinch, nor does she turn back. Her laser focus aimed forward. Her eyes scan 180° back and forth every step.

Flashes of STRANGE SYMBOLS carved into tree trunks.

She's tracking a GREEN BLOOD TRAIL: little interval blotches of fluorescent dribble on the ground or leaves ahead of her.

She hops over twine trip-wires holding counterweights and hidden booby traps. Avoiding the area's myriad rigged snares. Familiarized with the terrain.

OBSCURED ANGLE FROM BELOW: Ella hops over a DEATH PIT. Sharpened spears point up a hole covered by leaves.

She approaches a CLIFF with a hundred-foot drop into a river. Skids its edge and cuts right.

This course-correction makes her double her already punishing speed.

Following along the cliffside, she sees MOVEMENT in the forest CANOPY, just inside the treeline. Parallel to her.

...She's gaining on it.

A guttural INHUMAN DEATH ROAR echoes from far behind her.

Ella breaks focus, recognition flashes across her face.

A few second later -- an EXPLOSION RUMBLES!

Its BLAST WAVE -- propels Ella OVER THE EDGE!

She TUMBLES through the air.

Before hitting the water, she REGAINS FORM and dives, gracefully torpedoing into the river.

EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

UNDERWATER -- she narrowly avoids jagged rocks.

She breaks the surface for a breath of air --

-- and dives back under.

She allows the current to carry her downstream.

On the shore ahead, Ella glimpses blue electric arcs flicker around a semi-invisible SHAPE. Its active camouflage impeded by the refractions of the water, until it fully deactivates.

Exposed, the shape LIMPS its way into the jungle for cover.
Hunched over and holding its side.

Ducking under water, Ella butterfly strokes toward land.

EXT. RIVER BANK - CONTINUOUS

Ella pulls herself onto a muddy embankment.

She scoops handfuls of MUD and smears it over her body.
Obscuring her body's heat signature.

She looks up in the direction of the blast.

A dissipating MUSHROOM CLOUD hovers over the cliff.

Her face, a spectrum of emotions: grief gives way to loss...
Then rage.

She traces the meadow, finding fresh footprints in the mud:
large and definitely not human.

Ella follows the fading prints into the --

EXT. JUNGLE - CONTINUOUS

Ella approaches the closest, largest tree in the area.
Scanning its trunk, she locates another STRANGE SYMBOL.

Gleaning information from its shape, style and placement, she
heads in the direction it seems to suggest.

A few strides in and the blood trail resumes, albeit less
profuse now. Ella follows it, her senses alert.

Suddenly, the trail ends.

Abruptly, she stops. Does a 360° scan of her area. Quiets...

Hears a distant RUSTLING SOUND.

She looks toward the source of the sound, up in the trees.
Twenty yards ahead. A lone BRANCH SWAYS. No wind.

Even from this distance, the GREEN GLOW of an open wound is
visible.

Ella makes a soft CHIRPING WHISTLE that starts a chain
reaction response among the indigenous life-forms.

At the height of the animals' cacophony, she makes her move:
and darts in the direction of the occupied TREE.

Ella glances at the surrounding carved SYMBOLS --

She slows and stays hidden behind the tree trunks.
Approaching quietly. Walking sideways, imperceptibly silent.

Suddenly, the blood trail ends. She freezes.

CLICKING above.

She spins around and presses her back against a tree trunk.

Peeking between the foliage, she sees her target up in the trees: a YAUTJA PREDATOR. His name is NIMROD.

Severely wounded, his RIGHT ARM is severed at the forearm.
The QUILLS (dreadlocks) on the right side of his head are cut short into bloody appendages.

He tinkers with something, his back turned.

Ella slips from the base of one tree trunk to the next.
Advancing.

IN THE TREES:

A MEDI-KIT splayed open. A SYRINGE withdrawn. Needle injects.

A shallow metallic dish, with a lit blue flame at its center super-heats a glowing blue molten SLUDGE.

More green bleeds off his arm and onto the branch he sits on.

FOLLOW THE BLOOD --

-- as it dribbles off, falls through the air --

-- trickling down, bough to branch --

-- and drips onto ELLA'S FOREHEAD. She doesn't even flinch.
Her back pressed against the trunk.

IN THE TREES:

Using a flat-edge tool, Nimrod scoops the sludge and slaps it onto the exposed stump, cauterizing the wound. Staunching the blood flow. He bellows out a PAINFUL ROAR.

ABOVE THE CANOPY -- The aerial fauna take flight in fear.

IN THE TREES:

Recuperating from the pain, Nimrod applies sludge to the many other BLEEDING WOUNDS peppering his torso.

He takes the last item from his field-kit: an inhaler. Bringing it up to his face, he takes two deep breaths. Woozy. Struggling to stay conscious.

Ella dips down and picks up a ROCK, thumbs it for a moment...

The nature sounds of jungle noises fluctuate with a rhythm... When they ebb --

She THROWS it, aiming for distance and precision. Nails both. The rock CLATTERS somewhere in front of Nimrod.

Nimrod reacts and instantly activates his CAMOUFLAGE.

The tree branch springs back from weight removal.

MOMENTS LATER --

Ella reaches another TREE TRUNK marked with a carved SYMBOL.

She climbs the tree, gripping its overhanging branches, using notches previously scored into the bark for purchase.

Her featherweight barely disturbs the branches or ruffles any leaves. She reaches the tree's CROWN.

From here: an ample vantage point of the wide expanse below.

Ella closes her eyes... Takes a long, deep breath... Steadies.

The SOUNDS of the ALIEN FAUNA INCREASE and --

-- Dry leaves CRUNCH. Slow and deliberate. Nearby.

Bipedal FOOTSTEPS.

Ella's eyes snap open, narrowing in on a specific area below. Patiently waiting with the icy glare of a hungry spider.

There! A WARP. Nature momentarily distorts as a shape passes. The unmistakable hallmark of a camouflaged Yautja.

A SOUND draws her attention away.

Nimrod also reacts, freezes.

She hears VOICES. They speak a foreign language. Germanic. They speak in hush tones, but the sound carries... Human.

They approach from a direction behind Ella.

Nimrod hacks his way back up into the trees, leaving green blotches of fluorescent blood on every surface he touches.

She stays deathly still, never taking her eyes off Nimrod. Focused.

He's now at eye level with Ella and on a much closer tree. But unable to see her.

AT GROUND LEVEL -

SLAV and GERMAN, both bulky Eastern Europeans, loaded with heavy artillery approach... Oblivious to their peril.

IN THE TREES -

Nimrod poises. Ella reacts to, and mirrors, his movements. Keeping her opponent diametrically opposed in her sights. Squared up.

AT GROUND LEVEL -

The men move in unison, a tactical crew, rifles scanning the area for potential threats. They reach higher ground.

Slav taps German on the shoulder, points to the trunk of a tree, drawing attention to the strange symbol carved into it.

Slav WHISPERS to German, who responds in the affirmative. Both remain vigilant but Slav seems optimistic about this.

Slav's chest EXPLODES --

-- a TWO-PRONGED BLADE penetrates him from behind.

Slav's hands instinctively grip the blades as they lift his body off the ground. Slav BELLOWS in pain.

German watches, horrified. He wants to shoot at something but his mind cannot process what's happening.

The blades RETRACT and VANISH. Slav's body crumples.

German panics and SPRAYS his chain gun, raking left to right, above Slav's body. Before he can cross the center point --

-- the floating blade reappears beside German in full swing. And catches his head, cuts his skull in half.

Silence.

Nimrod deactivates his camouflage, finally fully visible:

He's a large predator. Pockmark scars. His right leg bleeds. A hi-tech tourniquet pressures the bleeding forearm stump. And he's missing a BIOMASK.

Nimrod disregards the ruined German.

He struggles to crouch beside Slav's supine body, staggering.

Regaining balance, he buries his clawed hand into the base of Slav's back with a sickening CRUNCH. In one yank, he RIPS the entire spinal column free, pulling with it Slav's SKULL.

Nimrod lifts the trophy in the air, SCREECHES in victory.

In a blur -- a KNIFE -- zooms through the air --

-- buries hilt-deep into Nimrod's back, below his rib cage.

Nimrod SCREECHES in pain.

He drops the skull. Turns around... But nobody's there.

Nimrod fires his shoulder blaster wildly, showering the area. Trunks EXPLODE. Canopies topple. Trees are leveled. Decimating the forest.

Then... Silence.

Nimrod painfully rips out the knife and green blood oozes from the wound. He looks at the knife, dwarfed in his massive hand, and discards it.

He produces a metal cord from his utility belt and SPINS IT, emitting a high-pitch WHISTLE that echoes through the forest.

Nimrod grabs the trophy skull and reactivates his camouflage. But his flowing wounds remain visibly glowing.

He hobbles into the foliage, his movements slowing, each step growing more sluggish and ataxic.

CLOSE ON - the KNIFE on the ground, thick green blood covers the blade to the hilt. Its ornate design of unknown origin.

Ella's hand picks it up, wipes the blade clean and sheathes it. She follows the new, now very distinct, blood trail.

MOMENTS LATER --

Ella reaches twin trees. Both marked with a carved symbol. One points left, the other right.

The blood trail leads left. Ella considers... then decides: forward, between both trunks.

Weaving through the foliage, she circumvents a hidden spear. Steps over a trip wire connected to an old claymore mine. Makeshift, improvised traps litter the area.

Ella FREEZES, her proprioceptive instincts engaging.
Something has caught her attention. She spots it --

A hundred yards away: TWO HELLHOUNDS. Grotesque. Bestial.
They sniff the air. One turns to Ella. Eyes narrowing.

Ella averts her gaze, avoiding eye contact and detection.
Deathly still...

One hellhound GROWLS, the other reacts and spots her.

She RUNS.

The hellhounds give chase, much faster.

Ella races away, scanning the forest.

SPOTS a tree trunk with a carved symbol --

-- diverts to it.

Passing the trunk, she leaps wildly over some shrubbery.
Stops and turns.

Hellhound runs directly at her and --

-- PLUMMETS --

-- into a hidden DEATH-PIT trap.

It YELPS. Impaled by sharpened wooden stakes at the bottom.

Ella undoes a vine-rope tied to a low-hanging branch.
Releases an avalanche of rocks that flow into the pit.

Ella flees.

The remaining Hellhound stops short. Bypasses the pit, and
continues its pursuit.

Ella runs deeper into the forest, guided by the map of
unidentifiable SYMBOLS. Signposts carved into the trees.

The Hellhound bears down on her, closing the distance.
Avoiding trip wire traps set up for taller targets.

Ella steers toward a trunk with a specific SYMBOL displayed.
She climbs the tree.

TREE CANOPY - CONTINUOUS

Hellhound stops at the base of the tree. Confused.

She glances down -- Just in time to see it START TO CLIMB.
Its talons shred bark with every grip of the trunk.

Ella nimbly negotiates the trunk using the branch nodes.
Trotting around with perfect balance.

She undoes a braided vine-rope from its anchor point and
eases a spring-loaded branch loaded like a catapult arm.

The hellhound reaches her.

She whips the rope free and ties a fast slipknot --

Hellhound LUNGES!

Imperceptibly fast, Ella --

-- slips the loop around its neck --

-- hops on to an adjacent bough.

Hellhound follows, CHOMPING at her heels.

Ella drops down to a branch beneath her, bracing the trunk.
Surrendering the higher ground.

Hellhound LEAPS down at her -- aiming a clear path to Ella.
Its paws reach out, anticipating the kill. An open maw
exposes rows of razor sharp teeth.

The rope SNAPS TAUT --

-- jerking the Hellhound back and hanging it by its neck.

It flails... until it chokes out and dies dangling.

GROUND - CONTINUOUS

Ella drops down off the tree, landing with silent agility.

SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Ella returns to the blood trail. It leads up a steep incline.
She bounds up after it, climbing a diagonal course.

At the top of the ridge, Ella surveys the topography:

She stands at the edge of an expansive and lush SINKHOLE.

A strange DEPRESSION at its bottom. An area at the center
where crushed vegetation DISTORTS with refractions.

Native avian fauna perch atop an invisible STRUCTURE.

MOVEMENT in the brush ahead -- heading towards the structure.

Ella circles her way down, flanking its trajectory.

At the SINKHOLE'S BASIN, she quickly finds cover and stops. Completely still. She closes her eyes. Focuses...

The soundscape HONES IN on approaching CLUMSY FOOTSTEPS.

Nimrod emerges, profuse fluorescent bleeding outlines his features and betrays his camouflage.

Ella unsheathes her knife, gripped for a downward stab kill.

Nimrod approaches, playing right into her trap.

Suddenly --

The invisible structure MATERIALIZES into a large SPACECRAFT. Held up on THREE HIND LEGS. This is Nimrod's ASSAULT SHIP.

Nimrod pushes through the foliage and stumbles onward. Fighting hypovolemic shock.

He rushes aboard the ship through an open LANDING RAMP.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Egyptian, Inca and Aztec decor. Primitive but futuristic. Arching walls. Seemingly both mechanical and organic.

Murals of textured hieroglyphics in the walls glow orange. Throbbing light pulses throughout the ship, a heartbeat. Thick atmospheric fog lingers, obscuring the ship's floor.

Nimrod CAREENS against a wall. Body functions critical.

He regains enough balance and coordination to continue.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, ANTECHAMBER - SAME

A massive domed atrium of ambient light hangs above the antechamber. A Gothic cathedral constructed of strange metal.

Otherworldly stone obelisks form a ring around its center.

Through sheer willpower, Nimrod labors forward.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, CONTROL DECK

Frantic, Nimrod enters commands into a holographic mainframe.

EXT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, SINKHOLE - CONTINUOUS

The landing ramp withdraws, doors seal SHUT.

Thrust boosters BLAST ON.

The ship LIFTS OFF.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY

Nimrod stumbles passed several compartmentalized entrances. Every passageway resembles a chambered nautilus.

He enters --

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, MEDBAY - CONTINUOUS

A high-tech lab with futuristic surgical equipment.

Nimrod scrambles through steel shelves stocked with supplies. Grasps a small pouch. Tears it open and drinks it down. Somewhat stabilizing him.

He discards the pouch and exits.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Nimrod approaches a large partition membrane. It SLIDES OPEN. He enters.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, TROPHY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Three separate but equal panels form a triptych of death.

Only about a half dozen strange SKULLS occupy the display. Less than half of the full capacity.

Metal PRONGS jut out of empty slots to claim more to come.

Nimrod struggles to reach across his waist at Slav's SKULL hanging from the right side of his utility belt. Unhooks it.

With reverence, he lifts the trophy up to an empty slot. Long, thin mechanical arms extend and gently grip the trophy.

Nimrod basks in the moment...

He stares into the hollow eyes of his stolen trophy.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, MEDBAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nimrod sits on a sterile table and finishes dressing his arm. The cauterized stub now looks well on its way to healing.

Nimrod stands, more exhausted now rather than distressed.

The Medbay houses a LIFE CHAMBER POD at its center.

Some command prompts into a holographic screen activates it. Nimrod opens the pod door. It HUMS alive.

As Nimrod enters the pod, he stops. His instincts stir. Thoughts racing.

One of his mandibles twitches.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, TROPHY ROOM

Ella reaches out her hand --

-- her fingers gently touch the recently claimed human SKULL.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella explores the ship.

Surrealistic webs of chambers spiral outward at either side. The entire ship feels embryonic. A biotic environment devoid of buttons, levers or switches; more organism than machine.

The pervasive fog almost entirely engulfs her small stature.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, MAGAZINE - MOMENTS LATER

Ella has found the weapons supply room and studies each one.

Three organized rack sections: weapons, armor, and a mask. Some items absent, presumably taken by Nimrod's comrades.

An assorted caches remains, but really only minor weapons. NET GUNS, TANTO (ceremonial swords), a two-prong wrist blade. She recognizes the COMBISTICK, a telescoping spear.

A surprised SCREECH --

Ella turns, finding Nimrod standing at the doorway, seething.

She calmly assumes a sideways southpaw stance. Prepared. Inviting. She takes a deep breath.

Nimrod protracts the two-pronged blade on his left arm and --

ATTACKS.

He swings wildly, a ferocious desperation masking fear.

Ella ducks and dodges the haymakers, letting him tire out. She's too small and quick for him to strike her.

POV - NIMROD'S NAKED EYES

A BLISTERING RED FILTER.

It's a game of whack-a-mole. Broad swings miss by a mile. She's tiny compared to him. She appears and disappears. Ducking behind the girth of his own swinging limbs.

RETURN TO SCENE

Nimrod presses forward as Ella sidesteps to his weaker right. But he's forcing her towards a corner.

Ella glances back, aware of this, and gauging her distance. She finds her moment:

When Nimrod opens his arm to swing --

-- Ella slips into his personal space.

Close-quarter combat:

With lightening-fast speed, Ella attacks with precision shots to open wounds. She quickly slips away from harm after ending the melee with an UP-KICK to the severed arm stub.

A jolt of pain seizes Nimrod and drops him down to one knee. Doubled over, he holds the bloodied stump close to his body. The wound reopens and bleeds green.

Ella has already strategically positioned herself behind Nimrod as he struggles to rise.

He faces Ella and wobbles.

She picks up on the tell.

Almost telepathically, Nimrod realizes he's made a fatal mistake projecting this weakness. It dawns on him that this skirmish will be his last if he isn't quickly victorious.

They square up.

Ella lowers her stance and center of gravity. Brandishes her knife from behind her waistband.

Nimrod recognizes the blade. She reads this and nods.

Infuriated, Nimrod SHRIEKS and charges forward, blade poised.

Ella rushes toward him and --

-- at the last second, changes angle. Evading his blade.

She slips beside him, burying her knife into his right thigh. Nimrod BELLOWS in pain.

She pivots, again gains an advantageous position behind him. Safe.

A combistick, now in her hand, TELESCOPES.

Anticipating her position, Nimrod spins --

-- blindly swinging his blade downwards with all his might. His last Hail-Mary attempt.

The blade and combistick CLASH.

SPARKS FLY.

The centrifugal force SPINS the combistick --

-- out of Ella's hand --

-- and broadsides Nimrod in the face between pincer and neck.

Striking a knockout nerve.

Nimrod's stiffened body topples.

Ella seizes her opportunity -- slipping in close for the killing blow, but sacrifices speed for power.

His size restricts her movements and his weight pins her on its way down, SLAMMING her against the wall.

Her head hits the wall.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

The sound of RUSHING WATER echoes.

FADE IN:

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE (FLASHBACK)

A dark cavern lies behind the wall of a cascading WATERFALL. Lush green vegetation blurs beyond it.

The dim light of a small fire dances on the cave walls. Strange shadows create undecipherable illusory images.

Boulders and protruding stones create natural barricades.

ROYCE (O.S.)

Once you kill a few of them, it
gets easier. You learn what to look
for. How they move. When to strike.

The REAR of the cave has accumulated all sorts of things, most handmade. Clothing modified to be used as bandages. There's some repurposed items. Trinkets and tokens taken.

There's also piles of YAUTJA TECH. Smashed-up biomasks. Plasma casters with exposed circuitry. A bent combistick. Human ordinance as well as embattled, alien-looking weaponry.

A weathered chest lies open, a brand emblazoned on the side: WEYLAND-YUTANI CORP.

ROYCE, a hard man with hard features chiseled by a hard life, sharpens a wood sapling into a spear with his bowie knife.

ROYCE

They're proud of their heritage.
Loyal to their kind. They excel at
hunting but, I wonder... how good
are they at war?

Ella sits in the corner, finishes sharpening a spear and puts it at the top of a pile of dozens of spears. She takes another stick and sits, starts whittling at the tip.

ROYCE

If we compare, they hold the upper
hand. They're stronger. Faster.
Better trained. They have better
weapons. And they've studied our
species for centuries, learning our
tactics and adapting. BUT!

He holds up a finger. She glances at him.

ROYCE

We have one advantage...

He stands and walks over to place his spear on the pile.
Ella's eyes follow him as he holds for dramatic impact...

ROYCE

We have the element of surprise.

Ella's attention returns to her task.

ROYCE

See, they don't know we're alive.
Or how long we've been alive. Or
what we've been doing... But, we've
watched their tactics. Learned what
they do and adapt to them. We can
anticipate their patterns.

He stays standing as he speaks, more for himself than Ella.
His movements almost professorial, explaining a power point.

ROYCE

They expect their prey to expire.
Captured or killed off eventually.
That's why they've stranded us on
their planet. Because at some point
they know we'll go hungry. Get
desperate and expose ourselves. The
scales are tipped for them to win,
even if by lengthy attrition.

(beat)

The game is rigged. No matter who
wins, we lose. Either they get us
or something else does, this world
will kill us. It's only a matter of
time.

The thought settles him into a silent contemplation.

Shaking it off, he takes another long wooden stick from a
pile of timber and sits down where he last was.

He finds his fervor again.

ROYCE

(unrelenting)

But this land is now our land.
We've acclimated. Become natives.
We know the terrain. We hold
battlefield advantage. They only
hunt within 20 miles from their
ship. So we map out 40 miles and
booby trap it. Then we wait until
they hunt in our territory.

He finishes whittling his spear. Points it at her.

ROYCE

A little targeted area denial,
mixed with some clever anti-access.
A winning combo.

He winks and CLICKS HIS TONGUE.

CUT TO:

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE - (FLASHBACK)

Deep in the bowels of the mountain's innards.

INSIDE A HOLE --

A TUNNEL being carved out.

ROYCE

Their discipline is a variable.
Wherever they're from, they must
have a culture of conflict. Of
violence. See, on Earth, we were
the outliers. But here we've had to
adapt. To give in to our killer
instincts. Sharpened them. And now
we've become the predators here.
Apex predators.

Royce chisels with a crude hammer made of futuristic metal
and tree branches for a handle. The metal slices into stone.

ROYCE

Their eyesight, it ain't that good.
Not when their mask's off.

He pries off a sizeable rock and hands it to Ella.

She adds it to an ever-growing pile.

ROYCE

A clever fighter is not someone who
wins but one who excels at winning.
By making no mistakes. One mistake
means death for us. Those are the
stakes. They touch us, it's over.
It's a matter of strength... They
have more. Speed and cunning.
That's our only chance at victory.

Royce steps out of the hole, hands her the makeshift hammer.

ROYCE

And you, you have an advantage.
You're smaller. Low to the ground.
Lower center of gravity. You're
lighter. Faster. You can
outmaneuver them. Slip in and out.

She goes into the hole. Royce leans against the cave wall.

ROYCE

Being superior hunters, I'd bet
they only train for offensive. And
I would also bet that their defense
is lacking. An attack on them...
They wouldn't know how to deal with
it. Catch'em off guard. You know?
Warfare is based on deception.
Confuse the enemy. When close, make
them believe we're far. When far,
make them believe we're on 'em.
Attack when they're unprepared.
Appear only when and where you're
not expected. That's basic Sun Tzu
right there.

No response from Ella, she acknowledges him but keeps busy.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. PREDATOR SHIP, MAGAZINE

An ALARM BLARES.

Turbulence rocks the ship.

Ella comes to, buried underneath Nimrod's huge body. She
sports a thin cut near her hairline.

Using the combistick, she fulcrums his dead weight off her
and rolls him over onto his back.

Ella RIPS her knife from his thigh and STRADDLES him, pinning
his only arm with her shin.

Nimrod remains unconscious. He breathes a combination of
wheezing, whistling inhaled and labored bubbling exhaled.
Jade blood dribbles from the corner of his mouth.

She palms his forehead down and the tip of her knife finds
the soft meat under his mandible -- poised for the kill.

She stops... and thinks.

A tiny DROPLET OF BLOOD forms on the corner of her eyebrow.

Ella decides against the kill.

Instead, she grabs a fistful of Nimrod's quills and slices them off in one quick motion. The stumps burst green blood. Nimrod's body is wracked by a violent spasm.

She pockets the quills. As she stands --

IN SLOW MOTION -

The droplet of blood detaches and falls into the green blood.

RETURN TO SCENE

She collapses the combistick and runs toward the alarms.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ella runs passed arching passages, fighting the thick atmospheric fog, reaching --

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, CONTROL DECK - CONTINUOUS

Outside the spacecraft's navigational windows, Ella sees the looming massive red planet: YAUTJA PRIME.

Maybe fifty times the size of Earth, the planet orbits binary stars. A fractional ring system comprised of boulders and rocks hints at a destroyed moon or other cataclysmic event.

The PROXIMITY ALERT on a holographic screen displays several boulders in orbit on a collision course.

A red holographic BUTTON FLASHES, written in their native language comprised of lines and dashes. She presses it.

EXT. YAUTJA PRIME - CONTINUOUS

Instantly, the ship banks, employing evasive maneuvers and dodging passed the deadly debris.

Bathed in the red light of a dying dwarf sun and another main sequence yellow star, the geography is rough and unforgiving.

Most of the planet is covered by a dry desert landscape. Volatile volcanoes pepper the harsh topography throughout. Atmospheric precipitation accumulates at the planet's poles.

The ship pierces the stratosphere.

Identical cities, miles apart, light up concentric circles interrupted by gaping tectonic fault-lines that form glowing hot crevasses. The cities pocked with active volcanoes.

Several other alien SPACE CRAFT travel to and from space. Traffic flows in rigid fashion from each city.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, CONTROL DECK - CONTINUOUS

The computer navigation system displays the planet, enveloped in geodesic shapes, indicating its full scan of the sphere.

Ella notices the planet's vastly different, dual biomes: endless arid terrain punctuated by lush jungle at both poles.

Controlled entirely by autopilot, the ship course corrects. It coasts toward its destination: A MEGACITY at the equator.

EXT. YAUTJA PRIME - DAY

In the distance below --

The CAPITAL CITY of Yautja Prime.

A circumpunct design constructed with symmetrical precision. Three concentric circles, separated by chasms of lava, wrap around a central STRUCTURE.

THREE BRIDGES connect the outer ring to the middle ring over the lava moat. TWO bridges between middle and inner rings. One BRIDGE links the inner ring to the central STRUCTURE.

ON APPROACH --

The city's structures come into relief: Pyramids alongside stepped windowless concrete skyscrapers. An architectural blend of Aztec, Inca and Egyptian styles.

The inner ring is comprised of a central SQUARE surrounded on three sides by identical great PYRAMIDS, facing center.

Each pyramid belongs to one of the three great CLAN HOUSES.

The center, connected by a one bridge accessible only from the inner ring, is a massive black stone outcropping.

It rises from an abyss. Atop the formation, a tetrahedron. This is the Monastery.

The ship maneuvers through the city, towards its center.

Finds its landing pad at an expansive TARMAC.

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Vector thrusters swivel downward, slowing the ship's decent. Landing gear engages. The engine cuts off.

Armed ENFORCER Yautja wait for the landing ramp to extend. They wear uniform armor and wield PLASMA RIFLES.

They board the ship, led by the CENTURION, of Elite Rank. Battle-scarred armor as marred as his face. Piercing eyes. A distinguishing RED SWATH hangs across him.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

The Enforcers methodically clear every room of threats. Searching with uncompromising militaristic precision.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, MAGAZINE - CONTINUOUS

They find and encircle the fallen Nimrod.

Centurion warily approaches and squats beside him.

Nimrod's injuries seem severe, but he still takes breath... he's alive.

Centurion SPEAKS to them in their guttural native tongue. Dictating orders.

The Enforcers lift Nimrod in unison and carry him out.

Centurion remains behind, surveying the remaining weapons. The biomask display holds five in total, only two remain.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Centurion peruses... searching for something amiss.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, TROPHY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Centurion enters, his hand rests on the hilt of his weapon.

Without touching them, he examines the trophies on display. Judging their size and proportionality.

A quiet TRILL suggests his thoughts. Surely it's not awe.

He looks at the HUMAN SKULL and takes pause. The other panels contain a skull from other varied species. But this human skull is the only one of its kind on display.... interesting.

ABOVE THE PANEL --

Ella lies prone, jammed into the tight space, supported by the panel's open component. She watches Centurion from above. Her forehead accumulates BEADS OF SWEAT.

He gets closer, face to face with the human skull, staring into its empty eye sockets. Leaning in... Reading its soul.

Centurion turns, walks toward the room's exit.

CLOSE ON: a DROP OF SWEAT slides off Ella's forehead. Powerless to act, she watches it fall.

The DROP lands on the human cranium with a dull TAP.

Centurion stops at the entryway... His wrist blades ENGAGE. He turns back, faces the trophy case. His demeanor altered.

His eyes scan the various skulls. Searching for the source. He looks up above the display but can only see the panel.

POV - CENTURION BIOMASK

Shifting through several different types of light registers. First the trophy case, then the entire room.

The ship's walls obfuscate his vision in every register.

RETURN TO SCENE

Centurion looks around the room, scanning. Suspicious.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Centurion appears, scouring for any sign of some disturbance.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, CONTROL DECK - SAME

Centurion scans the floors and walls for something to track.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, MEDBAY - SAME

Centurion studies the area and the medical mess left behind.

He squats down, observing the streaks of dried green blood. Now curdled, the blood's dulled out and darkened.

Something catches his attention. He removes his biomask. Leans in for a closer look...

PRIMIPILUS enters.

Centurion breaks off his investigation and stands upright. Retracts his wrist blades. At attention. Officer on deck.

Primimpilus is a CLAN LEADER. Decorated and visibly older. A regal PALUDAMENTUM hangs from his shoulder. Both sport the same CLAN RUNE etched into their armor: The MARAUDER CLAN.

Primipilus speaks in an older, coarser tone. Then walks out.

Centurion remains still for a second, considering something. His eyes wander down to the presumed clue. A dubious CLICK.

Then he turns and leaves, following orders.

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Centurion exits the ship, constantly looking over his shoulder with a heightened sense of skepticism.

Centurion leaves frame.

TIME JUMP.

The ship remains, unattended, parked on the tarmac. Undisturbed. Its landing ramp remains extended out.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, VARIOUS

All is silent and still.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, TROPHY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A soft SHUFFLING comes from inside the trophy panel.

Ella spins out from inside the transom above the trophies. She drops down and lands without a sound.

She heaves in deep breaths. Struggling to catch her breath. The atmosphere is lighter. More nitrogen-rich, less oxygen.

She inhales with her nose, holds, exhales through her mouth. Pacing herself and tempering her body's breathing.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, ANTECHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Ella peeks out... All safe.

The thick pervasive atmospheric fog has dissipated, revealing the true scale and splendor of the circle of obelisks.

Closer inspection of the obelisks reveals a texture forming an ancient language. Its surface scrawled over with text comprised of short dashes, like the Gilgamesh Dream Tablet.

Ella covers behind the obelisks, tracking a path through to --

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ella moves along the concave wall, exposing less of her body. She maintains a vigilant eye behind her as well as ahead. On high alert.

She pauses and waits... Expecting an ambush at any moment.

After a moment of inactivity, she advances forward in slight movements and short bursts. Constantly on edge.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, MAGAZINE - MOMENTS LATER

Ella darts passed the doorway while glancing inside the room. A recon tactic... The room is empty.

She enters and quickly makes her way to the weapons cache.

Ella takes dual sheathed tanto off the shelf and slides them through the strap of her small BELT BAG.

She grabs a net gun, presses a button on its side. Three small diodes light up, indicating "full." Takes that.

On the wall beside the shelf, several recesses hold flat, three-lobed, black MINES. They have metallic dome centers.

Ella plucks all three and deposits them into her belt bag.

The collapsed combistick she used earlier also comes with. Its weightlessness allows her ease of use.

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Ella pokes her head out for a second, then disappears again.

After a few seconds, she peeks out further. Glances around. Surveying her surroundings... No movement.

The city emits no noise pollution.

Combistick and net gun in hand, Ella creeps down the ramp.

Breathing heavily, she slows, trying to catch her breath. Wheezing through difficult, shallow gulps of air.

She drops to one knee to reduce her visible footprint. Obscured by the landing gear, she looks around.

Rows of alien aircraft sit parked along the tarmac's apron. Large HANGARS with no visible ingress line the rear. A wide-open stretch of empty taxiway extends towards the only exit.

She stands. Declining blatant exposure, she looks around.

At the end of the ROW OF AIRCRAFT, underneath a stone curb, she spots WISPS OF STEAM rising from a VENT.

The vent seems wide enough for her to fit through.

Ella steps off the assault ship ramp and onto tarmac stone.

She slips and dodges, moving between the ships, using their landing gear as cover. Her advance goes undetected.

Clearly at elevation, the airport sprawls from under a towering windowless stone structure. Black. Shiny. Cold.

Sawtooth ridges and sharp edges spearhead the austere decor. A short stone parapet runs along the perimeter of the airport and separates it from a wall of rising steam.

She makes a beeline for the parapet and slides behind a battlement on the perimeter wall. She hops over the ledge.

Her feet land on a steppe that juts out of the curtain wall overlooking a steep drop to an open fault-line gorge below.

She squats, hidden from view now behind the short wall, and looks out at the MEGALOPOLIS:

The massive MONOLITHIC CITY spans as far as the eye can see.

Its bleak black skyscrapers are either pyramid or rectangular cuboids with jutting slab roofs. Egypt meets Stonehenge.

Certain buildings have personal stone-terrace landing pads. None have windows. No vegetation of any kind in sight.

From here, the city's CENTERPIECE building can be seen. Clearly exalted as the supreme structure as the entire city seems to have been built around this tetrahedral Monastery.

She looks down at the pit of steam. The air too thick to see.

Her eyes scour for any footholds in the andesite wall but no gaps exist between the interlocking mortar-less stones.

She unsheathes the tanto swords. Lets a SCABBARD FALL.

A few seconds later, the scabbard CLATTERS at the bottom.

Ella tosses the other scabbard... it, too, CLATTERS below.

She lowers herself and lies prone, leaning out over the edge.

-- and slowly, Ella PUSHES THE BLADE INTO STONE. Horizontal. The edge doesn't cut, it separates the stone's atoms.

She buries the tanto at arm's length and halfway to the hilt.

Ella checks her belt bag is fastened tightly to her back and lowers herself down, using the blade as a stepping peg.

She takes the other Tanto sword and repeats the action, creating another slight step further down...

...And begins her long climb down the cyclopean wall.

INT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, MED BAY

NIMROD FLOATS languidly in a STASIS TANK --

-- suspended in a viscous turquoise fluid that cultures a layer of fresh scar tissue onto his ARM STUMP. Eyes closed.

Primipilus watches, thoughts of vengeance racing in his eyes.

Centurion steps beside him.

They speak in a DEEP GUTTURAL DIALECT.

PRIMIPILUS
(subtitled)
I want this hunt reviewed.

CENTURION
(subtitled)
His biomask was not recovered.

Primipilus seethes in silence, his mandible twitches in fury.

EXT. YAUTJA PRIME, LAVA FJORD - LATER

Ella scales down the last of the rampart wall and lands silently on the ground. Wipes her sweat.

Behind her --

-- a glowing RIVER OF LAVA flows into the city, directed by design through igneous sluices on either side of it.

A culvert at the base of an active VOLCANO in the distance feeds it. The coulee branches into smaller RAVINES OF LAVA.

The heat is borderline overwhelming.

She follows the river downstream and reaches a small estuary where cooled lava has created an embankment.

Ella collapses forward, panting. On the brink. She sits up. Signs of severe heat exhaustion and dehydration plague her.

A nearby loud HISS startles Ella into a defensive position.

Her eyes narrow through the RISING STEAM:

Above the sluices, stone downspouts feed WATER onto the riverbanks of the lava creating a curtain of rising steam.

The water supercools the lava, resulting in shiny OBSIDIAN shores that break off and melt back into the coursing lava.

Ella rushes to the downspout, cups her hand, and collects water. It looks clear and clean. She smells the water first. Tastes it.

Convinced enough, she quenches her thirst. Rinses her face. Then drinks some more.

Having had her fill, she turns and studies her surroundings. The flow of water ceases, apparently time automated.

Ella pries off a long SHARD OF OBSIDIAN.

She uses her tanto to carve out a small hole and stands the shard up firmly on its base. It casts two tapered shadows.

Ella places a small ROCK where each shadow crests.

From down here, the city looks like a series of steep, ascending stone terraces tiered to form steppe canyon walls. Towering stone mesas blanket the fjord below in shade.

Ella walks the slight bank of the lava river, following the ashlar stone wall along to her left.

Up ahead, the river of lava branches out to a distributary, bending into the wall into a stone gutter via an arched TUNNEL.

She nears the river's bank and pries off a loose piece of obsidian from the solid edge. She blows it to cool it off.

At the entrance of the archway, she uses the piece of obsidian to engrave an 'X' into the stone wall. At eye level. Repeats this inside the archway tunnel.

She crouches, facing the inside of the tunnel and crawls in.

INT. TUNNELS - SAME

A vast system of tunnels cavernously built into the stone. Precision and symmetry on full display with a uniform design.

The tunnel seems to stretch deep into the bowels of the city.

Ella advances, crouched, lit by the glow of the red lava.

The lava stream she follows acts as a tributary to several smaller channels that bifurcate and disappear in different directions through various other ARCHWAYS.

Stone vents above her direct steam upwards into the city. Identical and equidistant.

Every archway Ella passes, she marks with a UNIQUE NOTCH.

Each NOTCH a simple variation of the 'X'. As she continues, the variations increases in complexity the further she goes. They resemble the tree carvings on the Game Preserve Planet.

Ella stops at the next ARCH.

Accumulated obsidian build-up in the gutter restricts lava flow into a bottleneck that is almost entirely cinched off. She flicks in a few obsidian shards and easily dam the flow.

Ella heads into this archway tunnel.

INT. HOME TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The halted flow of lava into this tunnel now just sits there, slowly cooling.

Ten meters in, the tunnel dead-ends into a small CHAMBER. It's just big enough for Ella to stand upright in.

She looks around and takes in her surroundings.

The sound of STEAM HISSES from the water's contact with lava. She looks up the stone flue funneling the rising steam.

Ella climbs the flue, utilizing the protruding alternating PLATFORM shelves presumably meant to slow the steam's ascent. Strange, thick red moss grows off the stone.

Dim sunlight streams in from further up above.

Reaching the last platform, she pulls herself up towards the light and looks through the vent --

EXT. PARVIS - SAME

An open-air combat tournament space delineated by an octagonal battleground recessed into the stone floor.

Stone pillars and arch construction reminiscent of ancient Greek and Roman design. A wide MARAUDER CLAN RUNE is etched into the center of the combat area.

The confines of the parvis dwarfed by pyramidal skyscrapers surrounding it.

Two Yautja stand on opposite sides of the stone platform. Facing off.

One is a visitor and one holds home advantage.

CAIN possesses the Marauder clan insignia on his helmet. While BUTCHER's helmet is branded with a different CREST. Their garments and armor are distinctly stylized.

They both wait in patient anticipation.

Each opponent has a small contingency of SPECTATORS present for support, acting as witnesses.

Based on their garb and trophy trinkets, a hierarchy exists. One Yautja on either side wears an ornate biomask, indicating elite status. The spectators watch in respectful silence.

From a viewing box above, a group of TEMPLE GUARDS oversee. They wear regal armor, decorated with a simple emblem.

A Yautja ELDER stands and gives a signal.

From an unseen corner of the parvis, a GONG CLANGS.

Butcher and Cain advance towards each other, slowly at first. Then Butcher dashes forward.

Cain, with a running start, leaps twenty feet in the air -- His arc trajectory lands him right on top of Butcher.

But Butcher rolls out of the way, avoiding the massive stomp.

The Yautja engage in up-close, lethal hand-to-hand combat.

They strike, block, and parry attacks with brute strength. Like a ferocious Wing Chun spar.

Standing toe-to-toe, each opponent circumvents the other's most damaging attempts while still incurring minor hits.

Cain employs an elbow strike, catching Butcher's face --

-- Butcher flows with it and delivers a spinning back fist.

Cain drops but quickly recovers. He leaps forward, spearing Butcher into a tackle. Cain slams Butcher to the ground.

Butcher rolls back and into standing position. Ready.

Cain saunters forward, confident. He swings with everything.

Butcher ducks the swing and kicks Cain in the abdomen, sending him flying across the space.

Embarrassed, Cain quickly stands and leaps at Butcher.

With incredible speed, he delivers a combination of blows --

-- but misses all except the last. It catches with open hand, his claws scrape Butcher's biomask, embedding CLAW MARKS.

They separate from the melee.

Butcher touches his biomask, fingering the new indentations. He releases a low, disgruntled TRILL.

Cain stares defiantly at Butcher, goading him by waiting.

Butcher twists off a couple of hoses from his helmet and, gripping underneath his chin, removes his biomask, exposing a face severely SCARRED and burned by acid.

The flesh on his forehead has a particular BRANDING SCAR. Butcher studies the damage to his biomask.

He tosses aside the biomask and levels his gaze back on Cain. Butcher extends his wrist blades, escalating the stakes.

Cain responds to this by extending his own wrist blades, accepting the challenge.

They run at each other and collide, now in armed combat.

Their blades slash in all directions with blinding speed. Contact comes with LOUD CLASHES and flying SPARKS.

Butcher catches Cain's gauntlet, immobilizing his attack arm.

Before Cain can react, he's IMPALED by Butcher's wrist blade.

A loud SCREECH reverberates from behind Cain's biomask as luminous green blood pours from the wound.

Butcher buries his wrist blades deeper and lifts Cain off his feet, staring into the lifeless eyes of Cain's biomask.

He retracts his blades and Cain crumples to the ground, green blood pools onto his clan's insignia on the tournament floor.

The GONG CLANGS. The fight is over.

Butcher stands victorious.

He turns to his clan. They bow their heads to him in unison.

Behind Butcher, Cain's witnesses kneel and gesture submission toward Butcher and his clan.

Cain's clan collects their defeated warrior and carry him off toward the exit.

Butcher and his clan remain behind.

INT. TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

Ella descends the flue.

AT THE BOTTOM

She follows her path back to the MAIN LAVA TRIBUTARY.

CUT TO:

EXT. YAUTJA PRIME, LAVA FJORD - MOMENTS LATER

Ella stands over the crude sundial, holding a sheathed tanto.

The dual shadows cast by the gnomon have shifted over and tightened closer together. She adds two new satellite stones to its outer perimeter, marking their change.

She turns toward the volcano in the distance. Heads to it.

Ella finds a bottleneck in the stream of lava. Jumps across. Picks up another obsidian rock.

She approaches the nearest archway. Scratches her first mark, similar to the original archway but with a different theme. Replicates this symbol onto the inside of the tunnel

She crouches down and enters.

INT. EASTERN TUNNELS - LATER

Ella reaches a point where the stream of lava dead-ends into a contoured stone gully. The tunnel opens up and continues.

Ella follows the tunnel with her back against the side wall. Curious but cautious.

She reaches a massive SPIDERWEB spanning the length of the tunnel. The intricate network reflects a metallic shimmer. Almost invisible.

Ella draws her knife.

She gets closer to the web and notices that the inorganic web is not silken, but fine wire. She touches the tip of her blade to the end of the strand connecting it to the wall.

The web CONTRACTS -- whipping shut with a metallic SNAP then folding into itself and winding up with a high-pitch WHINE.

It lands on the ground, wound-up, as a slim, silver cylinder. Primed for reuse.

After a few hushed seconds, Ella picks it up and studies it. Keeping its front pointed away: it clearly looks directional.

She presses it against the wall but nothing happens.

Taps it, nothing. She slams it against the wall and recoils. Nothing.

She tosses it against the wall and the web SPRINGS from one side and grips the other, creating a net between walls.

INT. TUNNELS - LATER

Ella approaches an overexposed arch at the end of the tunnel.

Another metallic SPIDERWEB seals off the tunnel's exit. She ventures dangerously close to the gossamer and gazes out past the shimmering netting.

A vast barren DESERT stretches out into the horizon.

Ella uses her knife to trigger the spiderweb. It SLAMS shut. She picks up the wound-up trap, pockets it.

Before stepping out into the open expanse, she looks both ways and, sensing no threat, steps out into the sunlight.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - SAME

The arched gate of the tunnel is dwarfed by the fortified curtain wall towering over the barren terrain.

She looks down at her shadows, which are coalescing into one. Above her, the binary suns converge upon each other.

Ella flanks the valley in a roundabout path, heading toward the volcano, inhabiting the shadows cast by the bastion wall.

INT. DOJO - DAY

An austere training area carved from hard volcanic stone. Sunlight slashes down through the area.

Centurion kneels before a SHRINE. It contains the idol of -- LORD KAAIL, THE ALPHA PREDATOR, and liberator of the Hish. Vanquished foes lie dead and dismembered at his feet.

A long beat as Centurion practices an unnatural stillness. Head bowed forward, hands on his knees. Meditating.

His long quills hang, draped down across his face. A scarred CLAN RUNE BRANDING seared into the nape of his neck. An elegant insignia from an ancient order.

A huge TROPHY WALL to his left displays HUNDREDS OF SKULLS from the most dangerous species throughout the universe. Hollow sockets in menacing bones glare out with unknown evil. All perished by his hand.

Centurion's head lifts. He rolls himself up to his feet.

Respectfully, he bows with reverence to the shrine of Alpha. Turns around.

And for the first time, a Yautja is seen without any armor, gauntlet or tech. Leather pteruges hang from a metallic belt. Spartan attire.

From a weapons rack with various other strange killing tools, Centurion grips the handle of an ornate double-ended GLAIVE.

Centurion struts onto a combat zone canvas, spinning the glaive effortlessly. A nonplussed Zen vibe. Smooth. Focused. He moves with grace and ease, light-footed for his weight.

A row of YOUNG BLOODS sit seiza-style at the shimoza. Watching in silent veneration. Allowed this privilege.

The same elegant CLAN RUNE INSIGNIA is carved into the center of the stone canvas. Beside that, sits a huge TROLL MONSTER --

Its grotesque bestial form is festooned with sharp spikes protruding from a thick and scaly protective hide. Nature has armed it with tusks, horns, and razor sharp appendages.

A heavy chain connected to a collar clamped around its neck keeps it sitting idle. It HUFFS, incensed.

As Centurion approaches it --

CLANK! -- the chain necklace SNAPS OPEN, falls to the floor.

The Troll monster stands, towering in rage over Centurion.

EXT. VOLCANIC BLUFFS - LATER

Ella traverses the leeward crags of a precipitous escarpment. Ashen winds blow between the ridge spurs over the valley.

Reaching a promontory, she lies low and peers over.

A fertile VALLEY enclosed by sloping volcanos on either side. The height of the towering shoulders obscures the suns and creates a shadowy dale where alien vegetation flourishes.

A perimeter WALL forms a divide between the valley and the desert beyond it. The wall lacks a door barrier for entry.

Four large HOVELS sit nestled within the agricultural area. She spots several dark BEINGS in and around the verdure.

From this vantage point, their movements seem coordinated. Repetitious. One vacates another arrives minutes later. Predictable. On some strict collectivistic schedule.

Ella recedes from the ledge until concealed, then descends the rugged escarpment.

EXT. VALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella nears the perimeter wall from the volcanic bluffs above, already inside its borders.

She lands softly on the cairn wall and crouches down.

From here, she's able to get a clearer view of the BEINGS: tall, insectoid creatures with double-lobed heads standing on two sets of hind legs. They have two opposable hooked arms.

Their race is called the AMENGI.

Ella counts four of them, scattered throughout the valley.

They don't seem to be aware of her presence or even watchful as they toil away at their duties, tending the CROP FIELD.

Ella climbs down the juncture between the wall and volcano, then immediately ducks away. Hiding inside the CROP FIELD.

EXT. CROP FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Following the inter-row spaces between the alien grain crops, she rapidly approaches the nearest and tallest hovel.

At the edge of the crop line, Ella glances in all directions. Clear.

A short open pathway separates her from the structure.

She sneaks across the open area and presses against the stone wall of the structure. Finding purchase, she scales the wall.

Ella looks inside through an open hole in the roof.

A strange Neolithic machine rumbles below, operating without oversight, in the center of the space. One side is a granary. The other side is a grist depository.

INT. GRIST MILL - CONTINUOUS

Ella manages to use the contours of the shoddy construction to climb down inside and onto the machine.

She descends the machine, now identified as a grain MILL.

Powered by an unrecognizable perpetual motion apparatus, the mill is fed fresh grain that is reduced to grist.

She takes a kernel from the granary bin pile and smells it. Bites it in half and looks inside at its strange core.

Deeming it safe, she takes a mouthful and eats it.

Through the cracks in the stone, a SHAPE PASSES.

Ella ducks behind the mill.

An Amengi hunches to enter through the dilapidated doorway.

Obscured by the mill between them, Ella only catches glimpses of this Amengi. It shuffles inside. Bumbling clumsily toward the mill, WHEEZING with strain.

Ella remains still, drawn tanto and scabbard in hand, poised.

Using appendages implanted in its forelegs, the Amengi holds a bucket. It scoops up some grain from the grist depository.

And exits.

EXT. FARMLAND - CONTINUOUS

The Amengi lumbers out with its bucket of grist in tow.

Ella watches it from the doorway, studying its movements. Prying for weaknesses.

A SHRINE with an IDOL of Kaail decorates the entrance. Its elaborate masonry weathered by the elements.

INT. GRIST MILL - CONTINUOUS

Ella fills her belt bag with grain and fastens it tightly around her waist to her lower back.

She uses the mill for a boost to climb back out through the open hole in the ceiling.

EXT. FARMLAND - CONTINUOUS

Ella finds the Amengi carrying the bucket across the field. It heads towards the largest hovel at the far side.

She clocks the other Amengi, none currently pose a threat. They till the valley, continuing on their strange schedule.

Ella climbs the side of the grist mill hovel to the ground. She slips into the crop field for cover.

EXT. CROP FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Another SHRINE sits near the doorway, its marble weathered.

The Amengi hunches at the entrance of the HOVEL and enters.

Ella watches it from the crop field, five meters away.

A short moment later, the Amengi emerges. Its bucket empty. It waddles onward, following its circuit.

Ella waits for her moment and surveys her surroundings. Clear. A quick sprint and she's across, entering the --

INT. RANCH - CONTINUOUS

Dozens of separated STABLES hold MONSTROUS CREATURES.

Some are large, others massive, all from dangerous species. Lean, bipedal monsters and bulky behemoths inhabit cages. Beasts of burden or keystone predators bred for sport.

A stable holds a TROLL similar to the one from the Dojo.

They regard Ella with aggressive apprehension as she passes. Several rile against their enclosures and rattle their cages.

She observes their conditions of abject squalor and cruelty. A small feeder holds the dumped bucketful of grain feed.

Another trough sitting in MUD SLOP holds brackish water. Presumably for drinking.

EXT. CROP FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Ella stands at the edge of the crop field, eyeing her exit: the juncture between the perimeter wall and the volcano base. A swath of uncovered, wide-open area between them.

She surveys her surroundings. Clear to the right and left. The grist mill hovel nearby.

Ella turns around and, at the farthest end of the crop row, across the field, AN AMENGI stands idle, gawking at her.

She freezes, unsure of the situation...

The Amengi stares, motionless, its big black eyes transfixed. It drops its tools. Bone-like talons protrude from its arms!

Ella darts out of the field --

-- and hauls-ass across the open area towards the mill.

With incredible speed, it skitters to the end of the row. Giving chase.

She turns back -- the Amengi is standing right where she was! It reorients. Cleft antennae sensing disturbances in the air. Its focus finds her.

She's only halfway to the structure.

TIME SLOWS AS -- a clipped hindwing protrudes from behind the Amengi, using it to propel itself forward through space.

Ella sees the Amengi zooming towards her.

TIME RESUMES AS -- Ella jooks right. Rolls out of the way. Nearly at the hovel.

The Amengi flies passed and stops at the doorway to the mill. It takes a second to reorient itself, then turns to Ella.

Confronted by an Amengi, Ella now fully sees one up close: it's almost three meters tall, with a segmented exoskeleton. A cockroach/mantis abomination.

Its brownish spiracles discharge a rapid, frenzied WHEEZING. A disturbing sound akin to infantile excitement.

It beelines to her.

She tosses the scabbard at it.

Impossibly fast, the Amengi snatches it out of thin air, almost as it leaves Ella's hand.

It studies the scabbard then discards it.

The Amengi turns around. Ella is at the doorway.

She turns in time to see the Amengi, an inch away from her!

Ella leaps inside --

INT. GRIST MILL - MOMENTS LATER

-- and throws a SILVER CYLINDER at the door frame.

A metallic SPIDERWEB expands as the Amengi rushes forward --

The WEB SLAMS SHUT, wrapping around the Amengi and instantly dicing its body to pieces with a resounding CRACK-CRUNCH.

It CRUMPLES into a pile of viscera.

The web TWANGS shut but only partially contracts as it winds itself down into a bloody matted knot.

Ella stands, PANTING, panicked... Or exhilarated.

She collects the knotted web and climbs the mill to the top, using it to exit through the hole in the roof.

EXT. CROP FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Her eyes narrow on each of the other Amengi. None alerted. They remain undisturbed and continue their labor.

EXT. VALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella climbs to the top of the cairn wall and crouches.
Scouring the farmland below.

She locates another Amengi approach the grist mill.

It hunches itself down to fit through the smaller doorway.
And shuffles through the viscera of the dead Amengi.
Oblivious.

It reemerges carrying a bucket of grain and again wades
through the pile of innards, scattering some outside. Aloft.

It drones across the farmland. Mindlessly dutiful.

Ella turns toward the volcano's sheer cliff face, grips a
handhold and pulls herself up, beginning the ascent.

INT. DOJO - DAY

The TROLL MONSTER slumps on defunct legs, leaning on its only
functioning arm. Completely immobilized. A bloody mess.

Centurion circles the Troll, bloodied glaive in hand.

The feral Troll lashes out but, unable to sustain itself,
loses balance and returns to its previous, injured posture.
Sensing death, it BELLOWS weakly, in pain and anger.

Centurion ambles toward the six Young-bloods at the shimoza.
He points his glaive at one of them, his star --

PUPIL -- who stands and approaches.

Centurion presents the bloody glaive to Pupil, offering it.
Pupil takes it.

He tests the weight of the glaive, familiarizing himself.
Once comfortable, Pupil turns to the Troll and closes in.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - DAY

Ella trudges sluggish steps forward through the hardpan.

She's wrapped her shirt around her head and shoulders.
Shielded from blistering twin suns. She wears a sports bra.

Her squinted eyes fading. She breathes in shallow breaths.
Skin is beginning to flake off her chapped lips.

Ella's body casts only a single dark shadow.

Just a few meters ahead -- the entryway arch into the TUNNEL.
The engraved symbol on it.

Every step a costly victory.

INT. LAVA FJORD - MOMENTS LATER

Ella kneels on the ground. Her head swaying. Eyes closed.
Delirium hitting.

She glances down at the incomplete sundial. Energy levels
rapidly depleting.

Heat wave distortions dance around her, warping reality.

Suddenly, WATER SPEWS from the downspout spigots and HISSES
into a rising wall of steam over the lava.

Ella reaches her cupped hand out and takes a drink of water.

INT. TUNNELS - MOMENTS LATER

Drenched in sweat and water, Ella crawls through the tunnels.

She finds the tunnel with the choked-off lava stream.

Enters --

INT. HOME TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The lava inside this tributary has cooled into igneous stone.

Ella reaches the end of the tunnel and into the open chamber.
The net gun and her other belongings collected in the corner.

She climbs onto the first stone platform. With difficulty.
Her lethargic movements hinder her progress.

Able to go no further, she collapses into heat stroke.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Moonlight refracts through rushing water, casting a
hallucinogenic kaleidoscope of shapes onto the stone walls.

Royce crawls in from under the waterfall. Bloodied, bruised. He holds a length of rope in his hand. Struggling with it.

He fastens the rope around a boulder, alleviating the weight.

Royce takes a beat, in superman pose, catching his breath.

Ella stares questioningly at him... but he gives her nothing. His eyebrows raise, an expression of "that was a close one."

Royce takes the rope and starts pulling up something heavy. Ella holds the rope in between heaves.

The rope hauls in a dead Yautja body.

Ella reels and draws an alien KATANA.

ROYCE
(reassuring)
Hey. It's dead... I made sure.

Royce grabs the corpse's ankles.

ROYCE
Here, help me bring it in.

Skeptical, Ella re-sheathes her sword.

She joins Royce and grabs hold of the Yautja's scaly wrists.

Together, they carry the heavy carcass deeper into the cave.

SAME - MOMENTS LATER

A small flame burns for light.

The dead Yautja lies sprawled on the cave floor.

Royce and Ella both stand over it, staring down at it.

Ella admires the METALLIC BANDS clasped around its quills. Decorated with intricate designs.

ROYCE
Their hair is not hair at all. It's
a sensory organ. Like cat whiskers.
It helps coordination and balance.

Royce squats beside the body, draws his bowie knife.

ROYCE
Their anatomy is slightly different
than ours, but the basics remain.

He points the tip of the blade on the neck, under a mandible.

ROYCE

They have an artery that runs alongside a nerve. It's difficult to get to but hit that and you paralyze and kill in one blow.

(points at the neck)

Separate the head, that much is obvious.

(points to right ribs)

This is a kill. Their heart-organ.

(points to upper torso)

Lungs. Another kill shot, but slower. Maybe ten or twenty minutes...

(points to midsection)

Kill shot. This is their liver. Inevitable death but it takes long.

Major arteries:

(points to each limb)

They'll bleed out in under a half hour if left untreated. But they'll be more dangerous. So be careful.

Royce stabs a hole into the right rib cage. Twists the knife. Green blood flows freely, Royce collects it in a small basin.

An odor hit Ella.

ROYCE

Smell that? So can they, even from a distance. It's their pheromones. We can use it as bait, maybe.

He produces a small shot glass carved from wood --

ROYCE

Their blood is copper based. It's disgusting to be sure.

He holds the glass under the flowing bloodstream --

ROYCE

But for every single one of these motherfuckers I kill --

He lifts it in gesture --

ROYCE

Cheers.

-- and GULPS it down.

Ella stares, her poker face wavers as she quietly questions her safety with this crazy man, *but only for a second.*

The blood slows to a trickle and Royce puts the basin aside. He leverages the dead body over onto its back.

Royce cuts the scaly skin off and filets the muscle tissue.

ROYCE

Now, their flesh is tough, even
their softest meat. But --

He tosses the filet into a bucket of water --

ROYCE

-- let it sit in water and it'll
bloat and loosen. Their organs are
easier to chew and more nutritious.

Royce starts carving up the body's chest cavity. He digs in and rips out several organs, tossing them aside.

He offers her a slimy organ. She recoils, disgusted.

ROYCE

The only way to survive amongst
monsters is to become one...

He takes a bite out of it and chews.

Hands it to her again. She takes the organ.

Royce continues vivisecting and reaches the clavicle area.

ROYCE

Just avoid eating this thing.

He holds up the small, black, walnut-sized gland he cut out.

ROYCE

It releases a type of adrenaline.
It's what they tap into when they
go all kamikaze.

Royce places the gland on a flat rock and slices it in half. It releases a thick black ooze.

ROYCE

I don't know what effect it would
have on humans. Might trip out and
hallucinate. Or it might be
poisonous and kill ya.

(MORE)

ROYCE (CONT'D)
(considers)
Maybe one day, right?

CUT TO:

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Skewered meat cooks over a small fire.

Royce hands Ella one of the skewers with cooked meat on it. She looks at him, her eyes a dead stare. Creepy.

Royce doesn't react, he just continues to hold it out to her. Patient. He knows she's going to want it eventually.

ROYCE
It's kind of like pork...

She doesn't respond.

ROYCE
You know, pig..?
(he snorts)
As close to pork as you're going to
get around here at least. Believe
me, there's worse things to eat.

Finally, Ella slowly extends her hand and takes it.

ROYCE
Just make sure you cook it through.
Trichinosis is one thing, but you
wouldn't wanna get a bug from
something out here. No bueno.

Ella reluctantly bites a piece of meat off the skewer. Chews.

ROYCE
You know, you're going to have to
say something to me at some point.

She doesn't respond or even react.

ROYCE
Playing hard to get. That's fine.
Not yet, then. But eventually you
will. At some point. You'll see.

He winks, grinning at her.

She remains unresponsive and continues eating, almost as if she didn't even understand him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME TUNNEL - DAY

Ella lies face down atop the stone platform. Motionless... The same pose she collapsed into.

Slowly, she lifts her head. Regaining consciousness.

She looks down at the soft padding of red moss under her face. An instinct hints that this is what actually saved her.

She lifts herself and sits with her back against the wall. Takes a second to ponder... That was too close to dying...

INT. GRAND HALL - DAY

Centurion stands over a stone table resembling an altar.

He carves the Troll from the Dojo, now cooked and skinned. This is entirely a carnivore dinner.

The entire Marauder Clan is present.

A tenderloin cut is served to the only ANCIENT in the room, a warrior Yautja several centuries old; retired from hunting. He takes the meat, bows and takes it to his place at a table.

Next, Centurion cuts off the entirety of the top sirloin, this goes to Primimpilus. The Clan LEADER.

The prime rib gets carved out and served to the two ELDERS, accomplished and battle-scarred, one wears an eye patch.

Centurion smoothly filets a sirloin off the Monster, and places it to the side, saving it for himself; the sole ELITE.

The ribeye cut is carved out for the four ADJUTANT PREDATORS, hardened troops, successors in line for Clan leadership. Receiving their sustenance, they bow in gratitude.

Centurion gets to the lesser cuts of the Monster's anatomy.

He uses the carving knife to dish out scant portions to each of the four Unblooded that appreciatively accept the food.

Pupil among their company.

Six YOUNG-BLOODS stand in a row at the bottom of the steps.
In patient wait.

They'll get the scraps, if any are left.

INT. HOME TUNNEL - DAY

Ascending the VENT PLATFORMS --

The weaponry she took from the ship, precisely laid out.
Other random items as well, e.g. Obsidian stones, grain, etc.

NEXT PLATFORM UP --

The tanto lies unsheathed on the platform. Beside it, the
broken spiderweb trap's metallic netting sits disassembled.

Ella uses her foot to extend a high-tensile metallic braid
that unravels into three separate strands of metal silk.

She plats the strands, continuing the braid down the length.
Making rope.

As she works, she scoops a handful of grain into her mouth.

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - DAY

The central stone CATHEDRAL towers against a lurid red sky.
Beneath it --

A massive portico with Doric order colonnades.

The vast Square extends the length of three football fields.
Ornamental designs on the stone separate it into sections.

A REGIMENT OF YOUNG-BLOOD PREDATORS in standing formation,
divided into three battalion-sized SCHOOLS, all at attention.
None of them armed or carry any equipment or armor.

Each School directs their attention to its presiding Elite.

The Elites pace the front of the class, in full Clan armor;
each School wears some representation of their Clan Insignia.

Across the Square --

The Marauder Clan ANCIENT holds a MALLET and waits by a GONG.

The ELITES give the signal when ready.

What follows is an intense exercise regimen where every
aspect of motion is employed; each is an extraordinary feat:

First, each School splits into four divisions inside their section. The divisions perform attack drills each other.

The drills are comprised of every martial art imaginable. Attack tactics laced with acrobatic stunts. All in unison. Viciously aggressive katas executed with perfect precision.

A dazzling and dizzying display of total synchronization. Lethal Shudankodo.

In perfect ranks and eerie unison, this training is brutal. Their movements orchestrated and robotic. Perfect.

The drills are performed pointed in the direction of each School section's center point and then away from the center.

The Elites descend the portico steps, walk the Square and are completely avoided, unimpeded by the drills in effect. A crisscrossing river of war parted and momentarily diverted.

The Elite recklessly LAUNCHES a combistick into the fray.

Miraculously, none are struck. The combistick is absorbed, spun ROTC rifle style, and adeptly thrown to the next school.

On the Elite's signal, the four schools integrate flawlessly, forming one river and then a shell game of schools in action. Separating and rejoining.

The perimeter of the square is encircled by stone pillars. A TRAINEE stands in meditative balance upon their tapered ends. A test of endurance.

Among the tallest structures around in the city center, overlooking the Square is the --

EXT. STEPPE PYRAMID - CONTINUOUS

Ella peeks over the edge, lying atop the pyramid's flat apex. She watches them... their movements. Studying the enemy. Memorizing their patterns

An elevated stone platform rises behind the steppe pyramid, forming a stage for what seems to be ancient stone GALLOWS.

The THREE PYRAMIDS loom over the city Square, each exhibits a rose window with its CLAN RUNE in Rayonnant stone tracery.

Ella recognizes the Marauder symbol.

INT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, GRAND HALL - DAY

A shaft of light casts the CLAN RUNE in shadows on the floor.

Centurion hands Primipilus a bulging regal suede SACK.
Annoyed, an unwilling participant in this shady deal.

Primipilus takes it, withdraws its contents: a YAUTJA SKULL.

EXT. LAVA FJORD - MAGIC HOUR

Ella steps out from the Tunnels and gazes up at the sky where
a spectacular natural phenomenon blooms as the two suns set.

Visible prisms refract onto a revolving asteroid belt.
Northern Lights put to shame.

Everything is bathed in a deep blue hue.

Ella looks down at the sundial. The suns' path illustrated.
Where the dim shadows stretch, she places an INDICATOR STONE.

A thick fog swirls in, enveloping Ella in knee-high cumulus.

She takes a deep breath, a *loooong* deep breath. Eyes closed.
Able to breathe.

Ella looks up at the stone embankment and beyond.

INT. CITADEL - NIGHT

A ceremonial space used for the perpetuation of a tradition.
Ancient torches burn all around them, adding to the mystique.

Pupil kneels in the center of the square.

The Marauder ELDER stands behind him, dressed in a ceremonial
garb, his long quills extend halfway down his back.

Pupil is undergoing an ancient tradition: elaborate gold
bands are "plated" onto his shoulder-length quills. The
process involves using pliers to clamp metal rings down on a
sensory organ. And it must be done without any show of pain.

Pupil's eyes remain steadfast. Zoned in.

The Marauder Clan ANCIENT oversees the process.

On all four sides, witnesses:

The rest of the Marauder clan's Unblooded directly in front. Two other sides occupied by two other clan's six Unblooded. The rear holds all three Clans' Young-Bloods.

HIGH ABOVE --

On the OCULUS of the DOMED CEILING -- Ella also watches. Notices their formations are always numerically symmetrical.

A huge BLOOD-RED MOON PLANET floats in the sky behind her.

EXT. CITADEL - LATER

The Marauder Ancient plods along the cobblestone walkways. Alone.

The pyramids produce and cast a dim bioluminescence, emanating from the stone itself, that illuminates the path.

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

The Ancient walks under the ethereal hue of the moonlight.

EXT. SHRINE - MOMENTS LATER

The Ancient reaches a colossal STATUE OF KAAIL THE ALPHA, wearing armor and weapons fashioned from the exoskeleton of an Amengi. Talon claws strapped to his forearms, reminiscent of wrist blades. He holds up the head of a slain Amengi.

He reaches the base of the statue and bows his head, touches the statue's toes. Takes a few steps back. Genuflects.

He bows again. Then departs, plodding off into the night.

Silence.

The marble statue towers over us, casting a long shadow.

The sculpted Kaail is dressed in gladiatorial tatters, aggressively taunting nonbelievers with a trophy of his kill. His menacing face frozen in a battle-cry of victory.

Ella emerges from the shadows.

She struts right up to the base of the statue. Nonchalant.

She looks up at it. Locking eyes with the face of the statue. Staring at it, in defiance. Dwarfed by its size.

Ella's deadpan expression morphs into a malicious grin. Flashes of disgust and hate, a picture of retaliation.

She runs her hand across the stone pedestal of the statue. Studying it. Almost in admiration.

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Just inside the rushing waterfall, at the mouth of the cave.

Ella sits crouched with her back against the stone wall. Royce sits across from her. Both are beaten and bruised. Panting.

Ella bleeds from a claw wound on her left biceps.

ROYCE
Hell of a fight.

Ella glares at him, then returns her gaze straight ahead.

ROYCE
(chuckles)
What?

She's unresponsive.

Royce moves to her side and crouches next to her.

ROYCE
We're against all odds out here.
It's kill or be killed. Fight
without hope and you can't lose.
Survival isn't our endgame... it's
impossible and only temporary.

He takes his bandana and ties it around Ella's wound.

ROYCE
Look.

He shows her the fitted gauntlet on his left forearm.

ROYCE
The wrist gauntlet is the key.
Aside from their masks, this is
their most prized piece of tech.
Once on, it can't be removed.

He taps his knuckles against the strange alien metal and only gets some dull, muted thuds.

ROYCE

Solid, but weightless. Like nothing
we've ever seen.

He presses his thumb a certain way and a metallic flap opens,
exposing a display with alien text readouts.

ROYCE

It's a learning computer.
Biomechanical. Highly intuitive.
This is what I've spent my time
observing from them. How they use
it. The keypad is simple enough,
only 19 buttons. The combinations
are tough to learn, though. But
with enough time and practice...

He presses a button and VANISHES.

ROYCE (O.S.)

It controls everything. Their
camouflage, their drones. It even
regulates their body temperatures.

He reappears, a few steps away and at a different angle,
still crouched. His finger hangs over the button he pressed.
Showing her.

ROYCE

They're difficult to obtain since
they use it to self-destruct when
defeated in order to avoid capture.
This is the first code I learned...
It's the one I've seen the most.

Royce deliberately inputs a simple, FULL SEQUENCE involving
every button, from left to right.

He STOPS before finalizing the sequence. His finger hovers
over the final button.

He locks eyes with her. Nods emphatically.

ROYCE

You'll have thirty seconds. Then:
(gestures explosion)
Boom.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAVA FJORD - DAY

The lava distributary branches off, flowing through the myriad stone archways, all of them MARKED WITH A SYMBOL.

Two concentric rings of stones encircle the gnomon. The outer circle contains three stones, indicating eclipses. A sigmoid helix trajectory effectively mapped out; nighttime is noted. The SUNDIAL is complete.

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - DAY

Ella looks out through the VENT, pinpointing her position. Her target: a BASTILLE. Some distance ahead.

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's face appears through another vent.

The cube-shaped Bastille dominates the sky directly in front. This is the closest vent.

A broad BAILEY stretches between the vent and the Bastille. The open space devoid of any cover.

Ella studies the structure. Scouting for a path of ingress. She's on a mission: trying to infiltrate this building.

A movement catches her attention high above the city skyline: a SMALL DOT RISES.

Ella squints to see it.

Suddenly -- the SHADOW of a giant Yautja SHIP jets by!

Another SHIP FLIES in the same direction as the last. Propwash swirls the city's rising steam into a helix. It accelerates up and out into the horizon's vanishing point.

From the closest building beside her, another SHIP RISES. Reaching enough altitude, it darts away, following suit. Something is happening.

Ella ducks down into the vent.

INT. TUNNELS - MOMENTS LATER

ELLA POV --

SPEEDING through the network of tunnels. Familiarized now. Several of her carved SYMBOLS flash by as we rush through.

Making various turns into other tunnels. Reach a far end.
Climbing up the vent platforms.

EXT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

A single disregarded steam vent angles up onto a balcony.
Nestled in the shadows between two diametrical buttresses.

Ella pulls herself through the vent and out.

EXT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Ella rushes to the edge of the balcony overlooking the city.

From this vantage point, the situation becomes obvious:

It's a military mobilization. Dozens of SHIPS blast off from
personal landing pads. A majority of the fleet departs from
the Landing Tarmac. All bearing the same direction.

A low RUMBLE erupts as the larger MOTHERSHIPS lift off their
tetrahedron. A mass exodus over a vast cityscape.

After a few minutes of constant flight, the city falls quiet.

She turns.

A stone archway entrance into the Marauder pyramid beckons.

Ella draws out the two tanto, blades reversed in each hand.
Pressed against the wall, she scopes the entrance hall.

INT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID - MOMENTS LATER

She follows the shaft leading deeper into the pyramid.

Passing one CHAMBER --

-- she glances inside but only to secure it of any threats.

The glimpse inside provides a view of a slanted cupped nest,
possibly a Yautja resting room. She keeps moving forward.

INT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, ARMORY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella scours for possible alarms. Finds none. She enters.

A large DISPLAY CASE holds a significant cache of weaponry.

She sheathes the tanto and quickly pillages the weapons rack. Takes all the MINES. Two SMART DISCS. Some black SPHERES. Every plasma caster. A long, RIFLE-type gun (BLAZER).

Something makes her stop, frozen. Her attention shifted. Suddenly, everything else pales by comparison.

She reaches out, with the reverence of utter disbelief, and --
-- lifts up a WRIST GAUNTLET.

She slips her hand through the opening and --

THE GAUNTLET --

-- senses an occupant. The nano-molecules realign and its diameter shrinks down to wrap around her size forearm snugly. With a LOW HUM PULSE, the gauntlet INITIALIZES.

And for the first time, Ella smiles.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - DAY

Barren. Lifeless. The wind blows. Heat wavers in the air.

CLOSE ON: A PILE OF STONES. An unseen force places a final stone atop the pile, forming a CAIRN.

What looks like a humanoid SPECTRAL SHAPE moves.

Walking in the direction of the distant volcanic mountain.

A trail of similar cairns, evenly distanced, mark a path.

EXT. VOLCANO PLATEAU - LATER

On the far side of the volcano, opposite the farmland valley.

Over the mountain's ridge, an outcropping of land juts out. An isolated area far from the possibility of undue attention.

The SHIMMERING SHAPE approaches and materializes into Ella, overloaded with the plundered weapons.

She squats down and drops them. Lines them up, organized. Like items together.

CUT TO:

EXT. VOLCANO PLATEAU - MOMENTS LATER

Ella straps together two plasma casters with the metal rope. Tightly fastened, both muzzles aim forward.

She aims the barrels down at the base of the volcano. FIRES.

Two ORBS OF BLUE LIGHT simultaneously FLASH from the muzzles. Obsidian stone cliffs obliterate, pulverized into the air.

Gauging the distance between the two impact craters, she slightly adjusts the placement of the casters.

FIRES again.

This time the orbs travel parallel and then meet, coinciding on the same target, forming a single impact crater.

She scratches a NOTCH onto the barrel, marking its sights.

Ella puts this dual caster aside, takes two more plasma casters and ties them together in the same fashion.

CUT TO:

EXT. VOLCANO PLATEAU - LATER

Ella tampers with the mechanical triggers on the dual plasma casters. With extreme caution, she pulls a small spring out.

She tinkers with the trigger housings, rigging them together. Keeping the casters upheld in a certain direction, she handles them with delicate care.

She levels the DUAL CASTERS and releases their triggers --

-- the casters SPEW out unlimited ORBS in rapid, machine-gun fire succession. Constant. Unceasing. Unlimited.

Ella retracts the triggers and the casters cease their fire.

She rigs the triggers to remain off.

CUT TO:

EXT. VOLCANO PLATEAU - LATER

Ella holds a black, metal sphere the size of a tennis ball. She presses the top of the sphere and a red light ignites.

She tosses it down the volcano slope.

Her head nods in almost imperceptible, short intervals...
Counting the passing seconds.

After six seconds, the sphere EXPLODES.

CUT TO:

EXT. VOLCANO PLATEAU - LATER

Ella holds up a MINE, a silver BALL-BEARING at its center.

She pops open the flap on her WRIST GAUNTLET and locates the small, similarly-sized depression on it.

She holds a mine up to it and they magnetize together. The first of four indicator screens flashes an alien symbol.

Ella presses it. The symbol flashes and remains on.

Ella holds up another mine to it. They magnetize together. This time, the first and second screen flash an alien symbol.

She presses the first screen and the gauntlet locks it in. The symbol on the first screen becomes slightly more complex.

Ella holds the first mine over the other, they SNAP together.

Suddenly, a LOUD SCREECH gets her attention.

Ella peers over the volcano ridge, alert.

Where the desert plains meet the fertile valley:

A group of THREE YOUNG-BLOODS encircle a HULKING MONSTER.

They taunt it in one direction while attacking from the rear. A Young-Blood draws in the monster and stabs it, wounding it. Matador style.

Farther into the desert plains, closer to the city ramparts:

Another group of THREE YOUNG BLOODS give chase to a tall and slender praying MANTIS-type CREATURE, running for its life.

Ella slinks back behind the ridge, remaining out of sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAVA FJORD - DAY

TIMELAPSE of the SUNDIAL --

The gnomon's TWO SHADOWS travel along its predicted path shaped like an oblong number "8" with straightened edges. Their eventual destination: a STONE INDICATING NIGHTTIME.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - DAY

POV -- A PREDATOR SLASHES AND SWINGS in violent motions. Attempting to maim and maul. Aggressive boxing with claws. All of it up-close and personal. Fighting in a phone booth.

RETURN TO SCENE

Two equal rows of Unblooded TRAINEES face each other.

They swing and claw at each other with their feet planted, trying to overpower the other without lower-body torque.

When one Trainee manages to force an opponent to fall, the fallen remains on the ground in disgrace.

Whenever a fight finds its victor, the row moves over one. And the fight commences anew.

None notice the SPECTRAL SHAPE circumnavigate the outskirts. It sneaks past the Square towards the base entrance of --

-- The DARK BLADE CLAN pyramid.

An identical pyramid across from the Marauder Clan pyramid. Its elaborate rune sigil has a more biomechanical design.

Ella enters --

INT. DARK BLADE PYRAMID - CONTINUOUS

Still invisible, Ella enters and keeps to the walls.

INT. DARK BLADE PYRAMID, ARMORY - MOMENTS LATER

A large WEAPONS DISPLAY CASE wraps around the large room.

The spectral shape removes one of the mines from the shelf. It floats upside down and is lowered.

It BEEPS.

The activated mine is attached underneath the weapons display with a dull CLUNK.

Ella pillages through their weapons cache, helping herself and taking as much as she can carry.

The weapons hang off her invisible shape, dangling in midair. Once loaded up, she deactivates her camouflage.

She APPEARS, awkwardly holding all the gear.

Then reactivates the camouflage and she VANISHES ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME TUNNEL - DAY

An organized assortment of weaponry fills the stout corridor:

Smart discs stand upright, their edges embedded in the stone.

Some net guns and collapsed combisticks lie on their sides. Dual plasma casters. Shuriken. A BLAZER. Active caltrops. Quite the collection.

INT. FLUE - LATER

Inside another flue --

This one is considerably larger and wider. Ella must jump to grip the edge of the shelf above her.

Strenuously, she lifts herself up to the next platform above.

This open-faced vent is wide enough for her to fit through. Much like a storm drain.

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - SAME

Ella's face creeps into view enveloped by the rising steam.

The vast expanse of the sprawling monolithic city stretches before her. Seemingly infinite. But also seemingly vacant. There's no movement. No sign of life.

She uses her knife's blade as a mirror, discreetly reflecting the image of her surroundings from her limited vantage point. She checks above her... Nothing. To both sides... Nothing.

Beat.

The coast is clear.

Ella places an obsidian stone at the corner of the vent.

She slips out.

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - DAY

Ella sidles through the city, her SPECTRAL SHAPE shimmers. She appears to be alone in the vacated megacity.

Ella remains in the periphery of the buildings or walkways, scouting any strategic locations for maximum damage.

She walks through an ALLEYWAY --

EXT. HALLOWED GROUND - SAME

A sacred area covered with tall, dark obsidian TOMBSTONES. She finds a raised passageway that funnels into a CHOKEPOINT. Ella attaches a mine, hidden between two embossed stones.

She drops an obsidian rock.

Through the BOTTLENECK, a terrace gives way to a precipice. A thick curtain of steam obfuscates anything past the chasm.

After a beat, the steam dissipates and visibility increases: A MONASTERY rises atop a stony cliff wall 50 meters away. Only one narrow stone BRIDGE connects the two.

Two statues of kneeling Yautja flank each side of the bridge. Holding a spear and bowing their heads in reverence.

Ella hides a mine also at the mouth end of the bottleneck. She drops another obsidian rock, marking a trail.

She approaches the bridge connecting the MONASTERY to the terrace and stares out beyond the abyss below her and ahead. Her feet remain on the terrace.

The fortified, isolated, and strategically placed Monastery sits atop an obsidian butte. *A good place for a last stand.*

Ella lies on her belly and reaches under the stone bridge, attaching a mine.

EXT. LAVA FJORD - DAY

CLOSE ON:

The sundial's shadows approach the NIGHTTIME INDICATOR STONE.

PULL BACK TO
REVEAL:

EXT. LAVA FJORD - SAME

An Unblooded stands over the sundial. Studying it. Curious.
Suspicious.

Other Unblooded Yautja wander in front of the main tunnel.
Among them is Pupil.

INT. HOME TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Ella lies back on the platform, atop the red moss.

She uses the tanto to hollow out a small piece of obsidian.
Carving out what looks like a large THIMBLE.

She blows the debris off and observes her work. Satisfied,
she slips it into her belt bag.

EXT. LAVA FJORD - SAME

Pupil studies Ella's SYMBOL scratched into the arch wall.

PREDATOR POV

The biomask shuffles through various alien texts, attempting
to decipher the cryptic symbol... eventually to no avail.
It's an unknown language.

RETURN TO SCENE

Pupil runs his clawed fingers across the unrecognized symbol.

SUSPICIOUS CLICKING.

INT. TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

Framed by the arched entryway, Pupil squats down and peers
into the dark depths of the tunnel.

He spots the same symbol on the inside of the tunnel.

INT. HOME TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

At the tunnel juncture, Ella, back pressed against the wall, raises her knife, pointed to stab. Waiting expectantly.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - CONTINUOUS

Trying to compress his size, Pupil writhes his upper body into the archway, careful to avoid touching the flowing lava.

But he's too big to fit and also maintain mobility.

Pupil pulls himself out, repositions, and tries again but he's again only able to get just a bit farther than before.

He comes back out and stands, refusing to succumb to failure. Wheels turning in his mind.

Pupil sizes up his colleagues. Points to the SMALLEST ONE.

Immediately, the colleague obeys, drops down into position. Knees and elbows. He'll fit.

A low RUMBLING SOUND echoes.

They all stop and look up at the sky.

SEVERAL SHIPS ENTER THE ATMOSPHERE.

The three Unblooded exchange glances, excitement in the air. They opt to head back and take off running.

Pupil stays behind.

For a brief moment, Pupil considers the symbol on the wall. Looks into the dark tunnel. His natural instincts are abuzz.

After a beat, he decides against it and instead runs out to catch up with his friends.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Several docked SHIPS line the tarmac, landing ramps extended. The ship's hulls battle-worn from combat.

EXT. OBELISK BEACON - CONTINUOUS

Ella watches from atop the ancient structure, high above. Ancient hieroglyphs decorate the stone's facade.

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - SAME

Six armed TEMPLE GUARDS stand at the bottom of the ramp, dressed in regal armor with a branded royal insignia. Centurion provides support from behind.

A MOB of Young Bloods, Unblooded, Elites and Elders watch.

The most recently arrived ship extends its landing ramp. Three ENFORCERS exit, dressed in shiny white SUPREMACY ARMOR.

They escort a manacled BAD BLOOD down the ramp between them. A heavy, metallic collar binds his head and wrists together.

His gold and copper, ancient Egyptian styled armor is stained with green blood not his own. He is SCARAB.

Upon seeing him, the MOB GROWLS, a sound never before heard.

The Enforcers deliver Scarab over to the Temple Guards, who take custody of the prisoner and lead him away by his chains, weapons poised.

Behind the Enforcers, several Hunters carry out their unconscious wounded on lightweight, metallic stretchers.

EXT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella tracks the Guards leading Scarab through the streets. Following them. Towards the Bastille.

She slips back into the stone vent.

EXT. BASTILLE - LATER

An orthotopic fortress. Impregnable stone walls. No windows. Unmanned spire turrets and stupas tower over the structure. All steam vents die out far before reaching this building.

The Guards lead Scarab in through the stone arch portcullis.

EXT. CITY - CONTINUOUS

FROM AN ADJACENT STRUCTURE -- Ella's shimmering shape leans forward expectantly, watching them.

Once they've moved into the Bastille and out of her sight, she scuttles out to a ledge and perches... Waiting.

EXT. BASTILLE - LATER

The six Temple Guards exit the Bastille.

They cross the bailey and march away back towards the Tarmac.

After a BEAT -- Ella's translucent shape crosses the portcullis threshold and ventures inside.

INT. BASTILLE, GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

A low-ceilinged cupola encloses a stone hall lit by flickering lamps. This acts as the Bastille's main courtyard. Neolithic construction meets technological sophistication.

On opposite sides of the hall, one path leads to ascending stairs and another leads to descending, subterranean stairs.

Ella descends.

INT. BASTILLE, DESCENDING STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

A dank and dingy path. Water drips.

Ella advances slowly, cautiously. Clinging to the side walls of the stairway and remaining out of sight as best she can.

The stairway winds downward another hundred or so meters. Visible light spills in at the bottom, marking its end.

As Ella's shimmering shape approaches, she notices the condensation of her breaths... The temperature is dropping.

INT. BASTILLE, PENITENTIARY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella glances in, quickly surveying the area for threats. Finding none, she enters.

A massive prison comprised of individual and group holding cells and cages separated by interlaced bars of glistening alien metal, wrought into ornate designs.

The holding cells contain over a dozen PRISONERS OF WAR.

They are BAD BLOODS, members of a society who have gone against the Yautja code of honor. They are also taller. Larger. And possess different armor, altered and redecorated.

They wear some form of TRINKET or colorful JEWELRY to delineate separate caste systems representing different clan organizations and cultures.

Some trinkets are primitive, made of wood or another element while others tend to be more metallic and technological.

Several of the Prisoners' armor is splashed with green blood. Some blood theirs and some not.

They SHIVER, tortured in this cold, subterranean environment.

Some Prisoners lie on the ground, bound and subdued. Others stand in restrictive cells preventing them from sitting.

Underneath iron bars, Scarab lives in an oubliette-like cell.

Isolated from all the others, a WOUNDED Prisoner lies in a puddle of his own green blood, its luminescence fading.

Ella's shape moves passed the various cells.

The Prisoners sense a presence and CLICK their mandibles, communicating their suspicions.

INT. BASTILLE, GREAT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's shimmering shape emerges from the stairway and crosses the hall, reaching the opposite stairs. She climbs upwards.

INT. BASTILLE, ARMORY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's shape stands before a vast array of weaponry.

Ella takes a MINE from the shelf, holds it to her gauntlet. The mine activates with a BEEP and a red light flashes on her gauntlet, recognizing the intended command. She presses it.

She attaches the active mine under the shelf of other mines. Hidden.

Ella reaches out and grabs a SMART DISC off the wall.

Her fingers slip into the designated holes and it AWAKENS. WHIRRING to life, its bladed edges glow red.

Ella materializes, then activates her camouflage again. Integrating the disc into her invisibility.

INT. FLUE - MOMENTS LATER

Camouflaged, Ella removes the myriad weapons hanging off her. When an item separates from her contact, it MATERIALIZES.

She drops off and dumps the small arsenal onto the platform.

EXT. BASTILLE - MOMENTS LATER

Ella exits, remaining close to the sides of the portcullis. Still camouflaged.

She freezes.

A Yautja casually strides towards the portcullis.

This one is bigger than even the largest of the Bad Bloods. But also different somehow. Its gait distinguished, proud. Shoulders thrown back and its chin raised. Confident. Lean.

As it nears, a defined sexual dimorphism becomes apparent.

This is a MATRIARCH, but luckily she isn't wearing a biomask.

Ella glances at the closest steam vent: about 20 meters away, but with the Matriarch between them.

Ella presses against the outside arch of the portcullis. (Right side.) Keeps deathly still.

Matriarch's height makes her an imposing figure, casting a looming shadow over the tiny, shimmering shape of Ella.

Suddenly, Matriarch STOPS.

Ella inches away, trying to put any distance between them.

Matriarch turns around, an expression washes over her face. Her emotive eyes search for something. WRIST BLADES EXTEND.

She turns to the left, scanning. A low CLICKING SOUND.

With the Matriarch's back turned, Ella uses this moment to slip around the portcullis arch, against the Bastille's wall.

CLANG!

The wrist blades EMBED into the portcullis arch!

Ella sidesteps away, gaining another small distance.

Matriarch pulls back, searching for whatever feels amiss. Following her hunch.

Matriarch SWINGS, carving a vertical line in the stone wall.

Ella has moved again, around and away from the Bastille now.

Matriarch turns. She senses a presence, maybe even a threat. And she's facing Ella, but can't see her or lock onto her.

Ella, hunched, with knees bent, slowly slinks back and away. Gaining closer to the steam vent.

Matriarch relaxes her body and RETRACTS her wrist blades... She saunters forward like a lioness, directly at Ella.

Ella scampers back, trying to maintain quiet composure and not give her position away. The vent now at just six meters.

Matriarch holds. Her eyes narrowing closer on target.

Anticipating another attack, Ella never takes her eyes off Matriarch. She tip-toes backwards with wide strides and --

-- her shoe slightly SCRAPES the stone floor.

Matriarch's eyes light up, having found her prey.

Wrist blades EXTEND.

Matriarch descends upon her with a vicious volley of SWINGS.

Ella struggles to dodge the rapid onslaught --

-- one swing becomes UNAVOIDABLE and --

Ella raises the disc up to it --

-- and DEFLECTS the wrist blade.

SPARKS FLY.

Matriarch's eyes widen, insulted.

She adjusts her stance, realizing the much smaller size of her unseen opponent. Now she locates Ella's shimmering shape.

Matriarch LUNGES. Ella parries.

Matriarch advances with brute strength and sheer speed. Forcing Ella to retreat backwards.

Ella glances back at the vent --

only for a split-second -- and just to gauge the distance.

But Matriarch is honed in, and makes an attempt at her head.

Ella returns her attention --

-- to see a merciless HAYMAKER swinging directly at her.

IN SLOW MOTION -- Ella ducks, just in time to save her head. Her black hair, suspended in mid-air, follows.

SLOWER MOTION -- The blade swipes, an inch above her skull, and shears off a single STRAND OF HAIR.

Tiny BLUE ARCS envelop the STRAND OF HAIR and dissipate. Disconnected from the active camouflage, the hair reappears.

BACK TO NORMAL SPEED

Matriarch narrows in on the oddity, momentarily distracted.

And in that moment --

Ella DIVES, rolling into the vent and out of harm's way.

The Disc slips from Ella's grip and falls, CLATTERING against the stone platforms on its way down the flue.

Matriarch glares at the empty space before her. The CLATTERING draws attention to the adequately-sized vent.

She squats down and peers inside to no avail. She trills.

INT. FLUE - CONTINUOUS

Ella lies on a stone platform, third from the highest one. Still catching her breath... That was too close.

She sits up and ponders for a beat... Takes a breath.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME TUNNEL - LATER

CLOSE ON: an armed MINE.

Another armed mine is placed on top. It SNAPS into place. BEEP-BEEP-BEEP.

Ella programs another mine into the wrist gauntlet. It BEEPS. She presses the last of four screens, the symbol complex now.

She SNAPS it onto a tall STACK OF MINES. Armed in unison.

Her back turned now, she wraps SOMETHING to it, and ties it. A final touch to her EXPLOSIVE CONTRAPTION.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ella collects some of the accumulated weaponry. Straps it on. Fills her pockets. Then armfuls, as much as she can carry.

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: the obsidian stone set at the corner of the vent.

PUSH IN:

INT. VENT FLUE - CONTINUOUS

At the highest platform. Sunlight slashes down from the vent.

Ella piles up several smart discs. Gathers several mines. Lines a row of grenades. Stands a blazer on its butt stock. Leans the rigged dual plasma casters against the wall.

Assembling together and organizing a cache of weapons. Preparing for war.

EXT. HALLOWED GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's spectral form sneaks through the periphery, misshapen. Her form seems oddly disproportional.

At the CHOKEPOINT --

Ella finds a small nook at the structure's base, out of sight. Her misshapen arm extends, placing an OBJECT down.

When she releases the object, it materializes: a combistick.

She stashes a cluster of ITEMS. When they disconnect from her grip, they reappear: smart discs, a dual caster, etc.

EXT. HALLOWED GROUNDS - MOMENTS LATER

Through the BOTTLENECK --

Ella uses the braided steel wire fashioned from the webbing to tie a dual caster to the statue of the kneeling hunters.

She points the notches on the barrels at the bottleneck. Aiming at her target.

CUT TO:

Ella ties another dual caster to the second hunter statue.
Levels its barrels at the bottleneck.

She looks across the slim stone bridge, up at the Monastery.
It looms in solitary silence.

INT. MONASTERY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's shimmering form enters through the stone entryway.

A massive antechamber leads to a cluster of ascending stairs.
Ella climbs them to another passageway cut into the stone.

She passes through a pillared corridor that opens up into --

INT. SEPULCHER - CONTINUOUS

A vast, open cavern. The centerpiece of the Monastery.

A lone shaft of light slashes from the oculus at the zenith.
It falls to rest on an altar holding a sealed SARCOPHAGUS.

Ella materializes.

An inscription of dashes and lines decorates the stone tomb.
The pillars surrounding the sarcophagus hold lit torches.

The symmetry and sparse decor gives the tomb an added air of
reverence and holiness. This is a sacred place.

Indifferent, Ella crosses the room and climbs the steps.

Behind the sarcophagus, she locates her STOCKPILE OF WEAPONS.

She grabs a handheld net gun. Checks it's loaded and primed.
Slides it into her waistband. Takes a sheathed tanto sword.

In one fluid motion, she accesses her gauntlet and VANISHES.
(Small fingers afford her greater dexterity for the buttons.)

EXT. LAVA FJORD

The Matriarch prowls the area, armed and wearing a biomask.
Her head scans every direction.

Across the fjord lies the tunnel with Ella's etched symbol.
As of yet undiscovered.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

A mob, comprised of distinguished ranks, stands assembled. They line up in segregated formation, each to their own.

All of them face the same direction: the GALLOWS.

EXT. GALLOWS - SAME

The stage holds a complex MACHINE. Comprised of stone and steel, it has ancient script of dots etched into it.

A raging FIRE burns inside a copper fire-dish at the center.

Three TEMPLE GUARDS usher out a manacled Bad Blood PRISONER. Beaten and bloodied, having endured abuse during captivity.

He's led up stairs and to the STAGE under a proscenium arch.

Primpilus oversees. The witness of most importance.

EXT. STEPPE PYRAMID - CONTINUOUS

From high above, Ella watches the strange procession occur.

EXT. GALLOWS - SAME

Three other TEMPLE GUARDS fasten the Prisoner into position. CHAINED MANACLES get fastened to both wrists and ankles. Another around his NECK.

The Temple Guards turn a wheel and wind the chains until taut, lifting the Prisoner into the air spread-eagle.

Stretched in mid-air and allowed to hang for a second, the Prisoner strains against the tension of his bindings. Resigned to his situation.

A Temple Guard steps in front of the Prisoner, tanto in hand.

He slices the Prisoner's abdomen open from solar plexus to hip, spilling his innards out onto the floor.

The other two Temple Guards each draw a SWORD -- and swing. They sever both legs, leaving him hanging by his arms. Draining of blood.

They SWING AGAIN and cut off his arms.

Dead now, the Prisoner dangles from only his neck. Drained.

After a beat, the chain collar lowers the Prisoner.

Within reach, the presiding Guard decapitates the Prisoner. The dismembered torso THUMPS to the ground.

The Prisoner's head is held up for all to see.

The head is placed on a stone altar and SMASHED flat into pulpy bits by a capstone. A skull defiled and dishonored.

EXT. STEPPE PYRAMID - CONTINUOUS

Having seen enough, Ella slips away.

EXT. SHRINE - DAY

Camouflaged, Ella stares up at the towering statue of Kaail.

She slowly approaches, reverent, almost like a loyal subject.

After a beat, Ella hops onto the base pedestal of the statue. She finds a deep fold around the knee of the statue --

-- and wedges into it the STACK OF MINES.

ROYCE'S BANDANA tied around it.

INT. TUNNELS - MOMENTS LATER

Ella scurries through a tunnel, hunched over.

She crosses over the lava stream, turns into another tunnel. Passes its arched entry etched with one of her SYMBOLS.

A few meters in, she stops...

Contemplating something, her head nudges. Pulled by thought. The corner of her lip curls into a faint smile.

Decision made, she turns around and heads back.

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - DAY

The only nearby STEAM VENT.

At the end of a long row of several dozen damaged warships lining the port, queued for repair.

There's visible activity with Temple Guards milling about.

Ella's shimmering shape slinks between ships, sneaking around obstacles and personnel. Towards a specific destination.

She finds it: the ship. Her ship... The one she arrived in. Held up on three hind legs.

She climbs the landing ramp and boards.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, TROPHY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's transparent hand reaches out --

-- and touches the side of Slav's skull. The HUMAN skull. Holds it there. Cradling it.

Her fingers grip the skull and pull it free from the display. It FLOATS as her shimmering shape holds it up, admiring it.

She APPEARS. And DISAPPEARS again, the skull along with her.

The quick GLIMPSE of her shows she's armed.

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's shape creeps out and off of the ship's landing ramp. Almost imperceptible to the human eye.

She slips across a gap between ships. Presses her back against one of the recently arrived, damaged warships.

CUT TO:

POV - OFFICER BIO MASK

Strolling through the lot of docked ships. Carrying a glaive.

An OFFICER --

-- inattentively polices the area, confident of his safety. Comfortable. Barely glancing in different directions.

Mainly looking down at the stone ground. Probably in thought.

On the outskirts of the Tarmac, he cruises passed the last ship in the long row and stops. Leans his glaive on the ship.

He takes in the city skyline, extraordinary through his mask.

And turns just as --

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - CONTINUOUS

Ella BUMPS into Officer and falls flat on her ass.

She looks up at -- Officer's biomask looking right at her!

POV - OFFICER BIO MASK

The bold HEAT SIGNATURE of a bipedal SHAPE, glowing orange. It's a physically unimpressive creature. An ALIEN. A human.

It makes a slow reach to its hip for SOMETHING --

RETURN TO SCENE

Officer SPRINGS on Ella --

-- she angles up and PULLS A TRIGGER --

-- a WIRE MESH NET expands out from the barrel of a net gun.

It wraps around him and SHOOTS HIM BACKWARD through the air.

Officer lands ten meters away, squirming. He's pinned down by only a few headline BOLTS that embedded into the floor.

The self-driven BOLTS spin, WHIRRING and reeling the net, tightening the latticework of fine wire into tiny spools.

Before Officer can fully release a final SHRIEK --

-- the NET constricts around his body and slices into any exposed flesh.

Ella stands, her heart THUMPING. She draws a SMART DISC.

The unattached bolts spin wildly, spooling more than usual. It compresses the snare, leaving a sack of full armor and biomask in a mess of blood and diced chunks of green viscera.

Ella thinks for a moment... There's nothing else to do here.

She scuttles away and ducks back into the VENT.

EXT. LANDING TARMAC - MOMENTS LATER

A Temple Guard SOLDIER stands over the Officer's remains.

EXT. OBELISK BEACON - LATER

Ella reaches the top and leans over the edge to see:

An ongoing military operation surrounds the crime scene.

A heavily-armed perimeter established around the entire area. Dozens of Temple Guards swarm the Tarmac, canvassing it.

A group of Enforcers, wearing supremacy armor and armed to the teeth, focus on the next suspected BATTERED WARSHIP. They've surrounded it. Weapons pointed.

INT. BATTERED WARSHIP - CONTINUOUS

Six Temple Guards oversee Amengi slaves dismantling the ship. Removing panels, exposing the inner bioelectric circuitry.

A trio of Enforcers follow close behind the Amengi, aiming weapons into any form of possible hiding places. All vacant.

Their rummaging search is thorough, LOUD, and vicious.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, HALLWAY - SAME

Quiet. The walls are all still intact. Undisturbed.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, MAGAZINE - CONTINUOUS

Centurion stands over the dry bloodstain covering the floor. He wears his biomask, absorbing all types of readings. Motionless. His head lowered.

He removes his biomask. Drops down to one knee.

The blood's luminescence is long gone and its vibrant color has soured into a dull SWAMP GREEN. He disregards all that.

Centurion leans in close --

-- and studies the one speck of dried BROWN BLOOD.

INT. ASSAULT SHIP, TROPHY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Centurion walks passed the entryway. He stops.

Turns into the room.

Even through a biomask, thoughts become evident as he moves, ever so slowly, towards the far end of the room. Entranced.

His head tilted. Formulations and theories being confirmed. Dots are connecting. He reaches the back wall DISPLAY CASE.

None of the trophies interest him like the VACANT SPOT where a skull used to reside. His angered vindication apparent.

EXT. CITY - VARIOUS - DAY

All throughout the city --

Heavily-armed Temple Guards patrol the city streets. Marching. Faces covered by the cold stares of their biomasks.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - DAY

CLOSE ON: a stone cairn.

Silence.

Heat REFRACTS off the sun-drenched black sand and stone. Waves of light are interrupted by a passing mirage...

By some invisible force, a FOOTPRINT forms in the sand.

EXT. VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Ella's spectral shape advances, refracting the sun's rays. The walled-off Farmlands visible ahead in the distance.

EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

At the open, vaulted front gates. A gentle breeze blows. Vegetation beckons just beyond the gates. Silence.

The image of the vegetation and front gate WARPS. Transforming into a bipedal shape marching forward.

EXT. CROP FIELD - SAME

The enslaved Amengi tend to the crops. Droning about. Oblivious.

INT. GRIST MILL - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: grain pile. The kernels ripple into waves.

A handful floats up and vanishes. It CRUNCHES as it's chewed.

INT. RANCH - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's shimmering shape slinks past the stables of monstrous CREATURES in captivity. None notice the refracted shape pass.

The trough of brackish water SPILLS onto the ground. Mixing with the volcanic soil, producing a muddy slop.

The sound of active motion draws the monsters' attention. They lean close to their stable doors for vantage points.

POV MONSTER IN CAGE -

Inexplicably, the MUD sloshes around. Clumps of it levitate. Hovering in mid air, the mud moves laterally and SMEARS. Making contact with a surface, BLUE ARCS envelop that area.

Creatures from other stables react with violent fear. Spooked. Either from ignorance or recognition of the tech. They rile against their enclosures, RATTLING locks and cages.

As the mud is spread, more of the active camouflage fails -- creating a horrific visage of muddied parts, electrical arcs, and partial invisibility attempting to integrate around this *thing*. A demon borne of earthen mud and electric current.

EXT. LAVA FJORD - DUSK

Both SUNS move over the horizon. Sunlight is fading.

An AURORA splashes dynamic patterns of brilliant lights, transforming Ella's shimmering form into a radiant prism.

The gnomon's two dim shadows coincide on the sigmoidal shape. Touching the indicator stone... Night time is nigh.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - NIGHT

The Marauder ANCIENT strides across the vacant stone streets. Footsteps echoing.

The insignia he wears is comprised of a kanji-like character.

Suddenly, he stops and turns around. His senses tingling.

His cloudy eyes glance around at the silent, sleepy city. Nothing amiss.

Shrugging it off, he returns to his path.

EXT. SHRINE - MOMENTS LATER

The Ancient reaches the statue shrine area. Continues onward. Night washes the statue in a glistening kaleidoscopic sheen.

A STONE CLATTERS to his left. He turns toward it... Strange. But his trajectory remains uninterrupted.

A SOFT WHISPER, close to his right --

-- STOPS him.

Involuntarily, his mandible CLICKS ONCE.

He looks around. Feeling watched from all sides. Surrounded. The SILENCE becomes unnerving. Creepy.

Warily, he starts back to the statue.

At the base of the statue, he stands and faces it. Reluctantly, he bows his head. But his eyes never close.

He lifts his head and looks both ways, then nears the base. Dubious, he reaches out and touches the statue's feet.

Closer still, the shadows to his left mimic, and CLICK ONCE.

He pivots toward it.

Behind him he hears:

...psssst....

He spins around.

Nothing. Just an empty street.

Suddenly, the Ancient GROANS --

As an invisible SWORD RUNS HIM THROUGH the chest.

His eyes register shock. Confusion. Unable to process this. Unaccustomed to threats at home. This is impossible!

His hand wraps around the unseen blade, now STAINED GREEN.

Reflexively, the Ancient SWIPES at the air in front of him, razor-sharp claws drawn.

His arm SEVERS IN MID-AIR and falls.

A small shimmering shape in front of him is SPATTERED with green blood, marking a second blade, held up by little Ella.

Horrified, the Ancient takes a GURGLING INHALE.

His mandibles spread wide, and, as he begins to SCREECH --

Ella swings her blade --

-- and CUTS OPEN HIS THROAT.

The sword is ripped from his chest, also slicing his hand.

He collapses.

Ella REVEALS HERSELF.

Covered in mud. Bloody tanto in each hand, in reverse grip.
The embodiment of a furious god of war. Glaring down at him.

As the green blood pours from his fatal wounds, his eyes move
between Ella and --

-- the Statue of the Alpha, looming high above them both.
Utterly desecrated by his imminent death.

His eyes track back and forth between the two.

CUT TO:

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE (FLASHBACK)

Royce speaks with his mouth full of an alien meaty dinner.
Sustenance seems less important than the message he speaks.

ROYCE

I think we're ready for our war...
A war we won't win. But, we can do
some damage. Make them remember us.
And have a little fun, you know?

Ella is met by a mischievous grin on him.

ROYCE

(shrugs)
We're already here. Already dead.
Might as well.
(beat)
Make your enemy fight while angry
and cloud his judgement, but we'll
enter battle with a mind of ice.
And I know what you're thinking...

He winks.

ROYCE

I've been thinking about that, too.

"How do we bait them in?"

(grunts)

What would piss them off the most?

What would guarantee their hatred?

He sucks his teeth. Smiles.

EXT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Ella finishes tying a knot on a rope. She pulls it taut.
Stands. Gives Royce a "thumbs up."

He starts heaving back the rope --

-- lifting a dead Yautja by its feet, hanging it upside down.
Green, sinewy striations exposed. Its skin flayed off.

He ties the rope off.

Ella uses a bucket to spread green blood on the jungle floor.

POV - THROUGH BIO MASK

Shaky cam footage as the mask is handled with irreverence.
The infrared vision catches glimpses of heat signatures.

The video stream stabilizes and the thermal image settles on:

A frighteningly horrible visage of a skeletal face with black
hollow eye sockets staring at the screen like a grim reaper.

It is Royce's face, smirking. A giant 'fuck you' conveyed.

RETURN TO SCENE

He tosses the bio mask, discarding it underneath the body.
Its face lands upright, facing the dangling carcass.

ROYCE

That should get their attention.

They walk away.

A drop of GREEN BLOOD falls onto the face of the biomask.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHRINE - DUSK

Ella watches the Ancient's life fade... and die.

She CLANGS her SWORD down on the Ancient and decapitates him. Using the blade, she widens the space between head and body.

SCREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEECCH!!!!!!!!!!

Twenty meters away, a Temple Guard PATROLMAN stares, aghast. Ella turns her head, slightly. Looking over her shoulder. Only her peripherals meet him.

He recovers and acts, running at Ella. Full speed. Enraged. Ella doesn't move a muscle.

Patrolman is on her in seconds and swings the glaive on her --

Ella VANISHES -- the glaive SWISHES air.

Frantic and now worried, Patrolman looks around. Bested.

At the far corner of the shrine worship area, Ella REAPPEARS. She TAPS the blade on the floor, drawing his attention.

He sees Ella and immediately, he takes off RUNNING AFTER HER. He cuts the distance between them by half in three seconds. Way faster than any human superathlete.

Ella turns down a STREET ALLEY and DISAPPEARS.

Patrolman follows.

EXT. STREET ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

At the mouth of the alley, Patrolman STOPS.

He looks around for his target...

Suddenly -- Ella's visage FLASHES -- RIGHT IN HIS FACE.

Startled, he FLINCHES, then swings the glaive at her.

But she's gone.

He sees her SHIMMERING SHAPE at the far side of the alleyway. She's visible only when in motion.

He rushes to the end of the path into --

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

The Unblooded train. Precision and aggression on display. Collective action of offensive attacks.

Finding her trail now, Patrolman slowly starts following her. She's moving towards the Unblooded on their training course. He treads behind, quietly gaining.

Ella slips into the fray, in between the active Unblooded. Their synchronized phalanx closes in, a combistick swinging.

The three presiding clan Elders observe the Patrolman enter the training course. They don't see the invisible threat. Since not currently hunting, they don't wear bio masks.

Patrolman sees the shimmering shape STOP and wait... for him.

His eyesight is interrupted by a swinging combistick. He breaks his gaze just in time to lift his glaive --

-- and BLOCK THE COMBISTICK ATTACK.

The wall of focused Unblooded INTERLACES. Continuing their training with absolute resolve. Through *anything*. Relentless.

Patrolman catches another inadvertent swing and BLOCKS IT.

The cluster of Unblooded separates again, changing their trajectory now toward the perimeter of the training course.

Patrolman returns his attention ahead, to where Ella stood. But the shimmer has gone.

His eyes search for a target to land on.

Patrolman stops searching, an instinct activates too late. His body goes rigid as a sudden realization dawns over him.

Then, all the tension in his shoulders releases. Resigned. Acceptance takes over as he lowers his head. Defeated.

The panorama right behind him WARPS with movement.

Patrolman's chest BURSTS outward and green blood SPATTERS as the blade of a tanto protrudes. He BELLOWS OUT in pain.

Another tanto blade angles out and taps a vital organ. Patrolman collapses, dead.

The Elders immediately spring into action and run to him. Armed.

The Unblooded's focus falters. Some abandon their drills. Watching. Others continue, hesitant.

The three Elders converge on Patrolman's splayed body.

Two of them provide protective cover for the THIRD to study the body. He rolls Patrolman over.

And that's when he sees it: an ACTIVE MINE.

He only has time to look up at the other two Elders --

BOOM.

INT. DOJO - CONTINUOUS

The blast wave RUMBLES, ripping Centurion from meditation.

He turns in its direction and quickly dons his biomask. Attaches armor and arms himself with weaponry off his wall.

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

The explosion VAPORIZES Patrolman and the three Elders.

The Unblooded abandon their curriculum drills entirely now.

Unsure of correct protocol, they crowd around the blast site. Searching for clues. Trying to piece together the situation.

INT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

On full alert. Marauder Clan Hunters strap on armor.

INT. DARK BLADE PYRAMID, ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

Dark Blade Clan members begin to arm themselves.

EXT. STREET ALLEY - SAME

Ella's shimmering shape ducks down, tucked in a corner nook. Her attention is on her forearm gauntlet.

She enters a command and a red light flashes.

Ella presses the indicator.

INT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

Within the crowded room of soldiers preparing for battle --

-- the hidden mine EXPLODES.

INT. DARK BLADE PYRAMID, ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

The caltrop DETONATES.

INT. BASTILLE, ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

The mine DETONATES. Their stores of weaponry decimated.

EXT. TRAINING SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

The VARIOUS EXPLOSIONS around the city are visible from here. And it's all around them. All the major Clan houses are hit.

The Unblooded watch as their city burns.

A distant SCREECH gets their attention. They run to it.

EXT. SHRINE - MOMENTS LATER

Another Temple Guard kneels over the decapitated body of the revered Ancient, dismayed. The Ancient's HEAD IS MISSING.

The Unblooded reach the murder scene and are flabbergasted. Their eyes scan wildly, trying to extrapolate information.

Very quickly, their attention finds one discerning detail:

At the base of the Statue of Kaail, is a HUMAN SKULL TROPHY. Beside it are two severed, withered QUILLS.

Temple Guard joins them at the base, stares at the objects.

CUT TO:

POV - CENTURION BIOMASK

The HUMAN SKULL TROPHY at the base of the statue of Kaail. The two severed, QUILLS.

He's VIEWING THE LIVE FEED from Temple Guard's biomask.

Vertical SCRIPT OF DASHES runs along the side of the display. Providing written data.

Centurion ROARS, amplified by the biomask's reverberation.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHRINE - CONTINUOUS

The Unblooded study the skull from different angles.
Examining it. But refusing to touch it.

A questioning CLICKING gets the Unbloodeds' attention off the skull and draws them towards a FLUORESCENT GREEN BLOOD TRAIL.

They follow it.

INT. MARAUDER CLAN PYRAMID, ARMORY

Centurion enters, surveying the vast fiery destruction.
Hatred burning behind the cold eyes of his biomask.

EXT. CITY - MOMENTS LATER

The Unblooded, now leading themselves, track the blood trail.
They display an immature gung-ho demeanor, eager for a kill.
But lacking caution.

The blood tapers to a trickle, but remains distinct enough.
It becomes more scarce the farther they get from the Ancient.

The blood trail drags over a parapet and down the city wall.

The Unblooded peer over the edge and down the long fall.

Fluorescent green BLOTCHES lead to a SPLATTER at the bottom,
its luster accentuated by the black obsidian ground.

The class LEADER --

-- hops over and begins scaling down the tall curtain wall.
He exudes confidence and bravado.

So others follow suit.

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - MOMENTS LATER

The last of the Unblooded class reaches the ground level.

Rejoining the others who study the green splatter of blood,
deducing information. Inferring conclusions.

The seemingly innocuous tunnel arches draw no attention to themselves, cached in the dark shadows of night.

The blood trail goes no further.

One of them, a PEER, breaks his concentration on the blood. His mandible TWITCHES. His eyes riveted out into the night. Visibility is low, plus an encroaching fog.

But something draws his attention...

Peer breaks away from the forensics and steps to the plains. The calm in the air creates a palpable uneasiness.

The Unblooded suddenly STOP, as if a wave washes over them. They unite, facing in the same direction: out at the plains. All is silent...

They all feel it now.

They stare into the fog-ridden night and hear FAINT THUMPING.

The class draws closer together as the THUMPING APPROACHES. They form a phalanx.

At the front, the Leader is handed the class combistick. Expanding it, he points the tip of the spear out defensively.

Nearby PATTTERING to their left startles them.

A quick SCUTTLE to their right. The unnerving feeling of being flanked and surrounded begins to take hold.

From the rear, an Unblooded is STRUCK DOWN. He BELLOWS. Glowing green blood pours from a serious chest wound.

The other Unblooded turn to see a QUATZA RIJ, a fierce creature, native to the planet. Its slender build equipped with deadly claws and fangs it employs onto the Unblooded.

The combistick protrudes from the phalanx and finds its target, stabbing it in the rib cage and pinning it down.

Unblooded classmates use their claws to ravage its neck. Piling on damage.

Bright YELLOW BLOOD bursts from the creature's open wounds. Downed, it SHRIEKS, quivering in the final throes of death.

The Unblooded regroup.

Within the fog, they see a faint outline of a MASSIVE SHAPE. It steps forward and comes into sharp relief:

It's a TROLL MONSTER!

It locks eyes on the group of huddled Unblooded and rages. Running towards them like a battering ram!

The Unblooded hold steady their positions. Steadfast in their courage and determination against this foe.

ANOTHER TROLL MONSTER blindsides them from the right.

A massive overhand right crumples an Unblooded's body. Grabbing another's face and pulling him up by it.

A four-legged HORNED MONSTROSITY rams them from the left!

From both sides now, the Unblooded are ambushed by all manner of creatures, the entire ranch descending upon them.

SCREECHES and HOWLS as Unblooded and Monsters clash.

A sense of dread overtakes these inexperienced hunters. Panicked, they make rash decisions and lethal mistakes. Overwhelmed now, they break formation and become easier prey.

The horde of MONSTER CREATURES easily penetrate their ranks. Decimate their defenses.

It's a slaughter.

The Unblooded SCATTER. Some scale the wall back to the city. Others run out into the desert plains. Full retreat.

INT. TUNNELS - SAME

Ella moves through the tunnel, reaching the main TRIBUTARY. She makes a sharp left and enters an offshoot to the right. Adeptly navigating the underground network.

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's shimmering shape slinks out through a vent. Carefully. She rushes toward the Bastille's portcullis.

INT. BASTILLE, DESCENDING STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella descends the dank stairway towards the light at the end.

INT. BASTILLE, PENITENTIARY - MOMENTS LATER

Ella enters. Her deep breaths condensate before her.

The shivering Prisoners immediately sense her energy. Attentions turn toward the doorway. Their mandibles CLICK.

Ella REVEALS HERSELF.

The Prisoners BOLT UPRIGHT, absolutely ASTOUNDED.

All eyes on her as she strides across the holding cell area. She meets their eye contact.

She looks down through bars at Scarab as she passes over his oubliette-like cell beneath her feet. His eyes follow her.

She reaches the HERMIT prisoner at his cell. He's sitting up. But still incapacitated. Weakened.

Every single Prisoner is now riveted to their wrought bars.

Ella looks into the cramped cage housing this injured Hermit. She unlocks the cell, opens the door, and allows him exit.

He stares at her for a BEAT.

She gestures at the exit, a clear invitation.

Slowly and with great pains, he lifts himself to his feet. Hobbles out of the cell.

A BEAT as Hermit looks around at all the other Prisoners, still trapped in their cages.

He looks at Ella and immediately -- LUNGES.

Ella adjusts the angle of the door to shield herself from his attack. She plants her foot against the frame of the door, anchoring it in place with very little effort.

His hand folds against the powerful metal.

Ella VANISHES.

Hermit hesitates. And in that split-second --

His ARM FALLS to the floor. Severed in one clean swipe. Reflexively, he grips the stump with his other hand.

And his KNEE IS CUT CLEAN THROUGH.

He topples over.

Ella REAPPEARS.

Hermit lies on the floor trying to cradle both arm and leg. Flopping around. Sluggish. Bleeding out fast.

Ella SLICES his throat and turns, leaving him to die alone. Hermit GURGLES, and writhes into STILLNESS behind her.

Every Prisoner glares at Ella, impotent.

Her eyes find the next CLOSEST Prisoner. She approaches him. Sizing him up, she cleans the blood off her blade.

A BEAT of eye contact between them...

An unspoken understanding.

She unlocks his door. Swings open the gate and backs up. Unsheathes her other tanto. Holds both in opposite grips.

She's ready and - as they've all just seen - deadly.

The Closest Prisoner steps out of his cell and looks at Ella. Gauging her, reading her resolve.

He meets her eyes, a deadpan pool of raging murderous intent.

She gives him the slightest of nods toward the door. Threateningly subtle.

He obliges, crosses towards the exit, a walk becomes a jog.

She opens the NEXT CELL, this one with two Prisoners.

The Prisoners don't hesitate to run their way out to freedom. Never turning back.

Ella opens the following cell.

He doesn't even acknowledge her presence as he escapes.

EXT. BASTILLE - MOMENTS LATER

The Bad Blood Prisoners pour out through the portcullis. Liberated.

INT. BASTILLE, PENITENTIARY - SAME

Ella squats down and looks at Scarab, the last prisoner left. He stands still. Patient.

They stare at each other.

The lock to his cell SLIDES OPEN.

Ella lifts the cell door up on its hinges.

INT. OUBLIETTE - CONTINUOUS

Scarab considers his options for a short moment.

Decided, he LEAPS UP through the open ceiling and --

EXT. BASTILLE, PENITENTIARY - CONTINUOUS

-- lands on solid ground. Claws outstretched, in attack mode.

He looks around the area. He's alone. His mandibles CLICK. Foregoing his original intent, he makes his way out.

And STOPS at the exit.

He turns back. His eyes scan the area one last time, knowing Ella has not left, but unable to see her. *To be continued...*

Scarab returns to his escape. He exits the room.

The echo of his footsteps recede as he ascends the stairway.

Ella REAPPEARS.

EXT. BASTILLE - MOMENTS LATER

Scarab exits the portcullis. He looks in both directions.

On the city's horizon, several of the Clan houses are ablaze. The yellow glow of fire can be seen flickering in the night.

The last of the Bad Blood Prisoners are seen running around, wreaking havoc through the city streets.

The SOUNDS OF BATTLE RING OUT as Bad Bloods meet resistance.

Scarab shuffles away toward the city, melting into the night.

EXT. SHRINE - SAME

Centurion stands over the decapitated body of the Ancient. Noticing something, he squats.

He picks up a clot of DRIED MUD.

POV - CENTURION BIOMASK

The mud is analyzed by a comprehensive scan. Results scroll in vertical text, spewing information. But nothing of note.

The IMAGE FLASHES as Centurion changes to INFRARED SPECTRUM.

The clot of mud changes color, but resists probing.

FLASH to an ULTRAVIOLET SPECTRUM -- Nothing.

FLASH to a WAVELENGTH SPECTRUM -- Nothing.

FLASH to the CHEMORECEPTOR SPECTRUM -- turns the mud PURPLE soaked in a dark purple cloud floating around it.

He is INSIDE A TRANSLUCENT PURPLE CLOUD.

Centurion stands up and backs away from his position. Perspective shift shows a wispy trail of PURPLE STREAKS.

PHEROMONES. Suspended in the air. It lingers alongside their own immiscible GREEN remnants.

The streaks create a fading path from an unseen origin point. A clear vector.

Centurion follows it.

EXT. BASTILLE - MOMENTS LATER

Ella's shimmering shape MATERIALIZES.

She steps out through the portcullis to see a city on fire.

The sounds of BATTLE echo in the breeze as blades CLASH. Small EXPLOSIONS detonate far in the distance. Monsters HOWL.

Ella admires her work for a second, proud of her progress. She looks across the cityscape toward the Monastery.

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Royce enters --

-- muddied, he scuttles in behind the cover of a large boulder and loads up weaponry for an impending battle.

Ella rushes beside him. He speaks in a harsh, hushed whisper.

ROYCE

Two minutes.

He peers over the boulder and retracts. Meets Ella's eyes.

ROYCE

This is it. Just like we discussed. Okay? They'll sacrifice their camo crossing the waterfall. Once they're inside, and we can see them, they'll be forced into our bottleneck. I can defend that pretty well. Here --

He gives her a rifle.

ROYCE

They think it's only me in here.
And boy, do they want their kill.
My skull just upped in value to
these motherfuckers.

He points to the side of the cave, uses his hands to explain

ROYCE

Take position there. When I engage,
you wait ten seconds and then join.
We'll ambush them with a crossfire.

His voice carries a calm confidence that exudes strength.

ROYCE

If anything happens to me, get
outside first and flank them. You
make sure they die. Remember:
survival was never the goal.

She goes to enact the plan. Anxious. Adrenaline-riddled.

ROYCE

(whispers)
Wait!

He grabs her hand --

ROYCE

What was your name again?

He smiles at her, expecting no response.

Her anxiety dwindles.

Ella gets into position, levels her rifle.

ON THE RUSHING WATERFALL --

An invisible blockage disturbs the natural cascade of water.
Creating an air gap in the waterfall.

Electric blue arcs envelop a shape.

Active camouflage fails and exposes: THREE HUNTER PREDATORS.

They enter, surveying their surroundings.

Their leader is NIMROD.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - SAME

Centurion jogs forward through the serpentine streets.

POV - CENTURION BIOMASK

Following the lingering purple contrail of pheromones.
Intensity of the color increases as he follows it.

The city flies past as Centurion snakes through the streets.

A QUADRANT SEPARATES ON SCREEN - showing a WAR IN PROGRESS.
Against an UNSEEN ENEMY.

Descriptive text of dashes scrolls vertically beside it.

The QUADRANT SCREEN suddenly DEACTIVATES -- CUTS TO BLACK --
-- followed by the sound of a DISTANT EXPLOSION.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY GROUND LEVEL - NIGHT

A BATTALION defends against heavy encroaching PLASMA SHOTS.
They're pinned down at the mouth of an alleyway.

They're armed with what they've salvaged or kept stored away.
Only a few wear biomasks, others remain barefaced.

The plasma sends CHUNKS of STONE crumbling off the wall.

At the far end, Ella rounds the corner and fires wildly.
She's armed to the teeth, weapons hang all over her.

She unhooks a GRENADE from her belt, primes, and throws it.
Shoots a distracting BARRAGE into the alleyway behind it.

Amid some rubble, the grenade rolls to a stop.

She moves away, pausing her attack and creating an opening.

Sensing their moment, the Yautja rush in to advance.

And the GRENADE EXPLODES.

EXT. HALLOWED GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

Ella repositions to the far end of the area, near the edge.
With a direct line of sight to the alleyway. She VANISHES.

The dust begins to settle...

And more enraged Yautja now enter the open area, scouring.
Some move forward as others widen their search.

She lets them gather their numbers.

An ELITE scans the area with his biomask. A shoulder-mounted
plasma canon tracks his eye line, aiming for a target.

An UNMASKED Hunter stands beside him, waiting for a lead.

Ella's shimmer produces an OBJECT and throws it --

IN SLOW MOTION -

The OBJECT MATERIALIZES into a PUCK upon leaving her grip.
The puck spins through the air, unnaturally gaining speed.
Six CURVED BLADES expand from the center forming a SHURIKEN.

NORMAL SPEED -

The shuriken finds a target in the Elite's torso --

-- and rips through him.

Spinning the Elite around --

-- the shuriken embeds into the Hunter a mortal wound.

Ella resumes FIRE.

Her aim is righteous. Every BLUE ORB devastates what it hits.
Blowing away limbs and torsos. Each orb creates a KILL SHOT.

But the muzzle flash gives away her position --

One Yautja throws a combistick in her direction.

Ella rolls to her side and FIRES back.

She mows down all those that entered the Hallowed Grounds.
Only one way in and one way out.

Ella REAPPEARS and crosses the area, protected by tombstones.
Her caster pointed at the alleyway.

A fierce Yautja flings himself into the space.

Ella SHOOTS -- catches him in mid-air, splitting him in half.

A SECOND Yautja follows closely behind.

She FIRES. He dodges the shot. She DOUBLE-TAPS the trigger.
His SHOULDER EXPLODES, downing him.

She drops down another GRENADE.

She starts up the raised passageway, shooting a constant stream. More Yautja pour in, hot on her heels.

The GRENADE EXPLODES, giving her some breathing room.

Ella moves through the CHOKEPOINT, walking backwards. FIRING.

She glances down at an out-of-place OBSIDIAN ROCK.

Ella VANISHES.

A platoon convenes, rallying. They enter the BOTTLENECK.

Ella LETS LOOSE a SMART DISC into the cramped BOTTLENECK --
-- a full row of Yautja TORSOS CRUMPLE aside.

The Yautja climb over the bodies of their fallen and advance. Relentless.

Ella continues blasting her CANNONADE.

POV - ELITE BIOMASK

Some distance away, a BARRAGE of plasma orbs strafe in all directions from an unseen ORIGIN.

The IMAGE FLASHES into a VISIBLE COLOR SPECTRUM.

Ella's form becomes discernible.

She stays low to the ground in fluid motion. Every movement she makes claims lives and simultaneously dodges attacks.

A red TRIANGULAR TARGETING SYSTEM locates her within it. Locking on to her. The biomask emits a red LASER.

Ella glances in this direction. Targeting system LOCKS ON.

RETURN TO SCENE

CLOSE ON: the CHOKEPOINT MINE --

-- behind the targeting Elite --

-- DETONATES!

On the far side of the BOTTLENECK, Ella reaches the TERRACE. She's only got a few seconds before the next wave.

She rushes to the left Yautja STATUE, shelters behind it.

The first FEW YAUTJA cross the BOTTLENECK into the TERRACE.

She removes the trigger guard on the affixed DUAL CASTERS.
This activates a powerful, SUSTAINED AUTOMATIC FIRE.

Ella slightly adjusts aim and SHREDS the few Yautja present.
Then she HONES the raking fusillade towards the BOTTLENECK.

More Yautja run in.

Ella reaches the other statue and engages those dual casters.
Doubling the bombardments into an interlocking field of fire.
A kill box.

She joins in on the DISCHARGE SIEGE.

The TORRENT OF BLUE ORBS illuminates the night sky with
bright strobing flashes of light.

Ella starts up the ascending BRIDGE, towards the Monastery.

AT THE ALLEYWAY --

Unrecognizable after Ella's destruction.

CENTURION approaches the ravaged area. Dozens lie massacred.
Splotches of green everywhere... An open-air charnel house.

He steps over the obliterated carcasses of his fellow Yautja.

AT THE CHOKEPOINT --

A spent battlefield... Any Yautja here not dead soon will be.

CENTURION enters cautiously, studying the enemy's strategy.
He notes the blast crater, ideally placed for maximum damage.

The path forward blocked by the collapsed chokepoint walls.
He climbs over the detritus.

And for the first time, he lays eyes on the ENEMY threat --

-- on the BRIDGE --

-- as Ella dishes out unadulterated carnage.

POV - CENTURION BIOMASK

In this light SPECTRUM --

She looks like a deathly celestial being. A wraith comprised
of plasma. A luminous PURPLE AUREOLE emanates around her.
Dancing tendrils wisp with the iridescence of raging flames.

The SOURCE of the COLOR STREAM.

RETURN TO SCENE

CLOSE ON: the left-side dual caster, spraying infinite shots. Energy-replete and without recoil.

An ENERGY ORB, travelling in the opposite direction ZOOMS BY.

Another ORB GRAZES the statue. And a final one strikes it. The statue crumbles down and REDIRECTS the dual casters away.

Leaving a narrow gap in the BOTTLENECK clear of fire, the Yautja quickly capitalize on the opportunity and cross.

Circumnavigating the other rigged turret, they disable it. Crowds of Yautja flood in.

ON THE BRIDGE --

The first half of the narrow bridge is in excess of capacity. Crumpled bodies fall over the side and vanish into the chasm.

Ella fires her dual caster down the length of the BRIDGE. Blue ORBS BLAST through columns of approaching Yautja.

They clamber over each other to get to Ella, DESPERATE to claim the kill for themselves and their clan.

A Yautja LEAPS, the vector of his arc will land him on Ella!

She draws a NET GUN from her waist, angles up and SHOOTS --

-- REVERSING his trajectory in mid-air through sheer force.

He lands on Yautja further back, TOPPLING them over the edge.

Ella's losing ground, being forced back toward the Monastery. Her assault keeps the horde only a couple of meters away.

She's rapidly approaching the bridge's ABUTMENT.

Yautja SURGE forward.

Ella fires the net gun straight ahead --

-- the NET wraps around the front two Yautja --

-- and the headline BOLTS slam into the Yautja next to them.

The bolts self-tighten and SCREW themselves into the Yautja. They fall in a mound of writhing bodies.

Other Yautja push them aside and advance.

A Yautja JUMPS over the front line --

Ella expands a combistick and stands it on its tip --

-- the Yautja bears down hard on the other sharp point.
Impaling himself.

She throws a SMART DISC that runs through their front line.
Follows it with a SHURIKEN --

-- then rapid-fires down the barrel of both plasma casters.
She tosses a PRIMED GRENADE over their heads.

It EXPLODES!

A BLAST radius followed by a diameter of raining shrapnel.

Ella wages an all-out WAR against the planet.

EXT. MONASTERY - CONTINUOUS

AT THE ABUTMENT

With feet on solid ground --

-- Ella BLOWS THE BRIDGE!

A SPHERE of airborne Yautja expands from the discharge as the
stone bridge crumbles beneath their feet.

From the crowded TERRACE --

Fellow Yautja fall to their deaths into the chasm, as Ella
safely reaches the Monastery grounds.

Ella faces them, catching her breath. Ready for round two.

Centurion watches her from the foot of the destroyed bridge.
He locks eyes with Ella, an expansive abyss between them.
Facial expression unreadable behind his regal biomask.

Ella holds his gaze for a beat.

More Yautja assemble on the terrace.

Centurion turns around and heads back through the bottleneck.
Shoving incoming Yautja out of his way.

The mass of Yautja toe the perimeter edge of the terrace.
They SCREECH and HOWL up at Ella, who holds the high ground.

One Yautja aims his shoulder-mounted plasma caster, SHOOTS.
Sending a single BLUE ORB sailing in an arc over the chasm.

Ella side-steps out of its path, looks at the impact crater.

She reaches behind one of the statues at the foot of the bridge --

-- reveals a QUAD CASTER (two dual casters rigged together), removes their trigger guards and unleashes machine-gun fire.

The Yautja see the oncoming onslaught of hellfire upon them. They SCRAMBLE to SCATTER. Some push back through the BOTTLENECK while others boldly remain to face their fate.

A FLEET of six hunter SHIPS crests over the city skyline. Speeding towards her position. Ella sees them.

She drops the quad caster and reaches the opposite statue. Leans behind it and --

-- lifts the heavy BLAZER.

She angles it upward toward them.

PULLS THE TRIGGER --

-- a stout, prolonged ENERGY BEAM shoots out as far as the eye can see. She releases the trigger and the beam dies.

The ships pitch and roll, employing evasive maneuvers.

Ella aims now, and pulls the trigger.

The BEAM hits a ship's underbelly.

Gushing fire and rapt by a succession of explosions, the ship veers sharply and loses control. It crashes into the city.

Ella shifts the BEAM to another ship.

The BEAM cuts through the hull. The ship banks, and spins to one side, careening into the side of the Monastery's base. Losing altitude, it tumbles down into the chasm below.

A THIRD SHIP rounds the Monastery, Ella turns the BEAM ON IT, forcing it to YAW away, billowing smoke and heavily damaged.

She SWEEPS THE BEAM at the regrouped Yautja on the terrace and decimates their ranks, incurring mass casualties.

The remaining three SHIPS circle the air above the Monastery. Away from Ella's scope of reach.

Ella takes both weapons and retreats into the Monastery, attaching a mine to the stone doorway on her way in.

One of the ships approaches the Monastery, and hovers over. Close. Three ELITES RAPPEL down, landing on the periphery.

The Elites stealthily make their way to the front entry.

The mine EXPLODES --

-- propelling the Elites through the air like ragdolls --

-- and collapsing the entryway, barricading Ella inside.

The dust cloud from the explosion visible from --

ON THE TERRACE --

The Yautja witness the blast, but from such a distance, a definitive outcome remains unclear...

CLOSE ON: the BOTTLENECK mine.

EXPLODES.

INT. MONASTERY - CONTINUOUS

As the blocked entryway's dust settles, airborne particles cling to Ella's shimmer, interfering with her invisibility. She materializes.

Ella crosses the antechamber to the ascending stone stairs. She sets the blazer on a stair, aimed level at the entryway.

She unwinds some length of metallic wire from a small hank. Rigs the trigger. Leaving it ready.

Almost as an afterthought, Ella accesses her wrist gauntlet. Presses a command.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHRINE - CONTINUOUS

The STACK OF MINES creates an unprecedented EXPLOSION.

The legs on the statue are pulverized and --

-- the Statue of Kaail crumbles.

INT. MONASTERY - SAME

Ella grabs the quad caster, climbs the stairs two at a time.

She crosses the PILLARED CORRIDOR --

CLOSE ON: -- every other pillar holds an armed mine.
Targeting structural integrity.

INT. SEPULCHER - CONTINUOUS

Ella crosses the space and ducks behind the sarcophagus --
-- to her small cache of weapons.

She loads up on grenades.

INT. MONASTERY - SAME

The center boulders blocking the collapsed doorway glow RED.
An EPICENTER forms.

A BEAM OF ENERGY BLASTS through. It cuts across the room.
Strikes the pointed BLAZER, DESTROYING IT.

INT. SEPULCHER - CONTINUOUS

Ella turns, facing the direction of the NOISE.

She quickly throws a SILVER CYLINDER up at the oculus. Upon
impact, it EXPANDS into a metallic web spanning the entry.

Quad caster in hand, she runs toward the sound and enters --

INT. MONASTERY - CONTINUOUS

-- the PILLARED CORRIDOR.

About halfway in, Ella ducks down behind one of the pillars.

She activates her camouflage and VANISHES.

A group of SIX ENFORCERS enter, in sweep formation.

Ella PRIMES A GRENADE... two... three... four... five...

THROWS IT.

The Elites sense motion and take cover.

The grenade EXPLODES in mid air.

Ella opens fire.

INT. SEPULCHER - CONTINUOUS

Another THREE ENFORCERS rappel down from the oculus.
Silhouetted by the first signs of dawn above them.

INT. MONASTERY - CONTINUOUS

Ella lays down heavy fire through the corridor.

The Enforcers move like a tactical unit. Efficient.
Effective.

They draw her fire in one direction, using her own muzzle
flash to obscure the others' advance from her.

Ella hears the loud metallic TWANG of the WEB CONTRACTING.

She turns --

-- sees the movement of Enforcers back in the Sepulchre.
They've made their way inside.

Ella FIRES behind her. Then back around. Losing both fronts.

She is surrounded.

She accesses her wrist gauntlet -- inputs a FULL SEQUENCE.
From left to right. Every button.

Her finger hovers over the final one.

She stands.... She closes her eyes... And enters the command.

EVERY MINE DETONATES and the PILLARED CORRIDOR OBLITERATES.

SMASH CUT TO:

SUNLIGHT OBSCURES --

A LITTLE GIRL, swinging on a rope swing, GIGGLING.
The innocent laughter of a joyful child.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY - CONTINUOUS

A MASSIVE DETONATION inside RUMBLES the ground.

The hovering SHIPS bank away from spewed debris.

The Monastery CEILING CAVES IN and some of the WALLS BUCKLE.
But the foundations hold and the building remains.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. COLISEUM - DAY

Ella opens her eyes... Consciousness returning.

She's face down in sand. Her face caked in dry RED blood.

Her eyes drift to her left arm, the wrist gauntlet is gone.
She reaches behind her back... her knife is also missing.

Ella lifts herself up onto her knees.

A MASSIVE circular AMPHITHEATER wraps around and above her.

Ella looks around, gathering her bearings.

Beneath a massive domed cupola, viewing boxes descend in
staggered terraces, separating all 72 CLANS in attendance.
Even the Tartarus Clan from LV-797 is present.

A packed-out audience fills the arena with a watchful gaze.
Ella seems strangely comfortable under all this attention.

An open-air balcony contains a prehistoric bone table.
Sitting around the table is the revered COUNCIL OF ANCIENTS.
One vacant seat emblazoned with a kanji-like character.

A lone, mysterious figure watches Ella from atop a skeletal
throne comprised of Xenomorph queen skulls: A PREDATOR KING.

A shadow blankets Ella as --

Centurion clasps the nape of Ella's neck and THROWS her
forward, into the COMBAT ZONE at the colosseum's center.

She lands hard and skids to a halt in the sand.

Ella lifts herself up. She's faced with a gruesome FIGURE.
Face ruttled and worn, this is one of the Yautja SHAMAN.

Shaman grabs Ella's neck and lifts her up, studies her skull.
Satisfied, Shaman releases Ella, who lands on her feet.
Shaman scans her body with some tech gadgetry.

Shaman assess her. Shakes a primitive icon before her.
Accepting the device's readings, Shaman turns to the King.

The King nods.

Shaman steps aside, exposing NIMROD across the combat zone. He's sitting back on his knees, clearly in a weakened state. Primipilus stands behind him.

Ella sees Nimrod and her jaw sets.

The Shaman exits the arena of the colosseum. A GONG ECHOES.

Nimrod struggles to stand, using his only arm for assistance. His wounds not fully mended.

Nimrod advances, disguising his weakness as strength.

Ella LIMPS toward him slowly, fury boiling over in her eyes. She holds her leg and sides, feigning injury.

They FACE OFF.

Nimrod swings his left arm, slashing with razor-sharp claws. One touch would eviscerate Ella.

Ella ducks under it and nimbly gets behind him.

She steps forward to accrue velocity and punches him below the rib cage. An old knife wound reopens. GREEN BLOOD SEEPS.

Nimrod turns around, swinging a heavy backfist --

-- she avoids it and takes a few steps back, drawing him in.

Nimrod pushes forward with a flurry of one-handed haymakers. He misses all of them... Failing, his eyes avert his peers.

Ella watches Nimrod. Waiting. Prepared for his next attack. He's breathing heavily, gassing out.

Centurion watches, silent.

Nimrod lunges at her.

Ella ducks down, between his legs, and swings herself around using his thigh. She pops up on his right side.

Nimrod swings out his right arm, but its just a short stub. Ella SLAPS his STUMP.

Nimrod hides the pain.

He squares back up with her. Ella lowers her stance.

Nimrod feigns left then SWIPES at her --

-- Ella jerks back, narrowly avoiding a deadly uppercut.

Nimrod SWINGS again and over-extends himself.

Ella slips around him and viciously UP-KICKS his stump. Seized by pain, Nimrod holds his arm close.

Ella positions herself behind him again.

Wobbled, he turns to her. Finds her at the ready.

Ella side-steps right, adjusting her angle. Her form fluid. Nimrod realizes she's faked her injuries... and fooled him.

Ella takes short steps away from him, as if retreating.

Nimrod approaches forward and Ella widens her steps backward. Taunting him.

Nimrod RUNS at her. She RUNS at him.

Ella baseball slides under his swing, hooks her ankle to his, and pulls herself up behind him.

She digs her heel into the back of his knee, folding it.

Nimrod drops to one knee. Holds himself up with his only arm.

Finding her opening, Ella runs at him and jumps --

-- lands on Nimrod's back, sitting on his shoulders.

Using her forward momentum, she rolls to his weak side and wraps her legs around his neck and arm.

She hooks her leg --

-- locking in a Ura Sankaku... a REAR TRIANGLE CHOKE.

Nimrod lies on his back, tied up.

His own body mass provides the weight that pins him down and prevents him from overpowering with brute strength to escape.

With restricted mobility, Nimrod tries to swipe his clawed arm at her --

-- but unable to generate enough force from this angle.

Instead he gives up his arm --

-- which Ella snatches up and slides her body in front of. Using her shoulder to lock it into an armbar.

Nimrod angles his wrist to dig his claws into her shoulder.

She leans back, leveraging with very little strength --

-- and hyperextends his elbow --

-- SNAPPING IT.

Nimrod SCREECHES.

Ella deepens her chokehold and stifles his screech.

He YELPS, powerless. Weakening and struggling to breathe, Nimrod starts slipping, bordering unconsciousness.

Nimrod bites Ella, sinking a single pincer into her thigh. She grits her teeth, powering through the pain with anger.

Nimrod wriggles his head, exacerbating the bite wound.

Ella releases his limp, broken arm and plunges her fingers into his eye sockets, scrambling his eyeballs.

He splays his mandibles to breathe, retracting the pincer. Ella tightens again.

Nimrod falls unconscious.

Ella holds the triangle choke for a few more seconds.

Finally, she releases her hold and kicks herself off of him. Rolls backward and stands.

Ella steps away from her defeated opponent.

The colosseum watches in rapt silence.

After a few seconds, Nimrod GASPS awake.

He SHRIEKS in fury.

Nimrod rolls over and tries using his flaccid arm to stand up but it folds listlessly under his weight. He falls forward. He's a mess.

He scrambles, using his face and shoulder to push up off the floor and onto his knees. He manages enough inertia to stand.

But now blind, he can't defend himself.

Nimrod tries listening for a direction to attack...

Ella remains silent and still, observing her prey.

A sound draws Nimrod's attention in the wrong direction --

-- and he lunges into empty space, swinging his impotent arm.

Nimrod drops to his knees.

Ella turns her back to the defenseless Nimrod. Shaming him.

She looks up at the King.

The congregation STIRS at her contemptuousness.

Embarrassed, Centurion enters the combat zone.

He marches passed Ella and toward Nimrod --

-- extends his wrist blades to put Nimrod out of his misery.
A mercy kill.

A ROAR halts Centurion.

Primipilus steps between them.

Centurion lowers his blade, conceding to higher authority.

Primipilus turns to Nimrod and puts a hand on his shoulder.

Thinking it's Ella, Nimrod swings his broken arm.

Primipilus effortlessly swats away the feeble attack.

He TRILLS to Nimrod.

Nimrod recognizes the voice and cries a high-pitch complaint.
A whine.

Primipilus turns to Ella, enraged. Extends his wrist blades.
He moves to execute her.

Ella readies for confrontation, lowering her stance.

The AUDIENCE vocalizes its disapproval with CLICKING SOUNDS.

Centurion gets between them, blocking Primipilus.

The AUDIENCE reacts.

Ella's eyes track between them, assessing their situation.
Understanding that a great conflict is occurring.

Centurion and Primipilus exchange staccato GUTTURAL PHRASES.
Seemly reaching a compromise.

Abated, Primipilus turns toward the hapless Nimrod.

Irresolute, Primipilus approaches Nimrod, blades readied.

Centurion relaxes.

But in an INSTANT -- Primipilus instead RUSHES at Ella!

The audience SCREECHES.

Primipilus swing his blade at her --

But before he can deliver his blow --

Centurion SEVERES HIS ARM and cuts through his thigh.

Primipilus crumples, prone in a puddle his own pooling blood. Taking the pain in silence, and shame, as his life fades.

Ella watches, eyeing everyone, uncertain who to attack next.

Centurion bends to Primipilus and rips off his paludamentum, relieving him of his leadership status.

He glares at Ella...

Centurion walks over to the proscenium wall, reaches over it. He returns and hands Ella her BELT BAG.

A BEAT.

Without breaking his eye contact, she accepts it from him.

He turns around, starts to walk away. Then, suddenly stops.

Ella watches Centurion turn back toward her, considering... He produces HER KNIFE from his waist armor.

Centurion tosses it at her feet.

Ella clips on her belt bag and picks up her sheathed knife.

She turns to Nimrod. Unsheathes her knife.

Ella circles Nimrod and gets behind him. In close quarters.

Nimrod slightly turns his head, sensing some movement. Uncertain, he remains docile.

Ella plants a foot on his folded knee, locking him in place. She grabs a fistful of quills and YANKS HIS HEAD BACK.

Now Nimrod realizes. His blind eyes widen.

Ella upward STABS -- driving her knife under the mandible --

-- and hilt-deep into Nimrod's neck with a DULL POP.

His body goes limp and lolls back. Dead.

Ella's hip sustains Nimrod's torso, balanced upright.

She digs into her bag and produces the little stone THIMBLE.

Ripping out the blade, she collects some blood from the streaming wound into the makeshift cup. She GULPS IT DOWN.

Some quiet RUMBLINGS from the audience, of varied responses.

Ella tosses the cup over her shoulder and grips his quills. She rakes her blade across his neck and SAWS HIS HEAD OFF.

She takes Nimrod's head as his body slumps over and splays out on the floor. Pools of blood soak the sand.

Claimed trophy skull in one hand, bloodied knife in the other, Ella turns to the audience. Looks in their direction.

Next, she faces the King. A subtle nod.

Finally, Ella turns to Centurion. *Your move.*

He watches her from behind his mask, paludamentum in hand.

A tense moment between them.

Centurion approaches her.

Ella stiffens. She drops Nimrod's head and turns sideways. Knife angled down. Stance lowered defensively. On guard.

Centurion walks passed Ella, disregarding her combat stance. He reaches Nimrod's body and squats down to it.

He turns to her, EXPECTANT. Seemingly... waiting?

Centurion nods at Ella, beckoning her to join beside him.

Ella softens, nominally. Expecting the ruse to be a trap.

Centurion removes his biomask, sets it on the ground.

Ella relaxes.

Centurion continues to wait for her, eyes affixed.

Reluctantly, she approaches Centurion. Stands beside him.

Centurion dips his finger into Nimrod's freshly pooled blood. He stands and faces Ella.

She looks up at him, now confident and unafraid.

He traces the blood into a three-lined DESIGN on her face.
Marking her.

Its significance is not lost on Ella as the audience REACTS.
 She's been blooded.

Centurion stares down at her. Recognition becoming evident.
 He nods to her an attagirl. Almost... Proud?

CENTURION

Hoo...man.

ELLA

(defiant)

No.

Centurion stops, taken aback. Her tone brusque.

ELLA

Wo...man.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. GAME PRESERVE PLANET, CAVE - NIGHT

The cave is in utter shambles.

Royce sits alone in a far corner, bandaged up but very alive.
 He sharpens sticks into spears. MUTTERING QUIETLY to himself.

He STIFFENS.

Casually, he turns and then suddenly, LEAPS. Grips a rifle.
 But before he can aim it --

A THREE-DOTTED LASER targets him.

Another laser.

And another.

A half-dozen. He's cornered. Surrounded by SHIMMERING FORMS.

He drops his weapon.

ROYCE

This is the only way it was ever
 gonna go.

One of the SHIMMERING FORMS steps forward... A smaller one.
 It deactivates its camouflage --

This catches Royce off guard...

-- and removes its biomask.

It's ELLA.

Dressed in fully fitted Yautja armor and regalia.

Branded with the mark of a BLOODED.

She reaches out her hand to him.

ELLA
(accented)
My name is Ella.

Royce smiles and CLASPS her hand.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END