

BLACK VEIL

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Final Draft

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TEASER

FADE IN

EXT. SPACE - EARTH

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

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

EFFIE (V.O.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yeah, we nearly ended ourselves instead. Idiots.

(MORE)

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

(beat)  
 Ain't much better now either.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EFFIE (V.O.)

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

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

EFFIE (V.O.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GUNMAN

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

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

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - EFFIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EFFIE (V.O.)

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

Effie is in her early twenties. Seated at her desk, she appears to be sketching a new augment design.

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

And I do it well.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The scalpel cuts a little deeper.

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

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

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

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

Me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

GUNMAN

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

(beat)

You want more innocent blood on your hands?

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

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

EFFIE

Please. I don't want to die.

GUNMAN

Shut up!

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

EFFIE

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

GUNMAN

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

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

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

GUNMAN (cont'd)

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

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

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

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

Effie is relieved to see them both.

EFFIE

Magnus! Sheriff, please! Do something!

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

EFFIE (cont'd)

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

Frozen silence. Maybe she will die today after all.

CLOSE UP on Effie's distraught face.

EFFIE (V.O.)

Well, crap.

MAIN TITLES: BLACK VEIL

END TEASER

ACT ONEEXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET - DUSK

Picking up right where we left off. The stand-off continues between Abilene, the Gunman, and Magnus.

MAGNUS

(to Abilene)

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

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

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

GUNMAN

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

MAGNUS

(casually)

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

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

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

Magnus smirks at her dismissal of him.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

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

(MORE)



MAGNUS (cont'd)

(beat)

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

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

EFFIE (V.O.)

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

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

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

Without turning her head, Abilene knows Mutt is there.

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

Abilene shifts her left hip a little.

This is it. Death lingers in slow silence.

EFFIE

Please don't...

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

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

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

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

Effie sits up from her fall to the ground and takes in the scene.

The dead Gunman lays by her side with a bullet lodged between his eyes, Mutt is squirming in the street clutching his thigh, and Abilene is just standing there as if nothing special has happened.

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

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

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

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

MAGNUS

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

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

BLACKNESS

Disembodied SCREAMS from a YOUNG MALE voice.

FADE IN

EXT. SHINE TOWN - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### INT. RECLAMATION CENTER - EXTRACTION ROOM B

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

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

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

TECHNICIAN 2  
Twenty more minutes on the bloodwash.

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

#### INT. RECLAMATION CENTER - HALLWAY- CONTINUED

SCREAMS penetrate a closed door labeled, EXTRACTION ROOM B.

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

Then SILENCE.

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

The Compliance OFFICER guarding him notices.

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

KAEL  
Feck you.

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

KAEL (cont'd)  
(wary)  
What are they doing to them?

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

KAEL  
Yeah, but--

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

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

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

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

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

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

The door to Extraction Room B opens and Technician 1 assists the Boy down the hall. The Boy is dazed, and confused.

As he walks he drags his feet along the ground as if he can't quite get them to work right. His back is bandaged and bloody.

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

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

TECHNICIAN 1  
1911. Kael.

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

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

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

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

OFFICER  
Come on.

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

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

#### INT. EXTRACTION ROOM A

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

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

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

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

KAEL  
Let me out of here!

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

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

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

KAEL (cont'd)  
Wh- what is that? What are you doing?

TECHNICIAN 1  
(reassuring smile)  
It is your required port exchange scrub. The citizenry cannot have non-complaints exiled to the Dead Zone with knowledge of our city. That would be irresponsible.

Technician 1 approaches.

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

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

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

MIWA  
Stop.

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

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

TECHNICIAN 1  
Director. Is there a problem?

MIWA  
Yes.  
(she looks at Kael)  
Leave us.

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

MIWA (cont'd)  
I'll handle this one.

TECHNICIAN 1  
But I have not read the grievances  
against him, nor have I informed him  
of his mercy rights.

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

KAEL  
Mom. Thank God. Get me out of here.

Miwa takes a deep steady breath of preparation.

MIWA  
No.

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

MIWA (cont'd)  
I can't. Not this time.

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

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

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

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

MIWA (cont'd)

(frustrated)

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

KAEL

(now he's frustrated)

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

MIWA

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

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

MIWA (cont'd)

It's over.

KAEL

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

Miwa fills the syringe. Her face is stone.

MIWA

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

KAEL

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

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

MIWA

Exile.



KAEL  
Same damn thing!

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

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

KAEL (OVERLAPPING)  
Mom, please...

Miwa turns with the syringe in her hand.

MIWA  
Unauthorized allocation of precious resources.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MIWA

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

KAEL (OVERLAPPING)

We don't have to do this anymore. We can live-

MIWA

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

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

MIWA (cont'd)

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

KAEL

(groggy)

This is murder...

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

MIWA

It has to be this way.

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

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - COUNTY JAIL - SAME NIGHT

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

INT. COUNTY JAIL - JAIL CELL

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

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

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

EFFIE

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

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

ABILENE

Doctor?

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

EFFIE

(grins)

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

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

EFFIE (cont'd)

This will seal it. May I?

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

EFFIE (cont'd)

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

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

ABILENE

I'm not nearly as suicidal as you.

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

EFFIE

Is it true you killed your father?

Cold silence, and then:

ABILENE

What do you think?

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

EFFIE

(subject change)

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

Abilene pulls away. Her expression requires more.

EFFIE (cont'd)

Trust me.

(beat)

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

(beat, darker)

Everybody does.

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

ABILENE

That's why you're here. I knew you didn't fit.

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

EFFIE

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

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

ABILENE

That so?

EFFIE

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

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

ABILENE

Like you? How long have you been in  
his debt?

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

EFFIE

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

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

ABILENE

Why are you telling me this?

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

EFFIE

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

Abilene slants an interested look in Effie's direction.

ABILENE

Go on.

EFFIE

I want you to kill the Sheriff.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. COUNTY JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Where we left off.

ABILENE  
(dry chuckle)  
Oh, is that all.

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

Abilene glares, insulted.

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

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

Effie swallows hard.

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

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

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

Effie looks away. She can only offer one thing.

EFFIE  
I guess... I'd owe you?

ABILENE  
(cold chuckle)  
I thought you wanted out of bondage?

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

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

Once the shock wears off, Effie nods.

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

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

ABILENE  
 'Bout thirteen years.

EFFIE  
 (unsure)  
 That's... a while.  
 (thinks)  
 But Magnus would have been Sheriff  
 back then, so...  
 (wry grin)  
 Yeah, I think I know where to look.

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

FOOTSTEPS are overheard, and Effie hurries her last words.

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

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

EFFIE (cont'd)  
She's all yours.

MAGNUS  
She say anything useful?

EFFIE  
Just that you're an ugly Feral  
humper.

The comment almost gets a smile out of Abilene.

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

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

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

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

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

ABILENE  
Augments are for pussies.

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

MAGNUS  
I've got little patience for weak-  
minded insults. Let's try to keep a  
civil tongue and get down to  
business.

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



MAGNUS

(smiles)

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

ABILENE

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

MAGNUS

How long do you think your life is worth living?

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

ABILENE

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

MAGNUS

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

The long pause has Effie worried.

ABILENE

I'll ride.

MAGNUS

Glad to hear it.

He slams the cell door shut.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

See you at sun-up.

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

EXT. SHINE TOWN - COURTYARD - DAWN

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

MIWA (O.S.)

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

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

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

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

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

MIWA

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

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

MIWA (O.S.)

For without compliance the citizenry will fail.

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

The blue cybernetic filaments that we see on the faces in the crowd glow with life, but for Kael and his fellow exiles those live-wires are dark. They are not connected to the city, or the people anymore.

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

This day we have failed 3 times.

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

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

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

MIWA

Today we let the Dead Zone correct our failures, and tomorrow... tomorrow our great city becomes whole again.

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

Nola uses the crowd noise to speak to Kael. She preps his injection.

NOLA

(whisper)

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

She flicks the tip of the needle.

NOLA (cont'd)

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

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

NOLA (cont'd)

It's a placebo. I swapped yours out.

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

MIWA (O.S.)

Out of darkness comes light. Out of failure comes might.

NOLA (OVERLAPPING)  
Here. It's from your mom.

She hands him the canteen, and then leans close.

NOLA  
(whispers)  
Don't die. I love you.

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

MIWA  
The city and we are one.

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

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

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

INT. WALL COMPARTMENT

Pitch black. Shadowy figures shift nervously inside. Not a sound, but we can hear the fearful breaths of anticipation.

QUIET. STILLNESS. And then:

KAEL  
What is--

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

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

INT. CHUTE TUBE

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

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

EXT. DEVIL'S FORGE - DAWN

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

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

GROANS. MOANS. DISORIENTATION.

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

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

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

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

KAEL

Don't move.

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

KAEL (cont'd)

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

BOY

I'll try.

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

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

FEMALE

What is this place?

KAEL

The Dead Zone.

They stand there for a moment more, none wanting to move, almost mesmerized by the sheer beauty of destruction. Wreckage from the war litters the sand and rock.

BUILDINGS partially protrude from the desert floor. Exposed BONES and human remains are scattered through-out. And the unmistakable landmark of a broken AIRSHIP from a long dead Steampunk Pirate lays split in two among other debris.

KAEL (cont'd)

We need to get moving before the  
Ferals find us.

BOY

The what?

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

KAEL

Everybody got water?

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

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

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

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

KAEL (cont'd)

Thank you.

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

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

BOY

What is that?

KAEL

Hope.

(beat)

Let's get moving.

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

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT. OUTSIDE OF INDEPENDENCE - TRAIL - MORNING

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

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

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

SQUIRREL

They say you've killed eighty men.

Abilene ignores him and keeps her eyes on the trail.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

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

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

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

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

It's like he's not even there.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

So how fast are you anyway?

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

ABILENE

(sweetly)

Give me your gun and I'll show you.

He just about does that, until Magnus drops back.



MAGNUS

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

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

SQUIRREL

(embarrassed)  
Sure, boss.

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

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

ABILENE

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

MAGNUS

Can be arranged.

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

ABILENE

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

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

WADE

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

ABILENE

(disturbed frown)  
Alive?

MAGNUS

Preferably.

Abilene just shakes her head at that nonsense.

ABILENE

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

WADE

Doc's running tests on them.

ABILENE

She looking for a cure?

WADE

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

MAGNUS

You talk to much, Wade. Shut it.

(he nods up ahead)

Take five minutes to water the  
horses.

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

She slows her horse as she enters the destroyed homestead.

EXT. WESTER RANCH - CONTINUOUS

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

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

Magnus notices Abilene going astray from the group.

MAGNUS

Bear, keep an eye on her.

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

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

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

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

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

INSERT - KNIFE HANDLE

A brand mark of Circle-W, and the name, LILA.

BACK TO SHOT

BEAR

You live here.

(beat)

Everyday.

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

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

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

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

MAGNUS

Mount up!

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

WADE  
We taking the short-cut again?

ABILENE  
Short-cut?

Magnus nods at a tall hill not too far away.

MAGNUS  
Through Thunder Hill.

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

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

ABILENE  
Where does he get the labor?

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

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

WADE (cont'd)  
It's only half finished. But, yeah. We've been using it to snatch-and-grab Ferals for a while now.

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

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET- DAY

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

INT. COUNTY JAIL - SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Mutt sits at the deputy's desk sleeping.

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

EFFIE  
Sleeping on the job, I see?

MUTT  
Just following doctor's orders.

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

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

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

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

MUTT  
What? You said eat.

She looks at his wounded leg.

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

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

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

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

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

MUTT  
Ain't too bad-OW!

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

EFFIE

Sorry. I need to clean, and redress  
it.

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

MUTT

How come you and I quit?

EFFIE

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

MUTT

(pouts)

But I'm a lovable jerk?

EFFIE

Ehn.

(shrugs indifferent)

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

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

MUTT

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

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

EFFIE

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

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

EFFIE (cont'd)

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

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

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

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

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

EFFIE (cont'd)

Pretty baby.

MUTT

Mmm... Sexy.

She checks and he's still heavily doped.

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

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

INSERT - PAGE

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

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

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

BACK TO SHOT:

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

INSERT - PAGE

Jan. 11th '45. Wester, Lila - Age 13 - Female - Slave - SOLD for 60 pieces - CAPTAIN HAPPY JACK - AIRSHIP, HAPPY JACK.

BACK TO SHOT:

EFFIE

Happy Jack. Oh, crap...

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

EXT. DEVIL'S FORGE - DAY

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

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

FEMALE

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

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

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

KAEL

We need to get out of the sun.

(to his right)

In there.

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

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

INT. SPACE NEEDLE-LIKE BUILDING - DINNING AREA

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



KAEL

Careful.

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

BOY

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

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

KAEL

It's complicated.

BOY

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

Kael reassures him with a knowing smile.

KAEL

Trust me. Before we left, my mother uploaded the necessary data to me. We just need to get to Lucerne.

BOY

How far is that?

KAEL

You don't want to know.

BOY

Okay, but what's there?

KAEL

The Black Veil site.

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

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

BOY

Hello?

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

KAEL  
(whispers)  
Ferals. We need to go. Now.

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

KAEL (cont'd)  
Feck! RUN!

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

EXT. DEVIL'S FORGE - CONTINUOUS

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

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

KAEL  
Go, go, go!

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

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

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

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

The Boy slides, Kael reaches out, but misses.

KAEL (cont'd)  
No!

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

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

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

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

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

ABILENE

You okay?

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

KAEL

Stop! Don't come any closer!

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

ABILENE

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

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

ABILENE (cont'd)

Really? He wasn't going to shoot.

MAGNUS

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

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Uhn-uhn.

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)  
That ain't normal. Plague?

ABILENE  
No. Something else.

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

ABILENE (cont'd)  
I think he came from there.

Magnus is enlightened with a new objective.

MAGNUS  
We got ourselves a genuine Shiner,  
boys.

WADE  
This is one too, I think.

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

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

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

MAGNUS  
Change of plans.

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

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

GUNFIRE opens up on the captive Ferals.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUREXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET- DAY

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

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - LAB

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

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

EFFIE

These are beautiful. What kind of augment is it?

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

KAEL

You're not Ferals.

EFFIE

(smiles)

Neither are you. Looks like we have something in common.

Effie casts a glance back at the boy.

EFFIE (cont'd)

Are you together? Where did you come from?

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

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

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

ABILENE

We know you're from Shine Town.

KAEL

Shine...?

(sarcastic chuckle)

Is that what you people call it?

EFFIE

What do you call-

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

MAGNUS

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

Kael looks surprised, and confused.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

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

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)

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

Kael glares at him in stubborn silence.

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Fine. Hard way.

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

EFFIE

Sheriff, wait.

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

MAGNUS

I saw you use this.  
(MORE)

MAGNUS (cont'd)  
 (waggles the Surge  
 pistol)  
 Nothing like this is supposed to  
 function out here. What is it, and  
 how does it work?

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)  
 I can do this all day, Shiner. This  
 arm doesn't get tired.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)  
 (to Effie, angry)  
 I thought you said he wasn't Feral?

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

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

MAGNUS

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

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

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)

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

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

EFFIE

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

She applies compression to the wound to stop the bleeding.

ABILENE

It's fine.

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

ABILENE (cont'd)

I'm immune.

Flabbergasted, Effie grabs her arm for a closer look.

EFFIE

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

ABILENE

Thirteen years ago.

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

ABILENE (cont'd)

(no emotion)

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

(MORE)



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

Suddenly, Effie understands it, all of it.

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

Abilene nods.

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

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

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

Abilene offers her arm, and Effie preps a syringe.

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

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

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

She draws the blood from Abilene's arm.

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

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

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

Abilene shakes her head, "no".

ABILENE

Larkin was gut-shot in a gunfight. My bullet was an act of mercy.

(beat)

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

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

EFFIE

I think I did.

She gestures for Abilene to follow her out.

INT. EFFIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

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

EFFIE

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

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

ABILENE

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

EFFIE

The Duke owns everything around here.

ABILENE

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

EFFIE

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

She directs Abilene to the other page and points.

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

Abilene's expression grows even darker as she reads.

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

ABILENE  
 No.  
 (beat)  
 I got other priorities now.

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

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

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

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

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

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

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVEEXT. COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT

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

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

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

EFFIE

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

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

KAEL

He wasn't.

(beat)

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

(beat)

They turned them into bio- weapons.

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

EFFIE

You too?

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

EFFIE (cont'd)

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

KAEL

(humorless laugh)

By their standards, yes.

EFFIE

What did you do?

KAEL

I thought differently.

EFFIE  
That doesn't sound so horrible.

He stays quiet, and she gets nervous.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
So what were these terrible thoughts  
you had?

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

Effie mistakes his look as aggression and backs off little.

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

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

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

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

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

EFFIE  
With this?

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

Kael's eyes flash to the device.

EFFIE (cont'd)  
I found it while I was checking you  
for broken ribs.

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

KAEL  
I need to get this to the Black Veil  
site in Lucerne, Switzerland.

Effie sputters a laugh.

EFFIE

Switz-. Yeah, right. That's not happening.

KAEL

Listen to me. I can change things. Restore technology and power to the world. I can make things better, but not if I die in here.

EFFIE

You're serious.

(off his unwavering  
look)

Well, I hate to break your heart, but there ain't no Switzerland. Ain't a lot of things anymore.

KAEL

What is that supposed to mean?

EFFIE

Must be nice living a sheltered life, Shiner. Black Veil blew up most of that continent. Ain't nothing there, but a big hole.

Kael is clearly shocked and doesn't believe her.

KAEL

No. You're lying. I have the coordinates right here.

He taps his head.

EFFIE

(shrug)

Sorry.

KAEL

It can't be gone. Black Veil is still active. It's there. It has to be.

He's at a lost for what to believe now. Maybe he's crazy. Effie looks certain of that, and then she thinks a little harder. A smirk emerges.

EFFIE

Wait. Maybe... Well, I'll be... the Air Isles.

(MORE)

EFFIE (cont'd)  
Sure, lots of folk survived out there. Maybe it did too.

KAEL  
Then that's where I'm going.  
(frown)  
One question, what are Air Isles?

EFFIE  
(smile)  
You'll see. But first I'll need to get us a ride and a distraction.

KAEL  
Us?

EFFIE  
I'm trapped here just like you. I'll get you out of here, but only if you take me with you.

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

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

He shows her how to operate the Resistor.

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

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

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

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

MAGNUS  
How is he?

EFFIE  
You beat the snot out of him, how do you think?  
(beat)  
He needs rest.

MAGNUS

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

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

EFFIE

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

MAGNUS

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

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

EFFIE

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

Magnus proudly smiles.

MAGNUS

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

(beat)

Anything else?

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

EFFIE

Yeah.

(thoughtful pause)

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

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

MAGNUS

Your unadulterated death. Now get.

Effie lowers the Doctor's Bag and leaves.



EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - DAY

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

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

MAGNUS

Duke Bloxham, welcome back.

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Lady Isobel, you are looking as lovely as ever.

ISOBEL

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

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

DUKE BLOXHAM

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

MAGNUS

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

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

DUKE BLOXHAM

And who is this intriguing young woman?

MAGNUS

(turns to see)

Ah, that's Abilene Larkin-

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

ISOBEL  
Sheriff, do something!

                    MAGNUS  
Get the feck off him, girl!

Magnus grabs Abilene with his augmented arm, and throws her off the Duke, which makes him her new target. She connects a few punches with Magnus, and easily disarms him as he tries to draw on her. She isn't just fast with a gun, she's fast with her fists too.

Once Magnus is out of the way, Abilene redirects her attack back to Bloxham, only this time he's prepared to defend himself. He's no slouch in a fight and lands a few powerful hits to Abilene, but she takes them in stride. Instead of backing down, Abilene pulls a Bowie knife, the same one she took from her family's ranch.

                    ISOBEL  
Daddy, look out!

Abilene slashes, and Bloxham dodges -- this isn't his first knife fight, but he's not prepared for her speed. Her counter-strike rips open the shoulder of his nice jacket and draws blood.

Magnus is back in it now, and along with Bloxham they have Abilene cornered, so they think.

                    MAGNUS  
Easy, girl. Put down the knife.

Bloxham and Magnus move on Abilene, but she staggers the one, then the other, nicking the Duke in the neck with the blade.

Effie emerges from the Surgical Clinic and stops dead in her tracks when she sees Abilene taking on the Duke and Magnus with a knife.

It looks like Abilene has the fight under control until Mutt joins in. Three on one is more of a challenge for Abilene, and with Mutt's help the trio take her down to the ground hard, where she receives a dizzying blow to the head.

Bloxham strips the Bowie knife from Abilene's grip and mounts her just long enough to stab her right hand into the ground with her own blade, pinning her there.

Abilene YELLS out in pain as the knife goes through the palm of her hand. Effie doesn't like that at all, but she doesn't interfere.

Bloxham dismounts Abilene and dusts himself off. Isobel rushes to his side and hugs him.

ISOBEL

Oh, daddy, are you hurt?

Magnus retrieves his weapon and walks up to Abilene. She pulls her hand from the ground, but the blade is still stuck in her palm. She looks up at Magnus as he levels his gun at her head. His finger applies pressure to the trigger. The hammer on the gun begins to move.

EFFIE

Wait!

Effie bravely steps between Magnus's gun and Abilene.

EFFIE (cont'd)

I need her. She's immune to the plague.

(to the Duke)

I need her blood and I need her alive.

Duke Bloxham turns to Magnus for confirmation. The Sheriff is not excited about the answer but:

MAGNUS

Doc showed me the blood test. She's the real deal cure.

Duke Bloxham looks conflicted on whether or not to kill Abilene anyway. When he looks at Isobel, and sees fear on her face he has his answer.

DUKE BLOXHAM

I believe in second chances. If her blood will give that to others then let her live.

When he looks back at Isobel she is so proud of her father's forgiveness. He moves over to Magnus and Effie for a private word. Abilene is still on the ground, dazed from the blow to the head, but she hears every word.

DUKE BLOXHAM (cont'd)

Bleed her until she's dead, Doc.

Abilene looks up at Effie, the woman that she betrayed. She sees Effie nod her willingness to follow the Duke's orders, and then Abilene passes out.

THE END