

BLACK VEIL: EPISODE 2, "Independence Burning"

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Final Draft

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TEASER

FADE IN

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - DAY

Where we left off in the pilot episode. A stage coach is parked in the street. Magnus and Mutt drag a dazed Abilene toward the Surgical Clinic with Effie leading the way.

Isobel dabs at the small wound on her father's neck with her frilly white handkerchief. Duke Bloxham watches his men haul Abilene into the Clinic. He is angry, but he doesn't want to upset his delicate daughter.

ISOBEL

Why did she attack you like that,
Daddy?

He nods at a nearby WANTED POSTER of Abilene "Black Veil" Larkin.

BLOXHAM

That right there. She's a criminal.

ISOBEL

She's the Black Veil?

She sounds a little excited about it.

Bloxham turns to his daughter and smiles softly. He gently touches her cheek as he looks her over for injury.

BLOXHAM

Are you okay? You aren't hurt are
you?

ISOBEL

Oh, I'm fine. You're the one that's
bleeding. Come to the hotel and let
me tend to those wounds.

He nods and follows her across the street, casting one final glare behind him at the Surgical Clinic.

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - OPERATING ROOM

Magnus and Mutt carry Abilene into the room where Doctor Effie Harper is washing her hands at a basin.

Abilene is awake and struggling against the two men, but she's hurting from the blow to the head, and the knife blade that is still embedded in her right hand.

EFFIE

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

ABILENE (OVERLAPPING)

Let go! I'll kill you! No!

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

Effie scowls back at them.

EFFIE

Enough with the manhandling, damn it! I don't need to deal with more injuries.

MUTT

She won't stop fighting-OW!

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

MUTT (cont'd)

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

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

EFFIE

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

(smirk)

Maybe.

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

MAGNUS

Oh no you don't darlin'.

ABILENE

Get off me!

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

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

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

EFFIE
(whispers)
I got you.

MAGNUS
Sonuva-! I think she broke my nose.

EFFIE
A little help here, please.

Magnus and Mutt take Abilene's limp body and drop her hard on the table again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABILENE

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

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

ABILENE (cont'd)

Please.. don-

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

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

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

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

MAIN TITLES: BLACK VEIL

END TEASER

ACT ONEEXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - DAY

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

INT. SALOON

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

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

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

SQUIRREL

Call.

(shows cards)

Pair of eights.

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

WADE

(proudly)

Straight.

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

ISOBEL

Sorry, gentlemen. Full house.

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

WADE

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

ISOBEL

(mock horror)

Why that would be cheating, dear sir,
and a Lady never cheats.

(wink)

We do however manipulate luck from
time to time.

Wade smiles and dangerously flirts with her.

WADE

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

Isobel returns his smile. She's enjoying herself.

ISOBEL

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

SQUIRREL

Ha!

WADE

(chuckle)

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

SQUIRREL

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

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

Wade smiles through the awkward moment.

WADE

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

(beat)

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

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

WADE

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

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

Another awkward quiet, and then:

BEAR

You people talk too much and say very
little.

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

EXT. SHINE TOWN - DAY

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

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

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

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

MIWA

Enter.

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

NOLA

Madame Director, you wanted to see
me?

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

MIWA

I lost him.

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

NOLA
Who?

MIWA
Kael.

She notes Nola's confused reaction.

MIWA (cont'd)
He was right. The Resistor works.
Moments after the exile he came
online just outside of the walls, and
then traveled here...

She points deep inside Devil's Forge.

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

NOLA
His vitals went off the charts.
Something happened.

MIWA
It was a placebo you gave him?

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

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

MIWA
Ferals.

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

MIWA

He made it past the Ferals at that point, and then ended up here.

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

MIWA (cont'd)

Vitals spiked again, and then he completely went offline.

NOLA

You think he's--

MIWA

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

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

MIWA (cont'd)

He's not dead, Nola.

(beat)

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

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

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

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

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

BLOXHAM

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

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

KAEL

Who are you?

BLOXHAM

Duke Bloxham, the proprietor of these here fine estates.

KAEL

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

Bloxham smiles at that.

BLOXHAM

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

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

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

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

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

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

You see, you're the first person from Shine Town...

(pause, frown)

Is that what you call your home?

KAEL

Tesla City.

BLOXHAM

Clever. The standard unit of magnetic flux density.

Kael is surprised he knows that. The Duke notices.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

We do have books out here, Mr. Kael. We do read about our past technology, even if it doesn't work in our current condition.

(MORE)

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

(beat)

Anyhow, as I was saying, being the first of your kind to reach these parts has put a high price on your head. Not to mention your isolation makes you vulnerable to our rustic ways out here?

KAEL

I'm familiar with your ways.

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

KAEL (cont'd)

So, what do you want with me? Are you going to keep me locked up? Beat me some more?

BLOXHAM

No. Nothing like that. I am not one of your Feral guard dogs.

(beat)

I want you to achieve your goal. I'm going to get you to the Black Veil site and help you restore technology to the world.

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

KAEL

She told you everything, didn't she.

MAGNUS

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

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)

Never trust a pretty girl.

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

KAEL

So what? You may have the Surge Pistol, and the Resistor, but you still don't have me. You won't find Black Veil without me.

BLOXHAM
(frown, at Magnus)
We have the Resistor?

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

MAGNUS
Doc has been holding out on me.

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

BLOXHAM
This Resistor, is that what will fix things?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That is exactly what the Duke wants to hear.

BLOXHAM

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

(beat)

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

Kael can't help but agree with that logic.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

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

Kael holds his stare. He gives nothing away.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

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

NOLA

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

(beat)

How are you able to track him?

MIWA

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

Nola nods.

MIWA (cont'd)

It's one-way. The signal is bounced back down our corridor to us.

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

MIWA (cont'd)

Kael's proximity updates our maps.
There's a town here now.

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

NOLA

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

MIWA

There have always been survivors.

NOLA

How-why haven't we been told this?

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

MIWA

Because they've been trying to kill us for years. Nola, listen to me, the citizenry cannot know that life exists outside of these walls.

NOLA

Why?

MIWA

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

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

NOLA

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

Miwa grabs Nola again, this time more firmly.

MIWA

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

Nola shakes her head in disbelief.

MIWA (cont'd)

Nola, we aren't prepared to deal with what is outside.

(MORE)

MIWA (cont'd)

Listen to me, I need to know that you won't tell anyone about this. It's not the right time. It will put all of us in jeopardy.

(beat)

We have to be smart about this, Nola.

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

NOLA

(quiet anger)

You should have listened to him. It's your fault he's dea-- he's not here.

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

MIWA

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

NOLA

It was the truth!

MIWA

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

NOLA

You always discouraged him in everything he did.

MIWA

I was protecting him--
(she wags her head
clear)

I didn't ask you here to debate my parenting skills. I wanted to talk to you, to see if you still believe in my son's vision of life outside these walls.

NOLA

I never stopped.

(MORE)

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

Miwa looks away, regretful.

MIWA
Where do you think he got his ideas
from?

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

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. SURGICAL CLINIC - OPERATING ROOM

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

EFFIE

Sorry about this, but I need you.

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

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

MAGNUS

How did it go?

EFFIE

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

Magnus nods like he cares, but he doesn't.

MAGNUS

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

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

EFFIE

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

MAGNUS

Not what I mean.

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)
 I don't require much from you, Doc.
 Do your job, do what I ask of you,
 and don't-
 (slams hand on table)
 -LIE TO ME!

He backs off, composing himself.

MAGNUS (cont'd)
 I'm a simple man, with simple
 requests.

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

EFFIE
 I haven't-
 (stronger)
 I have done everything you've asked.
 I'll get the vaccine, and then I'll
 kill her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)
Kael told us he gave you the
Resistor.

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)
Yeah. I thought so.

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

MAGNUS (cont'd)
Go. The Duke wants to talk to you.
You can plead the value of your life
to him.

They exit.

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

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

There is an unwavering frown on Nola's face.

NOLA
You? You were a non-compliant?

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

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

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

NOLA
You sold out.

MIWA
We all did, a long time ago.
(gestures around)
Behind these walls we are given all
the protection in the world, and from
the world, and from ourselves.

(MORE)

MIWA (cont'd)
We gave up our freedom for the
promise of safety.

She approaches Nola earnestly, and honestly.

MIWA (cont'd)
My Son was right. We don't have the
resources to sustain us. It's time
we plan for a change.

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

Nola gives her a hard suspicious look.

NOLA
How do I know this isn't a trap?

MIWA
Because...

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

MIWA (cont'd)
I'm guilty of treason.
(beat)
This is evidence that I exiled Kael
without following protocol. If you
think at any point that I am setting
you up, release it to Compliance
Control.

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

NOLA
For Kael.
(beat; thoughtful)
What do you need from me?

MIWA
Continue looking into the gene
therapy drug.

NOLA
I am.

MIWA

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

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

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

KAEL

All right. I'm with you.

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

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

BLOXHAM

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

(beat)

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

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

EFFIE

I don't have it.

Bloxham turns to Kael curious about who to believe.

KAEL

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

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

MAGNUS

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

EFFIE

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

KAEL

You're the one-

BLOXHAM

Enough.

(to Effie)

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

The impending doom in his voice, though sugar coated, is certain. Effie fortifies her strength.

EFFIE

I said I don't have it.

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

KAEL

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

BLOXHAM

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

(beat)

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

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

EFFIE

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

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

BLOXHAM

Where is it! I won't ask again.

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

EFFIE

I'm done owing you.

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

BLOXHAM

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

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

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

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

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

INT. SURGICAL CLINIC - OPERATING ROOM

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET - DAY

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

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

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

The airship is the BLOOD RAVEN and it's FLAG bears the emblem of a RED BIRD. This airship is a menacing hunk of wood, metal, and machinery cobbled together from old war planes, tanks, and battle ships. TWO SMOKE STACKS bleed off black smoke from the fuel it's consuming to fight the gravity. Several well placed ROCKET BOOSTERS at the bottom of the boat keep the ship airborne.

A FEW PEOPLE nearby scurry off toward shelter and safety.

Mutt heads for the County Jail.

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

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

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

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

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

BLOXHAM
Magnus.

The Sheriff stops and looks his way.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)
Stop being a gentleman.

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

KAEL
No!

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

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

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

BLOXHAM
Bullshit.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET

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

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

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

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

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

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

BLOXHAM

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

Slagg glances back at his hovering ship. His home.

SLAGG

Not too far, Duke.

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

SLAGG (cont'd)

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

BLOXHAM

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

Not the least bit intimidated, Slagg grins.

SLAGG

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

BLOXHAM

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

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

SLAGG

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

(steps forward)

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

BLOXHAM

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

(MORE)

BLOXHAM (cont'd)
The Shiners are right where they have
always been, tucked behind their
impenetrable walls.

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

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

Bloxham confronts with a single step forward.

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

SLAGG
(smiles)
Aye, so it is a he. The informant
said as much.

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

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

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

BLOXHAM
Same could be said about you.

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

INT. COUNTY JAIL - CELL

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

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

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

EFFIE

Mutt, please.
(cough, spits blood)
The rib is pressing on my lung.
(wheeze)
Can't breathe.

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

KAEL

Do something!

Mutt looks worried, but conflicted.

MUTT

Like what!

KAEL

Open the fucking door and help me hold her down!

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

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

MUTT

What the--

KAEL

You were faking?

Effie just shrugs.

EFFIE

(at Mutt)

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

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

MUTT

Magnus will kill you for this, Effie.

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

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

EFFIE (cont'd)
 (at Kael)
 Well? Let's go. Lock it and c'mon.

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

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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

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

EFFIE
 Yep.

Effie reaches in the drawer and pulls out the Surge Pistol, tucking it in her belt. She sees Abilene's two stainless steel pistols and takes those instead of Mutt's garbage gun. Kael just about smiles until she turns one pistol on him.

EFFIE
 But we're going this way.

She maneuvers Kael toward the FRONT door with Mutt's gun. He stops, refusing to go any further than the door knob.

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

EFFIE
 Maybe.

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

EXT. STREET

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

SLAGG

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

(beat)

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

BLOXHAM

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

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

SLAGG

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

That was not the reaction Bloxham wanted.

BLOXHAM

Enough of this -

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

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

EFFIE

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

Kael is awe-struck and staring up at the Blood Raven.

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

SLAGG

Aye, Lass. You'll have safe passage on my ship. If all that ye say is true and this young lad has knowledge of the Black Isle.

Kael frowns. Black Isle?

BLOXHAM

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

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

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

EFFIE

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

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

EFFIE (cont'd)

(shouts)

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

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

SLAGG

Fetch her here.

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

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

ISOBEL

Daddy!

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

BLOXHAM

I won't ask you again. Leave, or die
down here at my feet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

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

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

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

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

INT. STABLES

Rows of spooked augmented HORSES stir as Squirrel bursts through the doors.

He almost runs smack into a horse that is saddled and ready to ride. He stops as he feels a cold BLADE press against his neck. It's Abilene's bloodstained BOWIE.

ABILENE

Don't twitch.

SQUIRREL

N-no problem.

He freezes with his pistol in his hand. Abilene takes the weapon from him and immediately turns the gun on him. She moves in front of him and his eyes widen.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

Don't kill me. I ain't here for you,
I swear.

Abilene backs toward her horse ready to mount.

ABILENE

Stay put and we won't have to make an
issue out of this. Turn around.
Hands up.

Trembling a little, Squirrel does as he's told and closes his eyes. He MUMBLES a prayer, and the next thing he hears is a horse taking off at full speed, nearly knocking him over as it races by.

He opens his eyes to see Abilene on horseback fleeing from town like a bat out of hell.

After letting out a breath, and realizing he's still alive, Squirrel climbs up to the LOFT.

He tosses aside stacks of HAY to reveal a wicked looking gunners chair with two huge machine gun mounts. He sits, cocks the receiver on the dual weapon and lets loose a hail storm of bullets aimed directly at the bow of the Blood Raven.

SQUIRREL

Ya-hoo! Suck on that you filthy
feral humpers!

Chunks of wood are blown off the ship, as well as a few unlucky pirates.

EXT. BANK

Bloxham, Magnus, Wade and Bear are pinned down on one side of the old-war era building. GUNFIRE with the pirates is exchanged.

Bloxham spots FIVE PIRATES headed for Effie and Kael who are wriggling themselves free of the collapsed porch.

BLOXHAM

There!

(to Magnus)

Don't you let them get taken.

Magnus nods to Wade and they both step up their shooting to hold off the Five Pirates from reaching Effie and Kael. It works and the Pirates are forced to take cover, and return fire.

A SCREAM belonging to Isobel catches Bloxham's ears. He looks across the street to see Isobel being chased by TWO PIRATES. They all disappear around the corner of the Saloon.

Bloxham grabs Bear and yanks him over. The Duke is ravenous and desperate, a deadly combination.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

You bring me my little girl safe and
sound and I'll give you and your
tribe their freedom.

Those words spark life in Bear's eyes. He nods, raises his huge twelve chamber automatic crossbow and starts raining down arrows on anyone standing in his way. He's a terminator, shooting and tossing aside Pirates like rag-dolls.

He heads down the side of the Saloon where Isobel disappeared.

EXT. BACK OF SALOON

Bear comes around the corner just in time to see Isobel snatched up by a BUNGEE PIRATE, and taken back to the ship.

Failure sweeps over Bear's face. The Two Pirates on the ground hesitate to attack the large man while his weapon is pointed at them.

Bear looks at them, and the Pirates tense, ready to attack. He DROPS his weapon, drops to his knees, and places his hands on his head in surrender. They take his auto-bow and him.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUREXT. OUTSIDE OF TOWN - HILL TOP

Abilene slows her horse and turns the animal around. In the not too far distance is the Town of Independence. The Blood Raven airship is blasting away with its cannons, and taking heavy fire itself from the Hellstorm. The scene is bloody destruction everywhere. The tiny town can't take much more punishment, and the Blood Raven is smoking from too much abuse.

Conflicted, Abilene glances behind. The safe path awaits her, but she just can't seem to order her horse to turn around. Instead, she looks back at the burning town, her town, and sees the STABLES EXPLODE in cannon fire. The final trail of machine gun fire hits the Blood Raven, and then stops.

Something deep pierces Abilene's already troubled face. She shakes her head at herself as if having an inner-argument on whether to leave, or go back. The scene of Independence burning plays with her emotions as it reminds her of her childhood home burning to the ground.

Pulling herself together she toughens-up and looks into the VALLEY below. There is a large herd of WILD BUFFALO peacefully grazing.

Abilene kicks her horse into high gear and rides straight toward the unsuspecting herd.

EXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET

Effie finally frees herself from the pile of porch debris. She has a few more cuts and bruises, but she's okay.

A GRUNT from Kael grabs her attention.

EFFIE

One second. I'll get you out. Are you hurt?

They both flinch as GUNFIRE ZINGS awfully close. The Pirates and Posse are trying to keep each other away from the prize... Kael.

KAEL

(pained)

My leg. I think it's broken.

Effie checks his right leg, which is pinned beneath a heavy wooden beam. She gives him a reassuring smile and he instantly looks worried.

KAEL (cont'd)

That bad, huh?

EFFIE

Well, it ain't broke, but you're skewered through and through. Good news is, it looks like it missed the main artery.

KAEL

So I'll just bleed to death slowly.

EFFIE

(grin)

That's the spirit.

(beat)

I'll get you out and take care of it. You'll be fine.

KAEL

Fine?! I've been kidnapped, tortured, lied to, shot at, and used as bait for the pirate people. I am not fine!

Effie finds another piece of wood for leverage and wedges it under the beam that is pinning Kael's leg while he rants.

EFFIE

Welcome to my world, Shiner.

KAEL

Don't you- You did this! This is your fault!

EFFIE

(more sympathetic)

Look, I'm trying to help you. We ain't going nowhere without Captain Slagg. We just need to get Abilene and everything will be peachy. You'll see.

Kael's reply is an angry GROWL as Effie lifts the beam from his leg.

He rolls out in agony and reaches for his leg, but stops short when he sees a sharp piece of wood piercing his right calf.

KAEL
Nugh! Get it out.

EFFIE
Working on it.

Calm, purposeful and professional, Effie tends to the problem. She slips off her jacket and ties the arms around his leg, just above the injury. She looks at him earnestly.

EFFIE (cont'd)
This is going to hurt. A lot.

KAEL
Just do it!

EFFIE
Okay, but first...

She leans over and plants a surprise kiss right on his lips. At first, Kael is shocked and uncertain, but at the very last second before she pulls away he's liking it.

And then he SCREAMS out in pain as Effie yanks the piece of wood from his leg. Was the kiss a distraction?

Kael writhes around for a few seconds while Effie works on stopping the bleeding by using her tied jacket as compression. Gritting his teeth in pain, or is it anger, Kael manages to speak:

KAEL
How do you know Slagg won't kill us
once he gets what he wants?

EFFIE
Well, I'm betting he'll try, but for
now he needs us alive.
(looks at him)
What do you think the Black Isle is?

Kael considers it as Effie continues to stabilize his injury. Then it dawns on him.

KAEL
The Black Veil site.

EFFIE
Congratulations, you're not a total
idiot. They think there's hidden
treasure there, which I guess is true
if old crap that killed people is
your idea of treasure.

KAEL
Do they know where it is?

EFFIE
Just rumors.

Kael wags his head, he's tired, and doubting himself. Effie sees it and frowns a little.

EFFIE (cont'd)
What?

KAEL
This was a mistake, coming out here.
If they get their hands on that kind
of tech-

EFFIE
They'll what? Kill each other? Look
around, been doing plenty of that on
our own without your fancy tech. I
thought you wanted to rescue the
world, help your people?

KAEL
At the cost of destroying it again?

EFFIE
You don't know that.

KAEL
Maybe Calix Amias was right. In the
wrong hands the technology of today
is the weapon of tomorrow. Do we
deserve that kind of power again?

Effie doesn't like the sound of that. She finishes with his leg and grabs his shirt hard.

EFFIE
No. You don't get to decide that for
the rest of the world. You don't get
to quit. Your people are depending
on you to fix things. I'm depending
on you. Now get up, and stop your
belly aching.

She starts to help him up.

EFFIE (cont'd)
(beat, softer)
Besides Calix Amias was a prick.

Kael gives her a questioning look, shocked that she knows who he is.

EFFIE (cont'd)

What? He's the father of the Black Veil bomb. He blew up the Earth. I read history, even it's not entirely accurate, according to you.

(beat)

Let's go find Abilene and get to the ship.

Kael still doesn't like the plan, but right now there's no better option.

KAEL

What do we need her for?

EFFIE

I gave her the Resistor.

KAEL

You what? Why?! She works for the Sheriff.

Effie gets him upright on his feet.

EFFIE

She don't work for anyone. And she was the safest place I could think of.

She stops at a RUMBLING SOUND. They both look down at the ground and see vibrations moving the dirt.

KAEL

What is that? Earthquake?

EFFIE

No, I don't think so-

As she looks off down the street her eyes go wide in horror.

EFFIE (cont'd)

Oh, shoot. Stampede!

A huge dust cloud carrying angry wild Buffalo begin to rampage through the streets of Independence, trampling anything in the way including people.

The beastly invasion breaks up the fighting in the streets, forcing both Pirate and Cowboy to seek refuge, or die.

Behind the herd is Abilene on her horse, driving the animals down the middle of town. Through the heavy dust cloud she spots Effie helping Kael out of the way of a particularly MAD BULL.

The Bull is charging right for Effie and Kael. It's horns are aimed and ready to gore, but Abilene cuts-in on horseback, and kicks the Bull's head away. The animal veers off course taking some of the wild herd with him, which clears a path for Effie and Kael to slip behind the remains of the GENERAL STORE.

Effie leans Kael against the only wall still standing from the General Store. She turns and smiles as Abilene joins them on horseback.

ABILENE

If you don't come with me right now,
you'll either die by the Duke's hand,
or Slagg's. I'm offering you a way
out, a way to live.

KAEL

I...

It looks like he's just about to take the offer when...

EFFIE

The Captain promised us safe passage.
We need his ship to get to the Air
Isles. The Black Veil site.
(nods at Kael)
He's going to restore power and
technology to the world.

Abilene gives Kael a questioning look. He shrugs a "yes", and Abilene quickly decides not to care.

ABILENE

Then you're on your own.

EFFIE

Wait! Don't you want to find out
what happened to your sister? Come
with us. You can track her down.
That's what you do, right?

ABILENE

Pretty damn sure she's dead. Slaves
don't exactly have a long life
expectancy.

EFFIE

She could still be alive. She could still be out there.

ABILENE

Hate to break it to you, Doc, but your plan is all kinds of fecked. There's a reason why we stick to our own kind. We fought a damn war over it. The pirates will either enslave you, rape you, or kill you.

Effie steps up to the horse and rests a hand on Abilene's leg.

EFFIE

Kael is going to change things, make things better. Doesn't that mean anything to you? Ain't it worth trying?

Effie's words seem to inspire Kael a little.

Conflicted, Abilene considers the offer. She shakes her head, "no", and then adjusts her horse to break contact.

ABILENE

I thought all you cared about was your freedom. This is it. I'm giving it to you. Last chance.

Effie sadly backs away.

EFFIE

I can't go, and neither can you. We need you.

She looks hard at Abilene's bandaged hand almost ready to confess something.

KAEL

She's not interested.

(at Abilene)

Give me the Resistor and leave. We'll be fine without you.

ABILENE

(frown)

The what now?

Effie looks off to the side. Someone is coming, but she keeps it to herself.

KAEL
 My device. About this big,
 (holds up fingers)
 flat, round?

ABILENE
 I don't have anything of yours,
 Shiner.

Kael looks at Effie, and Effie looks caught, not wanting to explain things just yet. Luckily, Slagg and his men surround them with weapons drawn.

SLAGG
 Willing or no, you'll be joining me
 on my ship. You have a deal Doctor
 Harper.

Before Abilene can make a move, Slagg stabs her horse through the heart and it falls dead instantly, taking the rider, Abilene, with it to the ground.

Effie pulls Kael along to join Slagg. Slagg takes the SURGE PISTOL from Effie's belt. Meanwhile, the OTHER PIRATES disarm Abilene and take her into custody.

SLAGG (cont'd)
 Set sail at once, Lads. We got what
 we came for.

EXT. SKY - BLOOD RAVEN - STERNCASTLE DECK - HELM

Badly damaged, the airship limps through the open sky toward the Air Isles. There are noticeable bullet holes throughout the hull and decks. Smoke spews from the ONE struggling engine, and yet the ship is still airborne.

Slagg and his First Mate, QUINT, a young man with tattoos all over his body, stand at the WHEEL and CONTROL PANEL talking. The Control Panel is full of lever systems.

QUINT
 Doc Williams is dead. Got hit on
 deck while tending to the men. The
 main engine is holding together, but
 we'll have to make port at the
 nearest repair isle.

SLAGG
 Aye. The Pit, me thinks. Less
 traffic and less attention. Best lay
 low after the dust-up on land.

Quint nods.

QUINT
Is the lad really a Shiner? Can he
take us to the Black Isle?

Slagg pulls out the Surge Pistol from under his coat. It is technology they have never seen before.

SLAGG
He better hope so, but I'll be
betting that my real treasure will
show up long 'fore then.

Quint slides him a questionable slide-long glance.

QUINT
Happy Jack.

SLAGG
Aye.

He spits at the name, and then stares out at the sky with anger filling his eyes. Quint seems a little off-put with the obsession in his Captain, but keeps it to himself.

SLAGG (cont'd)
Have our guests settled in to their
quarters?

QUINT
(smirk)
Aye Cap'n. Safe and sound just as
you ordered it.

Slagg returns the Surge Pistol to his side and we catch a glimpse of BLOOD on his nice white shirt. He is injured.

SLAGG
Good. Bring Doc Harper to my cabin
at once. It's time we renegotiate
our deal.

Quint nods and Slagg heads off to his quarters.

INT. BLOOD RAVEN - BRIG

Folks from Independence share this dank, dark, and filthy brig. Some are chained up, but there are so many people that there aren't enough shackles to hold them all.

Notably Squirrel, Wade, Isobel, Flaming Bear, Abilene, Effie, and Kael are among the captured, non-shackled, residents of Independence.

ABILENE

Excellent plan. Call the crappiest people on the planet and ask them for help. You know, maybe we'll all get to meet my sister when they sell us as slaves.

The animosity in the air is palpable between our heroes.

ISOBEL

I am not slave material. If anything I will be held for ransom.

ABILENE

Oh, shut up.

KAEL

I have to admit, the lady has a point.

ISOBEL

Thank you.

KAEL

Not you, her.

He indicates Abilene, and Isobel pouts in silence.

EFFIE

How else did you plan to get to the Air Isles - walk?

KAEL

You betrayed me. You sold me out, and now we're prisoners.

EFFIE

Hey, you're the one who broke our deal, you rat bastard, siding with the Duke.

He glares at Effie.

KAEL

How was I supposed to know that you didn't tell him about the Resistor. You told him everything else!

ABILENE

So you both screwed each other. You got what you deserved, the rest of us didn't.

The Independence RESIDENTS agree among themselves.

EFFIE

Excuse me, if you hadn't screwed me first none of this would have happened. All you had to do was keep our deal and kill Magnus.

ABILENE

I needed him alive to get to Bloxham. I was going to kill them both!

Effie suddenly "gets it".

ISOBEL

My father has never done any harm to anyone, let alone you. He's always helped the people of Independence. He brought work and good money to that backwater town.

(at Wade)

No offense.

Wade shrugs indifferent.

ISOBEL (cont'd)

And you...

(angry; at Effie)

You shot my daddy. He's only ever showed you kindness.

ABILENE

Your precious father slaughtered my entire family and ruined my life.

The blunt statement almost has Isobel believing, and then:

ISOBEL

That is a disgusting lie. He would never- He showed you mercy after you tried to murder him. You are the killer, not him.

ABILENE

You're really not that dumb, are you?

ISOBEL

Everybody knows you shot your own father. You're a murderer and one day you'll hang for it.

Abilene glares at her and Isobel glares back. Effie looks between them both, knowing the truth about Abilene.

EFFIE

Why didn't you tell me that was your plan?

Abilene looks at her still holding venom for Isobel. It spills out with the truth.

ABILENE

Because I didn't trust you.

KAEL

Wish I hadn't.

EFFIE

(snaps)

None of us would be here if you had just stayed behind your walls, Shiner.

ISOBEL

That is so true.

KAEL

This is not my fault.

(at Effie)

Why would you tell the Sheriff anything we talked about? We had a deal?

Effie takes a moment to gather her regret, and it shows.

EFFIE

(softly)

I thought it would buy my freedom.

KAEL

So you saw an opportunity to use me for your own selfish needs, and you took it.

(at Abilene)

You were right. She doesn't care about anyone, but herself.

ABILENE

Can we all just agree that we're a bunch of backstabbing assholes, and figure out a way not to die in here?

The group agrees with that. A moment of silent thinking passes. Effie looks around and lands on Kael and Abilene.

EFFIE

Well, you two are safe. You both have something Slagg needs. And Lady Isobel will probably be held for ransom. I'm a doctor so...

WADE

The rest of us are fecked. Got it. Thanks.

ABILENE

My bounty isn't going to buy me a whole lot of time.

EFFIE

No, but that will.

Effie's eyes drop down to Abilene's bandaged right hand. Abilene lifts her hand and looks at, then narrows her eyes at Effie.

ABILENE

What did you do?

EFFIE

(hesitant)

I may have implanted Kael's Resistor in your hand.

Abilene snaps a furious look at Effie, but it is Kael who beats her to a response.

KAEL

You what?!

The cell door SHRIEKS open and a PIRATE GUARD motions for Effie.

PIRATE GUARD

Cap'n wants to see you. Now.

Effie looks around at everybody, not wanting to leave, worried that she might not be coming back. The Pirate Guard reaches in and yanks her out with brute force.

Abilene jumps up to intervene...

ABILENE

Hey!

... but Wade stops her.

WADE

Now ain't the time to pick a fight.

The cell door SLAMS SHUT.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVEEXT. TOWN OF INDEPENDENCE - STREET - DUSK

PEOPLE are picking up the pieces left behind in the fight with the airship. Bloxham wanders the destruction in a daze. His arm is in a sling. His town is destroyed and his daughter is missing. He is devastated, and on the verge of insane rage.

Magnus and Mutt approach, and Bloxham lifts his head awaiting the news.

MAGNUS

No sign of Lady Isobel, Duke. I'm sorry. They took her.

MUTT

They took the whole damn town.

Bloxham barely has himself under control. He paces and seethes, each step, each word growing more and more heated.

BLOXHAM

They have my little girl. They'll do things to her. They'll-- I'll kill'em. I'll kill every last one of those sons of bitches!

He snaps and SHOOTS an innocent BYSTANDER in the head. There's no calming himself, and no reason to even try to hide his rage any longer. What's the point? Isobel is gone. She won't see what a monster he really is.

When he turns to Magnus and Mutt, they both rock back on their heels expecting a backlash. Bloxham grabs Magnus by the shirt and hauls him inches from his face.

BLOXHAM (cont'd)

Call a parley. If Slagg wants the whole world hunting him, then wish granted. We're going to unite with the Air Isles.

He walks off. Mutt looks at Magnus with fear in his eyes. The Duke's statement is bold, crazy, and dangerous.

EXT. SKY - BLOOD RAVEN - NIGHT

A star filled sky, and the airship slowly limps along. We focus down on the Captain's Cabin.

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Slagg is laid-out on his navigation table with his shirt off. He's guzzling a bottle of booze to dull the pain in his side. His entire chest and abdomen have a sculpted metal plate embedded in his flesh. It's an ugly, crude looking augment.

Effie tends to the bullet wound in his right side. She's using forceps to root around for a bullet fragment. A nearby bowl shows three pieces of lead already removed.

EFFIE

Almost got it. Last one. Don't move.

SLAGG

You remind me of her. My beloved. Celest.

EFFIE

Oh, good. You're drunk.

SLAGG

Ashen hair. Eyes as green as the Isles.

EFFIE

Mine are brown.

SLAGG

A gentleness that drew people to her-- Ow! Damn it, lass!

EFFIE

(smirk)

Said don't move.

SLAGG

Aye, she caused me a lot of pain too. Just like her, you are.

EFFIE

Sounds delightful. I'd like to meet her.

Slagg clinks the bottle of booze to his chest plate.

SLAGG

Aye, she's how I got this. Ripped out me rib cage and spilled my guts on the deck. Happen right out there.

EFFIE
She did that to you?

SLAGG
(laughs)
Lass wouldn't harm a soul. Happy
Jack did this to me, after he
performed heinous acts on my Celest.
(takes a swig)
I died that day with my beloved.

Effie looks disturbed, uncomfortable and sympathetic.

EFFIE
Sorry.

SLAGG
Don't need your pity. I'll mourn
when the bastard is dead.

A CLINK as Effie drops the last bullet fragment into the bowl.

EFFIE
You're lucky. No internal bleeding.
I'll sew you up and you should be
fine.

SLAGG
I kept my word. I gave you safe
passage.

EFFIE
Thank you.

SLAGG
But I can't give you freedom.

Effie stop the suture job.

SLAGG (cont'd)
Don't look so surprised. You know
how this works. You're either an
asset to me and my crew, or you're
property. Your choice, lass.

Slagg winces suddenly and looks down to see a scalpel
pressed to his freshly stitched side.

EFFIE
I've taken a life before.

Slagg studies her, and then grins.

SLAGG

No lass, you haven't. Not with evil in your heart. I can see it in your eyes. You couldn't even kill the Duke when you had the chance.

EFFIE

I missed.

SLAGG

Bollocks.

(beat)

You can kill me all you want, lass, but I promise you this -- you'll have none better than me. I'll give you your own cabin, medical supplies, and freedom on board. You'll have food, water, and a promise of safety. But if ye cross me, I promise an endless death.

Effie's expression flattens, she shakes her head and sets down the scalpel.

Slagg reveals the gun he had on her.

SLAGG (cont'd)

A deal then! Quint!

The cabin door opens, Quint is right outside.

QUINT

Aye, Captain?

SLAGG

Give the lass Doc Williams' Cabin. See to her needs and let it be known that she is mine.

Quint nods, and gestures for the lady to exit.

SLAGG (cont'd)

Doc Harper. Thank you for your services. I truly enjoyed your company.

Effie just kind of nods and leaves with Quint.

INT. HOLD

Everyone is resting, except Abilene who is wide awake and looking at her bandaged hand. She turns to Kael who is also unable to sleep. Their conversation is quiet.

ABILENE
Who beat the Doc?

KAEL
Same person that did this to me.
(indicates his
bruised face)
The Sheriff.

Abilene fights back an expression of guilt.

ABILENE
What did she do?

KAEL
She wouldn't tell the Duke where the Resistor was. She was protecting you, I suppose.

That forces a frown of emotion on Abilene's face.

KAEL (cont'd)
Of course, she also stuck the damn thing in you, which put you in danger in the first place, but whatever.

That was true too. Abilene agrees with a nod, and then looks thoughtfully at her bandaged hand again.

ABILENE
Can you really do it?

Kael looks her dead in the eyes. We see Isobel awake and listening.

KAEL
What you have in your hand will fix things, make things right.

ABILENE
How does it work?

KAEL
It's a similar principle to a Faraday cage. You see, the Black Veil particle field doesn't fry electronics.

(MORE)

KAEL (cont'd)

It's not an EMP like most people think. Tech still functions out here, it's just that the electrical current in the circuitry is blocked by the particles.

Abilene rolls her eyes at the science-talk, and almost gets her chance to interject, but Isobel interrupts. She is intrigued, not just with the knowledge, but with Kael.

ISOBEL

Like a clogged artery. It stops the flow of blood?

Abilene flashes a frown at Isobel.

KAEL

(surprised and happy)

The Black Veil Particle was supposed to temporarily saturate our atmosphere, just long enough to stop the weapons of war, and talk peace.

Another chance for Abilene to interrupt is taken by Wade.

WADE

Wait. If it ain't a bomb, why did it blow up the Earth?

KAEL

The only way to power it was to tap into the Earth's core.

SQUIRREL

That sounds like just about the stupidest thing I ever heard. Everybody knows you don't go poking around the belly of a beast.

Abilene glares at Squirrel. Even he is interested?

ISOBEL

So if it blew up, why are we still without power?

KAEL

My guess, it's like you said,
(at Wade)
it blew up the Earth, not itself.

ISOBEL

And the Resistor thing in her hand,
 (nods at Abilene)
 how is that supposed to help?

KAEL

It emits an opposing particle field
 that repulses the Black Veil's
 effects so that "blood" can flow
 through the circuits again.

Abilene gives him a dull flat look of impatience.

ABILENE

(sarcastically)
 Fascinating. But when I said, "how
 does it work", I meant how do I turn
 it on?

Now it's Kael's turn to be frustrated because his genius is
 lost on the woman who holds his precious invention.

KAEL

It's touch sensitive.

ABILENE

(mocking)
 You mean it has a button.

KAEL

(sighing)
 Yes. It has a button.
 (beat)
 Assuming our lovely Doctor implanted
 it correctly, you should be able to
 apply the appropriate pressure to
 your--

He sees the raw stitches on Abilene's wounded palm when she
 unwraps it. It's ugly, and crusted with blood.

KAEL (cont'd)

Yeah, that's probably going to hurt.

ABILENE

This will make your tech work out
 here? Your weapon too?

He nods as Abilene starts to catch up intellectually. She
 hesitates knowing that this is going to be painful, and then
 she presses her left thumb into her right palm. She winces
 and grits her teeth. A bit of blood is spilled from her
 hand.

Nothing happens. She looks disappointed.

ABILENE (cont'd)
It's not working -- oh...

When she looks at Kael for an answer she finds it. The blue filaments under his skin are glowing once again.

Isobel sits up in awe -- or in love.

Kael closes his eyes. There's rapid eye movement under his eyelids. He seems to be getting his cyber-fix.

INT. SHINE TOWN - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Miwa stares at the holographic map of Tesla City. She should be working, but she can't concentrate when her son is MIA.

Suddenly, when she's just about to shut it all down, the image of the map changes. A download is in progress from the Kotlas satellite. A new landscape begins to appear. It a small portion of the Air Isles.

Then an ALERT pops up: CONNECTION ESTABLISHED.

MIWA
Kael?

Relief on her face. He's Alive!

SMASH TO BLACK

THE END